

Speech: First anniversary of the National Cyber Security Strategy

Thank you, Brian, for the warm welcome and good morning to you all.

I am delighted to be here today to celebrate with you and officially open the new global HQ of the NCC Group. I just had a tour of the new offices and met some very interesting and creative people doing things that are truly amazing, and I know many of you here today have been instrumental in supporting the growth of this fantastic company.

NCC Group is a key part of a strong and growing UK cyber security industry. And you are a great example of business innovation and investment in the North of England.

The government is committed to attracting investment in the North and is building a Northern Powerhouse to help the cities, towns and rural communities of this part of the world combine their strengths to encourage greater prosperity.

I am pleased to say that in six months' time CyberUK, the UK's flagship cyber security event, will be hosted at the Manchester Convention Centre. And, next month, this city will also host the UK-Gulf Cyber Security Academic Symposium, which will continue to promote research and development in a number of crucial sectors, and deepen our international collaboration in cyber security.

So being here today is an ideal opportunity to reflect on the first year of this government's five year UK National Cyber Security Strategy.

My role as First Secretary of State means that I am responsible for the overarching Government National Cyber Security Strategy and the National Cyber Security Programme which delivers it.

Our digital economy is thriving: tech companies have created 3.5 million new jobs in the UK and four out of five people in the UK bought something online in the past year – a higher figure than in any other country.

So citizens, business and academia all derive huge benefits from the connectivity of the digital world. But the Wannacry ransomware attack, Equifax data breach, and other recent incidents highlight the need for all organisations to take action on cyber security and protect personal data.

To meet these challenges the government launched a comprehensive National Cyber Security Strategy last November 2016, supported by £1.9 billion of transformational investment. And I am pleased to say that since the launch there has been a continuous flow of international partners to our country, keen to learn from and emulate our strategy.

The most visible achievement in the past year has been the creation of the

National Cyber Security Centre, bringing key capabilities and expertise together in one place.

The NCSC marked its first birthday earlier this month and they've had a busy year. In all, they responded to more than 590 significant cyber incidents, more than 30 of which were sufficiently serious to require a cross-Government response.

The Wannacry virus and recent attack on the UK and Scottish Parliaments could have been considerably worse had the NCSC and the NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit not been operational and in a position to lead the response.

Responding to incidents like this requires a co-ordinated effort, and I am heartened that the NCSC received so many offers of support from industry during the incident. Clearly, the secret ingredient behind much of what we have achieved so far is our ability to draw on strong partnerships across government, industry, civil society and the academic world.

But we are not just waiting for attacks to happen – we are also doing our utmost to prevent them. We cannot tackle the threats we face solely in the UK, so building constructive relationships with our international partners is essential and we remain committed to promoting a cyberspace which is free, open, peaceful and secure.

Working in partnership with our allies on cyber defence is one of the most pressing strategic challenges of our time. Over the year, we've expanded our efforts to increase cyber resilience around the globe in over 50 countries, by raising public awareness and reinforcing Computer Security Incident Response Teams. We've also started testing an ambitious Active Cyber Defence programme of ground breaking initiatives to improve basic cyber security across the public sector. Today, we are launching the next phase of our Cyber Aware programme through the Tech-Free-15 campaign which encourages the public and small businesses to adopt secure behaviours, like taking time out to install software and app updates to better protect themselves from cyber crime.

So our goal is not just to defend and deter cyber attacks, but also to develop our cyber security ecosystem. This means bringing together our local cyber security clusters and our world leading universities including the 14 Academic Centres of Excellence in Cyber Security.

The new Cheltenham Innovation Centre opened this year and launched a Cyber Accelerator programme, which provides start-ups with access to world-class experts to help them build cutting-edge technology.

And alongside the domestic support to business, the Department for International Trade leads efforts to increase the export of our world-leading cyber security capability, and is currently developing plans to do more to support the UK's industry overseas.

And this year, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport kicked off their comprehensive Cyber Schools Programme, which aims to train nearly

6,000 young people over the coming years through extracurricular activities with the SANS Institute, BT, FutureLearn and the Cyber Security Challenge.

I would also like to pay tribute to NCC Group for your work with schools and universities to highlight cyber security as an attractive career path. Industry is coming together to sponsor our CyberFirst scheme, which saw more than 1,000 young people take part in summer courses this year. And earlier this year 8,000 girls entered the CyberFirst Girls competition, which is a fantastic success in a sector where we need more opportunities to promote and encourage diversity.

So there is a lot going on, and a lot that will be coming very soon, all part of this government's goal of making the UK a world-leader in cyber security.

So in closing, let me thank you again for the invitation to help you mark this milestone as you open your new global headquarters. You are a great example of the UK's global cyber security leadership and innovation, and I wish you the very best for the future. Thank you very much.