UK girls triumph in national cyber skills contest

Teams of girls from schools across the UK have been crowned cyber security champions

- The 2024 CyberFirst Girls Competition, run by GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre, saw the largest number of girls signing up since its inception
- Teams had cyber skills tested by cracking codes, decrypting messages, and solving coding puzzles in a contest which seeks to inspire young women to pursue careers in cyber

Girls from schools across the country have been crowned winners in a UK-wide competition which put their cyber security skills to the test.

More than 14,500 girls across the UK registered to take part in the 2024/2025 CyberFirst Girls Competition, which is run by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), a part of GCHQ, with 13 teams claiming the top prize.

The competition, saw the most teams and schools register since its inception eight years ago, with 4159 teams from over 800 schools signing up. The competition aims to encourage girls aged 12-13 to consider pursuing an interest in technology and the idea of a career in cyber.

The winning teams for the 2024 / 2025 competition are:

- **East of England**: Colchester County High School for Girls
- **East Midlands**: Landau Forte College
- **London**: The Henrietta Barnett School
- **North East**: Woodham Academy
- **North West**: Congleton High School
- **South East**: Nonsuch High School for Girls
- **South West**: St Augustine's Catholic College
- **West Midlands**: Kenilworth School and Sixth Form
- **Yorkshire & Humberside**: Beverley High School
- **Scotland**: Hyndland Secondary School
- **Wales**: Cardiff High School
- **Northern Ireland**: St Catherine's College
- **Independent Schools**: Highgate School

The winning teams from each home nation and region are being recognised at a grand prize winning dinner and celebration day taking place on International Women's Day next year on Saturday 8th March.

Chris Ensor, NCSC Deputy Director for Cyber Growth, said:

> *Congratulations to the winners and all the teams who took part in this year's CyberFirst Girls Competition, demonstrating admirable skills, teamwork and determination.*

"The growing level of engagement from schools across the UK is great demonstration of breaking barriers and addressing the need for greater female representation in the cyber security industry.

"I'd also like to thank all the teachers, for their incredible effort inspiring students to participate and our regional CyberFirst partners for their work in making the competition such a success."

The CyberFirst Girls Competition is the UK's flagship cyber security contest for schools, which opens annually to girls in Year 8 in England and Wales, S2 in Scotland, and Year 9 in Northern Ireland. Since it launched in 2017, around 85,000 girls have taken part.

The contest is designed to encourage girls to explore the world of cyber and technology, helping to address the lack of diversity in the UK cyber workforce, where women currently make up just 17%.

The CyberFirst programme offers a range of free opportunities aimed at offering young people the skills, opportunities and exposure they need to thrive in cyber security.

> CyberFirst has transitioned to TechFirst
>
> From 1 September 2026, the CyberFirst programme became part of TechFirst. NCSC continues to lead the cyber pathway, ensuring young people can access high-quality cyber skills and career opportunities. For more information view NCSC Cyber Skills.

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