

News story: New online challenge will test teenagers' cyber security skills

Young people between the ages of 14 and 18 will be invited to take part and test their skills in online real-world cyber challenges to see if they have the potential of playing a role in defending the nation from future online threats.

The £20 million Cyber Discovery programme is part of the Government's £1.9 billion investment to significantly transform the UK's cyber security. High performing individuals will also have the opportunity to take part in face-to-face interactions with cyber security experts and attend regional camps.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, said:

This Government is committed to improving the skills of the next generation and encouraging the best young minds into cyber security.

Cyber Discovery will help inspire the digital talent of tomorrow and give thousands of young people the opportunity to develop cutting-edge cyber security skills and fast-track future careers.

This important programme is part of our £1.9 billion investment to protect from online threats and make Britain the safest place to be online.

James Lyne, Global Head of Research and Development, at delivery partner SANS Institute, said:

It's been a privilege to be involved in a programme that aligns exactly with what SANS stands for: training to fill the cyber security skills gap. Using gamification to teach is a great and innovative way of ensuring interest is captured early on in this technology-led generation, which is something I, personally, am very excited about being a part of.

Debbie Tunstall, Head of Education at Cyber Security Challenge UK said:

Cyber security is an industry that's still in its infancy, meaning very few young people know and understand that there are lucrative careers awaiting them in the field. With a critical skills gap looming and the cybercrime threat growing, we need to educate about cyber security while individuals are still young; piquing their

interest in future cyber careers and as a result, filling the pipeline of talent. The Challenge has years of experience in dealing with people in this age group and providing fun and educational face-to-face events and we're delighted to bring our expertise to this innovative programme

Mark Hughes, CEO BT Security, said:

Organised crime has moved online while countries across the globe are also battling with hacktivism and cyber espionage. The cyber-crime industry is getting bigger, stronger and more sophisticated in its techniques of attack. So it's vital that we start engaging and encouraging young people in developing their cyber skills now, to further bolster the UK's defences against the escalating level of the threat. As a key delivery partner for the Cyber Discovery programme, BT is looking forward to inspiring the next generation of cyber security professionals and equipping them with the skills they need to beat cyber-criminals at their own game.

Chris Ensor, Deputy Director for NCSC skills and growth said:

Cyber security is an integral part to the UK making the most of the digital age, and programmes like Cyber Discovery and the NCSC's CyberFirst are helping young people develop skills that lead to dynamic and rewarding careers.

Investing in these initiatives will make a huge difference for generations to come, and will help us to find and support motivated, high performers from all backgrounds who want to make a positive impact on the world."

Participants have until early January 2018 to take the assessment and will find out mid-January if they have been shortlisted to take a part in the first pilot year of the programme.

Players will be responsible for driving their own learning and progression. However, the programme will also make use of extra-curricular 'clubs' where groups of Cyber Discovery participants can chat and collaborate, with guidance from an adult mentor or club leader.

This is part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme to find, nurture and fast-track tomorrow's online security experts.