

Press release: Huge response to join cyber security apprenticeship scheme

- Successful recruits will be placed in jobs in energy, water and transport companies
- Programme is led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme

Almost 1,250 people applied for 23 apprentice roles as part of a bold new pilot scheme to help protect the nation's critical national infrastructure from cyber threats and attacks.

The apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) scheme aims to help develop tomorrow's online security professionals and tackle the risk of a future skills shortage.

The successful recruits will be employed in energy, water and transport companies which cyber criminals could target. Thirteen firms including Northern Powergrid and Network Rail are taking part in the initiative.

The scheme will see the apprentices receive around 60 days of specialist classroom and lab training alongside their on-the-job education where there will work with existing cyber security professionals. This will help them develop skills to become cyber security professionals in under two years.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

As part of National Apprenticeship Week, our cyber security apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure scheme will take those with the right aptitude and thirst for new technology and place them in essential industries with tough on-the-job training.

This is an important part of our National Cyber Security Programme and recent Digital Strategy to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future.

It's fantastic to see such a huge response to this scheme and I'm sure all the apprentices will help make these workplaces more productive, bring in fresh ideas and contribute from day one.

Training will include a three-day capture the flag cyber security workshop as well as topics including ethical hacking, network defence, malware analysis, cryptography, encryption and cyber security operations. This will be delivered by an external provider at sites across the country.

The apprentices will complete the new Cyber Security Technologist higher apprenticeship standard, which has been developed by Government working with

industry. The scheme is for those aged 16 and over with a natural flair for problem solving and a passion for technology.

The programme is led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme.

Cyber security is a fast-paced and fascinating 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.

The apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure scheme is one of a number of cyber skills initiatives to develop a strong supply of cyber security professionals alongside the Government's Cyber Schools Programme and Cyber Retraining Academy. The pilot will contribute to the goal of delivering up to 1,000 cyber apprenticeships by 2021.

The figures are released as part of Government's celebration of National Apprenticeship Week. The week will also see a group of new recruits for the Government's own Cyber Security Apprenticeship scheme tour the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) tomorrow (March 10) to meet some of the people at the forefront of the fight against cyber attacks.

Protecting the UK's Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) from hostile cyber activity by strengthening the nation's cyber security and resilience is a major operational priority for the Government.

The NCSC was opened by Her Majesty the Queen in February and plays a pivotal part of the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy that has committed £1.9 billion of investment into transforming the nation's capabilities in cyber defence, deterrence and development.

Notes to editors

Media enquiries and interview requests – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210.

DCMS is initially working with employers in the energy, water and transport sectors to support the first round of cyber apprentices for critical national infrastructure sectors.

DCMS is keen to hear from employers in the following sectors to support future rounds of cyber apprentices in energy, civil nuclear, water, transport, telecoms, finance and broadcast media.

To apply to join the Government's own Cyber Security Apprenticeship scheme visit
<https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/cyber-security-technologist>.

Further recruitment rounds in the Apprenticeships in Critical National Infrastructure Sectors scheme will be advertised here
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cyber-security-cni-apprenticeships>.

[News story: £220 million to help motorists beat congestion](#)

Traffic hotspots across England have been identified by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling to receive millions of pounds for junction upgrades, roundabout improvements and better traffic signalling.

The schemes, worth about £110 million, will cut congestion and journey times for motorists and improve safety. They will be completed by spring 2020.

This includes 2 larger projects, worth £30 million, which will create an unbroken stretch of dual carriageway on the A69 between Hexham and Newcastle. A further £14 million will go towards creating a new junction on the M11 to provide another route into Harlow, cutting journey times as well as unlocking housing developments.

A further £110 million will be invested on improving more roads, with details revealed at a later date.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are making the most extensive improvements to roads in the last 40 years, investing a record £23 billion to keep our country moving and make journeys faster, better and more reliable for everyone.

We are also spending a further £1.3 billion over the course of this parliament to relieve congestion and provide important upgrades to ensure our roads are fit for the future.

These schemes announced today will provide quick relief to millions of drivers and save them from getting stuck in traffic.

Nick Harris, Highways England Operations Director, said:

This continued investment in our motorways and major roads is bringing real benefits to communities up and down the country, and we will continue working with our partners to improve journeys for everyone who uses our roads.

The funding is broken down as follows:

£90 million for the North

In the North West, Highways England has identified 4 schemes, worth £6.4 million, to tackle congestion – 2 to improve the A595/A66 junctions at Great Clifton and the Fitz Roundabout, as well as the A585 at Norcross and junction 3 of the M55. These projects will all start by winter 2018 and be completed by spring 2019. A further £21 million has been set aside to improve roads in the North West.

North West	Estimated cost £millions
A595 / A66 Fitz Roundabout (Low Rd)	1
A595 / A66 Great Clifton Widening	1.6
A585 Norcross Capacity Improvement	3
M55 Junction 3 Signals	0.8
Future small schemes	21
North West total	27.4

Yorkshire and the North East will benefit from the £30 million A69 upgrades as well as £14.8 million invested in enhancing 7 congested junctions as well as a further £18.2 million on other areas to be identified shortly. Improving the A63 Garrison Road in Hull will save more than half a million hours of delays in the first year alone.

Yorkshire and North East	Estimated cost £millions
A69/A68 Junction Improvements near Corbridge	15
A69/A6079 Junction Improvements near Hexham	15
A63 Garrison Road Signals and Road Improvement	6.35
M18 Junction 3 Improvements	0.25
M62 Junction 27 Widening	2.65
M62 Junction 28 Widening	2.25
A66/B6280 Morton Palms Widening	0.5
A19/ A179 Sheraton Signals	0.8
M1 Junction 36 Slip Road Improvement	2
Future small schemes	18.2
Yorkshire and North East total	63

£23 million for the Midlands

Four schemes, worth £9.9 million, will cut congestion in the Midlands, reducing queues at Old Stratford and Ogley Hay on the A5, junction 3 of the M42 and junction 27 on the M1. Details of schemes benefitting from an additional £14 million will be announced in due course.

Midlands	Estimated cost £millions
A5 Old Stratford Widening	3.3
M1 Junction 27 Capacity Improvements	0.9
A5/A5195 Ogley Hay Traffic Signals	1.5

Midlands	Estimated cost £millions
M42 Junction 3 Improvement	4.2
Future small schemes	14
Midlands total	23.9

£53 million for the South East

The South East will benefit from £11.6 million on four projects and £41.6 million for future schemes.

South East	Estimated cost £millions
M27 Junction 7 Improvements	2.5
A3 Northbound Off Slip at University Interchange (Guildford)	1.6
A3 Stoke Interchange Southbound Off Slip Improvements (Guildford)	2.5
A20 Port of Dover Technology Improvements	5
Future small schemes	41.6
South East total	53.2

£32 million for the South West

M5 in the South West will see almost £20 million of improvements to ensure better journeys for motorists. About £12 million will be allocated shortly.

South West	Estimated cost £millions
M5 Junction 19 Improvements	2.8
M5 Junction 17 – 18 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	4.3
M5 Junction 24 – 25 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	7.1
M5 Junction 23 – 24 Driver Information and Queue Protection Scheme	5.5
Future small schemes	12.4
South West total	32.1

£16 million for the East

On top of the £14 million investment in the M11 junction 7a scheme at Harlow, the East will benefit from £2.8 million of investment to ease congestion.

East	Estimated cost £millions
M11 Junction 7a, Harlow, Essex	14
A11 Fiveways Roundabout, Barton Mills Signalisation	0.4
Future small schemes	2.4

East

Estimated cost £millions

East total

16.8

Map of schemes

PDF, 2.49MB, 2 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email webmasterdft@dft.gsi.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

[Harsher measures will target smog](#)

Curbing winter smog in the north has become a priority and challenge for air quality improvement, leading to harsh measures this year, the environmental minister said on Thursday.

Measures will include more efforts to reduce coal consumption for heating, stricter laws and regulations on environmental protection, and more inspections to deter polluters and push governments to fulfill their duties in reducing pollution.

“The central government will take harsher measures to curb winter smog in the north this year, especially by implementing fully the efforts in reducing coal consumption for heating,” said Chen Jining, minister of environmental protection, during the ongoing plenary session of the National People’s Congress.

Although the average concentration of PM2.5 – hazardous airborne particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less – has decreased by 9.6 percent over the past three winters in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, several bouts of severe smog hit the region since autumn last year, causing another round of national debate.

In contrast, PM2.5 levels dropped by at least 20 percent over the same period in the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta.

Besides weather conditions in the north that were not conducive to dispersing pollutants, other critical factors were excessive discharges of pollutants from industrial production and consumption of coal.

The minister said previous control measures are proving effective, with large drops in pollutants. These measures were mainly those listed in the national campaign against air pollution, with specific requirements since 2013 for lowering pollutant emissions.

Though the concentration of PM2.5 dropped slowly this past winter, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region's annual average PM2.5 concentration last year was 33 percent lower than in 2013.

The new Environmental Protection Law, which took effect on January 1, 2015, presented environmental authorities with more weapons to fight polluters, said Tian Weiyong, head of environmental inspection for the ministry, in previous statements.

Data from the ministry showed that, based on the new Environmental Protection Law, 2,465 polluting companies were shut down last year, and environmental authorities at all levels levied fines totaling 6.63 billion yuan (\$959 million) on the polluters, a year-on-year increase of 56 percent.

Additionally, inspection teams sent by the central government reviewed 16 provincial-level regions last year.

Governments that fail to protect the environment as required will face punishments as well, he warned.

Despite the challenge, Chen was confident that China can solve pollution issues faster than developed countries.

"Many of them have spent 20 to 40 years, or even 50 years, to solve air pollution," said Chen. "It's hard to solve air pollution (in China) within two to three years. ... I can assure you that we can solve the air pollution issues faster than the developed countries."

[Chinese leaders discuss economy, B&R with lawmakers](#)

Premier Li Keqiang and other leaders on Thursday discussed economic upgrading, Belt and Road Initiative, people's congress system, poverty alleviation, anti-corruption campaign and other topics with national lawmakers.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang joins a panel discussion with deputies to the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) from Shaanxi Province at the annual session of the NPC in Beijing, capital of China, March 9, 2017. (Xinhua/Xie Huanchi)

They joined deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC) in separate panel discussions at the NPC annual session.

Joining NPC deputies from Shaanxi Province, Premier Li called for developing high-end equipment manufacturing, information industry, modern logistics and rural e-commerce. Tourism and culture should also be boosted to create more jobs.

The provincial government should further streamline administration, delegate power to lower levels, improve services, play well the province's role as a key junction in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, and take a lead in the development of China's western region.

Joining lawmakers from Jiangsu Province, Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said people's congresses at various levels should implement the decisions made by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee to ensure effective state governance under the Party's leadership.

He called for innovation in theory and practice of the people's congress system, which is China's fundamental political system.

Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, joined NPC deputies from Guizhou Province in a panel discussion.

Yu urged the province to continue optimizing the environment for developing private businesses, invigorating the private economy, and supporting private businesses' efforts to speed up transformation and upgrading.

Yu also highlighted targeted poverty alleviation, stressing more effective measures, enhanced implementation of policies and mobilization of all resources to win the battle against poverty.

Wang Qishan, secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, joined NPC deputies from Yunnan Province, calling for advancing the anti-corruption campaign, which accords with the aspirations of the Party and the people.

Calling inspections a kind of “political checkup,” Wang said undesirable working styles including formalism and bureaucratism during the implementation of CPC Central Committee decisions must be rooted out.

Senior officials at key positions must guard against perfunctory working style and endeavor in a pragmatic way to live up to the people’s expectations, he said.

Joining lawmakers from Chongqing Municipality, Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli highlighted the city’s role as a strategic pivot in China’s “Go West” strategy and asked the municipal government to actively fit into the Belt and Road Initiative and the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

He also urged Chongqing to push forward the supply-side structural reform, promote innovation-driven development and high-end manufacturing, coordinate rural and urban development, and protect the Three Gorges Reservoir and the Yangtze River.

Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli are all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

[Theresa May should show some leadership and scrap these tax rises for low and middle earners – John McDonnell](#)

John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, responding to Theresa May’s announcement to delay the planned rise in National Insurance for the self-employed, announced in the Budget only yesterday, said:

“It just goes to show that the Tories can never be on the side of ordinary working families when they believe it is acceptable to go ahead with £70 billion worth of tax giveaways to those at the top, while introducing a £2 billion tax hike for low and middle earners.

“The fact the Prime Minister won’t fully support her own Chancellor’s Budget measure, and has been forced by Labour to row back on it just 24 hours after he delivered his speech in Parliament, shows the level of disarray that exists at the top of government.

“Labour have been clear from the moment they were announced that we will oppose these tax rises on low and middle earners, as we don’t think it is a laughing matter, unlike Theresa May and Philip Hammond.

“What is even more alarming is that the Government didn’t stop and think before announcing such a tax hike. It should have been obvious that they would need to consult first, or at least wait until after their review on self-employment had finish, before announcing such drastic changes.

“As a result millions of ordinary working families will have been made to worry, and will now be holding their breath until the Government makes up their mind.

“Theresa May should simply show some leadership, rather than this partial U-turn, and just scrap these tax rises for low and middle earners altogether.”

Ends