

News story: Head of Government Digital Service to take on new role

Kevin Cunnington became Director General of the Government Digital Service in 2016.

Under his leadership, GDS has helped government realise more than £1 billion of benefits through scrutinising technology spending. Other achievements include the introduction of machine learning and speech recognition technologies to government services, and overseeing a substantial increase in traffic to the GOV.UK website, which now attracts more than 15 million unique visitors a week. Since 2016, the UK Government has also consistently ranked in the Top 5 of the UN E-Participation Index and E-Government Development Index.

His new position will see him take on the role of Director General in the newly created International Government Service (IGS).

The move tasks him with promoting the work of UK Government services, including the digital sector, across the world. He said:

I'm thrilled to be taking up this new role and see it as a fantastic opportunity to build on our achievements at GDS. I'm looking forward to promoting the work of the UK Government and exploring how the UK can provide government-to-government services, including digital, on a global stage.

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary said:

Kevin is well-qualified to take on his new role as head of IGS. Under his leadership, GDS has matured into an established function, responsible for accelerating digital transformation right across government and the wider public sector. The Civil Service now has more technical capability than ever before, while the UK is consistently ranked among the world's most digitally enabled governments.

Kevin leaves GDS in a strong place, ready for his successor to take digital government to the next level.

Alison Pritchard, who is currently GDS's Director for EU Exit and Transformation, will take over as Director General of GDS on an interim basis, while a recruitment exercise takes place to fill the role on a permanent basis.

Speech: Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster speech to Women in Security Network: 18 June 2019

Hello, and thank you for having me here today. In the four years since it was created, the Women in Security Network has provided a crucial forum for women and underrepresented groups to gain skills and connections to help them get ahead in their careers.

We all agree that the national security profession should reflect those it works to protect. So I am delighted to speak today about some of the work this Government is undertaking through the National Cyber Security Strategy to ensure a vibrant and representative cyber security profession.

Of course, women have served in security and technology throughout history – and have often been pioneers in computing and codebreaking. I've attended briefings in the Lovelace Room, right here in the National Cyber Security Centre. Each briefing in that room is an excellent reminder how women such as Ada Lovelace, Joan Clark, and Mavis Batey have been trailblazers in this field. But women need to be the rule and not the exception – especially when it comes to cyber security.

Today, cyber security is among the most important aspects of our national defence as we work to protect the UK and the British people.

The National Cyber Security Strategy has revolutionised the UK's fight against cyber threats as an ambitious, deliberately interventionist programme of action. During the last three years, we have put in place many of the building blocks to strengthen our cyber security and resilience, backed by an investment of £1.9 billion pounds.

In 2016, we set up the world-leading National Cyber Security Centre to act as our single authority on cyber security. We've invested in cutting-edge cyber capabilities across all tiers of UK Law Enforcement. And we're protecting UK internet users from lower-sophistication, high-volume attacks that have an impact on people's everyday lives, that compromise their identities and undermine the individual security of their bank accounts.

More than halfway into the Strategy, we're seeing behavioural changes, too – and not just from our warnings to an estimated 23 million account holders that 123456 isn't a suitable password! In Government and in the private sector, we're also seeing Boards integrate cyber security into the core functions of their organisations. The results of DCMS's Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2019 make clear that cyber security is increasingly a key issue for organisations, with three quarters of business and charities now rating it as a high priority. So we've made considerable progress in

Government, and with industry. And the people in this building have been a crucial part of that success.

But, we also recognise that there is much more work to be done.

The government, and indeed, the national security profession – must reflect those that it seeks to represent and protect. Yet, national security has the lowest representation of women than any other profession in Government, at 15.7 percent. And the National Security Council Officials board has the lowest proportion of female officials than any other Civil Service board.

The British government isn't alone. There remains a severe lack of diversity and representation in the cyber security industry. According to a report from the Global Information Security Workforce, only 11% of the global workforce is made up of women – this falls to a mere 7% elsewhere in Europe.

And we've seen the risks in other sectors when technology doesn't get diversity right. A New York Times piece published yesterday outlined how human biases in artificial intelligence technology have led to minorities and underrepresented groups being turned down for job opportunities, denied bank loans and even misidentified as criminals. Because when the faces who create AI systems are all male, or white, the algorithms are unable to recognise other groups as easily.

At the same time, we've seen ample research on how more diverse organisations do better at meeting their objectives. McKinsey studies of the British private sector show that greater gender diversity at the senior level corresponds to higher performance. So there is a business imperative, as well as a moral one.

There are lots of ways to address the issue of diversity. But today, I'm going to focus on the urgency of addressing the skills gap in cyber security, and the importance of cultivating the right workplace environment.

Cyber security is a nascent profession, which provides us with a narrow opportunity to shape its future. We need to be inspiring the next generation to think about a career in this field. There is a wealth of talented young people across the UK who could have successful careers in cyber security. Teenagers who are livestreamers with their own gaming vlogs. Students who consider Twitter their second language. They do not need to be fluent in Javascript to be the future of the industry.

Many of you in this room have been involved in valuable efforts to engage younger people – especially young girls – in cyber security. In 2015, GCHQ launched the CyberFirst programme to give talented young people the support, skills, experience and exposure they need to become 'cyberists' of the future.

This year, nearly 12,000 talented 12-13 year-old female students from over 800 schools across the UK took part in the CyberFirst Girls Competition. Last year, 44% of CyberFirst attendees were female. And in the Cyber Skills programme, female participation is at 23%, with the aim of achieving gender

balance.

At the same time, we also recognise that financial barriers can prevent very capable people from pursuing their chosen path. So the CyberFirst University Bursary aims to remove these barriers and give young people access to the training and skills they need to succeed, regardless of background. These are vital steps in unlocking and opening up the profession to young people, and I commend them wholeheartedly.

However, it is important that senior leaders recognise that an emphasis on skills-building isn't the only piece of the puzzle. There needs to be a cultural shift in the way we think about gender equality and diversity. We need to ensure that we don't treat this as a tick-box exercise, thinking that the job is done once the recruitment process has been finalised. Instead, we all need to be thinking about the broader, collective environment we create for new recruits. That means replicating opportunities for mentorship, like the network that you have so successfully built here. But it also means encouraging more senior male leaders to mentor women and improve the underlying culture, as recommended by Harvard Business Review.

Of course, a commitment to diversity is something even more rudimentary than skills, initiatives, or pathways. It means empowering staff to pursue their careers, building the confidence to constructively challenge their environments, and ensuring that they can construct opportunities for their colleagues in the future. This is the sort of power that diversity can bring to a profession as young and as pioneering as cyber security, and I challenge you all to embed this across your teams.

When a young Ada Lovelace began her mathematical studies, her tutor fretted that "the very great tension of mind [that mathematics] require is beyond the strength of a woman's physical power of application." Ada, of course, went on to become a visionary of computer programming. And we can now laugh at this outdated thinking.

But subtler societal perceptions persist. We can, and must, do more to encourage that a more diverse body of talent is represented at every level of government, business and beyond. Because as we chart the course for cyber security, we must ensure that our aims for the future of this profession remain as ambitious as our algorithms.

And now, your questions.

[Checked against delivery].

[**Press release: Lord Ahmad visits**](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina to mark the UN's Day for Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

During the visit, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict will address the Inter-Religious Council of BiH, discussing inter-faith contributions to peace and stability in BiH, including how best to support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and the importance of tackling stigma.

Lord Ahmad will also attend the OSCE South East Europe Media Conference in Sarajevo, as we look ahead to the upcoming Media Freedom Conference to be hosted in London in July. The Minister will give a speech highlighting the vital work of the UK's leadership in furthering media freedom across the world.

Whilst in Sarajevo, the Minister will meet with the BiH Presidency and Chairman of the Council of Ministers to discuss progress on reform in BiH, and ways in which the UK can support BiH's advancement on its Euro-Atlantic trajectory. He will also discuss Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiatives with Defence Minister Marina Pendes, following the WPS Conference hosted by the Armed Forces of BiH, with support from the British Embassy in Sarajevo, in March.

Arriving in Sarajevo, Lord Ahmad said:

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a key partner in the region, and so it's great to be visiting. I look forward to attending the OSCE Media Freedom conference in Sarajevo and underlining the excellent work done by journalists on the front line as well as discussing the UK's upcoming media freedom conference.

It is vital that we allow journalists to work in an environment where they can do their job, and hold those in power to account.

Today is the UN international day for the elimination of sexual violence in conflict. I am therefore also looking forward to meeting religious leaders and those affected by conflict-related sexual violence to understand better how we can best support them.

Further information

[News story: Treaty on voting rights signed with Luxembourg](#)

Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel and Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay have today [18 June] signed a reciprocal agreement to guarantee the rights of one another's citizens to vote in local elections.

This marks the third such agreement the UK has reached with an EU Member State following the treaties signed with [Spain](#) and [Portugal](#).

The treaty underlines the importance of the relationship between the UK and Luxembourg as well as reinforcing the significance we attribute to the rights of our citizens.

Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay said:

"I am very proud to be able to sign this treaty that secures in law the democratic rights of UK nationals here in Luxembourg, and Luxembourgish citizens in the UK, further demonstrating our commitment to protecting the rights of our citizens.

"We've now signed three reciprocal voting rights treaties and I hope we can agree many more in the coming months with the remaining Member States."

[News story: Home Office allocates £35 million to police forces for violence reduction units](#)

Violence reduction units will take a multi-agency approach, bringing together police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes.

The cash is in addition to the recent £63.4 million surge funding to forces across England and Wales that are worst affected by serious violence and knife crime.

Violence reduction units will be responsible for identifying the drivers of serious violence locally and developing a coordinated response to tackle them.

Local areas across England and Wales are starting to take a public health approach to prevent serious violence by addressing the issues that cause

violent behaviour in the first place.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Knife crime is taking too many young lives and it's vital that all parts of society work together to stop this senseless bloodshed.

Violence reduction units will help do this – bringing together police, local government, health professionals, community leaders and other key partners to tackle the root causes of serious violence.

National Police Chiefs' Council Chair Martin Hewitt said:

I have consistently made the case that serious violence on our streets is something the police cannot tackle alone. Forces across the country are putting significant effort into addressing the problem, and we are starting to see some positive outcomes.

It is widely agreed that prevention must be the priority, and evidence shows that violence reduction units work in contributing to this effort. The extra funding being provided to Police and Crime Commissioners is therefore welcomed.

The additional investment comes from the £100 million serious violence fund announced by the government in March as part of its continued action to crack down on violent crime.

The 18 local areas will set out plans demonstrating how they will use their provisional allocation to build a public health approach delivering both short and long-term action ahead of being awarded the funding in the coming weeks.

The Home Office will work closely with the violence reduction units to assess how the funding is being used to strengthen the response to serious violence.

Introducing new violence reduction units is part of the government's focus on early intervention, as set out in the Serious Violence Strategy which was published in April last year. In addition to the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund, the government has recently launched a £200 million 10-year Youth Endowment Fund, which will identify and support organisations with a proven track record of diverting vulnerable young people away from violent crime.

The government has also made it easier for officers in seven areas most affected by knife crime to use Section 60 stop and search powers. Section 60 powers allow the police to search people in a designated area without suspicion, where serious violence is anticipated.

A consultation on a new public health duty recently took place and the results will be published in due course. The new public health duty would mean a range of agencies such as police, education and health partners, local authorities, offender management, housing, youth and victim services will have a new legal duty to take action to prevent and tackle violent crime.