

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS**

# HACKING IT LEGAL

Help your child to make  
**positive choices**



**CYBER  
CHOICES**



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[www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk)


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# Hello

**THANK YOU FOR  
TAKING THE TIME  
TO PICK UP THIS  
BROCHURE**




It's been designed to introduce the Cyber Choices programme to parents, guardians and carers, to explain how where the legal boundaries are online and give details of resources children can use to develop their cyber skills.



## Introduction


Our children are immersed in communications and computing technology, including phones, tablets, laptops, PCs, game consoles, TVs, smart devices and of course the internet.



Many young people are curious and want to explore how these things work, how they interact with each other and what vulnerabilities they have. This can include learning to code and experimenting with tools and techniques discovered online, on video streaming websites, or discussed in forums.

These are great skills to have and the cyber security industry is desperately short of people with them. This means that salaries and prospects in that sector are lucrative. However, some people make poor choices and use such skills illegally, often in ignorance of the law. The average age of someone convicted of cyber crime is much younger than other crime types — offenders are often teenagers.

Some young people are vulnerable to becoming involved in cyber crime or have already committed offences. They may be motivated by a desire to challenge their skills, boredom or a lack of understanding of the law and the consequences of breaking it. They may be illegally hacking or using stressor services while gaming for example. The Cyber Choices team want to prevent this through the education of young people and showing them the legal route.



# Cyber Choices

The Cyber Choices network was created to help people make positive choices and use their cyber skills in a legal way.

This is a national programme co-ordinated by the National Crime Agency and delivered by the Regional Cyber Choices Network and Local Police Force Cyber Teams.

## The aims of the programme are to:

- Explaining the difference between legal and illegal cyber activity
- Encouraging individuals to make informed choices in their use of technology
- Increasing awareness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Promoting positive, legal cyber opportunities

## We achieve these by:

- Engaging with and providing resources to parents, guardians, carers, schools, youth clubs or other organisations
- Attending events such as gaming and computer exhibitions
- Promoting interesting and legal ways to use and develop cyber skills including online competitions We also work with specific individuals who may be vulnerable to becoming involved in cyber crime or in some cases, have committed offences, to divert them onto a more positive path.

## Help your child make positive choices

The Cyber Choices team want to help assist parents, guardians and carers who are supporting their children in the positive progression of their cyber learning and development. With the right knowledge you can instil in your child an understanding of the law in relation to computing in the same way you do when it comes to stealing or criminal damage. This booklet contains information on the Computer Misuse Act to help you understand what the laws are, as well as a number of resources that you can direct a young person to so they can progress skills legally.

Anyone can contact the Cyber Choices team, including parents, teachers, social workers or law enforcement.

## Engaging with cyber choices

If you would like any advice around any of this content. You can visit us at [www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk) for our contact details.

In most cases, the NCA or one of our regional/local partners can provide you with expert advice or can talk to your child before things go too far.

Information you provide will be held in confidence. However, if criminal offences or risks of harm are reported to us, we may pass that information on to appropriate partners, if necessary.

Please note, the Cyber Choices team cannot work with anyone who's subject to a cyber crime investigation until the conclusion of the case. Working with the Cyber Choices team does not prevent an individual being prosecuted for crimes committed, however there may be possibilities for alternative outcomes.

## Information packs

A range of these information packs are available offering information for various age groups, as well as a leaflet that explains the Computer Misuse Act 1990. Please visit us at [www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk) to find digital copies of these.

## Safeguarding in schools

Cyber Choices features in the Department for Education's report 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' as well as the National Police Chiefs' Council's report 'When to Phone the police'. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2)

[www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police-guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf](http://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police-guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf)

# Choose the legal or illegal path?

If your child has an interest in computers/technology, it's important to have a discussion with them about their use of it. Recognising and engaging with this interest is key to ensuring that they follow the correct pathway.

If you're concerned, talk to your child about the importance of honesty and legality. Explain the consequences of involvement in cyber crime and of breaking the Computer Misuse Act 1990, as detailed within this section.

Young people with an aptitude for coding or hacking have a life choice. Will your child choose the legal or illegal path?

Explain the enjoyable, lucrative and legal options available to them. These include coding, engineering, web development, penetration testing, security operations, law enforcement and many more roles in both the public and private sectors.

Search for computing and coding clubs available in your area and encourage your child to join the appropriate one for their age and ability.



## Consequences of breaking the Computer Misuse Act 1990 may include:

- Receiving a visit and warning from the police or NCA officers
  - Being arrested
  - Getting a criminal record
  - Having devices seized
  - Being banned or limited in your internet use
  - Being expelled from school
  - Not being able to get the job you want
  - Not being able to travel to certain countries
- ...or all of the above!



# The Computer Misuse Act 1990

## Section 1

Unauthorised access to computer material.

## Section 2

Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences.

## Section 3

Unauthorised acts with intent to impair, or with recklessness as to impairing, operation of computer.

## Section 3ZA

Unauthorised acts causing, or creating risk of, serious damage.

## Section 3A

Making, supplying or obtaining articles for use in offence under section 1, 3 or 3ZA.

A criminal record could affect your child's education and further career prospects so get to know the legal boundaries whilst online.

**Read more on page 8**

# For example



You watch your friend enter their username and password. You remember their login details and without their permission, later login and read all their messages.



Your friend leaves their tablet on the sofa. Without their permission, you access their gaming account and buy game credits with the attached credit card.



You are playing an online game with a friend who scores higher than you. You use a 'Booter' tool knowing it will knock them offline, so you can win the game.



You hack a phone company. Your hack stops some people phoning the Police when they are in danger. You didn't mean for this to happen, but you were reckless.



You download software so you can bypass login credentials and hack into your friend's laptop, however you've not had a chance to use it yet.

# Resources

The Cyber Choices website gives more information on cyber crime and preventing young people from committing it...

[www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk)

## ONLINE ACTIVITIES

There are fun and challenging online activities available to legally test and develop your child's cyber skills whether or not they are considering a career in tech. We have provided a range of these on the cyber website.

### Coding

Computer programming or 'Coding' can be described as writing instructions in a specific programming language that a computer follows to perform tasks.

Using coding, individuals can build software, create websites, run applications, design video games and so much more.

There are numerous online resources to allow anyone with an interest to learn how to code in any number of programming languages, such as Python, Java and HTML.

Resources available through the Cyber Choice's website.

# Online training

The online resources available don't just stop at coding there are loads more cyber skills that can be learned through interactive platforms that allow young people to practice what they've learned in a safe to fail environment.

Cloud Computing, AI and Machine learning, Networking, Ethical Hacking, Digital Forensics and Scripting.

Some of these skills will become the building blocks for a career in cyber.

## GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES

### TechFirst - Tech Youth

Developing the UK's next generation of cyber and tech professionals through student bursaries, courses for 11-18 year olds and competitions.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/techfirst](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/techfirst)

### Cyber Explorers

A fun, free interactive learning platform for those aged 11-14 backed by His Majesty's Government's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). It showcases how skills taught in class are linked to real world situations, through an immersive, gamified learning experience.

[www.cyberexplorers.co.uk](http://www.cyberexplorers.co.uk)



# Further education

If you or your child have an interest in furthering your learning, the following resources provide a wealth of information.

## UCAS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service website provides full details of university courses and entry requirements. The site also details apprenticeships. There are a number of institutions offering cyber security as a specialism.

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## NCSC

The National Cyber Security Centre website contains a lot of information on both academic and professional qualifications in cyber security.

[www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/schools](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/schools)



# Future careers

Skills in coding, gaming, computer programming, cyber security or anything IT related are in high demand. There are many careers and opportunities available to anyone with an interest in these areas.

There are so many careers in cyber out there and so much information available online. Why not encourage your child to get searching...“What does a Special Operations Centre Analyst do?” or “What skills do I need to become a Penetration Tester?”

## **CREST**

An international not-for-profit accreditation and certification body that represents and supports the technical

information security market. CREST has produced some careers guidance if your child is looking to go into cyber security.

[www.crest-approved.org/skills-certifications-careers/career-path/](http://www.crest-approved.org/skills-certifications-careers/career-path/)

## **Apprenticeships**

These are available through college websites and the Government site below.

[www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk](http://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk)

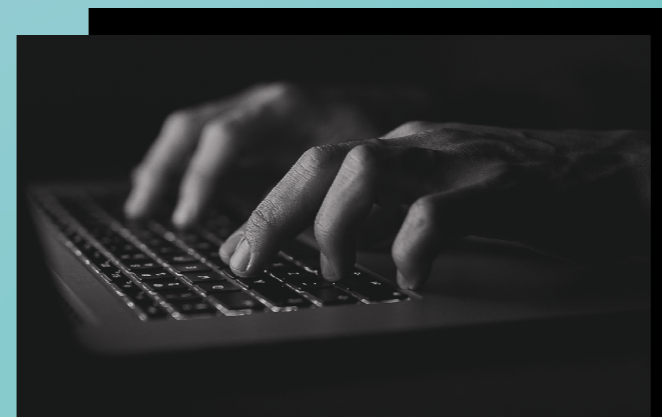
## **Careers Service**

The National Careers Service provides free and impartial advice, information and guidance on different careers including those in cyber. The Service is available to anyone aged 13+ no matter what stage of the careers journey they're at.

[nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers](http://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers)

## **Bug Bounties**

Many companies now offer 'bug bounty' schemes. They offer financial incentives for hackers who find and report vulnerabilities in their systems so they can be rectified. These can be a great way for hackers to challenge their skills whilst making money. However, it is essential that the terms and conditions of these schemes are read and strictly adhered to. Failure to follow these or to report vulnerabilities correctly can result in individuals inadvertently committing crime.



# Esports

Esports (electronic sports) is competitive video gaming where players play against each other in teams. Like with any other sport there are opportunities for individuals to learn and develop their core sports skills but also discipline, critical thinking, team working and communication skills.

There is often a crossover between those with an interest in cyber and those with an interest in video gaming and therefore esports offer a unique opportunity to divert potential cyber offenders towards a better pathway through which they can utilise some of their cyber skills.

# British Esports

Established with a vision to promote and nurture future esports talent and shape the landscape of competitive gaming throughout the UK and internationally through developing grassroots esports, cutting edge curriculum and career pathways.

There are opportunities for individuals to represent their school, college or university through the British Esports Student Champs age (12-19) or at University through National Student Esports and to study esports qualifications such as the Esports Leadership Programme, engage with Esports as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award or study esports full time in further and higher education through the Level 2 to Level 5 National and Higher National Qualifications in esports that support progression into a wide range of future careers.

You can learn more by visiting the British Esports website [britishesports.org/esports-and-education/](https://britishesports.org/esports-and-education/)

With 9 in 10 young people already playing video games, Teachers and Safeguarding Staff have a responsibility and duty to care towards young people. 'Duty to Care in Esports' is a free, certified, learning programme which prioritises positive coaching and engagement with players and teams by focusing on seven key pillars of knowledge and understanding which includes a Cyber Choices module.

[britishesports.org/esports-and-education/esports-courses/duty-to-care-in-esports/](https://britishesports.org/esports-and-education/esports-courses/duty-to-care-in-esports/)

# Glossary

## Anti-Virus

Software that is designed to detect, stop and remove viruses and other kinds of malicious software.

## Bitcoin

An electronic currency which can be used to purchase goods or services online.

## Black Hat / Illegal

A hacker who illegally hacks for a variety of reasons, including for the challenge or to benefit themselves.

## Booter

Used to launch a Denial of Service or Distributed Denial of Service attack. Also known as a stressor.

## Botnet

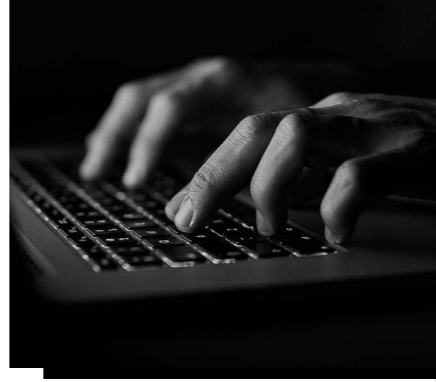
A botnet is a group of infected computers controlled by a single command. Criminals can create such a network by infecting individuals' computers with malware to gain control of them.

## Cloud

Storing and accessing computing and storage over the internet, for example — software, databases and services.

## Denial of Service (DoS) and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS)

A cyber attack involving the bombarding of a website or web service (such as email) by sending it multiple requests / data messages. If these come from multiple origins simultaneously it is 'Distributed'. These usually involve a botnet being used to carry out the attack.



## Hacker

Someone with computer skills who uses them to break into computers, systems and networks (legally or not).

## Malware

This is an abbreviation of malicious software. A term that includes viruses, trojans, worms, ransomware or any code or content that could have an adverse impact on a device or system.

## Phishing

The sending of untargeted, fraudulent messages to many people, usually to infect the recipient's system with malware by encouraging them to visit a fake website or click on a link.

## Ransomware

A type of malware that makes data on systems unusable or encrypted until the victim makes a ransom payment in order to decrypt their data — payment is commonly requested in bitcoin.

## Remote Access Trojan (RAT)

A hard to detect type of malware that infects a target's system, and allows the infector complete control over that system including to passwords, data and attached microphones/cameras. Also known as, RAT or Remote Access Tool.

## Social Engineering

Manipulating people into doing something unwittingly. This includes divulging personal, technical or other valuable information.

## Spear Phishing

The sending of targeted fraudulent messages to selected people, usually to infect the recipient's system with malware by encouraging them to visit a fake website or click on a link.

## Virtual Private Network (VPN)

Software which creates an encrypted online connection to another network or system. It can also be used to mask the origin or location of the user.

## White Hat / Legal

A legal computer hacker, or computer security specialist, who specialises in lawful penetration testing or other security testing.





# Get in touch

**If you have concerns over your child's activities, talk to us. Our aim is crime prevention through intervention, introducing positive diversions and deterring young people from crime.**

We hope you have found this Cyber Choices information useful. Used legally, skills in digital technology and computing can lead to an exciting and well paid career. Millions of cyber professionals are already needed and demand will only increase in the future.

Having a better understanding of a child's interests can help to safeguard them in their activities online. We hope that this guide has been helpful in that respect.

If you would like any further information or advice on Cyber Choices, please visit us at [www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk) for more resources and our contact details.



# Notes

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[www.cyberchoices.uk](http://www.cyberchoices.uk)

**Helping you  
choose a  
positive and  
legal path**