

# Press release: Record number of schoolgirls make digital waves but women still under-represented in the cyber security sector

- Women make up just 11% of the global cyber security workforce
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, David Lidington MP, calls for more to be done to encourage women into the cyber security industry
- As well as reaching out to the cyber-pros of tomorrow, NCSC launches new online training tool to meet security demands of today

Cyber-savvy female students who took part in an online competition founded by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) were praised today in a speech by David Lidington. Speaking at the 'Women in Security Network' conference, the Minister for the Cabinet Office also warned that more needs to be done to open up opportunities in cyber security for women.

Nearly 12,000 girls aged 12 – 13 from across the UK took part in the competition in 2019, which was launched by the NCSC as part of the CyberFirst initiative. The competition breaks down gender barriers by encouraging girls to engage with cyber security before they make their GCSE choices, with over 24,000 female students having taken part since the competition was launched in 2016. Promising youngsters from across the UK have been attending cyber security courses throughout the year, with some securing bursaries and apprenticeships through the CyberFirst programme.

However, with women accounting for just 7% of the cyber security workforce across Europe, David Lidington called for more to be done to encourage women into the sector:

There remains a severe lack of diversity in the cyber industry. Cyber security is among the most important aspects of our national defence today, so we need talent from every part of society enriching our workforces.

Women have been pioneers in security and technology, and we want to see this reflected in the cyber security sector too.

As well as reaching out to the cyber professionals of tomorrow, the NCSC has developed an online learning tool to give workers of today the skills they need to protect themselves from potential cyber attacks.

Aimed at SMEs, charities and the voluntary sector, the brand new, targeted 30-minute programme 'Stay Safe Online: Top Tips for Staff' educates users

about how attacks happen, where vulnerabilities lie and how to defend themselves. During his speech, David Lidington said the new training package will empower any user – not just cyber experts – to play their part in boosting their organisations' cyber resilience.

Commenting on the new software, Clare Gardiner, NCSC Director of Engagement, said:

We all have a part to play in making the UK the safest place to live and work online. Employees are vital in helping keep their organisations' networks safe and need to be aware of how to protect themselves.

Our recent Cyber Survey discovered that 25% of organisations don't see cyber security as a top priority and we hope this tool will empower staff to start conversations around best practice.

Once people are more cyber literate as a whole, we hope to see this having a positive impact on the diversity of people that are interested in working in the sector.

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## [News story: UK bids for COP26 presidency in partnership with Italy](#)

The United Kingdom and Italy have today agreed to present a proposal for the UK to assume the Presidency of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in partnership with Italy. Building on previous proposals, the UK offers to host the COP and Italy the pre-COP event. The UK and Italy have a proven track-record of working together to champion the need for urgent climate action globally and have both played a key role in shaping ambitious European Union commitments to meet the Paris Agreement.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Today through great joint diplomacy we have agreed a bid for a UK COP26 Presidency in partnership with our friends in Italy. Together, through our continued commitment to work across Europe and internationally, we will build a better world for our children.

The Italian Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea Protection, Sergio Costa, said:

This partnership between Italy and the UK sends a strong signal of determined and informed cooperation on climate change, which is a theme that requires a change of paradigm and which will dominate our agenda and that of future generations.

The United Kingdom and Italy are at the forefront of driving ambitious climate action.

Both countries have played a key role in shaping ambitious European Union commitments and are active members of the High Ambition Coalition, most recently standing together in support for the Statement on Stepping Up for Climate Ambition at COP24.

In the spirit of this co-operation, and building on our existing relationship, the United Kingdom and Italy are presenting a proposal for the UK to assume the Presidency of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in partnership with Italy.

Within the Pre-COP, Italy will host preparatory events and a significant 'youth event', in recognition of the disproportionate impact that climate change will have on young people.

The partnership will be unwavering in its commitment to encouraging the highest possible ambition through COP26, as well as its focus on promoting tangible action that brings to life the transformational change required to unleash the full potential of the Paris Agreement.

This partnership will form the cornerstone of a wider strategic partnership on tackling climate change and delivering ambitious climate action via COP26 between Italy and the UK, running through the UN Climate Action Summit this September, COP25, and the concurrent UK G7 Presidency and Italian G20 Presidency in 2021.

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## [News story: UK bids for COP26 presidency in partnership with Italy](#)

The governments of the United Kingdom and Italy have issued a joint statement on their proposal for the Presidency of the UN's 26th climate change conference.

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# Detailed guide: Add a new plant variety to the national list

How to apply for national listing of agricultural and vegetable plant varieties in the UK.

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## Statement to parliament: Statement on attacks on health facilities in the Idlib area of Syria

The government is extremely concerned by the current escalation of violence in north-west Syria, and appalled by the senseless attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools.

The UN has confirmed that since the end of April at least 25 health facilities, including at least two major hospitals, and 37 schools have been damaged due to airstrikes and shelling in north-west Syria.

These attacks are a clear breach of international law.

We call in the strongest possible terms on the Regime and Russia to cease these attacks, and help to end the suffering for those in Idlib.

The current escalation in violence is causing immense suffering for a civilian population who are already highly vulnerable. Even prior to this current escalation of violence, nearly 2 million people in the region have already been forced to leave their homes at least once, and nearly 3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the support we are providing to assist those in such dire need across north-west Syria. Last year alone, the UK provided over £80 million in humanitarian assistance in the region – including supporting provision of food, shelter and other essential items for those caught up in the conflict.

And we are continuing that support this year too. In response to the recent situation, DFID's partners are scaling up their humanitarian response to meet the growing needs on the ground, including supporting health facilities.

A further escalation of violence, triggering waves of displacement, would likely overwhelm an already stretched humanitarian response.

So once again, I call on all parties to cease violence in Idlib, to respect previously agreed ceasefires, and to bring an end to the needless and deplorable attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools in the region.