

FCDO & NCSC UK-GULF WOMEN IN CYBE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME CLOSING THE CYBER GENDER GAP

23 JANUARY 2023

Female cybersecurity leaders from the Gulf are travelling to the UK as part of a fellowship programme for insight into leading government, startup and industry cyber practices

Delegation to visit the National Cyber Security Centre, Plexal Stratford and BP's Security Operations Centre over the course of three days

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), innovation company Plexal and digital risk management consultancy Protection Group International (PGI) are supporting and empowering female cyber security professionals through the fellowship programme.

Recognising that women are generally underrepresented in cyber security globally but that there are key female leaders in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) who have overcome substantial cultural barriers in their field, the fellowship was set up in order to support positive female role models, promote peer to peer learning and cross-country collaboration and strengthen UK Gulf cooperation and partnerships.

The previous cohorts of fellows have completed a quantitative and qualitative survey in order to better understand the skills shortages in the GCC, created the first ever Arabic speaking awareness portal, developed an innovative app to test skills and also enhanced the work of the Women in Cyber Security Middle East (WICSME) Network. The UK visit will give the fellows and their UK counterparts an opportunity to learn and share best practice across government, industry and academia. Their visit will include:

Monday 23 January: National Cyber Security Centre

Delegates will hear more about UK government priorities and policy on cybersecurity from senior directors, with topics including growth, identity, governance and more

Tuesday 24 January: Plexal Stratford

This day will present a chance to engage with innovators across sectors, understand the peer approaches to cyber security and what opportunities there are for collaboration between the UK and the Gulf

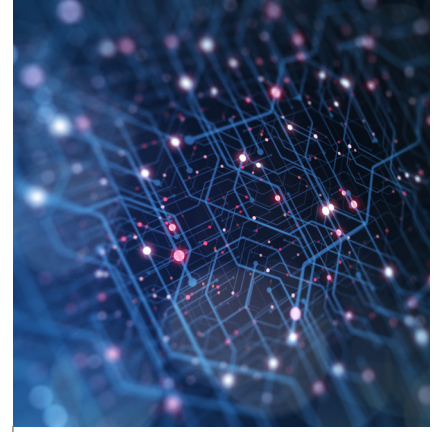
Wednesday 25 January: BP Security Operations Centre

Fellows will visit a BP Security Operations Centre where they will have the opportunity to further understand a UK CNI company's approach to managing its cyber security.

For further information,
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Lindy Cameron, CEO at the National Cyber Security Centre, says: "The UK-Gulf Women in Cyber Fellowship is doing fantastic work nurturing diversity and ultimately building cyber resilience for our Gulf allies.

"At the NCSC we are committed to help increase female representation in the cyber security workforce, and we are extremely proud to support this fellowship."

Saj Huq, CCO at innovation company Plexal, says: "Plexal has long sought to grow a more diverse and inclusive cyber ecosystem, enabled by innovation. For example, our Cyber Runway programme with DCMS is inclusive-by-design, with 45% of members from Cyber Runway cohort one being female-led startups. We are proud to be supporting this FCDO and NCSC mission to further develop a highly talented cohort of Gulf female cyber leaders through immersion and access to the UK's innovation ecosystem."

Sebastian Madden, Chief Corporate Development Officer at Protection Group International, says: "Enabling organisations and governments to build digital resilience is a vital part of what we do at PGI and skills development is a key element of that process. We are proud to have supported female cyber leaders from the Gulf through the UK-Gulf Women in Cybersecurity Fellowship programme over the last three years. It has been a privilege to work with them as they have collaborated both to improve cyber resilience in the Arabic speaking world, and to pave the way for their fellow women in cyber to excel. The Fellowship has provided leaders and future leaders from the region with the platform, resources and relationships to change the way women in the cybersecurity industry develop technical and soft skills, and advance their careers and the industry."

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Saj Huq, CCO, PLEXAL

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Notes to Editors

About Plexal

Plexal is the innovation company solving society's challenges through collaboration with government, startups and industry. The business is closing the gap between organisations – small and large, local and global, private and public – and working towards a common goal: using science and technology to deliver national security and prosperity.

Providing bespoke consultancy services and state-of-the-art workspaces for over 800 innovators, Plexal sources the right partners from our ecosystem of 15,000 individuals. It supports entrepreneurs, startups and scaleups building emerging technologies and operates across multiple sectors including cyber, healthcare, intelligence and defence, government, public safety, financial services and telecoms.

Plexal delivers projects for key government departments and global tech companies including the National Cyber Security Centre, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Amazon Web Services and IBM. The NCSC for Startups alumni of over 60 companies has collectively raised over £430m and created hundreds of jobs, while 72 cyber startups that have gone through Plexal's LORCA accelerators have collectively raised over £300m, generated more than £68m in revenue and hired over 700 people.

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