Director GCHQ warns UK at ‘moment of consequence’ in inaugural Annual lecture

On Wednesday 27 May 2026, Director GCHQ Anne Keast-Butler delivered the first Annual Lecture at Bletchley Park

Taking to the stage at the Fellowship Auditorium at GCHQ’s wartime home of Bletchley Park, Director GCHQ Anne Keast-Butler emphasised the importance of international partnerships for increasing resilience and harnessing technology for good amidst a *“narrowing window for the UK and allies to stay ahead.”*

You can read the full as-delivered Annual Lecture here

Director GCHQ said that we are at a *“moment of consequence”* where we’re seeing increasingly brazen behaviour from adversaries. She warned that “*Russia is scaling up its daily hybrid activity against the UK and Europe*” and highlighted GCHQ’s role in *“seeing around corners”* to help the UK prepare.

Marking the 80th anniversary of the UKUSA intelligence agreement, Director GCHQ set out the nature of the threat as seen by the organisation and detailed how partnerships – from AI to intelligence, and academia to the public – are the crux of our resilience and prosperity in the face of such challenges. She continued to urge us all to take action, *“from living rooms to boardrooms” to make cyber security "ten times more urgent.”*

Addressing an audience of media, experts, academia, government and national security partners, Director GCHQ warned that we are in a “*new era of radical uncertainty, contested geopolitics and rapidly changing technology”.*

She shared her assessment that “*the risk of miscalculation is as high as I’ve ever seen it”* and emphasised the importance of GCHQ’s work in harnessing tech and data at the edge of the impossible to keep the country safe.

Referencing a series of 1939 letters from GCHQ's first Director, Alastair Denniston, Director noted how in its more than 100-year history GCHQ has always prided itself on "*foresight, practicality … and partnerships*" in order to keep the country and its allies safe, adding, *"When humanity is facing the worst, we are at our best."*

The first GCHQ Annual Lecture took place at Bletchley Park, which to this day serves as a symbol of collaboration amidst conflict. Each year the event will see Director GCHQ set out the intelligence agency's assessment of the ever-changing threat landscape, as well as demonstrating how the organisation is working to challenge adversaries' use of technology to power the threat.

Visit here to read the full as-delivered GCHQ Annual Lecture

As-delivered speech ❯

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