



Crown
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Service



Maximising Cyber Talent

GCloud Service Description Document

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Reference: PA RM1557.15

Version: 1.0

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Maximising Cyber Talent

1.1 Short Service Description

The search for talent needs to be broad, diverse and inclusive. Recruiters, leaders and managers need to be innovative identifying, developing and retaining talent in order to overcome the challenge posed by the skills gap. Our service brings together talent, skills-development and cyber specialists to help organisations maximise cyber talent.

1.2 Key Service Features

1. End-to-end cyber talent management design, development, delivery, and evaluation
2. Experienced, SC/DV cleared cyber talent specialists
3. Collaboration and partnering with cyber recruitment and training organisations
4. Business change approaches to ensure maximising of talent processes
5. Proven aptitude and attitude assessment methodologies to identify potential
6. Design of bespoke cyber foundation/conversion to role learning pathways
7. Technology / AI / gamification enabled learning solutions
8. Insight and guidance on retention and progression strategies
9. Strengths-based approach to identifying, developing, and deploying talent
10. Design and delivery of outreach and engagement events

1.3 Key Service Benefits

1. Sustainable approach to attracting, assessing, and selecting cyber talent
2. Creation of an inclusive environment, recognising strength in diversity
3. Improved retention of scarce resource and skills
4. Improved engagement and motivation of cyber professionals
5. Increased performance, recognising strengths and potential when deploying talent
6. Efficiency of resource management and strategic workforce planning
7. Improved recruitment messaging and outreach capability
8. Improved efficiency, effectiveness, and scalability of learning activity
9. Use of analytics and insights, understanding and adapting talent practices
10. Working with accreditation bodies to add rigour to learning.

1.4 Service Definition

Maximising cyber talent draws together our full range of People, Talent, Business Change and Cyber expertise. It provides a range of approaches, methodologies, and best practice insights on how to attract, develop, retain, and engage a broad range of cyber talent. Our innovative approaches draw on vast experiences of working in partnership with a range of public and private sector cyber organisations to help them tackle the cyber skills gap.

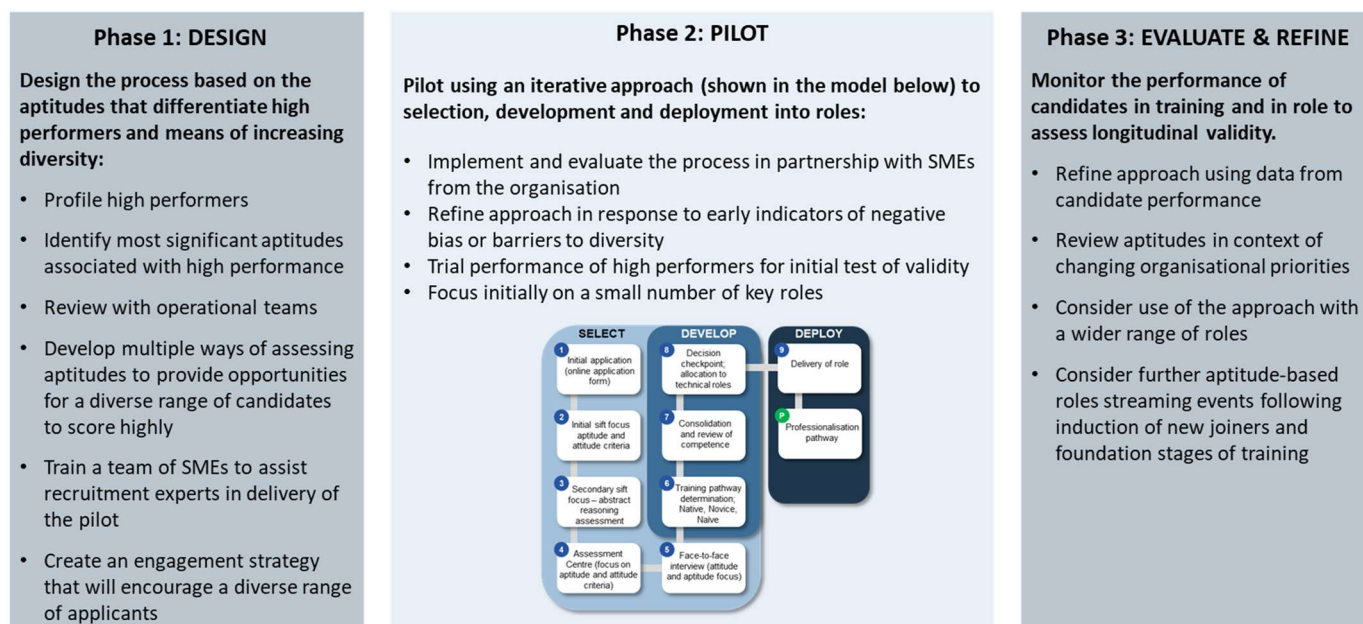
PA's approach and partnerships can help to unlock new ways of sourcing and developing high-performing talent. We believe overcoming the challenge presented by the cyber skills gap requires organisations to adopt a three-tiered approach:

- Innovate to find new ways to identify and recruit talent
- Develop new and existing talent to meet the challenge
- Work to retain cyber talent and share learning with others.

1.4.1 Innovative approach to identifying talent

By analysing the current and future skills required within an organisation, and considering the aptitudes required to grow such skills, a focus on these as opposed to academic qualifications and other potential blockers will build a growth mindset amongst current staff and help unlock pockets of talent who might otherwise feel hesitant in applying for roles by:

- Identifying which aptitudes are common in best performers and designing a processes for identifying those attributes in others
- Running a pilot process
- Evaluating the development and performance of candidates, iterating and refining it.

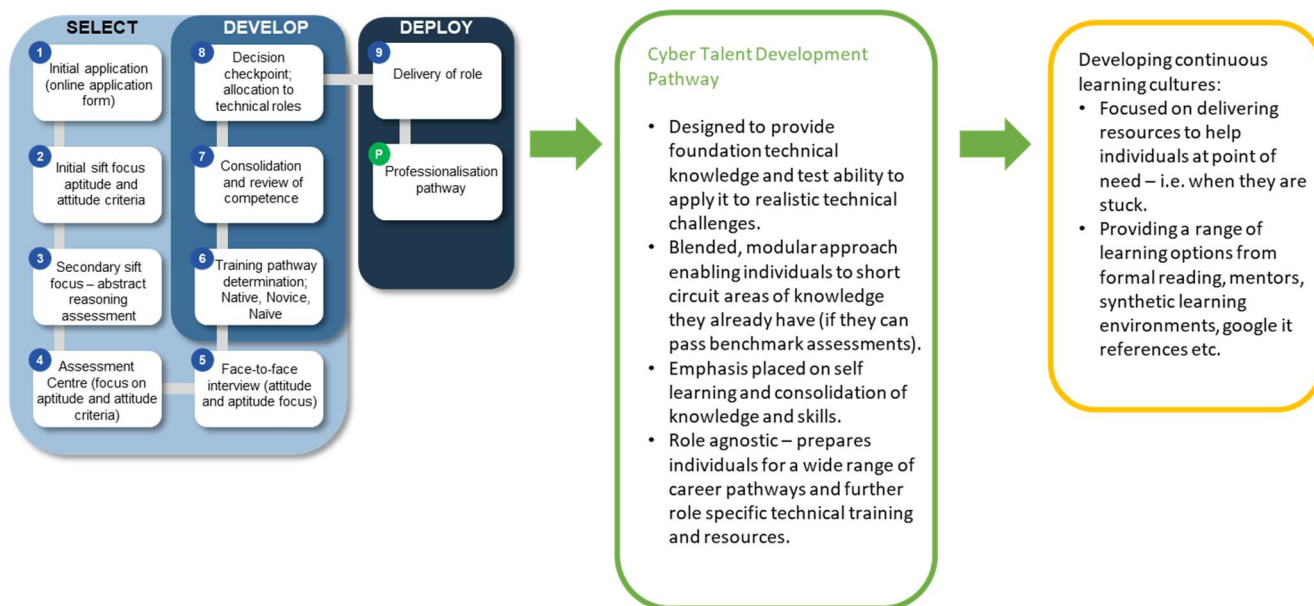


1.4.2 Develop new and existing talent

Once an organisation has found or recruited new talent, foundational and advanced development pathways need to be designed and deployed to enable individuals to land successfully in role.

- Designing and delivering training pathways
- Deploying our in-house technical training capability

- Separate strategic and technical career paths.



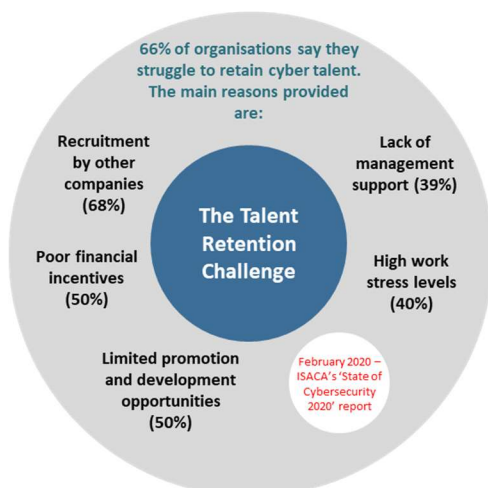
1.4.3 Work to retain cyber talent

Aptitudes-based talent management can lead to a reduction in staff turnover, alongside savings across the employee lifecycle. As part of a comprehensive workforce plan, an organisation can understand the talent they have and can better match colleagues' strengths to business priorities. In turn, colleagues understand what they need to do to progress vertically and laterally. Recognising and valuing employees' strengths provides them with more purposeful and interesting work allowing them to grow, focus and change.

- Creating cyber career pathways
- Opportunities for skill development
- Flexible employment packages
- Creating a 'sticky' work environment.

At PA we believe in the importance of retaining talent. A happy employee is motivated to perform and is less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. After all the effort to identify and develop the talent, to lose an individual to a competitor would be careless!

We combine our knowledge of cyber and the needs of its workforce with the expertise of our People and Change team to assess your organisation's ability to retain cyber talent.



Creating cyber career pathways

- **Mapping** the skills required for **career progression**
- Showing that career progression is possible and **making available the training and tools** to progress

Offering opportunities for skill development

- **Making available the training and tools** to progress careers
- Cyber talent typically enjoy developing their skills and will seek employment opportunities that allow them to realise their full potential

Creating a 'sticky' work environment

- **Good management** alongside **opportunity** for skill development
- A **happy, inclusive and diverse work culture**
- Create a workplace that employees don't want to leave

Diversity programmes

- Actively seek a **diverse and inclusive** workforce
- Encourage all genders and ethnicities to pursue a cyber career in your organisation

Flexible employment packages

- **Competitive salaries** are just one part of an attractive package
- Consider allowing **secondments** elsewhere in industry/ academia/ government
- Flexible working **delivering work life balance**

1.4.4 Creating value by working with PA to maximise cyber talent

Many organisations follow a traditional approach to finding, developing and retaining cyber talent. These approaches are typically generic and display the following characteristics.

- Based on formal academic qualifications
- Assesses 'what the individual knows now' and trains to fill the gaps in knowledge
- Limited focus on the aptitudes, and behaviours that differentiate high performers in role
- Typically using SMEs to find similar versions of themselves.

They can be limiting and lacking in the neurodiversity required to solve the trickiest cyber problems in the most complex of environments – high potential for 'just like me' bias, does not focus on a passion for continuous learning and largely ignores an individual's desire to use technology and data in new and innovative ways.

Our approach is focused on strengths and aptitude - created with the following principles in mind.

- Focus on the strengths required to succeed in different cyber roles – enabling the identification of the criteria that drives success in high performers (our work with a UK security agency helped to identify over 400 individuals who displayed the potential to succeed in further cyber training – individuals that more traditional approaches would have sifted-out).
- Inclusion and Diversity – our approach demonstrates an ability to find non-traditional pools of talent typically increasing diversity of applicants and maintaining this throughout the recruitment process e.g. increasing female diversity by 25% for young people interested in cyber career with an HMG Secure client.
- Focus on curiosity, passion to learn and personal resilience – enabling diversity of thought, anchored against core strengths (our work with a military client helped to look beyond skill and capability and focus on the behaviours and values that were important to individuals – providing opportunity to those who share the same common purpose).
- Experiential in design – enabling individuals to draw on a broad range of experiences to shape the direction of their future learning (our work with a national infrastructure organisation put the individual's experience at the heart of all training and development activity – user-centric design at the core of the learning offer).

1.5 Why PA Consulting Group (PA)?

A trusted partner for cloud, AI, and digital technologies

PA Consulting Group (PA) is a leading technology and innovation consultancy and one of the UK government's most trusted advisors, combining strategy, delivery assurance and deep engineering to turn complex ambition into assured outcomes. We bring end-to-end capability across cloud architecture, data and AI, cyber, and advanced technology R&D, backed by a track record of scaling innovation in the public and private sectors.

Our UK work is anchored by secure, standards-led delivery. PA maintains ISO/IEC 27001 certification across global operations, demonstrating disciplined information security and operational control, and applies UK government good practice (GDS, NCSC CAF) across cloud and digital programmes.

We combine consultancy with real engineering. At our Global Innovation & Technology Centre (Cambridge), 300+ scientists, designers and engineers operate extensive labs and studios to prototype and industrialise solutions, bridging physical and digital from concept to production.

1.5.1 Why PA for cloud, data and AI

- **Hyperscaler alliances without vendor lock-in.** PA is Premier Tier with **Google Cloud** (13+ years; 150+ certifications; specialisations in infrastructure, data analytics, app dev and security) and holds deep **AWS** and **Microsoft** credentials, accelerating secure data foundations and generative AI at scale while keeping advice independent and outcome-led.
- **Responsible AI you can trust.** Our Responsible AI framework, governance toolkits, and risk policy make AI adoption transparent, auditable, and compliant, embedding lifecycle controls, model documentation, and human-in-the-loop safeguards aligned to evolving regulation.
- **Impact beyond pilots.** We help organisations become *intelligent enterprises*, using data and agentic AI to create and protect value, with pragmatic roadmaps from use-case selection to scaled operations.
- **Proof through delivery.** Our client stories span enterprise data platforms, IoT and analytics (e.g., Rentokil Initial), and product innovation at scale (e.g., Unilever) where PA has put data and AI at the heart of continuous, market-leading improvement.

1.5.2 Cloud capability (assess, design, build, assure, run)

PA applies an assured cloud delivery approach to complex government and regulated environments, blending client-side delivery assurance, multi-cloud architecture, and resilient operations:

- **Strategy & readiness.** Maturity assessments, target operating models for hybrid/multi-cloud, and cost/benefit modelling; proportionate GDS compliance and ISO 27001 controls embedded upfront.
- **Design & architecture.** Secure, well-architected patterns across Azure, AWS, and Google Cloud; data platforms, identity and access, and cross-domain solutions for sensitive estates.
- **Build & deploy.** Cloud-native engineering, DevSecOps (CALMR), CI/CD, infrastructure-as-code; automated testing and quality assurance to accelerate safe release.
- **Migration & modernisation.** Legacy transformation, platform reviews, and workload migration tuned to resilience and cost; pragmatic FinOps to keep spend predictable and efficient.
- **Operate & optimise.** Observability, incident management, performance tuning, backup/restore, and change management, maintaining business continuity and reducing total cost.
- **Client-side delivery assurance.** Forward-looking, risk-based assurance that keeps complex programmes on track, covering governance, architecture, testing, migration, service readiness and cutover. See our *IT Delivery Assurance* service.

1.5.3 AI, ML and data (from strategy to scale)

- **Strategy & governance.** AI blueprints, operating models, and policy; enterprise data governance; regulatory readiness; centre-of-excellence setup and change adoption.
- **Engineering & MLOps.** Data platforms on Azure/AWS/GCP, pipelines and feature stores; robust ML lifecycle with monitoring, drift detection and auditability.
- **Generative & agentic AI.** Secure integration of LLMs (including Copilot) into workflows for measurable productivity and quality gains, using guardrails, system cards and ROI framing.
- **Responsible AI.** Lifecycle controls and assurance tooling to manage bias, security and transparency.

1.5.3.1 Quantum and emerging technologies

PA's applied physics and quantum engineering teams help clients unlock near-term value, combining quantum techniques with classical systems for decision support, advanced sensing and secure communications:

- **Decision support & optimisation.** Hybrid quantum/classical algorithms to accelerate complex planning, routing and resource allocation where speed and quality of decisions matter.
- **Quantum sensing & RF.** Novel quantum radio and Rydberg-based sensing to enhance spectrum use, detection sensitivity and resilience in contested environments.
- **Commercialisation insight.** Advisory at the “whole-stack” level, hardware, supply chain, interfaces, and ethics, to move from lab to market within national strategies.

These capabilities are industrialised at our Cambridge centre, turning concepts into robust prototypes and pre-production systems across sectors like defence, energy and transport.

1.5.4 Cyber security and digital trust

Digital trust is central to PA’s approach. We design security into architecture, operations and culture, aligning to NCSC CAF and GovAssure, and delivering testing, red-team, SOC design and OT/IoT security:

- **Transformation & architecture.** Secure-by-design patterns, cloud security, identity, and cross-domain data protection (including NCSC-approved Oakdoor data diode products).
- **Assurance & regulation.** CAF/GovAssure alignment and pragmatic remediation plans for government organisations.
- **Testing & resilience.** CREST-aligned penetration testing, red-teaming, incident readiness, and operational resilience.

1.5.5 What PA will bring

Ideation & Strategy

- Cloud strategy and advisory services
- Cloud readiness assessments
- Cost/benefit and ROI modelling
- Security and compliance by design.
- AI/ML and data strategy (blueprints, operating model, governance) with Responsible AI policy and guardrails.
- Quantum opportunity framing and whole-stack commercialisation roadmaps.

Design & Architecture

- Bespoke enterprise and cloud architectures
- Integration with existing IT infrastructures
- Hybrid/multi-cloud design
- Continuity and disaster recovery
- Data platforms and MLOps patterns
- Security, privacy and resilience embedded by design in technical designs
- User-centred-design
- Secure cross-domain solutions and high-side/low-side integration where required.

Development & Deployment

- Cloud-native engineering
- Containerisation, microservices and serverless
- DevSecOps (CALMR) with CI/CD and automated testing
- Generative AI and Copilot enablement with measurable productivity outcomes and run-controls.

Implementation & Migration

- Data migration and legacy modernisation
- Vendor selection and management
- Infrastructure-as-code with progressive, low-risk cutover.

Operations & Management

- Observability, incident management, SIEM/SOC design
- Performance optimisation and cost management (FinOps)
- Backup/restore
- User training and change adoption.

Innovation & Scaling

- Scalable cloud infrastructure to support growth
- AI/ML implementation and scaling
- IoT integration
- Ongoing innovation sprints and R&D, supported by our Cambridge engineering labs for rapid prototyping and pre-production.

1.5.6 PA is fully equipped to manage any challenges or requirements you may present

Across strategy, design, build and run, PA blends independent advice with hands-on engineering, operating to ISO 27001 and UK government standards, and backed by hyperscaler partnership depth. Whether the brief is modernising a sensitive cloud estate, industrialising AI responsibly, or de-risking a quantum-adjacent programme, we bring the multidisciplinary team to get from idea to reality, safely, quickly, and at scale.

1.6 A Genuine commitment to Social Value

At PA, we believe in the power of ingenuity to create a positive human future. Central to this ambition is our commitment to developing high-quality opportunities that enable individuals to acquire leading-edge skills, all within an environment that supports personal wellbeing and growth. We invest in our people through comprehensive training and development, ensuring they are fully prepared to tackle our clients' most complex challenges and advance their own careers.

We recognise that diversity drives innovation. Therefore, our recruitment practices are inclusive, welcoming individuals from all backgrounds. Every member of our team is empowered to reach their full potential through inclusive policies, processes, and a culture that is continuously improved using robust data.

We are passionate about creating genuine opportunities for those facing significant barriers to employment. Since 2023, our Digital Apprenticeship Programme has offered a Digital and Technology Solutions Degree through the University of Roehampton or Northumbria University. Our apprentices typically include first-generation professionals, college leavers, and individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds, many living in deprived areas. Additionally, we offer summer internships for undergraduates entering their final year, hosted at both our central London office and the Global Innovation and Technology Centre in Cambridge.

Economic responsibility is integral to our purpose. PA is accredited as a Living Wage employer, and where relevant, we ensure that our suppliers and subcontractors are paid at least the minimum living wage. We are also a signatory to the Prompt Payment Code, demonstrating our commitment to fair and responsible payments to suppliers.

Our carbon reduction targets have been validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). We have a published carbon reduction plan and are committed to achieving carbon net zero by 2040, in alignment with PPN 06/21 criteria for UK public sector contracts exceeding £5 million. In 2024, we achieved a silver EcoVadis rating, reflecting our ongoing progress in sustainability.

We are dedicated to delivering targeted social value and will collaborate with you to determine the most effective approach for you, ensuring our efforts have the greatest possible impact.

1.7 Security Clearance

PA are fully compliant with industry best practices for information security, which includes compliance with the UK MOD Industry Personnel Security Assurance (IPSA) standard, against which we are independently audited every three years. PA also has multiple sites with FSC (previously List X) where our dedicated in-house Security Vetting team are based. This allows PA to achieve security vetting of its employees in a time effective manner ensuring the correct processes are always followed (In accordance with the Security Policy Framework/GS007). As a matter of standard process, PA puts all its eligible employees through the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), set out by the Cabinet Office. Those employees working on, or planning to work on, government projects are automatically put forward for SC clearance which are processed via UK-SV (formally the Defence Business Services – National Security Vetting). PA also process DV vetting through the UK-SV and other agencies, these are generally client sponsored.

PA currently have a large pool of cleared individuals (80% of UK Staff). Should a resource be identified where clearance is needed, the PA Security Vetting team will then process the individual through the relevant clearance procedure. The team will also be able to validate all existing clearances held by PA employees when requested.

1.8 Next Steps

This service is intended to help customers develop and deliver successful outcomes regardless of the life cycle stage they are at. PA prides itself on working with clients and helping them to deliver outcomes whilst also providing them the ability to 'stand on their own' so that they can move their solutions forward without future involvement. Please contact us on GCloudFramework@paconsulting.com to discuss your needs further.



About PA.

We believe in the power of ingenuity to build a positive human future.

As strategies, technologies, and innovation collide, we create opportunity from complexity.

Our diverse teams of experts combine innovative thinking and breakthrough technologies to progress further, faster. Our clients adapt and transform, and together we achieve enduring results.

We are over 4,000 strategists, innovators, designers, consultants, digital experts, scientists, engineers, and technologists. And we have deep expertise in consumer and manufacturing, defence and security, energy and utilities, financial services, government and public services, health and life sciences, and transport.

Our teams operate globally from offices across the UK, Ireland, US, Nordics, and Netherlands.

PA. Bringing Ingenuity to Life.

Discover more at paconsulting.com and connect with PA on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

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