

HOTSW DIGITAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

Digital Skills Mapping Proposal

Submitted by:
University of Exeter & University of Plymouth

April 2018

Background

HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) have identified the digital sector as critical to the region's success. Digital skills impact on a number of areas including; digital inclusion, productivity, attracting and retaining quality sustainable jobs, economic growth and overcoming any negative impacts from Brexit. HotSW LEP have held workshops to establish a local Digital Skills Partnership which has met twice (January and March 2018) and has identified a need for a 'digital skills needs mapping exercise' within the region. The HotSW local DSP has now been confirmed as one of two pilot areas in the country, able to draw down on national support from major corporates such as Amazon, Google etc

This document sets out a proposal for what the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter working in partnership will do to deliver this output.

Summary of the HotSW LEP approach and how this work adds value

DCMS envisage a 5-step approach which the HotSW DSP has adopted as a starting point; in time the HotSW approach may evolve but in all cases the DSP will need to ensure it is delivering to the DCMS model. That model is

- Data gathering: identification of existing data and literature on this sector relevant to HotSW geography
- Matching existing supply to needs, current and future, to identify gaps
- Delivery of new/modified training/content
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Data sharing

As part of the data gathering stage, the partnership wants to understand

1. Existing digital skills provision
2. Future needs: how trends in the economy will change digital skills requirements over the next 10 years. This includes not only the higher level digital skills needed to build new jobs and sectors but also the kind of skills that most careers will increasingly require.
3. The gaps in provision and skill sets that might exist
4. As part of 1&2 above, understanding the business case for investment. Ultimately the partnership is looking to be able to establish a business case for investment in digital skills, understanding the economic importance and value of digital skills in the future economy.

The partnership will use this research to shape interventions, draw down on national support, link to comms messaged and develop a renewed offer to individuals and businesses utilising partners in the region. In time it should be possible for a) individuals to better understand just what digital skills they need to enable them to access the careers of the future and b) business leaders to understand what skills their business will need to compete and prosper in the future.

Proposal and timetable

This proposal will address elements 1-4 above and utilises existing good practice methodologies already employed in this sector by the applicant Higher Education Institutions. It incorporates the following elements:

1. Literature review
2. Electronic survey of employers – supported by a very limited telephone survey offer and some interviews with employers
3. Analysis of survey results
4. REPORT on the results of the employer survey and literature review
5. Review of current digital skills education/training supply in the region including some interviews with key providers
6. REPORT on the results of the education/training supply survey
7. DIGITAL SKILLS STRATEGY REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (targeted at the HotSW Digital Skills Partnership and LEP partners)

A timetable for the work is attached in the Annex.