



Digital skills are critical across the majority of sectors and occupations, and are essential entry requirements for two thirds of UK occupations. Local economies will benefit from investing in both those individuals who already have advanced digital skills and work at the heart of the growing digital economy, as well as those who have yet to gain the essential basic skills.

It is estimated that nationally, closing the digital skills gap could unlock £85bn in turnover every year.⁴⁴

- 8.4% of UK adults have never used the internet (down from 9.2% in 2017), and 10% of households do not even have internet access.⁴⁵ According to the [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index](#), 11.3m people (aged 15 and over) lack one or more of the five Basic Digital Skills; 4.3m have zero.
- The Employer Skills Survey 2017 identified that a third (33%) of all skill-shortage vacancies in the UK were attributed, at least in part, to a lack of 'digital skills'. This includes both basic computer literacy (23%) and/or more advanced or specialist IT skills (21%). Around 35% of businesses reported that their current staff was lacking digital skills. You can learn more about digital skills shortages and gaps in your local area using the data [here](#).

The challenge is particularly acute in the SME and social sectors. According to the Lloyds Digital Index in 2018, 16% of SMEs and 30% of Charities nationally have low digital capability, so are not taking advantage of the improvements in productivity that digital skills uptake can provide.

Baseline

Working with your Skills Advisory Panel and if in place locally, your Local Digital Skills Partnership, you should review what skills interventions and policies you can influence. This should include publicly funded provision delivered through HE/FE colleges, T-levels, apprenticeships, and private/third sector provision.

Your baseline exercise should seek to identify gaps, where demand for digital skills is not being met by the supply of individuals with relevant qualifications, and therefore where investment in a new programme/provision would be beneficial. It is also important to analyse, where possible, the diversity of people in digital roles and taking up digital skills courses in the area, in order to design programmes that successfully engage the local community.

One particular challenge when developing your baseline is the variety of terms used to define 'digital skills', which will require you to draw on a range of quantitative and qualitative sources as part of your evidence gathering. Broadly you should collect data assessing digital skills needs at the basic (essential), general and advanced levels and with reference, for example, to the new Essential Digital Skills Framework.

Skills shortages and gaps can be difficult to quantify. The following resources will help:

- [Employer skills survey 2017](#).
- Online vacancy data e.g. Burning Glass and Adzuna.

DCMS is collaborating with the Department for Work and Pensions to develop a digital skills information service (data tool), which will enable you to understand the digital skills needs in your area. A prototype is expected in spring 2019 and once it is launched we will be encouraging you to use this service to help produce the baseline for your LIS.

The analysis produced through the [Skills Advisory Panels](#) (a Department for Education programme supported by DCMS) will underpin the 'people' pillar of each region's LIS.

44 Lloyds Bank, [UK Business and Charity Digital Index](#), 2018

45 ONS, [Internet users, UK: 2018](#)

Agreeing objectives

You are strongly encouraged to work with cross-sector partners to develop initiatives that increase digital capability at all levels, and that improve the diversity of those in tech roles. DCMS encourages you to consider embedding a Local Digital Skills Partnership as part of your LIS. Alignment with the objectives set out in the Digital Strategy (2017) will be important to ensure that everyone can access the skills they need to fully participate in society. DCMS has developed a five-step model in consultation with DSP partners, which it encourages local DSPs to adopt:

- Build the partnership. Ensure that local businesses, academia, charities and training providers are represented and contributing.
- Create a strategy. Gather and analyse evidence, and match provision to needs.
- Deliver training.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of provision.
- Share data, tools and practice with other region.

Designing interventions

DCMS is supporting Local Digital Skills Partnerships (LDSPs), which are being set up to tackle local digital skills challenges to help build thriving and inclusive local economies. Working closely with LEPs and other regional stakeholders, these partnerships are encouraged to design and deliver new and innovative digital skills provision that can then be replicated and scaled across the country as more Local DSPs are set up.

The local DSP Delivery group that reports to the main DSP Board is developing a “Playbook” that will collate and showcase best practice and best in class digital skills provision across the country. This will include sections around the setting up of a Local DSP, the governance required, and will enable regions without Local DSPs to develop their own. The DSP is

currently [collecting content for the Playbook](#), and a first iteration will be live by Summer 2019.

Monitoring progress

You should set up evaluation and monitoring strategies that demonstrate the improvement in digital skills in individuals, and what wider effects these improvements have at a local level. The Employer Skills Survey, the Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index and the Lloyds Bank Business and Charities Digital Index are metrics you can use to measure.⁴⁶

If you need more information on monitoring and evaluation the [Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit](#) is a helpful resource.

DCMS has commissioned an evaluation outline plan to identify a strategy and metrics for evaluating the impact of the Digital Skills Partnership programme, including that of the Local DSPs. This work is due to be completed in spring 2019, with evaluation and monitoring beginning later in the year. The framework and metrics identified to measure the impact of Local DSPs, could be adapted to monitor and evaluate digital skills policy/programmes in your regions.

46 DfE, [UK Employer Skills Survey 2017](#); Lloyds Bank, [Consumer Digital Index](#), 2018

