

Britain may hire hackers for cyber-defence

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Binary code reflected from a computer screen in a woman's eye on October 22, 2012

Britain may recruit convicted computer hackers to a new military unit dedicated to combatting cyber-attacks, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said.

Hammond announced plans last month to recruit hundreds of computer experts to work as military reservists for at least 19 days a year in a new

Joint Cyber Reserve unit.

"As a matter of policy the armed forces don't necessarily exclude people who have [criminal convictions](#). Each individual case would be looked at on its merits," Hammond told BBC television late Monday.

"The conviction would be examined in terms of how long ago it was, how serious it was, what sort of sentence had followed. So I can't rule it out."

Lieutenant Colonel Michael White, the head of the new cyber unit, told the same programme: "We're looking at capability development, rather than setting hard and fast rules about individual personality traits."

Britain's new cyber unit will work alongside regular forces to protect against [cyber attacks](#) and if necessary launch counter-attacks.

The reservists could be called up for full-time duties if required.

Recruitment opened this month for the unit, which is open to any adult British or Commonwealth citizens who have lived in Britain for the last five years and who can pass the security clearance process.

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