

# Closing the workforce digital skills gap: key messages and calls to action

Below are a series of key messages to help you articulate our collective work to close the workforce digital skills gap.

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## Our mission in...

### A sentence

There is critical gap in the essential digital skills of the UK workforce, and closing it would boost growth and productivity, help us respond to emerging tech, and ensure everyone has the skills they need for work today and in our digital future.

### A paragraph

Today, the majority of the UK labour force lack the full suite of digital capabilities industry and government agree are essential for work. Closing this skills gap is critical for boosting growth and productivity, embracing emerging tech like AI, and breaking down barriers to opportunity for all. The UK needs a Great Digital Catch Up, with every member of the UK workforce, whether paid or voluntary supported to build the digital foundations required for work today and in the future.

## More information on...

### The collective mission

Today, there is a hidden yet widespread lack of fundamental digital skills and confidence among working-age adults. The majority of the labour force lack the full suite of digital capabilities industry and government agree are essential for work.

According to the [Lloyds Bank 2024 Consumer Digital Index](#), c.21 million (52%) working-age adults cannot do all 20 Work tasks found in [the Essential Digital Skills Framework](#).

More than half of the labour force are missing basic skills like checking an online payslip, using digital tools to collaborate with colleagues and some of the basics of staying safe online.

This skills gap is not just a problem to solve but an opportunity to realise. Building a digitally capable workforce will secure and grow jobs, boost economic opportunities in all regions and ensure the UK keeps pace with the world.

Without action, the skills gap will widen, leaving many unable to access good jobs or essential public services, and this will only be exacerbated by the likely impact of AI and automation.



Every member of the UK workforce, whether paid or voluntary, must be supported to build the essential digital skills required for working life now and in the future.

All employers, across business, local and national government, and civil society can play their part. Join the movement as we commit to:

1. Raise awareness of the workforce essential digital skill gap.
2. Work together to supercharge action as part of a national change programme.
3. Empower people of working age to build solid digital foundations.

Find out more at [www.futuredotnow.uk/charter](http://www.futuredotnow.uk/charter).

### Our asks of government

In recent years, we have been missing a national strategy to address the critical digital skills gap in working-age adults. Business is stepping up, working with FutureDotNow to drive action to close the gap, but they cannot do this alone.

The new government can capitalise on this momentum, working in partnership with industry to rapidly realise a national plan as part of its Growth mission, ensuring all working-age adults have the core digital capability they need to thrive.

These three, extremely low-cost steps must be actioned to enable and encourage business to attack the workforce digital deficit at scale and pace:

- 1. Establish a shared national ambition:** A measurable, time-bound, national ambition for essential digital skills across the UK and its regions, to be owned and adopted by Government, and shaped and validated by the business community.
- 2. Define the national minimum digital skill set for workers:** The work skills in the existing Essential Digital Skills Framework to be adopted by government as the minimum digital skill set for working-age adults, while working with industry to ensure it keeps pace with technological advances.
  - Incorporating the Framework into the national curriculum will also ensure there are upskilling opportunities at every age and life stage, and help ensure a talent pipeline of young people, from education to the workforce, systematically equipped with the digital skills they need for work today and to grow in line with technological development.
- 3. Empower and galvanise business action:** Apprenticeships funded by the new Growth and Skills Levy required to incorporate digital essentials regardless of discipline, and employers able to provide essential digital skills training via the levy. This, alongside consistent government advocacy for action would unlock significant business capacity.