

WANTED: CYBER SECURITY INNOVATORS TO HELP SECURE UK NETWORKS

11 JUNE 2021

- Call open for pioneering companies to apply for new NCSC for Startups initiative
- Chosen startups will help UK government develop solutions to mission-critical cyber security challenges
- New collaboration between NCSC and Plexal, the innovation centre established, announced at CyNam event during Cheltenham Science Festival

Pioneering tech startups will have the chance to join the UK's cyber security experts in their mission to keep the country safe online thanks to a new initiative launched today (11 June).

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ – used the Cheltenham Science Festival to formally open applications for NCSC for Startups, where tech companies can apply to help develop products to defend critical areas of our economy and society.

Tech innovators which are accepted onto the programme, from early-stage startups to established scaleups, will develop and pilot technology to protect the country from malicious activity, including phishing and ransomware attacks.

NCSC for Startups is the successor to the NCSC Cyber Accelerator, a programme which helped more than 40 tech companies raise in excess of £100m in external investments.

While the Cyber Accelerator programme involved startups taking part in 10-week programmes at set times during the year, NCSC for Startups will involve the continual onboarding of companies throughout the year as they apply to work on specific projects. This will create the potential for a greater number of collaborations than ever before.

NCSC for Startups is a collaboration between the NCSC and Plexal, the innovation centre. The programme will be supported by Deloitte, CyNam, which brings Cheltenham's cyber community together, Cheltenham-based coworking space Hub8 and tech skills provider QA.

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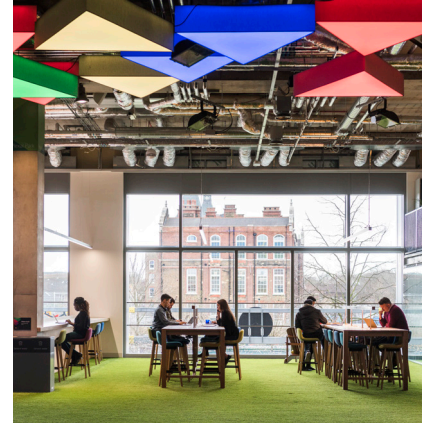
Chris Ensor, NCSC Deputy Director for Cyber Growth, said: *"We want to work with the UK's thriving cyber security industry to explore new ideas that will make the UK the safest place to live and work online. NCSC for Startups offers the potential for even greater collaboration than ever before, and I would encourage startups to come forward and help us in our mission."*

Successful applicants will be onboarded throughout the year, where they will work from the NCSC for Startups HQ in Cheltenham as well as remotely. They will also be eligible to apply for funding to help them develop their ideas.

The chosen companies will receive direct support from Plexal's cyber innovation team and leading experts from the NCSC and GCHQ. Startups will also gain access to wider technical and commercial opportunities with Plexal's industry partners across the UK's cyber security ecosystem. Startups will keep all intellectual property and equity created during the programme.

Saj Huq, Director of Innovation at Plexal, said: *"Being at the cutting edge of cyber security is critical for solving the constantly evolving challenges and enabling the many technology-driven opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and digital world creates. NCSC for Startups is a unique opportunity for innovative startups to explore new concepts and collaborate with the UK government, Plexal and a broad spectrum of industry and academic partners to develop, iterate and pilot solutions that the UK needs the most."*

Further information on NCSC for Startups can be found on the NCSC website: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>



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Saj Huq
 Director of Innovation
 Plexal

Notes to Editors

About Plexal

Plexal is the innovation centre and coworking space that believes in the power of collaboration.

It forges connections between industry, academia, investors, startups and scaleups to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing society and the economy. Plexal creates the conditions for solutions to be co-created, putting collaboration and innovation in the fast lane.

Plexal's cyber ecosystem includes security leaders, cyber startups, policymakers, investors and enterprises across the UK and around the world. Plexal brings this ecosystem together through its programmes, events and direct introductions.

Its innovation team is working with technology innovators across the UK to deliver NCSC for Startups, enabling companies to build solutions with the government to solve some of the UK's most pressing national security challenges.

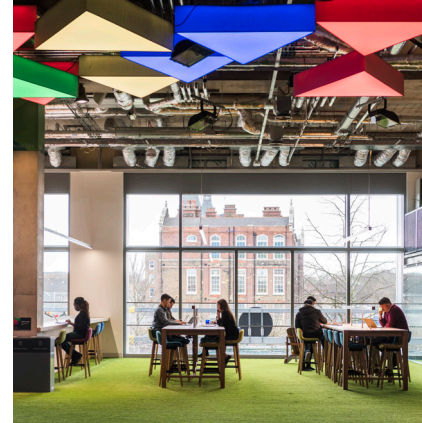
Plexal delivers the government-backed London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement (LORCA): an innovation programme aimed at scaling cybersecurity solutions that are needed most by industry and society.

It is also the dedicated innovation partner for the Greater Manchester Digital Security Innovation Hub. Plexal will deliver innovation programmes for the hub, helping to catalyse the growth of SMEs across Greater Manchester and beyond.

Members of Plexal's workspace enjoy community events, 1:1 support and services designed to help them scale. Plexal also partners with social enterprises, researchers and business to champion inclusive innovation, and it's optimising its physical workspace for accessibility.

Plexal was launched in 2017 and was founded by clients of specialist real estate investment advisory company Delancey.

For more information visit: plexal.com



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