

Press release: Extracurricular cyber clubs to inspire and identify tomorrow's cyber security professionals

The Cyber Schools Programme aims to support and encourage schoolchildren to develop some of the key skills they would need to work in the growing cyber security sector and help defend the nation's businesses against online threats.

Up to £20m is available to deliver an extracurricular school programme which will see an army of expert external instructors teaching, testing and training teenagers selected for the programme, with a comprehensive cyber curriculum expected to mix classroom and online teaching with real-world challenges and hands-on work experience.

The Cyber Schools Programme, led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is aimed at those aged between 14 and 18, with a target for at least 5,700 teenagers to be trained by 2021.

This programme is for students with the aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject. It aims to appeal to children from all backgrounds, including those currently underrepresented in cyber security jobs.

Cyber security is an exciting industry with strong job prospects. Recent figures from the Tech Partnership show there are already 58,000 cyber security specialists in a growing sector worth £22bn a year to the economy. This is part of the Government's commitment to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

This forward-thinking programme will see thousands of the best and brightest young minds given the opportunity to learn cutting-edge cyber security skills alongside their secondary school studies. We are determined to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future and these extracurricular clubs will help identify and inspire future talent.

Students will be expected to commit to four hours a week. This will include classroom-based and online-teaching with flexibility around exams and busier study periods.

The aim is for students to start aged 14 and complete a four-year programme. It will be delivered in modules, meaning older students can join at any point providing they meet the right criteria. The provider will have the

flexibility to decide the most appropriate way to deliver the programme, and the pilot, to begin in September 2017, will be monitored and reviewed after the first year.

The programme is all part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme to find, finesse and fast-track tomorrow's online security experts.

It includes the recently announced [CyberFirst bursary funding scheme](#), which offers grants of up to £4,000 for up to 1,000 students by 2020 to study a relevant degree, do a placement or attend a summer school and, depending on meeting requirements, the chance to work in national security on graduation.

There are 2,500 free places on CyberFirst in 2017 and an additional [CyberFirst Girls Competition](#), where teams of 13-to-15-year-old young women can pit their wits against one another to crack a series of online puzzles.

DCMS is also supporting leading employers in critical energy and transport infrastructure to train and recruit up to 50 highly skilled apprentices aged 16 and over to help defend essential services against cyber attacks. The [Cyber Security Apprenticeships for Critical Sectors Scheme](#) is open now for applications for those with a natural flair for problem solving and who are passionate about technology.

A [Cyber Retraining Academy](#), launched in January, is also helping more than 50 high-aptitude people fast-track into the cyber security industry with a ten-week intensive training course.

Notes to Editors

- Media enquiries – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210 or out of hours on 07699 751153.
- DCMS are [seeking providers](#) to deliver this prestigious new schools programme. Bids close on the 13th March 2017.