



National Cyber  
Security Centre  
a part of GCHQ

# **THIS IS A CYBERFIRST WORLD**

*ANNUAL HIGHLIGHT  
REPORT 2023-2024*



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The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) was created in 2016 as part of the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy. Since then, our goal has been to make the UK the safest place to live and work online.

The NCSC strives to identify new ways to promote innovation, develop the UK's cyber security research, and build the UK's pipeline of talented young people and encourage them into cyber security careers. Our investment in skills helps the UK remain a world leader in cyber security by developing the talent we have and attracting the best and brightest people to the industry. To ensure a secure, resilient and prosperous economy, organisations must have access to the cyber security skills they need.

## FOREWORD BY CHRIS ENSOR



Welcome to the CyberFirst Annual Highlight report for April 2023 – March 2024. The last time we issued our annual report we were in the grips of the pandemic, and I wondered what sort of world would emerge. Certainly, some things have changed, but much feels to have reverted. We certainly benefitted from the significant improvements in virtual delivery which overall has improved students' experiences – though there is no substitution for those in-person encounters.

Since that time, I am proud to note how CyberFirst has continued to grow a tried and tested UK-wide programme. It is now seeing the benefits of the ongoing investment in the National Cyber Strategy, with over 700 high-calibre graduates entering the cyber security job market. Working alongside the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), the programme has engaged over 250,000 students and expanded its reach into 6, soon to be 8 regions/home nations of the UK.

Diversity remains core to the programme and this year saw record numbers of girls taking part in the annual Girls' Competition and yet again a positive number of young women being made offers onto the bursary programme.

CyberFirst is very much a collaborative effort between industry, academia and government. This year, the programme has benefited from a massive increase in industry support with over 100 ambassadors supporting regions/home nations and 5,000 hours provided to schools. For the first time we looked at our social value return on investment (SROI) and I was extremely pleased to see the results – a positive £4.06 SROI for every £1 invested which equates to £31m of social value! This indicates how the ongoing commitment from industry, academia and government enables CyberFirst to continue to provide opportunities to empower and develop talented students. This helps to keep them and their families safe online, and eventually making the UK a safe place to live and work online.

As we enter this final year before the next spending review, I am full of pride for what CyberFirst has achieved, the young lives that it has changed for the good and the community it has built. It is also a pivotal moment for CyberFirst and its future. In the ever-evolving landscape of cyber security, our commitment to excellence remains unwavering. The CyberFirst programme, bolstered by industry, academia and government, has nurtured talent, fortified resilience, and championed innovation. The question now, is how best to scale and sustain CyberFirst and what should the NCSC involvement be in the future? Options are being worked on and no doubt many of you will have the chance to input and help shape the future trajectory of CyberFirst.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our supporters. We have come a long way from just 19 Bursary students in 2015 and firmly established CyberFirst as a core solution to filling the cyber security skills gap, supporting and nurturing talented students into the cyber workforce and the growth of the cyber security profession in the UK.

CHRIS ENSOR  
NCSC DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR CYBER GROWTH

### BURSARY STATS

UP TO MARCH 2024, OVER

# 1,280

CYBERFIRST BURSARY STUDENTS JOINED- 23% FEMALE AND 16% ETHNIC MINORITIES

# 89%

OF 2023 BURSARY GRADUATES WENT INTO A CYBER SECURITY RELATED ROLE

# 39%

2023 BURSARY RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN OFFERED 39% OF PLACEMENTS TO WOMEN

### GIRLS' COMPETITION STATS

# 12,593

GIRLS PARTICIPATED IN THE CYBERFIRST GIRLS' COMPETITION 2023

# 3,614

TEAMS REGISTERED FOR CYBERFIRST GIRLS' COMPETITION 2023

# 758

SCHOOLS PARTICIPATED, OF WHICH 633 WERE STATE SCHOOLS

### ECOSYSTEM & CYBERFIRST SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES STATS

# 5,017

INDUSTRY HOURS DELIVERED TO CYBERFIRST ECOSYSTEMS FROM SEPTEMBER 2023

# 100

CYBERFIRST AMBASSADORS

# 129

CYBERFIRST SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

### COURSES STATS

# 250,000

STUDENTS ENGAGED SINCE 2016 (OF WHICH 22,000 WERE FREE COURSE PLACES)

# 800

PLACES OFFERED TO KEY STAGE 4 AND 5 STUDENTS IN SUMMER 2023

# 43%

FEMALE STUDENTS, OVER 40% ETHNIC MINORITIES IN FY2023/24

### MEMBERSHIP STAT

# 200

ACTIVE CYBERFIRST INDUSTRY/ GOVERNMENT/ACADEMIA MEMBERS

### SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)

# £4.06

SROI FOR EVERY £1 INVESTED IN CYBERFIRST, EQUATES TO £31M OF SOCIAL VALUE

# £6.52

SROI FOR EVERY £1 INVESTED IN CYBERFIRST ECOSYSTEM WORK

### AWARDS



NOMINATED FOR THE CYBER DIVERSITY AWARD 2023



Government Commercial Function

NOMINATED FOR THE GOVERNMENT COMMERCIAL FUNCTION (GCF) AWARDS FOR NCSC, ACADEMIA AND CYBERFIRST'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL VALUE



SCOTTISH CYBER AWARDS 2023

WINNER OF BEST EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCOTLAND

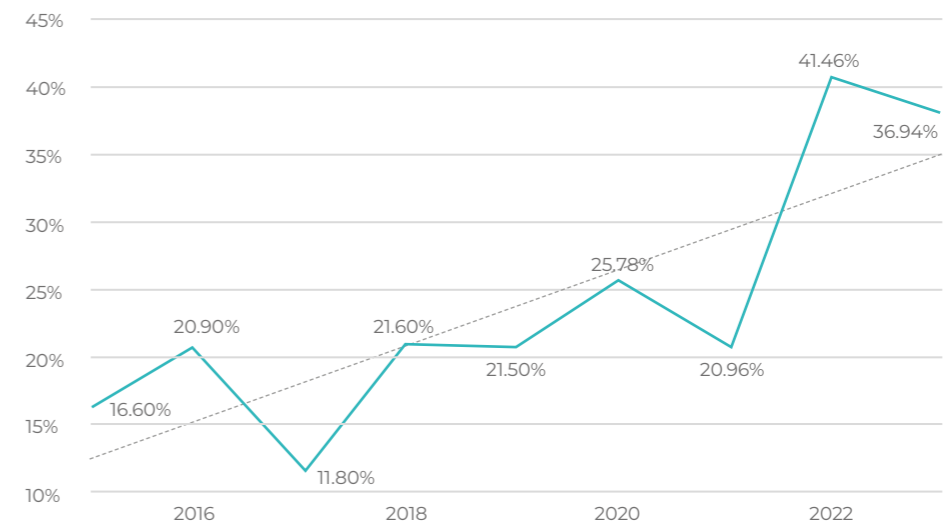
## CYBERFIRST BURSARY



The CyberFirst Bursary scheme continues to go from strength to strength, attracting highly motivated and talented undergraduates. With 710 students already graduated and in full time cyber security roles, there are hundreds more hand picked students actively working through the scheme. In March 2024, a further 152 Bursaries have been conditionally offered with over 100 of them expected to become final offers later this year. The Bursary scheme now has over 1,280 students who are either within the scheme or have graduated from it.

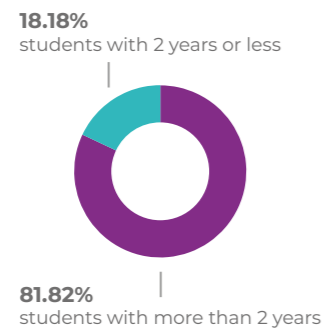
The number of women successfully joining the CyberFirst Bursary scheme has risen to nearly 40% and there is a year-on-year increase in applications received from women. This figure has remained constant for the last couple of years and it is anticipated these exceptionally talented young women will be the female role models the cyber security industry so desperately needs.

% Females Accepted onto the Bursary Programme

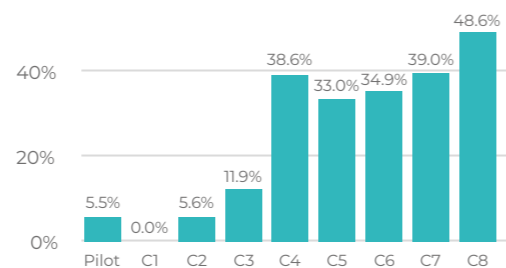


The increase of students who have previously experienced CyberFirst either through the courses or the Girls' Competition is now at just over 48%, showing the impact of the CyberFirst pipeline. It also shows that students are coming to the programme for longer with 80% of students now being with CyberFirst for more than 2 years, up from 60%.

Number of years on the Scheme



% of students who attended a CyberFirst Course



In September 2023, 169 CyberFirst graduates accepted positions with government or industry members; 89% of whom were in cyber security roles. In Summer 2024, a further 128 will graduate – with 59% already having received excellent job offers from CyberFirst members.

During Summer 2023, the CyberFirst Academy welcomed 58 Bursary students. Once again, the Academy proved to be a hugely informative and stimulating environment for the students. A further 157 students were successfully placed on eight-week summer placements with industry and government. Thank you to our members who continue to support CyberFirst by hosting summer placements and advertising graduate roles with us.



## CYBERFIRST STUDENT AWARDS



**Best Industry Summer Placement 2023**  
**Winner: Benjamin L – QA**



**Best Government Summer Placement 2023**  
**Winner: Gurkiran B – MOD A**



**Best Bursary Giveback 2023**  
**Winner: Edward S1**



**Best Bursary Student Scheme All-Rounder 2023**  
**Winner: Euan C**



**Best Bursary Student Graduate All-Rounder 2023**  
**Winner: Elliott B1**

## CYBERFIRST ANNUAL CAREERS FAIR

The annual CyberFirst Careers Fair took place at Leeds Royal Armouries on 17th October 2023 and was part of a two-day event together with the CyberFirst Alumni Conference.

Over 150 students attended the event with 62 CyberFirst industry and government members hosting stands. It was a busy day and feedback from students and members was overwhelmingly positive. Hosts rated the day 4.8/5 and students gave it a resounding thumbs up with 4.7/5.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM HOSTS:

**“We had some excellent conversations with students during the event!”**

**“It was great to meet so many enthusiastic people”**

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM STUDENTS:

**“The opportunity was invaluable”**

**“Great to meet the CyberFirst community!”**



## CYBERFIRST ALUMNI

The Alumni Community has continued to grow in numbers and is becoming a strong network of competent professionals sharing knowledge and experience. This year included:

**Alumni Conference** - The third Alumni Conference was held in Leeds in October 2023. It was a tremendous success, attracting 158 attendees, a significant increase from the 108 attendees in 2022. The conference was divided into four tracks, with three focusing on Cloud Security, AI and Machine Learning, and Cyber Physical. The fourth track featured lightning talks from Alumni members and concluded with a panel discussion on C-Level Cyber. With 28 speakers, the conference facilitated a broad range of discussions, reflecting the organising committee’s diligent efforts.

**CyberFirst Champion Scheme: Bridging students and partner companies** - A CyberFirst Champion is an alumnus of the CyberFirst Bursary Programme, working in a company and acting as the point of contact for current bursary students. The scheme has expanded from 30 to 41 members, serving as a vital link between current and former students, and CyberFirst members. Work is being undertaken to expand the scheme to create a Cyber Directory that allows champions to map CyBok and UK Cyber Security Council categories of skills and knowledge to their experience and job roles.

**Cluster Events: Nationwide networking and knowledge sharing events** - Introduced last year, these events are a series of regionally organised gatherings providing a unique platform for networking among the Alumni community. Attendees participate in lightning talks and engage with guest speakers from across government and industry. Since March 2023, three Cluster events have taken place in London and Manchester with Cheltenham holding their inaugural cluster event in January 2024.

The Alumni Community’s growth and vibrancy are a testament to the dedication of its members and the vision of the Alumni Council.

WILL H  
CYBERFIRST ALUMNI COUNCIL CHAIR

# CYBERFIRST ECOSYSTEMS



## CYBERFIRST GOES LOCAL

In February 2020, the NCSC introduced the CyberFirst Schools and Colleges programme in Wales, Northern Ireland, the South West and North East of England. Unfortunately, this was quickly followed by the ‘big C’ pandemic, effectively stymieing the rollout for the next couple of years, whilst schools and wider society grappled with the impact of national and localised lockdowns because of Coronavirus.

2022 saw a return to normality in UK education. This seemed an opportune time to appoint several regional and home nation partners to oversee the CyberFirst Schools and Colleges programme in situ and to build a cyber education ecosystem, with these schools at the heart of delivery.

Over the last couple of years, we have expanded our successful delivery model by increasing the number of regions and home nations partnerships from 4 to 6, covering Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, North West, North East and the South West.

Our partners facilitate engagement between industry and schools through events, career talks, CyberFirst courses and other technology related activities. They manage the CyberFirst Schools and Colleges applications and panel assessment process and have been instrumental in growing the CyberFirst schools’ community to 129.

Each of these schools and colleges are committed to providing a structured approach to excellence in cyber security education and welcome the support of industry and academia to inspire students in the pursuit of future careers in cyber and wider technology.

Between September 2023 and March 2024, the regional and home nation partners have engaged over 17,000 students and have been supported by 5,017 hours of industry support. The partnerships approach is a model that delivers real impact, providing national and local employers with a trusted framework where they can engage with local schools and students in some of the most deprived parts of the country – releasing untapped potential and helping to keep the most talented young people within their local communities.

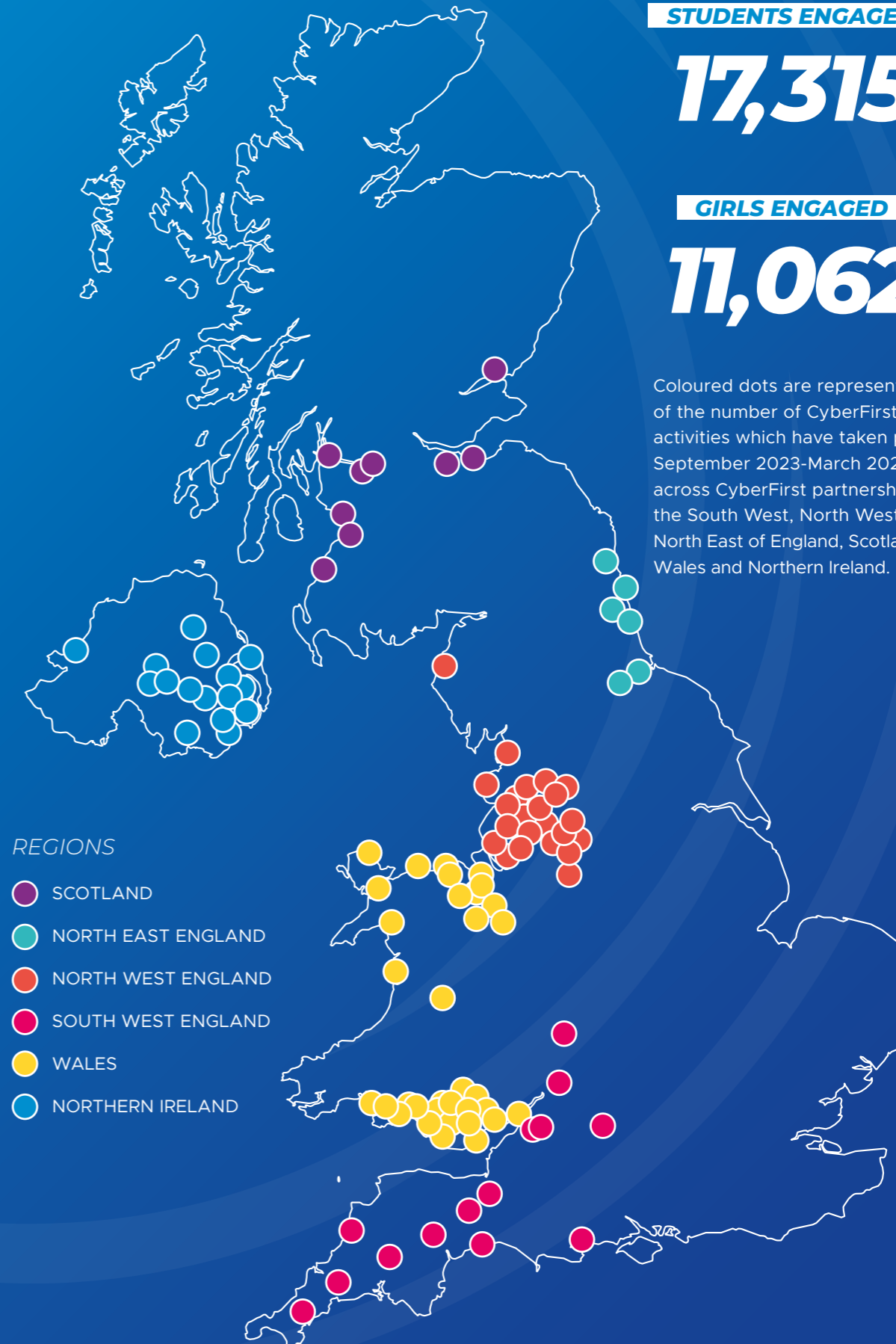
### STUDENTS ENGAGED

# 17,315

### GIRLS ENGAGED

# 11,062

Coloured dots are representative of the number of CyberFirst activities which have taken place September 2023-March 2024 across CyberFirst partnerships in the South West, North West and North East of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



#### REGIONS

- SCOTLAND
- NORTH EAST ENGLAND
- NORTH WEST ENGLAND
- SOUTH WEST ENGLAND
- WALES
- NORTHERN IRELAND

## CYBER SECURITY EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM CONFERENCE 12-13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

Through events like the **Cyber Security Education Ecosystem Conference**, the NCSC continues to deepen efforts to improve cyber security at all stages of primary, secondary and higher education.

In March 2024, the second Cyber Security Education Ecosystem Conference took place in Leeds. With around 180 delegates including our CyberFirst regional and home nation partners, industry members, academics and schoolteachers; all the component parts to help grow the education ecosystem were present. Representatives from academia and industry took to the stage as speakers and panel members to discuss and debate topics including AI in Education and Social Value in Cyber Security Education.

The conference was an opportunity to connect, share and develop best practice to take forward initiatives to strengthen our cyber ecosystem and celebrate success. Some amazing teachers who support CyberFirst in our regional and home nations were awarded with a CyberFirst Outstanding Teacher Award.



Teachers in receipt of their CyberFirst Outstanding Teacher Awards



Cleeve School, a CyberFirst Gold School received an award for their outstanding contribution to CyberFirst



## CYBERFIRST AMBASSADORS

The CyberFirst Ambassador network was launched in earnest this year and has grown from strength to strength. There are now **over 100 CyberFirst Ambassadors** signed up across the regions and home nations. The Ambassadors come from a variety of organisations from small start-ups to large scale multinationals and academia. All bring huge amounts of energy and cyber related experience directly into the education space, helping to demystify technical terminology and provide insights for students into future cyber careers.

CyberFirst Ambassadors are a key part of the ecosystem, and support the CyberFirst programme by:

- Representing requirements of schools and colleges back to the regional and home nation partner.
- Encouraging schools and colleges not yet recognised as being part of CyberFirst to apply.
- Forging trusted relationships between schools and industry.
- Representing the regional and home nation partnerships, NCSC and the CyberFirst brand.
- Delivering CyberFirst activities in schools and colleges.
- Being involved in assessment panels for CyberFirst Schools and Colleges.

If you want to become involved, please email [cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk](mailto:cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk)



## CYBERFIRST SPOTLIGHT TALKS NEW INITIATIVE

This year the CyberFirst team launched a series of Spotlight Talks for CyberFirst Schools and Colleges held twice a month. These have been enthusiastically supported by industry and academia providing talks on a range of cyber related topics.

Each talk tends to attract circa 20 school sign ups, with some schools having 20 plus students attending. They have proved extremely popular with teachers and students and are now a firm fixture on the CyberFirst Schools' calendar.

A huge thank you to the CyberFirst members who have supported this new initiative. Please email [cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk](mailto:cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk) if you wish to contribute in the future.



## CYBERFIRST MEMBERSHIP AND AWARDS

CyberFirst membership has grown considerably this year, and there are now over 200 active members from industry, government, academia, police/ROCs and charities/not-for-profit, all working together to help support the wide range of activities the CyberFirst programme offers.

Our NCSC website now has a dedicated space listing our [CyberFirst Partners and members](#), and includes a [brochure](#) which outlines CyberFirst activities in more detail to help our members identify where they can support us.

The way the membership process is managed, and the selection of CyberFirst Partners has changed. There are now two tiers of membership, Partners and Supporters. Both tiers have clearly defined benefits and the criteria for Partner selection is published on our [website](#).



IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH



SUPPORTED  
BY

It was great to be able to welcome new Partners to join CyberFirst this year and they sit on the CyberFirst Industry Advisory Board (IAB), helping set direction for the CyberFirst programme. To ensure full representation within the IAB, places are held for the Alumni Chair as well as specific SME companies. The IAB members have worked together in workshops and meetings to tackle challenging topics, including diversity, T Levels, closing the skills gap and the future direction of CyberFirst. We are grateful for the time, energy and support of our current Partners:

Deloitte.



ROKE



ZAIZI

BAE SYSTEMS

QINETIQ

INTER|RUPT  
LABS





## CELEBRATING SUCCESS OF OUR MEMBERS

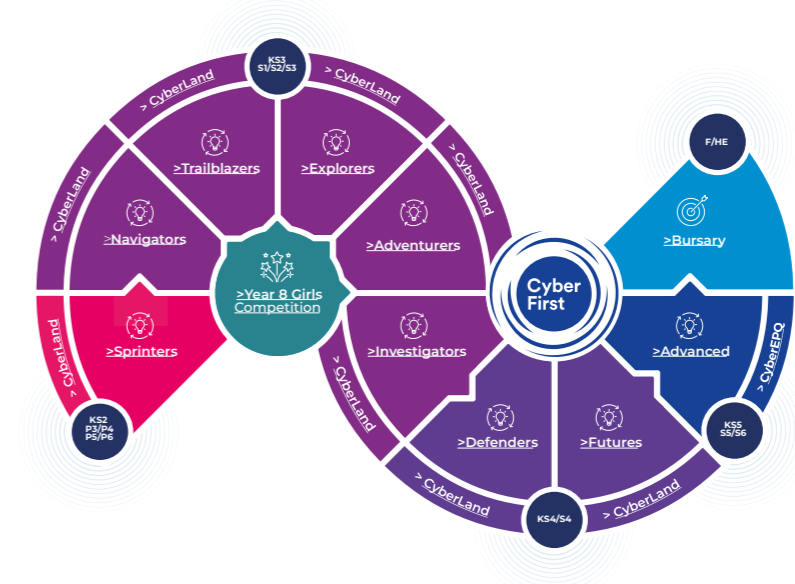
For those who have been part of the CyberFirst community over several years, you will know that the NCSC likes to publicly recognise the fantastic contributions our CyberFirst members make to the programme with a formal dinner and awards ceremony.

This year, two new categories of awards were introduced for best newcomer, and most innovative/novel contribution to CyberFirst.

Congratulations and a huge thank you to all these organisations for their hard work supporting CyberFirst:

	<p><b>Industry Champion Award</b>  <b>Winner:</b> <a href="#">QinetiQ</a></p>	<p><b>Nominees:</b>            BT            Microsoft</p>
	<p><b>SME Champion Award</b>  <b>Winner:</b> <a href="#">Interrupt Labs</a></p>	<p><b>Nominees:</b>            Foundry Zero            Vertical Structure</p>
	<p><b>Government Champion Award</b>  <b>Winner:</b> <a href="#">Northern Ireland Civil Service</a></p>	<p><b>Nominees:</b>            DSTL            HMGCC</p>
	<p><b>Best Newcomer to CyberFirst</b>  <b>Winner:</b> <a href="#">Claranet</a></p>	<p><b>Nominees:</b>            Kent Police            TSB</p>
	<p><b>Most Innovative/Novel Contribution to CyberFirst</b>  <b>Winner:</b> <a href="#">North Green Security</a></p>	<p><b>Nominees:</b>            Deloitte            Palo Alto</p>

## CYBERFIRST COURSES



**Extra-curricular courses for children aged 11-17 years.** The number of students attending CyberFirst courses at key stage 3 has grown significantly over the last year. This growth has been driven by the regional and home nation partners offering in school and extra curricula courses to schools within their region. These courses are a great opportunity to build on students' existing interests and support those who have no prior knowledge. All courses emphasise the ethics and legalities of 'messing around' with computers and the internet, and offer practical, hands-on learning and applied teamwork.

In summer 2023, NCSC offered 800 free residential and non-residential weeklong places at key stage 4 and 5. Since summer 2016, the NCSC plus wider government and industry has provided over 22,000 free CyberFirst course places to students aged 11 – 17 years. Just under 6,000 of these courses are via the MOD funded CyberFirst cadets' programme.

The diversity stats remain positive with over 43% of students attending the courses identifying as female and over 40% attended by students from ethnic minority backgrounds. In terms of applications, we have seen a shift in the ratio of applications from 1:3 female:male to 1:2 which is fantastic.

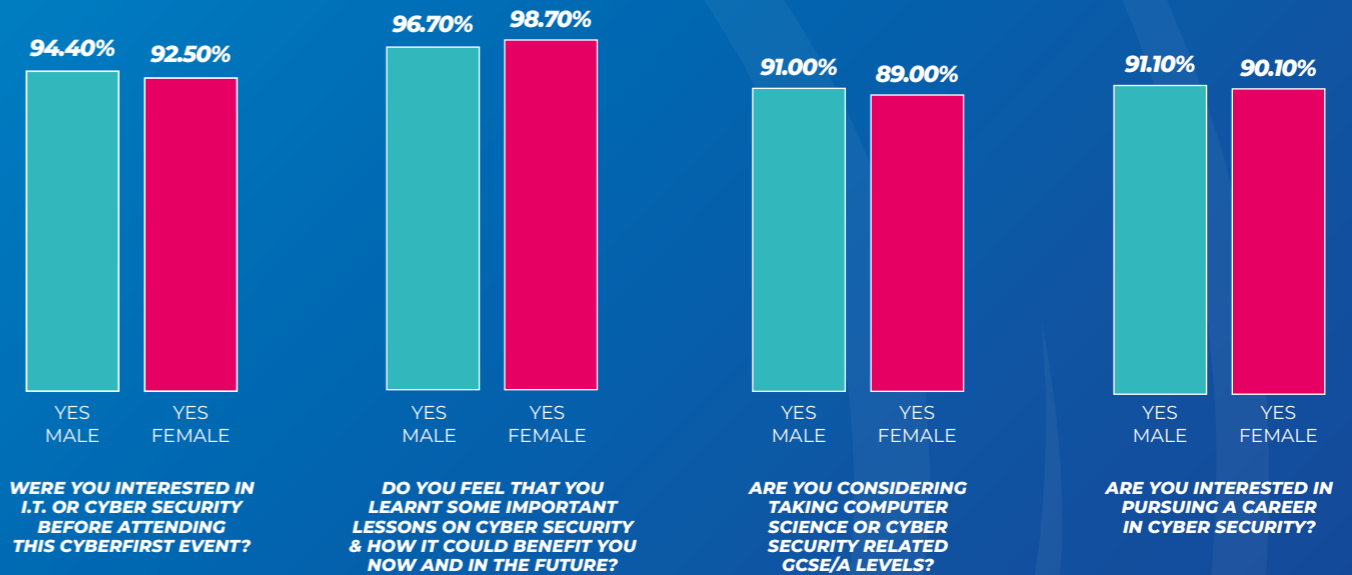
**CyberFirst Explorers** - This programme is a free, interactive cyber learning platform available across UK secondary schools. Led by DSIT, Cyber Explorers teaches 11-14 year olds essential digital skills to meet future talent demand of the cyber security sector. Since the programme was launched in 2022, over 60,000 students have registered on the platform across over 2,500 schools. This year DSIT trialled a range of additional regional activities to drive up engagement to the platform and further extended activities through launching the Cyber Explorers Cup Competition in December 2023.

**Sprinters/Navigators** - Over the past year, NCSC have worked with partners and schools to amplify resources for Young People and in particular Cyber Sprinters and Cyber Navigators.

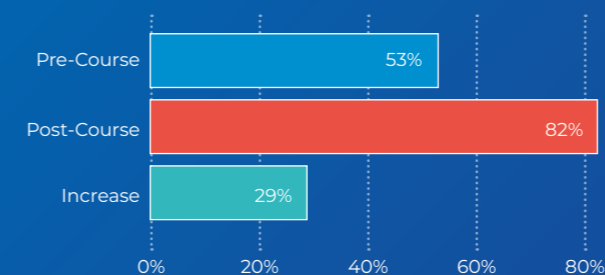
**Cyber Sprinters** - A NCSC developed interactive cyber security game, empowers young people between 7-11 years old to make smart decisions about staying secure online through an arcade-like game. These resources reached 18,200 separate users between April 2023 - March 2024, generating 22,160 sessions, with an average time of 1hr 15mins per session. As the game is used in classroom teaching with multiple students, the number of views is likely to be much higher than this. NCSC hope to continue and build upon its success over the next year, working with schools to spread the message.

**Cyber Navigators** - An interactive video geared for 11-14 year olds, which highlights some of the main cyber scams that this demographic face. The video follows 3 students as they navigate their lives online. Learners have the opportunity throughout the video to make choices to influence the next part of the video and watch it play out. The Cyber Navigators resources have generated 7,539 users across 9,991 sessions. Like Cyber Sprinters, most of these sessions are likely to have taken place in the classroom, therefore the reach is likely to be higher than this.

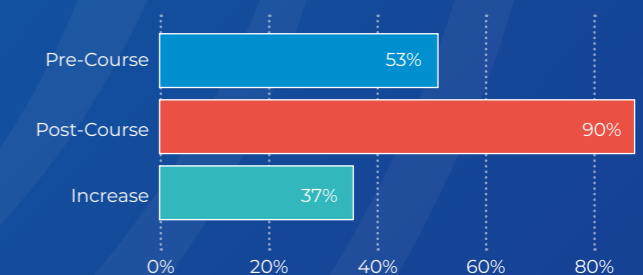
## STUDENT FEEDBACK



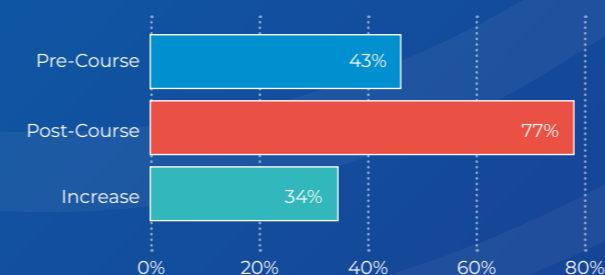
**ADVANCED:** WOULD YOU CONSIDER PURSUING A CAREER IN CYBER SECURITY?



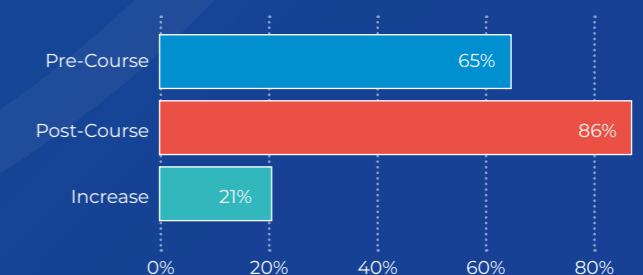
**DEFENDERS:** WOULD YOU CONSIDER COMPUTING OR CYBER SECURITY EQUIVALENT AT GCSE?



**DEFENDERS:** WOULD YOU CONSIDER PURSUING A CAREER IN CYBER SECURITY?



**FUTURES:** WOULD YOU CONSIDER PURSUING A CAREER IN CYBER SECURITY?



## CYBERFIRST GIRLS' COMPETITION



2023/24 saw some significant changes for the CyberFirst Girls' Competition.

After several years of running the competition in two phases, with an initial online qualifying round followed by the regional finals, the NCSC shifted to an entirely online model to streamline delivery. The competition benefitted from an increased level of support through regional and home nations ecosystem partners and the CyberFirst Schools and Colleges' network. They helped raise awareness in regions and home nations, and many CyberFirst members across the UK helped promote the competition on their social media channels.

This resulted in the highest number of girls ever taking part in the competition, with over 12,500 girls logging in.

A RECENT INDEPENDENT SURVEY OF CYBERFIRST FOUND THAT THE COMPETITION WAS FELT TO HAVE

***“increased female students’ knowledge about Cyber Security and computer science/digital and increased their interest in studying computer science at GCSE and beyond.”***

QUOTE FROM A CYBERFIRST GIRLS' COMPETITION TEACHER:

***“I have noticed that most of the girls in our 6th form cohorts have taken part in either the Girls' Competition or another course which they have told me led to their decision in choosing computing as an option. For example, last year a year 13 student, Rosie, as a result of being a part of the winning team of the Girls' Competition when she was in year 8 fell in love with cyber and went on to do an apprenticeship in cyber security and aspires to work at GCHQ.”***

To mark the winning teams from each of the English regions and the home nations, a Girls' Competition Celebration Day was held on 2nd March 2024 in Oxford. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the winning teams with a fun-filled day and evening.

Chris Ensor, NCSC Deputy Director Cyber Growth presented some winning schools with prizes, including a grand prize cheque for £5,000 kindly donated by **Tesco, to Newlands Girls' School** as the Highest Scoring state newcomer.

Beyond the competition and the main celebratory event, many CyberFirst members have supported the competition with pre and post celebratory events being run across the UK. **Deloitte** issued 250 laptops to schools who took part in the competition and met certain social economic criteria, to support their ongoing growth in cyber security education.



# CYBERFIRST GIRLS' COMPETITION CELEBRATION DAY



## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)

Like many organisations, social value is an ongoing priority for CyberFirst. This year, for the first time NCSC commissioned a study to look at the social value for the CyberFirst programme as a whole. This is the tangible impact created for society by or through the actions and legacy of an individual or organisation.

As part of the study, it was revealed that six vital thematic areas of value were delivered: Employment and Volunteering, Education and Skills, Health and Wellbeing, Social and Community, The Economy, and Crime and Justice. Through primary research, the study revealed that for the academic year 2023/24 it was forecasted that for every **£1 invested** in CyberFirst there was a **£4.06 SROI** which equated to **£31m of evidenced social value!**

Even more positively, the regional ecosystem work has a particularly high Social Return on Investment compared to other elements of CyberFirst and showed a **£6.52 SROI** against every £1 invested. It shows that using locally empowered regional leads delivers real impact and benefit to local communities.

We plan to repeat this study again for the 24/25 academic year when we will have a more complete set of data and more in-depth study options.

*“An increasing number of students are joining our 6th form to study Computing and we have seen our cohort size trebled over the last 3 years. As a result, we have increased Computing curriculum time for all students across the school.”*

CYBERFIRST TEACHER

*“Very few students were interested in Computing/ICT historically at this school with no Computer Science and a total of 19 students taking ICT across both Year 10/11 in the 2023/2024 academic year with no girls. Since CyberFirst initiatives such as Empower, the CyberFirst Girls’ Competition and having a Cyber Day, the profile of the department has risen. We’ve gone from doing a pre-options, options request to students to look at numbers of students interested in particular subjects to a point where there will be one Computer Science class next year, with nearly half the students being girls.”*

CYBERFIRST SCHOOLS EDUCATIONAL LEAD

## FORWARD PLANNING FOR 2024/25

The new financial year is starting with some immediate growth in the regional and home nation ecosystems with the addition of 2 new regions, the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. It will be great to see the expansion of CyberFirst Schools and Colleges in these regions and the addition of the West Midlands is very timely with CyberUK taking place in Birmingham in May 2024. We know that scaling via our regions is a successful model, with more and more ambassadors joining the programme and schools noting the benefits of having industry working alongside them.

The Girls' Competition will be the last one that NCSC runs and whilst this may be disappointing, NCSC is keen to explore options for others to deliver the competition on our behalf. We recognise the impact the competition has on influencing young minds to consider STEM choices at GCSE and/or a career in cyber security and would love to work with other organisations to ensure it continues in some form. This year's competition will take place in **November 2024** and the Gala Celebration event will be in **Manchester in February or March 2025**.

The Bursary scheme remains key to CyberFirst and we plan to continue to recruit an additional **100 students** this year. The recruitment campaign will start in September as per normal timelines. Linked to this we know that many of our current students want to see more industry and government members at the annual CyberFirst Careers Fair. So, with that in mind, we will be increasing the capacity at our 2024 event. Spaces will still be limited so please respond promptly when calls for registration are made. The **2024 Careers Fair and Alumni Conference** will be taking place in Bristol in **October 2024**. We look forward to seeing you there.

A major change will be that we will not be offering our summer courses programme in 2024 as we need time to focus on priorities for 2025/26. Instead, students will be emailed other potential learning opportunities, whether they be online offerings or face to face courses. If you have a cyber related educational product you feel KS4 or KS5 students would benefit from, please email [cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk](mailto:cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk). In addition, the NCSC is keen to explore options for commercialisation and also seeing how others could deliver our content as all content and labs will be accessible to our CyberFirst members.

FY 2024/25 looks to be an interesting year as we head into a Spending Review and a General Election which may or may not result in changes. As Chris notes in his introduction, there is also the question as to how best to scale and sustain CyberFirst and what should the NCSC involvement be in the future?

Finally, a massive thank you for your continued support, our list of sponsors for 2023/24 is shown on the next page, and it would be great to see some or all of these sponsors again next year.

As always if you wish to find out more about what we are doing or get in contact, please email [cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk](mailto:cyberfirst@ncsc.gov.uk).

**We are very much looking forward to what will be an interesting year!**

SARAH S3  
HEAD CYBERFIRST PROGRAMME

# SPONSORS FOR 2023-2024

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