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Planning

Pre-Procurement Engagement for a TechFirst Technology Education Platform

Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Scope

Description

TechFirst is the government's flagship programme opening pathways into the UK's fast-growing tech sector. It builds on the success of CyberFirst, expanding out to new areas of technology and growing its impact. Our ambition is to reach 1 million students in all secondary schools across the UK by 2029.

CyberFirst has already reached 415,000 young people since 2016, developing relevant skills and opening eyes to the career opportunities that exist in cyber security across the economy. The programme targets young people aged 11-25. The CyberFirst programme consists of events delivered by local delivery partners, an annual competition for girls aged 12-13, summer courses, an undergraduate programme, a selection programme to choose team members to represent the UK in international cyber competitions, and the Cyber Explorers online platform.

Cyber Explorers is an online platform for children aged 11-14 providing gamified cyber security content. At the end of June 2025, it had 128,893 registered learners in 3,375 schools across the UK. It is used by teachers in a variety of ways, including within Computing lessons and as engaging content for after school clubs. It is designed to

support the Computing curriculum in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as the Scottish Technologies curriculum. Cyber Explorers is accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

While the objective of Cyber Explorers is to drive participation in Computer Science at age 14, with a view to encouraging decisions that support pathways towards employment in the cyber sector, the content of the programme supports other government tech objectives. Cyber Explorers helps young people understand the threats and harms that exist online and develop strategies to mitigate these risks. The content also introduces students to how AI systems are engineered.

The new TechFirst programme will continue to support education aligned with career pathways into cyber security, but it is also designed to support career pathways for all the frontier technologies in the Digital and Technologies Sector of the Industrial Strategy. These include, in addition to cyber security: AI, advanced connectivity technologies, engineering biology, quantum technologies and semiconductors.

As CyberFirst transitions into TechFirst, we are looking to evolve the Cyber Explorers platform into a resource that offers engaging content aligned to the Computing curriculum and beyond into the frontier technologies. Ultimately, we want to:

- Spark young people's interest in technology
- Improve young people's awareness of - and interest in pursuing - the varied careers available within the UK technology sector
- Increase the number of young people who choose to pursue Computer Science or other computing and digital related qualifications at 14 years old

This initiative aims to reach all students in the classroom, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that content is both inclusive for underrepresented groups and accessible.

2. Requirement

The requirement for this technology education platform will be to provide:

- Commitment to supporting this project for a minimum of 3 years, including enablement of a smooth transition from the current Cyber Explorers platform and in future to any successive version of the platform
- An online tech learning platform for students from 11 to 18 years old, either pre-existing or newly created, that can be used both by teachers to facilitate Computing and Computer Science lessons, and by young people to learn independently. It must be structured in a way that caters separately to the differing needs of students in the 11-14, 14-16, and

16-18 age cohorts, but under a single platform to simplify engagement for teachers working across year groups and students throughout their entire secondary school journey

- Learning content that engages students on the topics within the national Computing and Computer Science curricula, as well as cyber security and AI
- Careers inspiration content that introduces students to the diverse careers available in tech and stories of professional 'role models' from underrepresented backgrounds. Content will have a particular focus on the frontier technologies outlined in the Industrial Strategy: Advanced Connectivity Technologies, AI, Cyber Security, Engineering Biology, Quantum Technologies and Semiconductors
- Annual national level online challenges and competitions to generate greater engagement with the platform and further the intended wider aims of the project
- Overarching promotion of diversity in tech across the platform, particularly supporting increased participation from girls and those from currently underrepresented backgrounds

Total value (estimated)

- £1 excluding VAT
- £1 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 2 March 2026 to 31 March 2028
- 2 years, 30 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72590000 - Computer-related professional services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

16 December 2025

Engagement process description

PQQ <https://beisgroup.ukp.app.jaggaer.com/go/21354739019A597D606C>

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

2 February 2026

Contracting authority

Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PVWZ-3216-PVQL

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