

UK'S TECH INNOVATORS URGED TO JOIN FIGHT AGAINST RANSOMWARE THREAT

20 JANUARY 2022

- Companies with ideas to protect small businesses from ransomware offered chance to develop them further with leading cyber security experts
- Through the NCSC For Startups programme – run by the National Cyber Security Centre and Plexal – companies can develop, adapt and test their products
- Call follows UK Government's National Cyber Strategy launch, which outlines "whole of society" approach to protecting the nation

CYBER security trailblazers with ideas to protect small businesses from ransomware are being offered the chance to work with the UK's leading cyber security experts.

From today the companies can apply to join NCSC For Startups, a programme in which they collaborate with experts to develop, adapt and test their products.

The programme was launched last year by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ – and Plexal, the innovation company founded by Delancey. Its aim is to bring together innovative startups with NCSC technical expertise to solve some of the UK's most important cyber challenges.

The latest call for companies to join the programme is aimed at those which are developing products to protect SMEs from the growing ransomware threat. In the first four months of 2021, the NCSC handled the same number of ransomware incidents as for the whole of 2020 – which was itself a number more than three times greater than in 2019.

The NCSC and Plexal want to hear from startups that:

- can defend SMEs from ransomware by providing accessible, low-cost protection
- encourage firms to implement secure backups to minimise the impact of an attack
- address risks posed by Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) as more businesses and individuals implement home and remote working

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

"Ransomware presents the most serious cyber security threat to the UK and it is vital that organisations protect themselves.

Our latest NCSC For Startups challenge provides a great opportunity for innovative companies to collaborate with us in the fight against ransomware and strengthen the UK's defences."



FIGHT RANSOMWARE.

Apply to join NCSC
For Startups.



For further information,
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The latest ransomware challenge has been announced less than a month after the launch of UK government's National Cyber Strategy. This new strategy will respond to evolving cyber threats including ransomware, continue to promote cyber skills and businesses across the UK, and ensure the UK remains a leader on cyber into the next decade.

Saj Huq, director of innovation at Plexal, said:

"Ransomware doesn't just affect large, established companies there is a growing risk to SMEs that make up the backbone of our economy and anyone who lives and works online are potential victims.

"This is a unique and game-changing opportunity for startups to work on the biggest cyber threat around alongside experts from the National Cyber Security Centre and industry who are working day in, day out to keep the UK safe – and I hope they respond to this call with a sense of urgency and mission."

NCSC For Startups is the successor to the NCSC Cyber Accelerator, which helped more than 40 tech companies raise over £100m in external investment. Nine companies completed the relaunched initiative in 2021.

Further information on NCSC For Startups, the ransomware challenge, and how to apply can be found on the NCSC website: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/ncsc-for-startups/join-the-ncsc-for-start-ups>

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Saj Huq

Director of Innovation at Plexal



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Notes to editors

NCSC For Startups welcomes startups at all stages of maturity, from those developing a minimum viable product to scaleups – including startups that want to point their technology to a cyber challenge and join the sector. Successful applicants will be onboarded throughout the year and 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 solutions.

The startups will get access to support from the NCSC, Plexal's innovation team, investors and industry leaders to help them develop, adapt and test solutions to national security challenges identified by the NCSC.

Startups will keep all intellectual property and equity created during the programme.

Images can be accessed [here](#)

About Plexal

Plexal is the innovation company that supercharges collaboration.

It combines open, collaborative innovation with a community of fast-growth startups to help enterprises and the government unlock the potential of technology.

Plexal works with some of the most influential government departments and global tech companies to deliver innovation projects. These include the cross-border Rapid Innovation Accelerator, which connected entrepreneurs in the UK and Oman, and London RoadLab, which helped Transport for London fast-track innovation.

Plexal's cyber innovation team is also building the UK's most connected cybersecurity ecosystem. Plexal delivers the LORCA accelerator, is the National Cyber Security Centre's partner for NCSC For Startups and is supporting 107 innovators through the Cyber Runway accelerator. Over the last three years, Plexal has helped cyber startups raise over £200m and earn over £37m in revenue through LORCA alone.

Its workspace in London is home to over 800 innovators who are breaking new ground in cybersecurity, mobility, inclusive design, healthtech, AI and more. Members get access to community events, connections and 1:1 support designed to help them scale and Plexal regularly partners with members to pilot their solutions, bid for business together and enable them to build solutions with large organisations. The community includes Fiit, the online fitness startup, Quantum technology company M Squared and youth-led charity My Life My Say.

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

For more information visit: plexal.com

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