

Press release: Search to find Cyber Security experts of the future

An online programme designed to inspire teenagers to think about a career in cyber security will continue for a second year after a successful pilot across England.

Over 23,000 young people aged between 14 and 18 have already taken part in the Cyber Discovery programme which uses interactive games to teach teenagers about cyber security in an accessible and fun way. Those who perform at the highest levels, will also have the opportunity to attend a special summer camp to hone their skills and meet industry leaders.

The scheme sits within Cyber First, the government's cyber security skills programme, which is part of the £1.9 billion investment through the National Cyber Security Strategy to transform the UK's cyber security and ensure we build skills in the workforce of the future.

Minister for Digital Margot James said:

We need to inspire young people and show them a career in Cyber Security can be exciting and rewarding, not only to give them more opportunities but also help build a talented workforce for the future. The Cyber Discovery programme has been a great success so far. I hope more teenagers will take part and learn that those working in cyber security can come from any walk of life, and have studied any subject.

The £20 million Cyber Discovery programme teaches students about subjects including digital forensics, defending against web attacks and cryptography. It is being delivered by IT security training company the SANS Institute.

The programme is also a key part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy – a long term plan to ensure that businesses have the skilled workers they need here in Britain.

Head of Research and Development for SANS Institute James Lyne said:

Based on the success of last year's Cyber Discovery programme, it's clear there's both the appetite and the aptitude to learn about cyber security in the UK. Before taking part in Cyber Discovery 40.4% of female students and 35.5% of male students hadn't even considered a career in cyber security. This dropped to 9.6% and 6.3% respectively after these students took part in the programme. And many of the club leaders who are also Computer Science teachers, told us they used Cyber Discovery last year to complement their lesson plans. We hope to extend this enthusiasm and passion

for cyber security across the the UK in year two.

Any young person between the ages of 14 to 18 can take part. Registration and completion of the first assessment phase closes on 7 January 2019. Find out more on the [Cyber Discovery website](#).

Further Information:

1. The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK has a sustainable pipeline of cyber security talent supporting a workforce that meets current and future cyber security demands and supports the UK's prosperity by keeping the economy and the country safe from cyber threats.
2. The [National Cyber Security Strategy](#) commits to developing and implementing 'a self-standing skills strategy that builds on existing work to integrate cyber security into the education system. This will continue to improve the state of computer science teaching overall and embed cybersecurity into the curriculum. Everyone studying computer science, technology or digital skills will learn the fundamentals of cyber security and will be able to bring those skills into the workforce. As part of this effort, we will address the gender imbalance in cyber-focused professions, and reach people from more diverse backgrounds, to make sure we are drawing from the widest available talent pool.
3. SANS Institute was established in 1989 as a cooperative research and education organisation and is now the largest provider of cyber security training and certification to practitioners at governments and commercial institutions worldwide. The SANS curriculum spans more than 60 courses across multiple cyber security disciplines. SANS has successfully run programmes for school age students and is passionate about encouraging young people to pursue a career in cyber security.