



explore **another** world

Opportunities

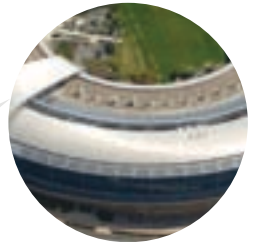
Discover new ways of working
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Enter a world of possibility



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See things that others don't



03 Intro

“I love the thrill of working on real stuff that applies to the here and now; there’s nothing more rewarding than watching the news, seeing a story break, and knowing I contributed to that in some way.”

Protecting Britain’s electronic communications and digital space, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) intercepts and interprets information to stay ahead of the UK’s adversaries – the online criminals, computer hackers, terrorists, drug smugglers and any organised crime which threatens the country, its people and infrastructure. It’s vital work that calls for intrepid people. People who are ready to explore new possibilities and, whichever role they’re in, can find innovative solutions in unconventional ways. So join our mission and enjoy a unique insight into another world – using and developing your expertise in an environment that might surprise you.

04 About us

“Every day is different and there is constant change, so it never feels like it’s getting stale. There’s also a real creative buzz and a thirst for new ideas.”

As one of the UK’s intelligence and security agencies, we gather and analyse digital and electronic signals from many channels, from all corners of the world. Converting this information into intelligence material, we play a significant role in informing national security, military operations, police activity and foreign policy. Our customers include government organisations such as the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, as well as law enforcement agencies.

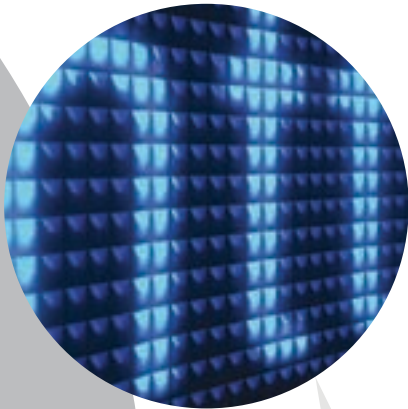
Our HQ is in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and we have smaller stations in Yorkshire and Cornwall. Most of our 5,000+ people are based in Cheltenham, together with some of the world’s most powerful computing equipment and cutting edge technology.

As the threats to the UK’s security and economy become increasingly complex, we’re working more closely than ever before with other members of the intelligence community. Bringing together the ‘human intelligence’ focus of MI5 and MI6 and our electronic or ‘signals intelligence’ as it’s known, we’re even better placed to tackle an ever evolving range of external, global threats.

Of all the challenges we face, cyber threats are the fastest growing. Tasked with being the Government’s expert in cyber security, we’re growing our expertise to help ensure that the UK can live and work online with confidence. Crucial to this work is CESG – the UK’s national technical authority for Information Assurance. CESG (as part of

GCHQ) offers world-class advice and consultancy on information security issues to customers and government worldwide. GCHQ also hosts the UK Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC), through which expertise is concentrated on understanding threats and exploiting opportunities in cyber space.

So, as you’ll see, what we do is unique, challenging and rewarding. It will expose you to a variety of new experiences, new ways of working, and new ways to grow your expertise.



Discover new ways of working

“There is frequently misunderstanding around what GCHQ does, and many people make the mistake of thinking we are MI5 or MI6. All three agencies have their own identity and are unique in what they do. It just happens that we come together with one central mission – to safeguard UK interests.”



06 The people we need

A large and complex business, the work we do requires expertise in a number of specialist areas. While many of our roles offer entry routes for degree qualified individuals, we also recruit people with professional qualifications or significant work experience, and those with rare language capability. There are also opportunities for apprentices, students and those with at least 5 GCSEs (including Maths, English and an IT related or Science subject at grade C or above) or equivalent.

Everyone who joins us, no matter what level they are in the organisation, has access to training and development opportunities. Due to the unique and challenging nature of our work, you'll discover an ideal environment in which to explore your ability and take your experience to whole new levels.

Professional & experienced hires:

Specialist IT, Electronic Communications; Cyber Security & Information Assurance roles; Systems/Software Engineering; IT Project Management; Language Analysts; Information Specialists; Corporate Support (e.g. Procurement, Finance, Project Management, etc)

Graduate entry level or equivalent (e.g. native level ability for Language Analysts):

Language Analysts; Cyber Security & Information Assurance roles; Mathematics; Computer Science, IT, ICT Research, Software Engineering and Electronic Engineering roles; Information Specialists; plus our Leadership Development Scheme.

Student level:

Sponsorships/Placements; Technical Apprentices.

5 GCSEs (or equivalent) or more:

Technical Apprentices; First line IT support; Finance.

“We all aspire to become experts in our work so that we are able to not only understand how our adversaries operate, but also protect our very own communications – such as those used by Central Government, or by armed forces engaged in conflict.”



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“From the second I walked through the front door I knew I was part of something special. To work for an organisation where drive and motivation comes not from money, but from the opportunity to do extraordinary things for your country gives me an immense sense of achievement.”

08 The roles

These are some of the main career streams that we recruit to:

Cyber Security & Information Assurance

The UK is constantly under attack. Cyberspace is vital for the prosperity of the UK and for our way of life. It brings many opportunities for businesses and people, but also numerous threats. Every internet connection is a gateway through which hackers, money launderers and even terrorists could launch an assault on national security. However, by using and creating some of the world's most advanced technology, we're fighting back.

Our diverse teams of experts apply their skills, imagination and innovation to take on hugely complex technical challenges; supporting major Government ICT programmes to ensure appropriate levels of security are built in. Every day brings new problems to solve – researching and developing new methods of safeguarding critical data, intercepting and decoding information and exploiting opportunities to secure the advantage.

We recruit experienced people and at graduate entry level for these roles. (At graduate entry level we look for individuals with a degree in a STEM related subject (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics), preferably with a significant IT component).

Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Research

Carrying out pioneering research across a wide range of technologies, our teams work to develop innovative techniques and applications to deliver new solutions and prototype systems. They also explore how we can integrate emerging technologies into our operational work.

Ours is a highly creative and cutting-edge technical environment. So we're looking for inquisitive people who can take the initiative, seize new opportunities and rise to complex challenges.

You could be involved in a variety of work, including High Speed Internet Processing, Hardware, Network Exploration, Data Mining, Natural Language Processing, Mobile Technology, Internet Research and Stream Analysis.

For all roles in these areas you should have, or be studying towards, a minimum 2:1 honours degree in a single or joint technical subject such as Applied Mathematics, Physics, Electronic Engineering, Computer Science or any other numerate or technical discipline.

Other Computer Science, IT & Technical roles

We operate in one of the most diverse, technically challenging IT cultures. Our work involves tailoring and re-engineering emerging technologies and systems to our own unique needs, as well as developing hardware and software solutions to highly complex problems. These roles are critical to keeping our operations running and advancing our capabilities, and typically include:

Systems Engineering, Software Engineering, Telecomms Engineering, IT Infrastructure, IT Service Management (including First Line IT Support) and IT Project Management.

We recruit experienced people and at graduate entry level for most of these areas, while our First Line IT Support positions are available to those with a minimum of 5 GCSEs (or equivalent). Whichever role you're interested in, you'll need to be an innovative thinker and problem solver, and a confident decision maker.

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10 The roles

Mathematics

We are one of the UK’s top employers of mathematicians (outside of academia). Our teams – some of the nation’s top mathematical minds – work on some of the world’s most complex problems. Whether they’re investigating cryptographic security, modelling statistical patterns in challenging data or developing new algorithms for novel computer architectures, every day brings them a new challenge to stretch their intellectual ability, and new opportunities for advanced research. Joining them, you could develop your expertise in a number of areas including cryptographic design and evaluation, diagnosis of encryption and covert communications, advanced and quantum algorithms, software development, cloud computing – and more. Mathematicians also play a key role in our cyber and information assurance areas, so opportunities are available throughout the department; consequently there is lots of scope to have a varied and diverse career.

So if you’ve got a good degree in Maths or a related discipline, this is the ideal place to make the most of your passion for problem solving.

Language Analysts

GCHQ employs more language specialists than anyone else in the country, so we have a vibrant linguist community – and plenty of people to share your passion for language and other cultures.

Joining our team of front-line analysts, you’ll piece together snippets of information collected from a variety of electronic communication channels. You’ll apply your knowledge of language and how it is used – with all of its cultural references – to analyse this information and find the real meaning behind every exchange. Writing reports and working with colleagues from other areas, you’ll help us see the bigger picture of exactly what’s happening, where and when.

We recruit both graduates and non graduates (native tongue) to our language roles. Our requirements change as our mission evolves, so register your interest on our website to receive an email alert or RSS feed on the latest opportunities.



“There’s been a real mix of on the job training and structured tuition, and I’ve even learnt a new programming language along the way.”

Information Specialists

The GCHQ Information team provides electronic information and other resources to the whole of GCHQ as well as to our front-line teams and external customers. The largest professional information service in government, not only is our service recognised as a model of best practice – it also offers you the opportunity to broaden your experience and skill set on rotation across different areas. Our activities include research and enquiries, knowledge management, information architecture, and search and retrieval tools and techniques.

To join us, you’ll need a professional Information Science/Librarianship qualification.

Leadership Development Scheme

On this in-depth, bespoke development programme you’ll benefit from formal training, individual mentoring and supervision, and carefully selected placements which will challenge and grow your ability on increasingly complex projects. You could be based in any area of GCHQ – from working with the Operations teams to supporting HR, Finance or IT activities. So, whether you ultimately choose to focus on front-line activities or corporate support, you’ll gain all the skills, experience and knowledge you need to be considered for a senior leadership role within a few years of joining the organisation. However, this isn’t a fast track programme. In fact, it can last for up to six years, with placements of between 6 -12 months at a time. It’s intensive, and it’s rigorous – so you’ll need to be fully committed.

To join this scheme, you’ll need at least a 2:1 degree. However, your potential leadership skills (we’re looking for the ability to weigh up complex information, make confident decisions and influence at all levels) will really be key to your success.

12 The roles

“I can’t go into the specifics (for obvious reasons) but just recently I was involved in an operation that potentially saved countless lives – there aren’t many jobs where you can say that!”

Corporate Support

While the majority of our roles involve collecting and analysing vital intelligence, our success also depends on the vital support of a number of other experts in the following areas:

- Accountancy & Finance
- Audit
- Contracts Management
- Commercial Managers
- Project Management
- Purchasing & Procurement
- Vetting Officers

Some of these roles are helping our front-line operations, others will be supporting our people, or working to improve the way we deliver information to our customers. Whatever you’re doing, you can be sure that your contribution will be valued and that you’ll be playing your part in supporting the GCHQ mission.

Primarily we recruit experienced people for these roles, but occasionally have graduate entry level positions available.

We recruit throughout the year to various roles, but we generally have an ongoing need within the following two areas:

Project Management

As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, so does our work. And, with a high volume and wide range of activity, our Project Managers are rarely asked to manage the same kind of project twice. So you’ll enjoy plenty of variety here. From initiation to execution you’ll make the most of your skills throughout the project life cycle, planning and delivering requirements for a wide range of Information Assurance customers. And, as you enable them to advise and assist with the security of communications and electronic data, ultimately you’ll help safeguard the UK against the growing threat of cyber crime.

These roles are primarily based at our Cheltenham site, but you may also have the opportunity to work with our partner organisations. Your role, and the projects you’re involved in, will depend upon your skills and experience. But whichever role you join us in you’ll have access to a range of formal and informal development opportunities.

Purchasing & Procurement

Our increasing focus on the cyber agenda and demanding portfolio of work make value for money and cost-effective contracts more important than ever. Going out to tender, negotiating contracts, managing their delivery and maintaining supplier relationships, our 70-strong Procurement team delivers cost-effective, innovative solutions to enable the success of a diverse range of projects supporting our mission. So, whether you join us in a category management, commercial policy, supplier relationship management or any other role, you can be sure that your contribution will be valued.

You’ll also benefit from our commitment to your professional development. CIPS certified since 2005, we were the first organisation to be certified according to the new CIPS Certification Standard in June 2012. So, with us, you can develop your expertise in a systemic procurement environment that operates best-in-class professional procurement and supply practices.

Sponsorships/Placements

We run this programme specifically for undergraduates who have a real passion for and focus on technology. Offering invaluable practical experience, it’s open to those studying for their first degree in a STEM subject (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths), preferably with a significant IT component.

With programmes covering many of our technical disciplines you’ll have several

options. Whichever you choose – whether it’s a Summer Placement, Industrial Placement Year, Final Year or Two Years’ sponsorship, you’ll gain a real insight into our work. You could also benefit from an annual bursary and a grant for books and software too.

You’ll be treated as one of the team, and you’ll be exposed to real work and responsibility from the outset. In fact, many of our students have made a real difference to our operations. Some students may also be given the opportunity to convert their placement into a full time role upon completion of their studies (although there is no obligation from either side).

You’ll need to apply the year before you’d like the sponsorship to start. For more about your options – and to apply – please visit our website.

(Please note that, due to the sensitive nature of our work, unfortunately we are unable to offer general work experience.)

Higher Apprenticeships in IT, Software, Internet & Telecomms

Our two year programme will see you helping to build and maintain some of the world’s most sophisticated electrical and electronic equipment. You’ll be based in Cheltenham in your first year, but during your second year there will be work based placements in one of the Intelligence Services – so you could be based

in either Cheltenham or London. There you’ll be involved in real-world tasks of a research, development or project nature, obtaining the practical experience and evidence you need to complete your apprenticeship.

During this time you’ll be paid a salary, and after successful completion of your apprenticeship, you’ll gain Foundation Degree and a Level 4 Diploma in IT Professional Competence. There may also be the option for continued learning to attain a full (Bsc) degree as well as the opportunity to take up a permanent position within the intelligence community in Cheltenham, London or indeed any of our locations in the UK.

To apply, you should have (or be about to achieve) 3 A Levels (at least Grade C) – two of which must be in STEM related subjects – together with 5 GCSEs, including English and Mathematics, at Grade C or above.



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Protect UK interests

14 Our working environment

Known locally as the ‘doughnut’ because of its unique shape, our purpose-built, state-of-the-art building in Cheltenham provides an inspiring workplace. Its circular design means that our employees are never more than five minutes walk from each other – enhancing our collaborative environment and knowledge-sharing ethos. At the heart of the building is the ‘Street’. Not only is it the primary navigation route, but it also offers a range of facilities including a shop, restaurant, deli bar, coffee shops and a gym.

We provide an informal and collaborative working environment where people are able to develop and share their ideas, and formulate innovative approaches to challenging problems.

We’re immensely proud of what we do here. And we’re immensely proud of our people. So, with an exceptional welfare and support infrastructure, we do all that we can to help them be their best – both in and out of work. Enabling a healthy work-life balance is extremely important to us, and so most of our people enjoy flexible working.

In the heart of the Cotswolds, Cheltenham is a popular spa town, offering a choice of housing and education, excellent shopping and good communication links with London, Cardiff, Oxford, Bristol and Birmingham. Cheltenham is also home to a number of internationally famous festivals, with plenty of places to watch and take part in sports, appreciate the arts or socialise with friends and family.

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“Before joining I had a view that it would be very technical and IT related, but in reality the actual environment and people are more diverse than you would ever expect.”

“The local area’s also got loads to offer. There’s a great mix of town and country, so pretty much whatever you’re into you can still enjoy it. Whether that’s hiking boots or kitten heels, real ale or Kir Royale.”



16 Our culture

We're here to protect the interests of all British people, so we're doing a lot to make our working environment appropriate to the wide range of personalities, backgrounds and talents in the British population. This includes a commitment to making reasonable workplace adjustments for people with disabilities. We've also developed an award-winning Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Toolkit. We have established support networks for women, disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and black and minority ethnic employees. We offer a prayer room for different religions too. We've done all of this, not because we have to, but because we want you – whoever you are – to feel welcome, valued and respected.

We want you to enjoy yourself too. So, while we work hard, we offer plenty of opportunities for our people to have fun and get together in their free time. Whether that's through getting involved with our sporting societies – from football to netball, swimming, sailing and more – or any of a wide variety of social events including family days, theatre trips and days at the races. We also have musical groups to join, such as our choir and brass band. Or, if you prefer socialising online, you can share your thoughts on one of our many internal blogs and community forums.

Please note that, due to the nature of our work, you must be a British citizen to be eligible for employment. You can read our full nationality and security criteria online.

“I work with a fantastic mix of people – all from different backgrounds and cultures – which makes for a really interesting and enjoyable working experience.”



17 Training and development

Everyone here – whatever their role, whatever their experience – benefits from development opportunities.

It's not just about ensuring you have the right skills to do the job at hand. Our aim is to understand you and what motivates you – and, by matching your talents with our business needs, help you to progress and realise your full potential.

We invest heavily in you and your development, with industry leading training, in house courses, seminars and conferences, and a real commitment to your professional development throughout at every level of the organisation.

As an established Investor in People (IIP), we offer continuous personal development. With the support of mentors, managers and training officers, you'll have access to a range of formal and informal development opportunities. And, where appropriate, we'll support you to study for professional qualifications.

You'll also have the opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge in a particular area or, if you prefer, to broaden your experience and develop new and different skills. It's up to you where you take your career with us.

“Flexible working at GCHQ is fantastic. I work my 37 hour week over four days, which enables me to take a day each week to look after my 3-year-old son. This means we can save the money we would have spent on nursery fees, and more importantly I get a full day of one-on-one time with my son – a rare luxury for working fathers.”

Salary and benefits

Your salary will depend upon the role you apply for, but a typical Apprenticeship salary is c£16.5k, other entry level roles start at c£19k, and c£25k at graduate level (again, depending upon the role). People offering experience or additional skills may be eligible for more senior positions or an enhanced salary.

You'll also be eligible for a range of benefits, including the Civil Service pension scheme and our internal Employee Assistance service (which aims to help individuals with any problem or crisis, work related or personal). Our maternity and paternity leave policies are generous and flexible to help you cope with the demands of a new child, while we can also help with the provision of childcare facilities in school holidays.

We offer a range of flexible working patterns, including the option to 'earn' an additional 4 days off per month – on top of a generous holiday allowance. So whatever your caring commitments or individual needs outside work, there's a working pattern to suit your lifestyle. Special leave may also be granted to take part in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and community outreach projects.

We also offer subsidised gym membership, eye-care vouchers and a range of wellbeing treatments and advice. You might want to join our Sports and Leisure association too. Meanwhile, if you choose to join the Government and Communications Group within the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), you'll be eligible for a range of PCS benefits and support, as well as discounts for a variety of goods and local services.

Not only that, but from departmental and Civil Service awards for outstanding service to national honours from MBEs to KCMG, our employees can enjoy real recognition for their work.

18 The application and vetting process

Whichever role you want to consider, you should apply to a suitable recruitment campaign via our careers website – where you'll also find more information, together with case studies, about the range of opportunities open to you. Our website will also indicate if an opportunity is at our Cheltenham HQ or one of our smaller stations (Bude or Scarborough).

We recruit throughout the year to various roles, so if there isn't currently a recruitment campaign relevant to your skills then please register your interest on our website to receive an email alert or RSS feed on the latest opportunities.

Whether you're a student, a graduate, or an experienced professional, the application process typically involves three phases:

1. **Initial Sifting** – where we match your qualifications and competencies against the minimum criteria required for the role (also taking into consideration our nationality, security and residency requirements).
2. **Assessment** – where those who appear best suited to the role in question are invited to the selection phase. This may involve tests, interviews or a full day assessment centre (depending on the role).
3. **Developed Vetting** – everyone offered a position at GCHQ is required to undergo 'Developed Vetting Security Clearance' prior to employment. This will include an extended security vetting interview

with you, and people close to you, in order to assess your suitability for working within the intelligence services. You must be aged 18 or over, at the time of entry to GCHQ, to obtain Developed Vetting Security Clearance.

How long does the vetting process last?

Everyone's application and developed vetting is unique, so unfortunately it isn't possible for us to say exactly how long it takes to complete the process. However, most people are granted security clearances within 6 - 9 months of applying (although in some instances it can take longer). If you make a successful application while you're studying, we will conduct the vetting process whilst you complete your studies or degree.

Applying to GCHQ can be a long process but it's fair and thorough, and once you've joined us you'll understand why it's a necessity.

Also, please remember what GCHQ is – an intelligence agency – so if you wish to apply for a position here, you must limit those you tell about your application to your immediate family (parents and/or siblings) and your partner.

For more information about our current opportunities, please visit our recruitment website.

www.gchq-careers.co.uk



“It’s well worth it – good colleagues, good benefits... not to mention the opportunity to do something of real value.”



explore **another** world

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recruitment@gchq.gsi.gov.uk