

[New virtual cyber school gives teens chance to try out as cyber security agents from home](#)

- Teens can learn how to crack codes, fix security flaws and dissect criminals' digital trails
- Comes as National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) launches CyberFirst summer courses online

Thousands of young people are being offered the chance to join a [virtual cyber security school](#) as part of plans to make sure the country develops the next generation of professional cyber defenders.

At a time when schools remain closed to most children, the online initiative aims to inspire future talent to work in the cyber security sector and give students a variety of extracurricular activities to do from the safety of their homes.

Teens can learn how to crack codes, fix security flaws and dissect criminals' digital trails while progressing through the game as a cyber agent. This will help them develop important skills needed for future jobs, particularly in cyber security.

The school provides free weekly webinars run by industry experts teaching fundamental security disciplines such as digital forensics, cryptography and operating systems.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:

This new initiative will give teenagers something fun and educational to do from home and provide them with a glimpse into the life of a cyber security professional.

We have a world-leading cyber sector which plays a crucial role protecting the country and our digital economy, so it is absolutely vital we continue to inspire the next generation of tech talent to help maintain the UK's strong position.

The move comes as the government announces a number of other online training courses to give UK school pupils the opportunity to learn and develop cyber security skills, this includes the launch of the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) hugely popular [CyberFirst summer courses](#). The courses are moving online this year to help more than a thousand 14 to 17-year-olds develop important cyber skills from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

NCSC Chief Executive Officer Ciaran Martin said:

Technology is helping us all cope with the coronavirus crisis and is playing an essential role in keeping our businesses moving and our society connected.

It has never been more important for our young people to keep engaged and learn how to protect our digital world – and I'm delighted to see our instructor led CyberFirst summer courses made available online.

Enrolled students will learn how to code and carry out cybersecurity operations in an instructor-led virtual classroom to help guide the students through the programme and build a sense of camaraderie within each cohort.

The National Crime Agency and Cyber Security Challenge UK will also this week announce teenagers can access their online cyber skills platform [CyberLand](#) for free during the coming months. In the game designed to teach teenagers the fundamentals of cyber security, players protect the virtual city 'CyberLand' from cyber attacks while learning key skills.

Deputy Director at the NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit Jim Stokley said:

Many young people have a keen interest in technology and have developed impressive cyber skills.

The virtual cyber school and CyberFirst programmes are great initiatives which will support this next generation of cyber defenders in realising their potential.

We've also partnered with Cyber Security Challenge UK to offer free access to their online platform Cyberland where young people will find games that encourage them to improve cyber skills safely and legally.

Computer science teacher & EdTech evangelist Mark Martin said:

This is a great initiative to encourage young people to consider future careers in cyber security and see that they can have a tech job keeping people safe online.

The virtual cyber school will help students learn valuable skills needed to work in the industry in a fun and entertaining way. I encourage teachers to share these programmes with their students as a productive activity to do in their spare time from home.

Cyber Discovery provider SANS Chief Technology Officer James Lyne said:

Cyber security is a fascinating field packed with opportunities for innovation and to make the online world more secure. It spans every

part of society and has a huge role in our future security and technology prospects as a nation.

This is your chance to learn how to 'forensicate' like a digital Sherlock Holmes, close down vulnerabilities before the hackers find them, and break codes.

Teachers, parents, students – get online and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity amidst the unique and challenging situation our country faces right now.

CyberFirst provider QA Chairman Sir Charlie Mayfield said:

These initiatives from NCSC and DCMS are set to deliver a great summer of learning for young people across the UK. There is a shortage of digital skills in the UK and the CyberFirst programmes tackle this issue head on – and have the added benefit of keeping young minds active at this difficult time.

The road to the UK's economic recovery from this pandemic will be built on the skills we learn at this time. That's why it was critical that initiatives like CyberFirst were pivoted to virtual delivery, so they could go ahead as planned. We are proud to partner with the NCSC to deliver these fully virtual training programmes.