

Closing the workforce digital skills gap

Routes to 20 million >>

Progress in 2024 and the 2025 plan for action

Roadmap update #2: January 2025

The scale of the workforce digital skills gap

c.21 million (52%) working-age adults cannot perform all 20 work tasks outlined in the Essential Digital Skills Framework.¹

Every sector, region and demographic has a gap. It is more pronounced in key groups, but is also present in unexpected communities.

Groups with largest gap

65% of part-time workers

65% in the construction sector

63% of older workers

62% of those with an impairment

cannot complete all 20 tasks

Unexpected gaps

c.1 in 2 young people
(48% of 18-24 year olds)

c.1 in 2 academics (43% with a degree/masters/PhD)

c.1 in 3 high earners
(32% earning over £75k)

c.1 in 5 tech sector workers
(20%)

cannot complete all 20 tasks

With 21 million working-age adults needing support to build the essential digital skills for work, FutureDotNow's mission is more important than ever.

This report sets out the progress made by FutureDotNow in 2024 and our plans for 2025 as we build routes to improve the digital skills of 20 million working-age adults.

To find out more about FutureDotNow's mission, our headline achievements and plans for 2025, **read pages 3 to 6.**

A full review of 2024 can be found on **pages 8 to 21.**

For more information on our 2025 strategy and five-year plan to reach 20m people without essential digital skills for work, **see pages 22 to 29.**

For more about the FutureDotNow team, who we work with and how to get involved, **see pages 30 to 34.**

To find out about joining the FutureDotNow coalition, **see page 31.**

¹ All data from the Lloyds Bank 2024 UK Consumer Digital Index unless otherwise stated.

A joint mission and a shared plan

Since 2019, FutureDotNow has convened industry, local and national government, and civil society. Together we are a cross-cutting community with a shared commitment to improve the digital capability and confidence of the workforce.

Our mission to close the essential digital skills gap at the heart of the UK workforce remains critical. The good news is, we have a plan to tackle it and a community that's delivering.

There are c.21 million (52%) working-age adults unable to perform all 20 work tasks outlined in the Essential Digital Skills Framework. With only a 2% shift since 2023², essential digital skills growth has stagnated.

At this rate of change, closing this skills gap will take almost 25 years.

We simply don't have this time. More than half of workers are missing basics like fundamental online safety skills, being able to use collaboration tools and even accessing online payslips.

While the skills gap is stubbornly static and pervasive across all sectors, regions and demographics, closing it couldn't be more important.

It will bring benefits to us all, breaking down barriers to opportunity for individuals, improving business productivity and building resilience to future disruption. Together, this can drive economic growth across the UK.

Momentum is growing.

In 2024, we built on [our Digital Skills Roadmap](#) and mobilised action around a clear set of tangible goals. We gained consensus on the steps required and established the foundations for scale impact.

With this growing energy, and with clear alignment to government missions, we now have an opportunity to truly super-charge action.

In 2025, we will continue to work with our delivery community to identify and develop solutions that address systemic barriers. We will build clear routes to scale, and pathways that reach people at multiple touchpoints in their working life.

Together, we can ensure the workforce builds digital foundations for work today and in the future.

“Emerging digital technologies like generative AI are revolutionising how businesses interact with customers and the way we work. However, to capitalise on this opportunity we need to ensure our workforce is digitally equipped.

“Salesforce is proud to support FutureDotNow. Only by working together as all stakeholders, can we take action to better support workers to navigate this new era.”

Zahra Bahrololoumi CBE
CEO UK&I



²The Lloyds Bank 2023 Consumer Digital Index reported that 54% (c.21.7m labour force adults) couldn't complete the 20 work tasks.

Significant progress in 2024

While there is still much to do to close the workforce digital skills gap, 2024 has seen significant progress made by a growing community, working together.

FutureDotNow's 2024 delivery plan built and unified communities of interest around a common goal, gaining consensus on the work required and providing the infrastructure needed for collective action.

To deliver progress, we mobilised industry through a dynamic sprint model across 10 specific workstreams.

100+ participants representing more than 80 organisations came together across three sprints.

Individually and collectively the workstreams achieved significant outcomes and we gained clear insights into what it takes to bring about true collective action.

Progress was made possible through the dedication and hard work of the workstream teams and the commitment of our partner organisations.

Large-scale change requires broad, cross-sector coordination.

We are proud to be the convening force that brings together this diverse community of individuals and employers, all committed to improving the digital capability of the UK workforce.

Outcomes delivered

Cross-industry workstream teams have made significant progress, including:

- Developing the Workforce Digital Skills Charter, uniting industry around a shared and clear statement of ambition
- Producing well-defined asks of the new government, establishing a new national narrative
- Industry validation of the digital skills baseline required by working-age adults
- Securing funding to quantify the economic impact of the workforce digital skills gap
- Creating a host of new core assets to support FutureDotNow members to upskill their workforce, including new assessment tools to enable business to accurately assess workforce digital confidence in a standardised way

“No single organisation can bridge this digital skills gap alone. That’s why the work of the FutureDotNow coalition is so important. We need more organisations to join us so that we can equip people with the digital skills they need and unlock economic growth, drive productivity levels, support new jobs, and build a more inclusive, prosperous society.”

Chintan Patel
Chief Technology Officer
Co-lead, Strategy working group



A plan for collective action in 2025

The year ahead is about designing for scale – building on what is working and identifying new routes to expand reach. Ultimately, we're working to help 20 million people gain the digital capability they need for work today and in our digital future.

We're starting 2025 with clear purpose, a bold plan and a strong community.

Four strategic priorities for 2025

1. CAMPAIGNING

Influencing business action, public policy and, ultimately, individual behaviour

2. CONVENING

Providing sustainable coordinating capability, with shared measures

3. ENABLERS

Continuing to identify and develop solutions to systemic barriers

4. PATHWAYS

Establishing multiple potential touchpoints to reach individuals

Working together

These four priorities provide a framework for scale impact. Learning from our progress in 2024, we will continue to do what works.

We will deliver three ten-week sprints across the year, convening cross sector sprint teams, with content and industry expertise. We're appointing industry co-leads for each of the Enablers and Pathways. It's an action-focused plan with clear goals.

We invite you to join us:

1. Join an Enabler team

Be part of one of the teams working to overcome specific barriers to improving workforce digital capability

2. Lead sponsor a Pathway

Help set the strategic direction for our work across places, sectors, skill area or with those not in work

3. Co-lead a Pathway action community

Lead the action within a specific sector, region or area of interest

4. Be a FutureDotNow campaigns partner

Support our PR or advocacy work with expert resources or funding

5. Sponsor sprint delivery

Support FutureDotNow's role as convener by seconding project staff

6. Sponsor a flagship event

Help FutureDotNow continue to build momentum and energy through dynamic, inspiring events



Find out more about the 2025 plan, including how to get involved, on pages 22 to 29.

Developing routes to 20 Million: A five year strategy

Having built the Roadmap in 2023 and gained a clear view on actions needed, 2024 has seen a new way of working, bringing industry together using an agile sprint model. While last year saw significant progress, there are still over 20 million people without the digital essentials. In 2025, our priority is designing for scale, building on what worked and identifying new routes to expand reach.



2024 progress

Building foundations for scale impact

Across the year, our delivery plan teams made tangible progress in helping close the workforce digital skills gap, including developing new resources to help business take action.



2024 Delivery Plan

The year opened with a defined set of priorities, shaped by industry and streamlined into seven action areas. We tested a new approach to collaboration, with teams working in short, focused sprints, with tangible goals and a co-leadership model. All creating a strong sense of community and shared accountability.

Key features of the approach

We built seven workstream project teams made up of members and expert advisors from across the FutureDotNow community, each accountable for progress.

Each workstream reported into one of the three action areas, chaired by senior business leaders:

- Emma Kendrew, Accenture
- Chintan Patel, Cisco
- Deborah O'Neill, Oliver Wyman
- Stuart Mills, consultant digital leader

These were supplemented by three cross cutting 'vertical' workstreams in the year. Subject matter experts in key communities looked at all seven action areas through their respective lenses: priority sectors, SMEs, local/regional activation.

The teams worked in three 10-week sprints of activity across the year, with end-of-sprint events to consolidate progress and inform next phase of work.

This approach proved highly effective, enabling teams to work with focus, urgency and commitment while creating a strong sense of community. This infrastructure for collective action will be carried forward into 2025.

2024

Building foundations for scale impact

Strategy

- 1 Shared statement of ambition
- 2 Future-fit work skills framework
- 3 Economic impact assessment of UK workforce Essential Digital Skills gap
- 4 Workforce digital skills recognised as a method of delivering social impact

Employer Action

- 5 Help organisations understand Essential Digital Skills levels in their workforce
- 6 Help organisations train their workforce in Essential Digital Skills

Culture

- 7 Motives and culture scoping project



Priority sectors

SMEs

Regions

Cross cutting themes

The seven action areas will be supplemented by a small number of "verticals". Subject matter experts will look at all seven action areas through their respective lenses.



Read on to see the organisations involved and the progress across each workstream.

2024 progress update

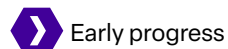
All workstreams have delivered tangible progress. Some have completed, while other workstreams will continue their work into 2025.

“As well as producing tangible, reusable assets and taking significant steps forward on making the case for change, these workstreams are laying exactly the right foundations for the work that will come next.”

Emma Kendrew
Technology Lead
Co-lead, Strategy working group



Workstream	2024 headlines	Status indicator
1. Shared ambition	- Workforce Digital Skills Charter developed providing a consistent mantra for business action. Over 130 signatories. - Impact measurement framework developed.	
2. Future-fit work skills framework	- Essential Digital Skills Framework validated with businesses as an appropriate national skills baseline, and surfacing need for more nuanced task level content for different industries. Sector-specific overlays drafted for Construction, SME and Healthcare. - Ownership of framework under Ministerial review. - The Framework part of Turing Institute/IFATE data study group, providing insight into how Work skills align with UK-wide job descriptions and standards. - Mapping of current landscape underway, documenting how the Framework sits alongside other assets, e.g. standards and qualifications.	
3. Economic impact assessment	- Market review confirmed data gap on economic impact of current level of essential digital skills in working age adults. - Research proposal built and Government support secured to develop economic model and research report into value of the labour force being equipped with the workplace essential digital skills. - Development of economic model research report commenced Dec 2024, launch planned Spring 2025 (FutureDotNow managed project).	
4. Social impact	- Draft guidance for public sector procurement commissioners on incorporating digital inclusion in social value requirements. Designed to sit alongside a future (mirror) guide aimed at supporting suppliers to respond to requirements. Commissioner guide due Spring 2025. - Engagement underway with Crown Commercial Service on how to realise digital inclusion outcomes through social value.	



See pages 22 to 29 for more detail on the progress in each workstream.

2024 progress update

Workstream	2024 headlines	Status indicator
5. Help organisations assess	- Two new tools developed to help build common approach to understanding digital confidence levels. Workplace Assessment Guide and Colleague Self-Assessment Guide are now live on the FutureDotNow members' area along with survey forms that support SMEs to deliver the self-assessment. - Over 4,000 participants have already used the Colleague Self-Assessments tool through the pilot phase.	
6. Help organisations train	- Criteria developed to support training providers to map assets against the Essential Digital Skills Framework. - Draft guide produced on how providers can use AI to validate their learning content. - Beta version of the Digital Skills Directory searchable by essential digital skill task. - Process developed to effectively capture organisation learning stories across the FutureDotNow community. - New FutureDotNow members' area built and tested to make it easier for organisations to access relevant resources.	
7. Motives and culture	- Plan developed to gather evidence on individuals' confidence, motives and barriers when building digital skills. - Scoping complete on project to develop evidence-based report on 'what works' when it comes to building digital confidence (subject to funding).	
8. Construction and Infrastructure sector	Initial focus on raising awareness among Amey's sub-contractor community, with plans underway to engage with wider sector.	
9. SME	Subject matter expertise provided to inform workstreams on future-fit framework and helping employers assess.	
10. South-West Region	Awareness building across the region, including events with South-West Business Council and SW local authorities lead officers on digital and skills.	

 Complete
  On track
  Early progress

“The UK is experiencing a significant transformation in the skills needed in the workplace, impacting individuals, businesses, and the economy alike.

“That’s why our efforts to empower employers and employees in identifying and bridging critical digital skills gaps are crucial.”

Deborah O'Neill
 Partner and Head of Digital Europe,
 Co-lead, Employer Action working group



New resources to help employers take action

During 2024, we developed new assets to help organisations take action to improve workforce digital skills. These resources have been developed with and for FutureDotNow members, to be housed in our website members' area. The site also includes DIGI, a curated AI tool, to help members find the information and tools they need, no matter what stage their business is at. Thank you to our partners at Accenture, Oliver Wyman and Ufi VocTech Trust for their support in building these tools.



Colleague Self-Assessment Guide:

A best-practice guide to help the workforce identify their own skills gaps, to support tailored upskilling programmes (inc. a digital confidence assessment, questionnaire).



Workplace Assessment Guide:

A new four-stage model to help employers identify and measure digital skills gaps and requirements.

4,000+
individuals completed
the self-assessment
questionnaire

89%
report they feel more
motivated to improve
their digital skills
because of taking the
assessment



Upgraded Digital Skills Directory:

With training resources validated against the Essential Digital Skills Framework and advanced filtering options, our refreshed directory makes it even easier for our members to find the right training for their workforce.



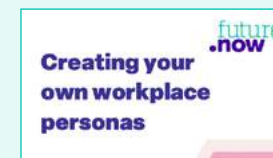
Turning insight into action:

Analysis of the Lloyds Bank 2023 UK Consumer Digital Index data on Essential Digital Skills for Work highlighting the implications for business, to help them take action.



Sector specific data:

Putting a spotlight on the critical digital tasks missing in each sector, as identified by Lloyds, to help prioritise upskilling efforts.



Guide to creating your own stakeholder personas:

Step-by-step guide to help organisations develop tailored stakeholder personas for their business, sector or region.



Stakeholder personas:

Detailed profiles to support internal engagement strategies around digital upskilling, including profiles for HR Director and Digital Transformation Manager.

Workstream 1: Building shared ambition

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘*build a shared statement of ambition suitable for adoption across all sectors that recognises essential digital skills as a critical challenge for UK industry*’.

This was broken down into three task areas:

- Ensuring the gap in workforce essential digital skills is recognised as critical part of the UK’s digital skills challenge.
- Developing a shared, consistent statement of ambition that can be adopted by industry, opinion formers and policy makers.
- Scoping a new approach to measure collective impact of helping people in the workforce build essential digital skills.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



As a first step towards a national ambition to close the workforce digital skills gap, [the Workforce Digital Skills Charter](#) has been developed. It provides a consistent mantra for business action. Launched in September, the Charter has over 130 cross-sector signatories, with plans to scale further in 2025. Supporting assets have been produced to enable organisations to embed key messages in their communications.

The workstream team developed a clear set of asks of the new Labour government to help supercharge industry action on the workforce digital skills gap. This informed [FutureDotNow’s summer letter](#) to the newly appointed Secretary of State for Education and Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Innovation, co-signed by sixteen senior business leaders.

The new government has since signalled a publication on Digital Inclusion early in 2025 and that the needs of the workforce are now considered under the umbrella of digital inclusion.

The workstream team has also worked with the Employer Action workstreams to agree the scope of work on the Impact Measurement Enabler, with three areas of interest identified:

- The impact of FutureDotNow on member organisations. This sits with the FutureDotNow team; a first set of metrics has been designed and are in the field with member organisations.
- The impact of member organisations on digital skills in their workforce. This sits with Workstream 5; new tools have been developed to deliver a common approach to measure digital confidence levels (see page 11).
- The impact of collective action to help working age adults build their essential digital skills. A project has been scoped for potential delivery in 2025 to test different ways of measuring collective impact in ‘bitesize’ ways.

Workstream team

accenture



BUSINESS LDN



techUK

Led by:

Judith Jackson-Merrick, Accenture

Liz Williams MBE, FutureDotNow



Workstream 2: Future-fit works skills framework

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘*deliver a Future-fit work skills framework for essential digital skills in the workforce, with a review process to ensure it keeps up with advancements in tech*’.

This was broken down into three task areas:

- Validating the Essential Digital Skills Framework and the skills for work with industry, with an appropriate review process established that ensures it keeps pace with tech developments (e.g. AI).
- Positioning the framework alongside other appropriate standards and curricula.
- Working to ensure the framework is recognised and adopted by industry as the digital skills baseline for workers.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



The Essential Digital Skills Framework has been validated with businesses as an appropriate national skills baseline. This research exercise conducted in the Spring also surfaced the need for more nuanced task level content for different industries to bring the tasks to life. A first round of sector-specific overlays of the Framework have been developed for Construction, SME and Healthcare, and are being tested.

Work has been completed to establish the current position in terms of ownership of the Essential Digital Skills Framework to support discussion with the Department for Education and other stakeholders on future responsibilities. This work provided a feed into the asks of Government work led by Workstream 1 and we understand that forward ownership of the framework is now subject to Ministerial discussion.

To strengthen use of a common language, work is underway to document how the framework sits alongside existing standards, curricula and qualifications. As an early example of impact, essential digital skills have been embedded into a Turing Institute/IFATE data study group to provide insight into how essential digital skills for work align with UK job descriptions and standards.

Workstream team



Led by:

James Freed, NHS England

Dr Matt Forshaw, Alan Turing Institute

Holly Chate, FutureDotNow



See Annex 1 for more detail on the current Essential Digital Skills Framework

Workstream 3: Economic impact assessment of the workforce essential digital skills gap

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘close gaps in the evidence base on the economic impact of the workforce essential digital skills gap so building essential digital skills in the workforce is appropriately prioritised’.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



Review of existing research in the Spring confirmed a clear data gap on the impact of workforce essential digital skills on productivity and other key metrics. The limited data available was found to be non-specific and out of date, with no government-owned data sources.

To close this evidence gap, a proposal was developed over the Summer to develop an authoritative economic model that credibly shows the far-reaching value of the labour force being equipped with essential digital skills. Once developed the model will provide an initial set of data-driven insights that translate complex economic findings into clear and actionable insights for diverse stakeholders and provide a foundation for future more detailed economic analysis and reporting.

FutureDotNow is now working with the Government’s National Technology Advisor and the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) to deliver this work with findings provisionally scheduled for Spring 2025.

Workstream team



Led by:

Elizabeth Barr, Cisco

Aidan Hancock, independent consultant and FutureDotNow Trustee

Paul Fleming, FutureDotNow

Workstream 4: Workforce digital skills recognised as a method of delivering social impact

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘establish building essential digital skills in the workforce as a method of delivering ESG social impact, thereby motivating businesses to invest in skills development for social impact’.

This was broken down into three task areas:

- Building understanding of current measurement and reporting on social value impact made by digital inclusion and digital upskilling activities
- The potential to target public procurement Social Value Act interventions to deliver systematic impact on digital inclusion
- Exploring the opportunity and practicality of embedding digital inclusion formally within Social ESG metrics

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



This workstream was formally stood up over the Summer as part of Sprint 2, with work in Sprint 1 to understand measurement and reporting on social value impact made by digital inclusion and digital upskilling activities.

A workshop with business leaders decided to focus on the Social Value Act as a priority, specifically how to help suppliers and procurement professionals understand the social impact of enhancing individuals’ essential digital skills for work.

Social Value Guide for public sector commissioners has been produced in draft form, with plan for first publication early in 2025. This aims to help contract commissioners become more ‘intelligent customers’ when it comes to understanding, setting out and realising impact from social value activity through supplier contracts, with an emphasis on addressing the digital skills gap. A parallel document is planned for suppliers. Early engagement is underway with Crown Commercial Service.

Work is underway on how to quantify social value of workforce essential digital skills, including: how helping working-age adults build core digital capability and confidence creates value for society; the difference in life chances for someone with and without essential digital skills; and the value a worker with the essential digital skills brings to society.

FutureDotNow is now working with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to progress this work, which forms part of our 2025 delivery plan.

Workstream team

Deloitte.

Good Things
Foundation



Led by:

Anna Farquarson, ISS

David Farrell, NHS England

Liz Williams MBE, FutureDotNow

“The social value workstream is making real progress to help commissioners make best use of their social value procurement requirements to shape practical digital skilling and reskilling activity.”

Anna, Farquharson, ISS and David Farrell, NHS England



Workstream 5: Help organisations understand essential digital skill levels in their workforce

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘*help organisations assess and understand essential digital skills levels in their workforce, providing the data and tools needed to inform targeted training interventions*’.

This was broken down into two task areas:

- Support organisations to interrogate national digital skills data more effectively and efficiently to inform their interventions.
- Enable companies to run their own workforce digital capability assessments and measure the progress of individuals and their organisation.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



New analysis of the 2023 Consumer Digital Index Essential Digital Skills for Work data undertaken and shared with stakeholders in webinar and online report. This provided employers with key insights into workforce skill levels.

To help employers measure and understand the skills needs of their organisation, a new Workplace Assessment Guide has been developed detailing proven methods that organisations can use. This sits alongside a new Colleague Self-assessment Guide designed to allow individuals to quantify their skills level.

These two new tools are designed to enable organisations to gain insight into digital skill levels of their workforce. They have been extensively piloted, involving over 4,000 people across leading organisations with feedback showing the act of inviting people to consider their digital capability levels also acts as a stimulus for them to take action to improve their skills.

Given SME organisations are collectively the biggest employers in the UK, work is also underway to support SME organisations to deliver the self-assessment tool efficiently.

Workstream team

Amey

CAST

CORNWALL COUNCIL
Council of Cornwall

cosmic

Deloitte

Department
for Transport

GMCA
GREATER MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Lancashire
Enterprise Partnership

M&S
EST. 1884

nationwide

NCFE

OliverWyman

Ramsay
Health Care

salesforce

Led by:

Suzanne Austen, formerly Department for Transport

Chloe Rickard, Cornwall Council

Conor Rose, Marks and Spencer

Paul Fleming, FutureDotNow

“The pilot data coming out of the self-assessment guide is really encouraging, and a great springboard into 2025. I can’t wait to see how things develop over the course of the next year as we launch these assets more widely.

Suzanne Austen, formerly Department for Transport



Workstream 6: Help organisations train the workforce in essential digital skills

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been working to ‘help organisations train their workforces in essential digital skills, making it easier to access and utilise existing training resources and guidance’.

This was broken down into three task areas:

- Making existing training resources and guidance more readily accessible.
- Creating feedback loops to surface what content works and what doesn’t.
- Identifying training content gaps to inform action to close them.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



New validation criteria have been developed for training providers to map their content against the 20 work tasks in the Essential Digital Skills Framework, with an initial focus on the Being Safe and Legal Online skills. Gap analysis was completed in the Spring on what training content exists against each of the 20 work tasks in the framework.

Over the summer learning providers were invited to use the new validation criteria to confirm their learning content covers all nine ‘Being safe and legal’ tasks found in the Essential Digital Skill Framework. Validated training content has now been mapped onto the FutureDotNow Digital Skills Directory.

A beta version of new FutureDotNow members’ area has been built and tested with employer organisations, ready for roll out early in 2025. This is a key platform for organisations to access digital upskilling resources, including the new workforce assessment tools developed by Workstream 5 and new learning stories from organisations on their approach to digital upskilling to enable shared learning.

Workstream team



Led by:

Kirsty Adams, Barclays

Niamh Patton, Nationwide

Paul Fleming, FutureDotNow

Chris Andersson, FutureDotNow

“We’ve all come together with a common purpose, no matter the sector or competitor. We’d like to commend the energy and passion from all involved.”

Kirsty Adams, Barclays and Niamh Patton, Nationwide
Co-leads, Workstream 6



Workstream 7: Motives and culture scoping project

Workstream remit (as scoped in Jan 2024)

This workstream team has been undertaking exploratory work on the cultural and motivational factors that drive individuals to improve their workplace digital skills.

Progress made in 2024

Status indicator:



This workstream fully mobilised mid-year having agreed a scope of work around building understanding on the culture change required to address the digital skills gap, specifically, what motivates people to upskill. This followed early steer from the Behavioural Insights Team to focus on changing behaviours first to drive long-term culture change.

The decision was made over the summer to focus on gathering evidence of existing approaches to building digital motives and the impacts organisations have seen. A survey was developed to gather evidence on individuals' confidence, motives and barriers when building digital skills, which was tested with a small group in December.

Work is now underway on a formal project to capture what works when it comes to building digital confidence and motives in an evidence-based report to help employers build their upskilling programmes. The project will gather insights from employers and working-age adults, identify knowledge gaps, and develop a feedback loop for future data capture. FutureDotNow is working with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to progress this work, which forms part of our 2025 delivery plan.

Workstream team



Led by:

Aurelie Marais Machurat, Bouygues

Holly Chate, FutureDotNow

Focusing on key communities

During 2024, FutureDotNow launched three additional workstreams to focus on key communities where there may be specific and nuanced needs.

These cross-cutting ‘verticals’ were asked to mobilise their specific community to:

- Raise awareness of the essential digital skill gap.
- Inspire and encourage action to empower people of working age to build digital foundations.
- Work together as part of the national change programme to supercharge action on workforce digital skills.
- Advance the seven national workstreams (e.g. embedding workstream outputs into regional activity or identifying local funding streams to advance the work of the delivery plan).

Our three pathfinder verticals focused on:

Priority sectors. Construction and Infrastructure was identified as a priority sector due to its growing digital needs and low workforce digital capability. The sector has large supply chains of small and medium businesses, offering opportunities for prime contractors to support broader upskilling.

Small and medium enterprises. Over half of the private sector workforce is employed by a small or medium sized enterprise. It's critical this segment of the workforce has the same level of opportunity for digital upskilling.

Regions. The South-West is our first regional workstream working to super-charge regional activity, galvanising local partners to activate their communities.

These vertical workstream have directly influenced the 2025 delivery plan and the formation of our Pathway projects. These will see the creation of several action communities focused on individual sectors, places, skill areas and those not in work, establishing multiple potential touchpoints to reach individuals.



Read on for more detail on our vertical workstreams

Priority sectors

SMEs

Regions

Cross cutting themes

Seven workstreams were supplemented by a small number of ‘verticals’. Subject matter experts looked at the seven core action areas through their respective lenses.

Focusing on key communities

Workstream 8: Construction and Infrastructure

Status indicator:



Construction and Infrastructure was identified as a priority sector due to its growing digital needs and low workforce digital capability. The sector has large supply chains of small and medium businesses, offering opportunities for prime contractors to support broader upskilling.

- Led by Naomi O'Neill, from Amey, this workstream has initially focused on Amey sub-contractor contacts to pilot a plan for raising awareness of essential digital skills with new organisations. Feedback is being gathered ahead of a wider roll out.
- There has also been positive engagement via Amey with National Highways and Network Rail with plans underway for a co-hosted round table session with key suppliers across industry sub sectors.
- This work will continue into 2025, and has been the pathfinder for our Sector Pathway in the 2025 delivery plan (see page 27)



Workstream 9: SMEs

Status indicator:



Over half of the private sector workforce is employed by a small or medium sized enterprise. It's critical this segment of the workforce has the same level of opportunity for digital upskilling.

- Led by Karen Licurse, from Digital Boost, this workstream has reviewed the Essential Digital Skills Framework to ensure it is relevant and applicable for micro and small businesses.
- It has also tested the Colleague Self-Assessment Guide, developed by Workstream 5, with SMEs to inform future development of the tool.
- This work will continue in 2025 as one of our seven Enabler workstreams (see page 25)



Workstream 10: South-West region

Status indicator:



The South-West is our first regional workstream working to super-charge regional activity to close the workforce digital skills gap, considering local contexts and galvanising local partners to activate their communities.

- Led by Julie Hawker MBE, from Cosmic, with representatives from Cornwall Council, Dorset Council, Devon County Council and Somerset Council, this workstream has been focused on raising awareness of the workforce digital skill gap across the region. This includes two events in October; a business leader lunch, hosted by the South-West Business Council and a briefing for Local Authorities and Digital Skills Partnerships.
- The South-West team have also been working with local employers to pilot the workforce assessment tools developed by Workstream 5.
- This work will continue into 2025, and has been the pathfinder for our Place Pathway in the 2025 delivery plan (see page 27)



2024 in numbers

c.21 million people still can't complete the 20 digital tasks industry and government agree are essential for work

1 shared mission

to close the essential digital skills gap in working age adults

1 delivery plan

3 sprints

10 workstreams

80 organisations

100+ people

120



Workforce Digital Skills Summit

Building a future-fit workforce

industry delegates attend the inaugural Workforce Digital Skills Summit

4,000

measured their digital confidence using our self-assessment tool

9/10 more motivated to improve their skills



130+

charter signatories and growing



20

C-suite leaders provided strategic insight at our Senior Leaders Council

140

delivery team recognition badges issued



1

Tech Impact Award for Promoting Digital Skills (non-profit)



2025

Developing routes to 20m

In 2025, we're building on what worked in 2024 while identifying new routes to reach the 20 million people who need help to build the essential digital skills for work.



The plan for 2025 – and beyond

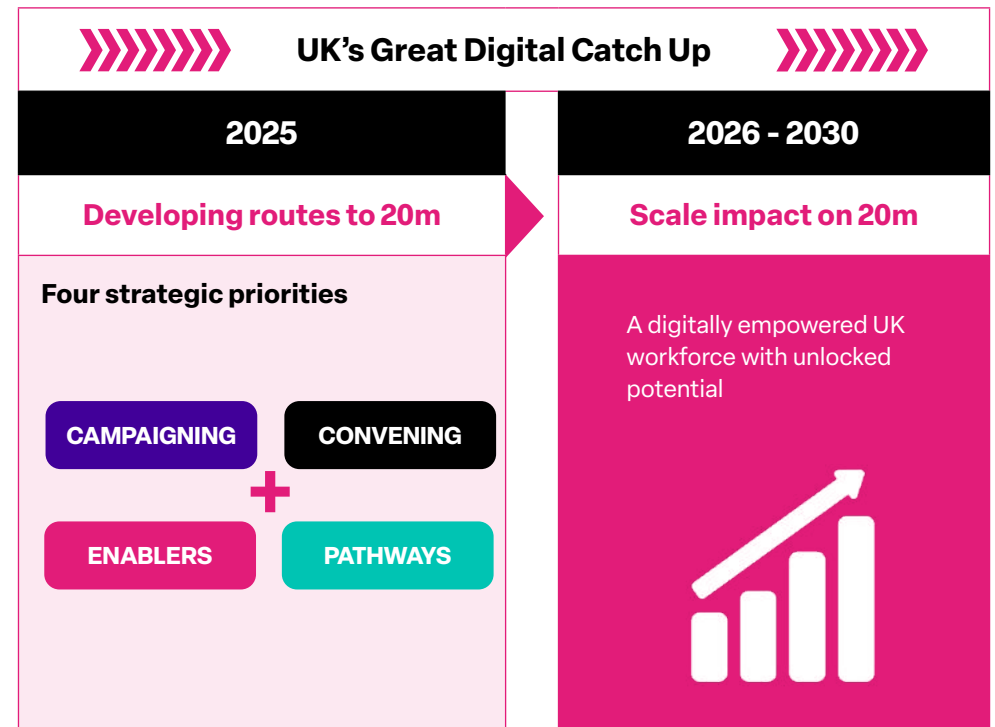
Delivering large-scale change requires a clear vision and plan. It also requires coordination.

In 2025, FutureDotNow will pursue four strategic priorities, continuing what works and testing new routes to reach people at scale.

- 1. Campaigning:** Work to keep the spotlight on the needs of working-age adults in the ‘hidden middle’
- 2. Convening:** Provide sustainable coordinating capability, with shared measures
- 3. Enablers:** Continue to identify and develop Enablers; solutions to address systemic barriers
- 4. Pathways:** Identify scale routes to uplift the c20m working-age adults without essential digital skills for work

As convener, FutureDotNow will continue to provide the infrastructure for collective action, which includes:

- Three 10-week sprints over the year, each with a kick-off call, mid-point connect and end of sprint workshop
- Co-leadership model, with two industry leads for every Enabler and Pathway
- An action-focused environment where, it’s easy for members to participate, individuals are empowered to take ownership, and contributions are celebrated
- Annual Workforce Digital Skills Summit to champion the issue, profile impact, and energise the wider network



Read on for more information on the strategic priorities for 2025 and how you can get involved

Campaigning and Convening

CAMPAIGNING

Influencing business action, public policy and, ultimately, individual behaviour.

FutureDotNow will continue to campaign to secure attention on the need to supercharge essential digital skills in working age adults.

- **Public policy:** We will continue to work to embed the needs of working age adults in the digital inclusion agenda, alongside the three core asks of government established in 2024
- **Mobilising the Workforce Digital Skills Charter:** We will campaign to increase the number of Charter signatories at scale, including targeting the FTSE350
- **Media and key influencers:** We will continue to work to increase awareness of the workforce essential digital skills challenge as critical to UK and personal prosperity
- **Authoritative insight:** We will create external cut-through by leveraging new content, for example the Economic Impact Report

CONVENING

Providing sustainable coordinating capability, with shared measures.

FutureDotNow will continue to set clear direction and focus on sustaining an environment that makes it easy for members to participate and drive change.

- **Powerful vision and plan for action:** Set clear direction, with a milestone-based programme of work that builds momentum and delivers progress
- **Coordination and collaboration:** Continue to mobilise and coordinate a community of changemakers, by creating the infrastructure for targeted and effective collaboration
- **Shared measurement:** Develop and convene attention around a consistent set of shared metrics
- **Scalable assets:** Continue to create high-quality, scalable content that supports members to close the digital skills gap and attracts many more organisations to join the coalition



See page 29 to find out how to get involved in the 2025 delivery plan to close the workforce digital skills gap

Introducing our 2025 Enabler workstreams

ENABLERS

Identifying and developing solutions to systemic barriers

Building on workstream activity in 2024, FutureDotNow will continue to recognise and resolve systemic barriers to progress.

Some 2024 workstreams will continue, while others are new additions.

Each workstream project team will include members and expert advisors from across the FutureDotNow community and together they are accountable for progress.

Some projects are already stood up with co-leads in place. Teams convening others will stand up over the course of the year. Funded projects will have oversight from the FutureDotNow team.

Seven enabler workstreams	Focus areas	Co-leads
Future-Fit Skills Framework	- Essential Digital Skills Framework ownership - Validation of Framework, incl. sector task overlays and individual testing - Mapping of Framework into wider skills ecosystem - FUNDED PROJECT: Embedding AI into Essential Digital Skills Framework	Turing Institute + NHS England
Economic Impact	FUNDED PROJECT: Economic impact of essential digital skills in working age adults	FutureDotNow + DSIT + Cebr
Social Value	- Social Value Act – Guidance for both commissioners and suppliers - FUNDED PROJECT: Quantify social value of essential digital skills in working-age adults	TBC + TBC FutureDotNow + DSIT + Sonnet
Training Content	- Learning providers embedding the Framework into training provision - Role of digital badging for training content, organisations and individuals	Barclays + Nationwide TBC + TBC
Motives And Confidence	FUNDED PROJECT: What works to help adults build essential digital skills to help employers improve the effectiveness of upskilling programmes	FutureDotNow + DSIT + BIT
Measuring Impact	How to measure collective impact in ‘bitesize’ way so we can communicate impact more effectively	TBC + TBC
Needs of Small and Medium Enterprises	Building understanding of what does and doesn’t work for SMEs	Digital Boost + TBC



See page 29 to find out how to get involved in the 2025 delivery plan to close the workforce digital skills gap

Introducing our 2025 Pathways

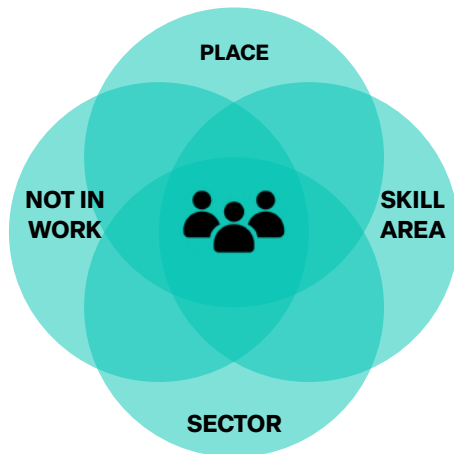
PATHWAYS

Establishing multiple potential touchpoints to reach individuals.

As well as tackling systemic issues, it's critical to build a framework for scale impact and focus on identifying pathways to reach working-age adults at scale.

In 2025, FutureDotNow will stand up four priority pathways and one influence pathway.

For each of these, we are in discussions with sponsoring organisations to act as champions.



Four priority pathways to reach working age adults at scale

2025 sponsoring organisations

PATHWAY 1: SECTOR

TBC

PATHWAY 2: PLACE

TBC

PATHWAY 3: SKILL AREA

TBC

PATHWAY 4: NOT IN WORK

TBC

Plus, an influence pathway to break the cycle in future talent pipeline

BREAKING THE CYCLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

TBC



Read on for more information about each of the 2025 Pathway projects.

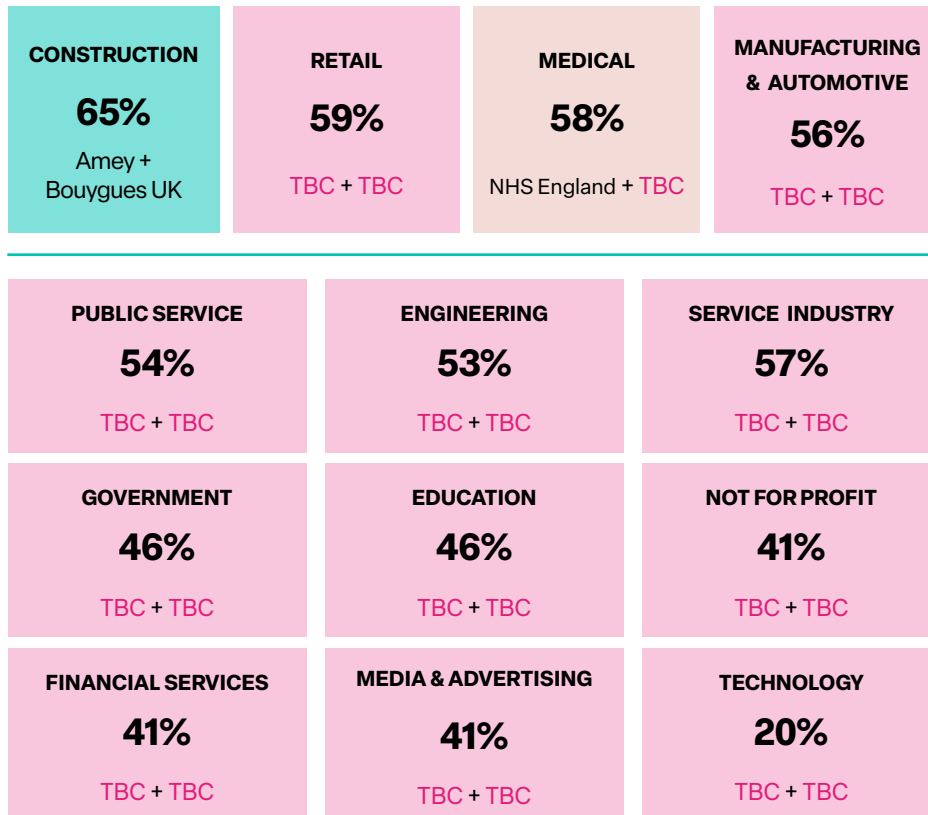
Using heatmaps to mobilise pathway action communities

	Two sponsors secured
	Sponsorship available - one sponsor secured
	Sponsorship available - no sponsors secured
X%	Those without all 20 Essential Digital Skills for Work tasks

PATHWAY 1: SECTOR

Sector-based action communities, will each be 'sponsored' by (ideally) two business leaders.

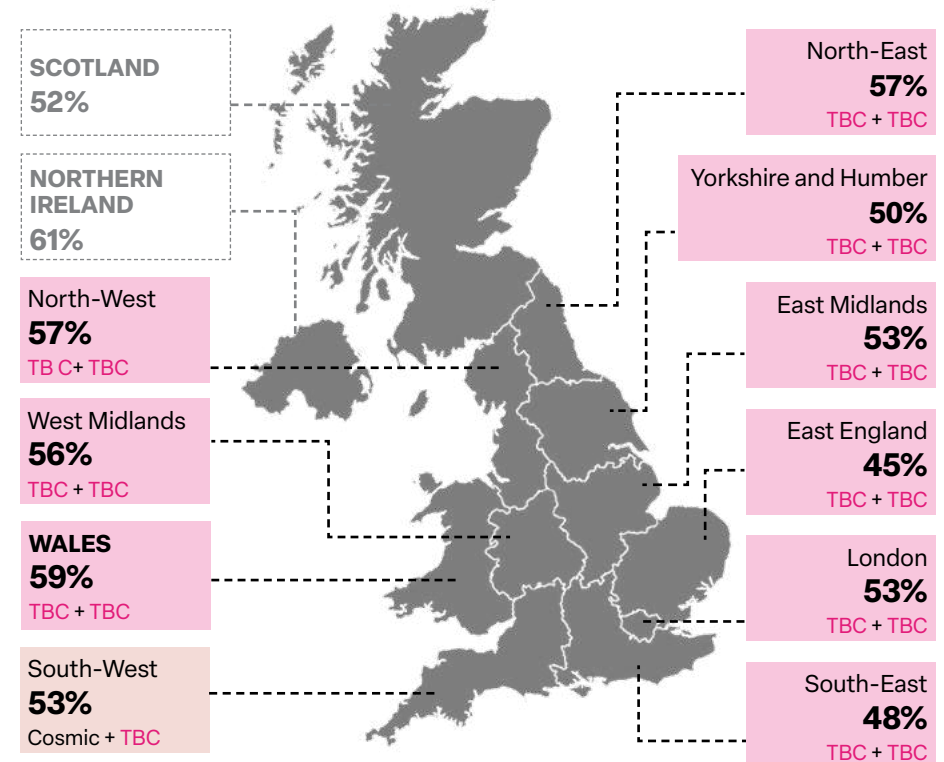
Priority sectors for 2025



PATHWAY 2: PLACE

Regional action communities will engage with existing place-based activity.

Current skills levels for the regions and nations of the UK



As a charity, FutureDotNow operates in England and Wales. This doesn't prevent similar action in Scotland and Northern Ireland but it won't be a prioritised.

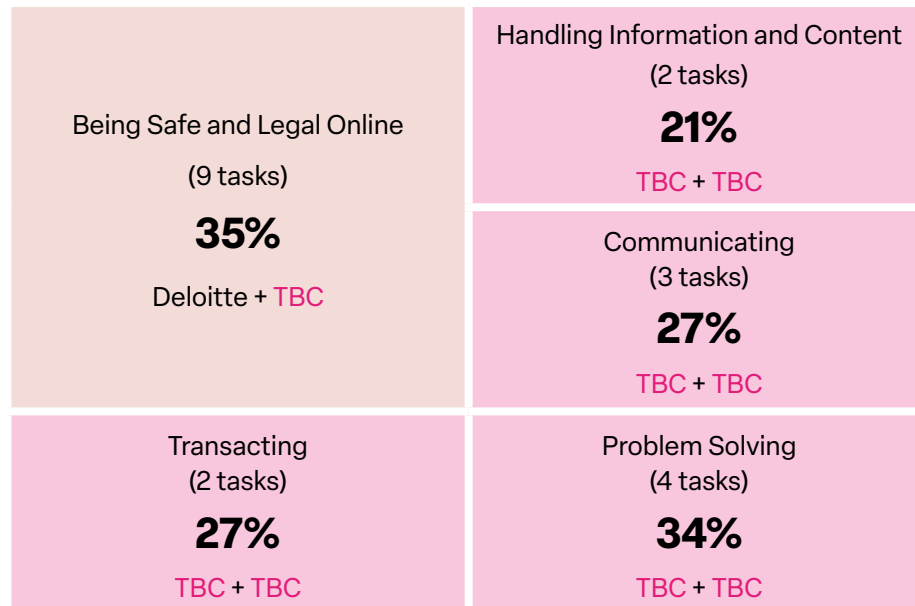
Using heatmaps to mobilise pathway action communities

	Two sponsors secured
	Sponsorship available - one sponsor secured
	Sponsorship available - no sponsors secured
X%	Those without all 20 Essential Digital Skills for Work tasks

PATHWAY 3: SKILL AREA

Task-based action communities will each be 'sponsored' by (ideally) two functional leaders, e.g. Chief Security Officers or People Officers.

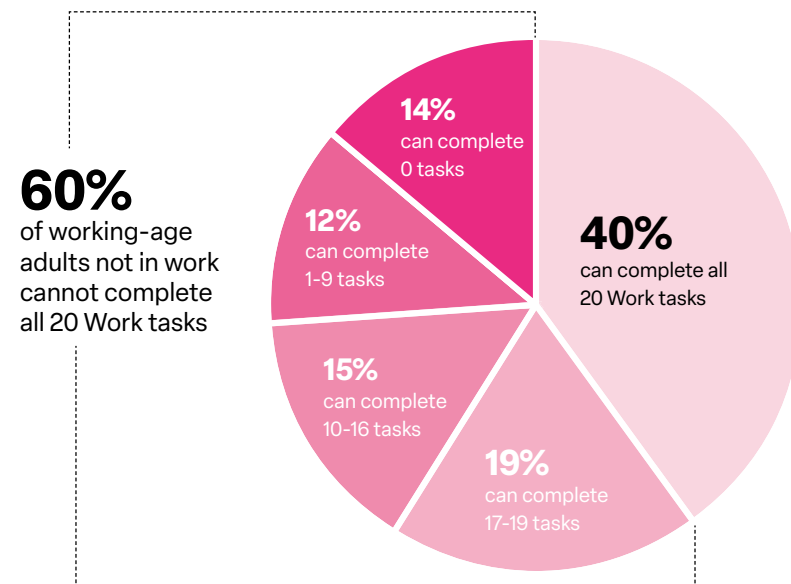
The skill areas that make up the Essential Digital Skills Framework



PATHWAY 4: NOT IN WORK

With significantly lower levels of digital skills for work than the national average, those not in work (not retired) require focused support.

The percentage of Work tasks that can be completed by those not in work



INFLUENCE PATHWAY: BREAKING THE CYCLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

FutureDotNow's primary focus will continue to be on the needs of the current working population. However, without action to break the cycle of young people entering the labour force without the essential digital skills for work, our work will never be done. This workstream will identify key stakeholders working with children and young people who share the objective of ensuring young people are workforce-ready.

How to get involved

These are a few of the ways you can get involved with delivery of the 2025 plan to close the workforce digital skills gap. Please note, we prioritise involvement of FutureDotNow strategic partners and members.

CAMPAIGNING

Be FutureDotNow's (pro-bono) partner in one or more communications discipline
e.g. Public Relations

CONVENING

Sponsor sprint delivery
e.g. by seconding a Project Manager
Sponsor a flagship event e.g. End of year reception

ENABLERS

Join an Enabler workstream
as a member or co-lead

Seven Enabler workstreams

Future-Fit Skills Framework

Economic Impact

Social Value

Training Content

Motives And Confidence

Measuring Impact

Needs of Small and Medium Enterprises

PATHWAYS

Lead a Pathway action community
e.g. Retail, or North-West

PATHWAY 1: SECTOR

PATHWAY 2: PLACE

PATHWAY 3: SKILL AREA

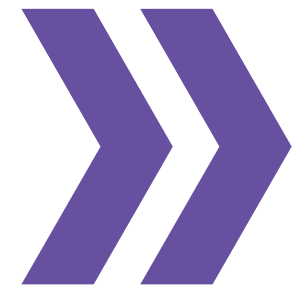
PATHWAY 4: NOT IN WORK



If you'd like to get involved in the 2025 delivery plan to close the workforce digital skills gap, we'd love to hear from you. [Please complete this short form to express interest.](#) You can also find our 2025 activity calendar on page 38.

Join us

1. Join FutureDotNow
2. Three ways to join our mission
3. A message from our CEO
4. Thank you
5. The FutureDotNow team



Join FutureDotNow

FutureDotNow is leading the mission to close the workforce essential digital skills gap in the UK.

Since launch in 2019, FutureDotNow has built new understanding of this part of the UK's digital skills challenge. Our campaigning is influencing public policy and inspiring business action. By convening a powerful coalition of business leaders, policy makers and experts, we are surfacing practical solutions and coordinating collective action to drive systemic change.

We were established by and for business. Our coalition continues to grow and has scale reach across business and civil society as well as local, regional and national government.

We benefit from the advice and guidance of our trustees who give their time generously. Thank you to our Chair Sir Peter Estlin, and trustees, Camilla Drejer, Aidan Hancock, Chintan Patel and Jemma Waters.

We are also fortunate to be supported by a number of Strategic Partners, who provide the lion's share of our funding, alongside invaluable expertise and strategic support. Like many small charities, we are also focused on ensuring financial sustainability.

As demand for our work grows, we have explored new routes to funding and, in 2025, are launching a new membership offer that contributes to our operating costs while providing organisations with access to insight and resources to help them take action.

Our 2024 Strategic Partners



Three ways you can join our mission to close the workforce digital skills gap

1. Sign the Workforce Digital Skills Charter

The Charter is a shared statement of ambition to close the workforce essential digital skills gap. Join the 130+ leading organisations already committed to:

- Raising awareness of the workforce essential digital skill gap
- Joining our national change programme to supercharge action
- Empowering people of working age to build solid digital foundations

» Find out more and become a signatory at www.futuredotnow.uk/charter.

2. Become a FutureDotNow Member

Introduced in 2025, FutureDotNow membership comes with exclusive resources to help upskill your workforce and priority access to our events, while directly contributing towards our sustainability as a charity.

Annual membership costs between £250 and £5,000, based on business size.

» Find out more at www.futuredotnow.uk/become-a-futuredotnow-member.

3. Join our Strategic Partner community

Take a direct role supporting and shaping our work to close the workforce essential digital skills gap, as a FutureDotNow Strategic Partner.

This includes powering up FutureDotNow with financial support to cover our core costs (£30k p/a contribution) alongside strategic advice, advocacy and pro-bono resources to help us get things done.

» To discuss becoming a Strategic Partner, email ceo@futuredotnow.uk

A message from our CEO

Closing the essential digital skills gap in the workforce presents a huge opportunity. Mastering essential digital skills will enable individuals to break down barriers to opportunity, improve business productivity, and drive economic growth across the UK.

Workforce digital capability is a part of the skills challenge that's been largely under the radar. That is changing, as evidenced by the sheer number of companies that have signed the Workforce Digital Skill Charter since we launched it in the Autumn.

This year has been an incredible team game, and personally I've loved every minute of it. We opened 2024 with priority areas for action, and closed it having delivered significant progress, surfacing practical solutions and coordinating collective action to drive systemic change.

We're also armed with new insight on how to bring different organisations together and create common cause. The sprint model we've deployed has been a gamechanger!

Our strategy and plan for 2025 builds on this. We know what's working and where we need to test and learn, and have identified a suite of critical projects to stand up in the year.

Our work on the pathways to reach individuals at scale is an exciting development. We are establishing new routes to reach the 20 million people without the digital skills they need for work today and for our digital future.

On behalf of FutureDotNow, I'd like to thank everyone who's played a part in the progress made in 2024. Whilst there is much more to do, we have a plan and it's working.

Come join us.



Liz Williams MBE
CEO, FutureDotNow



Progress is a team game

Thank you to everyone who has worked on our joint mission to close the workforce digital skill gap, whether as a Strategic Partner, trustee, as part of our 2024 delivery plan community – or in any other way, including the following people:

Camilla Drejer, *Accenture*
 Chloe Tartan, *Accenture*
 Judith Jackson-Merrick, *Accenture*
 Natalie de Freitas, *Accenture*
 Jeff Colclough, *Amey*
 Marco Buturo, *Amey*
 Matt Allan, *Amey*
 Naomi O'Neill, *Amey*
 Anna Collins, *Barclays*
 Kirsty Adams, *Barclays*
 Matthew Song, *Barclays*
 Toni Ives, *Barclays*

Andrew Cox, *BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT*
 Annette Allmark, *BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT*
 Lucy Ireland, *BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT*
 Patricia Barlow, *BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT*
 Edward Flahavan, *Behavioural Insights Team*
 Lal Chadeesingh, *Behavioural Insights Team*
 Mark Hilton, *BusinessLDN*
 Thomas Beautyman, *Cabinet Office*
 Tori Ellaway, *CAST*
 Amy Lucas, *Cisco*
 Elizabeth Barr, *Cisco*
 Hannah Owen, *City & Guilds*
 Jemima Broadbridge, *City & Guilds*
 Patrick Craven, *City & Guilds*
 Amelia Axelsen, *City of London Corporation*
 Olivia Larkin, *City of London Corporation*
 Gloria Odeyemi, *City of London Corporation*
 Chloe Rickard, *Cornwall Council*
 Emma Moore, *Cosmic*
 Julie Hawker MBE, *Cosmic*
 Claire Burton, *Deloitte*
 James Oates, *Deloitte*
 Jess Reddy, *Deloitte*

Helen Guezelkuecuk, *Dept. for Education*
 James Baskerville, *Dept. for Education*
 Flora Scott-Barrett, *Dept. for Science, Innovation & Tech*
 Joseph Baddeley, *Dept. for Science, Innovation & Tech*
 Iman Syed, *Dept. for Science, Innovation & Tech*
 Suzanne Austen, *Dept. for Transport*
 Rebecca Hepplestone, *Dept. for Work and Pensions*
 Vernetta John-Joiles, *Digging Into Digital*
 Karen Licurse, *Digital Boost*
 Emma Weston, *Digital Unite*
 Katharine Welch, *Dorset Council*
 Penny Syddall, *Dorset Council*
 Gregg Hutchings, *Financial Services Skills Commission*
 Steve Woon, *Finyx*
 Nick Samuels, *Freshwater*
 Emma Cave, *Good Things Foundation*
 Emma Stone, *Good Things Foundation*
 Katie Heard, *Good Things Foundation*
 Lisa Brown, *Good Things Foundation*
 Megan Potts, *Good Things Foundation*
 Georgina Grinshpan, *GMCA*
 Beena Puri, *GMCA*
 Lily Fairbairn, *GMCA*
 Aidan Hancock, *Independent*
 Stuart Mills, *Independent*
 Rachid Hourizi MBE, *Institute of Coding*
 Anna Farquharson, *ISS*
 Kerry Harrison, *Lancashire LEP*
 Louise Wood, *Leeds City Council*
 Anthony Mazen, *Lloyds Banking Group*
 Jemma Waters, *Lloyds Banking Group*
 Niall Smith, *Makers Academy*
 Matthew Stewart, *Manchester City Council*
 Conor Rose, *Marks & Spencer*
 Peter Beesley, *Marks and Spencer*

Suzanne Howse, *Marks and Spencer*
 Samantha Losey, *Montfort*
 Jo Mills, *Nationwide Building Society*
 Niamh Patton, *Nationwide Building Society*
 David Redden, *NCFE*
 David Farrell, *NHS England*
 James Freed, *NHS England*
 Ruth Levin, *NHS England*
 Hilary Lowe, *NHS Scotland*
 Holly Simmons, *Niya*
 Chris Leeming, *Nominet*
 Paul Fletcher, *Nominet*
 Akshita Raghuna Bora, *Oliver Wyman*
 Carol Briggs, *Oliver Wyman*
 Daniel Stoltz, *Oliver Wyman*
 Deborah O'Neill, *Oliver Wyman*
 Jackson Kerr, *Oliver Wyman*
 Kent Valentine, *Oliver Wyman*
 Matthew Harrison, *Oliver Wyman*
 Sian Wilkinson, *Oliver Wyman*
 Rob Robinson, *formerly Oliver Wyman*
 Sunil Patel, *PwC*
 Mehdi Hamidi Sahneh, *PwC*
 Alan Cooke, *Ramsay Health Care*
 Jade Calder, *Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea*
 Tim Ellis, *Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea*
 Avril Couper, *Salesforce*
 Dominique Penny-King, *Salesforce*
 Aurelie Marais Machurat, *Sizewell C Civil Works Alliance*
 Chris Stevens, *Social Value Portal*
 Margherita Certo, *techUK*
 Nimmi Patel, *techUK*
 Dr Matt Forshaw, *The Alan Turing Institute*
 Josh Smith, *Ufi VocTech Trust*
 Gori Yahaya, *Upskill Universe*

We'd like to thank the following senior leaders for their advice and guidance in shaping our 2025 strategy and plan.

Edmund King OBE, *AA*
 Emma Kendrew, *Accenture*
 Tom Lawless, *Amey*
 Frédéric Gal, *Bouygues UK*
 Chintan Patel, *Cisco UK & Ireland*
 Kirstie Donnelly MBE, *City and Guilds*
 Roy Rickhuss CBE, *Community Trade Union*
 Jitender Arora, *Deloitte*
 Phil Smith CBE, *Digital Skills Council*
 Helen Milner OBE, *Good Things Foundation*
 Christopher John Dean, *HSBC*
 Sir Robin Budenberg CBE, *Lloyds Banking Group*
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 Dr Dave Smith, *National Technology Advisor*
 Stephen Noakes, *Nationwide Building Society*
 Gavin Simpson, *Salesforce*
 Sabina Nizamuddin, *Sizewell C Civil Works Alliance*
 Russ Shaw, CBE, *Global Tech Advocates*
 Rebecca Garrod-Waters, *Ufi VocTech Trust*
 Nicki Lyons, *Vodafone*

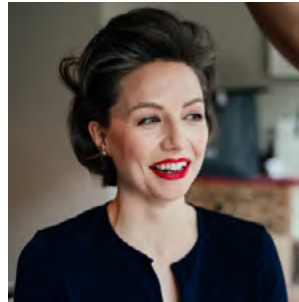
And everyone else who supported our work in 2024.

The FutureDotNow team

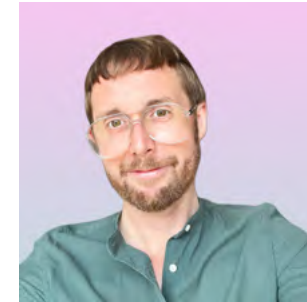
While we work with dozens of cross-sector organisations to deliver our mission, this coalition is convened by a small core team. You can reach us at hello@futuresdotnow.uk.



Liz Williams MBE
Chief Executive Officer



Holly Chate
Chief Operating Officer



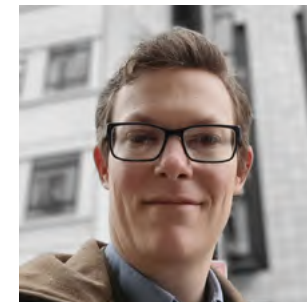
Paul Fleming
Head of Impact and
Engagement
(Seconded by Accenture)



Chris Andersson
Communications and
Campaigns Manager



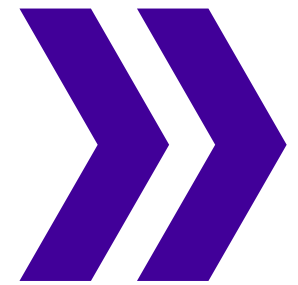
Angie Clement
Business Manager



Andrew Wiltshire
Membership Growth
Manager

Annexes

1. The 20 Work tasks in the Essential Digital Skills Framework
2. FutureDotNow Theory of Change
3. 2025 calendar



Annex 1: The 20 Work tasks in the Essential Digital Skills Framework

Defined by industry and government as essential for work, there are 20 tasks all individuals should be able to complete, across five skill areas: handling information and content, communicating, transacting, problem solving and being safe and legal online.

Handling information and content

1. **Follow my organisation's IT policies when sharing information internally and externally** (e.g. classifying emails/documents, encrypting sensitive information, sharing appropriate information on social media)
2. **Securely access, synchronise and share information at work across different devices** (e.g. manage email, calendar or appointment system via different devices)

Communicating

3. **Communicate in the workplace digitally using messaging applications** (e.g. Email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, internal intranet, WhatsApp)
4. **Use workplace digital tools to create, share and collaborate with colleagues** (e.g. Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, G-Suite, Office 365, WeTransfer, DropBox, WebEx, Slack)
5. **Set up and manage an account on a professional online network/community/job site** (e.g. LinkedIn, Total Jobs, Indeed)

Transacting

6. **Complete digital records on behalf of, or within my organisation** (e.g. absence management, holidays, timesheets, expenses, tax returns)
7. **Access salary and tax information digitally** (e.g. password protected payslips, P60, P45)

Problem solving

8. **Find information online that helps me solve work related problems** (e.g. search engines, IT helpdesk, software providers, peer networks)
9. **Improve my skills and ability to do new things at work using online tutorials, learning platforms and how-to guides** (e.g. LinkedIn Learning, YouTube, iDEA, Skillsoft, internal learning platforms)
10. **Use appropriate software that is required of my day-to-day job** (e.g. spreadsheets, online booking systems, HR management, workflow or sales management)
11. **Improve my own and/or the organisation's productivity using digital tools** (e.g. Trello, Microsoft Projects and Planner, Slack)

Being safe and legal online

12. **Act with caution online and understand that there are risks and threats involved in carrying out activities online** (e.g. use anti-virus software, classify and share information securely or avoid certain types of websites such as piracy websites)
13. **Follow data protection guidelines online** (e.g. following data storage and retention guidelines, not sharing or using other people's data or media such as movies or music without their consent)
14. **Recognise suspicious links and know that clicking on these links or downloading unfamiliar attachments is a risk** (e.g. spam/phishing emails, texts, pop ups)
15. **Be careful with what I share online as I know that online activity produces a permanent record that can be accessed by others** (e.g. publicly shared photos, forums, personal information or opinions)
16. **Respond to requests for authentication for online accounts** (e.g. resetting my password when I've forgotten it, two factor authentication, using a remote access key or an authenticator app)
17. **Identify secure websites** (e.g. by looking for the padlock and https in the address bar)
18. **Identify secure Wi-Fi networks to connect to** (e.g. Wi-Fi networks where a unique password is required, trusted source or padlock next to Wi-Fi network)
19. **Update my device software/operating systems when necessary to prevent viruses and other risks** (e.g. enabling automatic updates, or installing when prompted to do so)
20. **Set privacy and marketing settings for websites and my accounts** (e.g. managing social media privacy settings, managing cookie settings, updating contact preferences)

Annex 2: FutureDotNow Theory of Change

Theory of Change to close the workforce digital skills gap



Theory of Change is a standard approach used in the Not-for-Profit sector when tackling complex, multi-dimensional challenges. It provides a visual method to explain how specific interventions or set of actions lead to a social change. For FutureDotNow, it helps us connect the dots between activity, outcomes and the impact we are ultimately working to achieve.

The Challenge

Today, over half of working-age adults in the UK cannot perform all 20 digital tasks industry and government agree are vital for today's workplace, such as checking pay slips online, setting secure passwords, or using productivity tools. That's c.22 million adults right across the workforce, in every sector, region and age group, including high earners and those with high levels of education.

This reality has largely been hidden in plain sight, potentially masked by assumptions that adults naturally gain core digital competence through use. Worryingly, against that backdrop, only 4 in 10 adults plan to improve their digital skills in 2024.

Closing this skills gap is not just a problem to solve, it's an opportunity to realise. A digitally proficient workforce would impact personal prosperity, drive economic growth, enhance digital transformations, and bolster cybersecurity. The rapid rise of AI heightens both the risks and opportunities, making it crucial for everyone in the workforce to develop essential digital skills to thrive now and in the future.

NARRATING

FutureDotNow is building a common agenda on workforce essential digital skills, alongside provision of authoritative insight. Expert understanding and cross-sector relationships enable us to narrate the challenge and how to solve it in new and compelling ways.

How FutureDotNow delivers change

CAMPAIGNING

Continuous communication is core to our work. FutureDotNow's campaigning mindset and strategy is designed to influence business action, public policy and ultimately individual behaviour.

CONVENING

A powerful coalition of business leaders, policy makers and experts enables us to surface practical solutions and coordinate collective action to drive systemic change through mutually reinforcing activities. We also ensure focus on impact metrics and shared measurement systems.

Five levers for change

FRAMING THE ISSUE & MAKING THE CASE

Clearly articulating the essential digital skills gap in working-age adults and the benefits of closing it, in a way that is compelling for business and public policy makers.

STRONG DATA & STORYTELLING

Surfacing and closing critical data gaps alongside qualitative content including case studies.

COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

Establishing a national challenge that requires targeted and effective collaboration to deliver scale impact at pace. Mobilising and coordinating a community of changemakers.

POWERFUL VISION & PLAN FOR ACTION

Setting clear direction, with a milestone-based programme of work that builds momentum and delivers progress.

SHARED MEASUREMENT

Developing and converging attention around a consistent set of shared metrics.

Outcomes FutureDotNow is working to achieve

A DIGITALLY EMPOWERED UK WORKFORCE WITH UNLOCKED POTENTIAL

Everyone of working age is equipped with the essential digital skills and confidence they need today and to keep pace with tech development. Improved digital confidence and capability gives people the opportunity to progress and prosper. This helps organisations improve productivity, digitally transform, and fill the talent gap, benefitting the whole UK economy.

NATIONAL

The whole UK economy benefits because people have improved digital capability and more opportunity to progress and prosper, and business have access to a future-proofed workforce that helps them improve productivity, digitally transform, and fill the talent gap.

BUSINESS

As a result of closing the Essential Digital Skills gap in their workforce, businesses become more resilient, productive, and sustainable. Profiling the importance of digital confidence and capability leads to a more joined-up, systematic approach to prioritising and investing in upskilling.

INDIVIDUALS

People see the value of improving the digital skills they need for work and can access the resources they need to do so. Building digital capability and confidence leads to benefits in their daily lives and careers.

Learning & assumptions

Specificity on the different parts of the digital skills challenge is essential in order to drive change. The term 'digital skills' currently encompasses everything from high-end specialist tech skills to getting the most marginalised in society online. This discusses the current level of essential digital capability across the workforce and its impact on business and economic goals.

Overestimating what digital capability people have now leads to the development of products and services designed for an idealised future rather than current realities, hampering adoption, productivity and transformation gains.

Developing a base level of digital skills increases people's confidence and capability to continue to develop and grow their skills as tech evolves.

The route to scale impact and accelerated change is cross-sector collaboration.

A central convening organisation is vital to deliver large-scale collective impact on the challenge.

Everyone, particularly working age adults, needs the Essential Digital Skills to prosper today, increase productivity and prepare for a changing world of work impacted by automation and AI.

Outcomes FutureDotNow is working to achieve

A digitally empowered UK workforce with unlocked potential

Everyone of working age is equipped with the essential digital skills and confidence they need today and to keep pace with tech development. Improved digital confidence and capability gives people the opportunity to progress and prosper. This helps organisations improve productivity, digitally transform and fill the talent gap, benefitting the whole UK economy.

National

The whole UK economy benefits because people have improved digital capability and more opportunity to progress and prosper, and business have access to a future-proofed workforce that helps them improve productivity, digitally transform, and fill the talent gaps.

Business

As a result of closing the essential digital skills gap in their workforce, businesses become more resilient, productive, and sustainable. Profiling the importance of digital confidence and capability leads to a more joined-up, systematic approach to prioritising and investing in upskilling.

Individuals

People see the value of improving the digital skills they need for work and can access the resources they need to do so. Building digital capability and confidence leads to benefits in their daily lives and careers.



You can read the full FutureDotNow Theory of Change [on our website](#).



Closing the workforce digital skills gap

Routes to 20 million

Progress in 2024 and the 2025 plan for action

Roadmap update #2: January 2025

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