

Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership

Finance & Resources Meeting

05th October 2021

Agenda item 6

Report theme: Supporting Heart of the South West's businesses and organisations to be inclusive and diverse employers, by raising awareness and adoption of the Tech Talent Charter.

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Summary

The Tech Talent Charter a non-profit organisation leading a national movement to address inequality in the UK tech sector. The LEP is exploring the opportunities around this and is planning

- a) Sustained promotion and advocacy through the Digital Skills Partnership, to include a marketing campaign, landing page and case studies. These resources and costs (£1,100) will be covered by the Digital Skills Partnership.
- b) Two facilitated sessions run by the Tech Talent Charter which will work with up to 32 organisations to discuss theories of change and guide the organisations with tools from the Tech Talent Charter playbook to mobilise change within their organisation. These two sessions cost £6,000 and the LEP will contribute up to £4,900 towards these under CEX delegation
- c) Following the workshops, to then consider if the LEP should apply for Tech Talent Charter status

The work will support the Heart of the South West LEP's Digital Skills Partnership to grow diversity and inclusion in the Heart of the South West's digital workforce, through a sustained and programmatic approach of Tech Talent Charter.

F&R are asked to note this paper.

Overview

The [Tech Talent Charter](#) (TTC) is a non-profit organisation leading a national movement to address inequality in the UK tech sector and drive inclusions and diversity in a practical way that is measured through annual data collection. Tech Talent Charter is supported by the UK Governments' Digital Strategy as a programmatic tool to help organisations understand why inclusion matters and the benefits it can bring to regions. Through becoming a signatory (at no cost), organisations have access to the TTC playbook of resources which help organisations build diverse digital workforces. Tech Talent Charter also provides facilitated training to accelerate and support the adoption.

Launched in 2017, today there are over 600 signatories including, Accenture, Ao.com, BBC, British Heart Foundation, Channel Four, CompTIA, Cancer Research, Dell, Deloitte. The Tech Talent Charter is partially funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. (Of the 600 signatories there are very few SME signatories based in the Heart of the South West).

Why is there a need for the Tech Talent Charter?

The Heart of the South West LEP region mirrors a national picture of poor diversity within its STEAMM workforce. Women make up 51% of the local population but only 15% of the digital workforce. Residents in our most deprived wards make up 12% of the working population but represent only 2% of the digital workforce. (Given that roles requiring digital skills command on average 29% more than roles that do not require digital skills, raising the digital competency of residents in deprived wards can help to decrease economic disparities). 14% of the UK working population is from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background yet only 8.5% of senior leaders in the tech sector are BAME. And finally, the disruption and transformation caused by Covid should be a catalyst to increase diversity across the digital work-force, as working from home and flexible working patterns remove barriers for people with disabilities or caring responsibilities to participate in the digital workforce. 19% of the UK working population has a disability yet only 9% of IT specialists in the UK have a disability. It is well documented that whilst Neuro Diverse individuals are often suited to digital and technical roles, often standard recruitment processes filter out their talent.¹

The Tech Talent Charter aim of greater digital inclusion supports social mobility, acting as a catalyst for greater equality in the workplace, raising levels of individuals economic prosperity and increasing organisational cognitive diversity.

How does the Tech Talent Charter help?

By becoming a charter signatory, each organisation is confirming that it has board or senior management level support, to review its internal practices, supported by the free resources through the Tech Talent Charter playbook, and through the charter pledges to increase the level of diversity and inclusion within their culture and workforce.

Levels of diversity and inclusion are captured through an annual survey, which benchmarks the progress year on year made across all signatories.

What is the requirement of the Tech Talent Charter signatory?

Each organisation pledges to provide the following:-

1. Identify a person who will be responsible for championing the charter and the commitments
2. Develop a plan to improve Diversity and Inclusion; including adopting inclusive recruitment and promotion processes and practices to support the growth and retention of a diverse workforce
3. Practice: Collaborating with other signatory organisations and the TTC to share what has worked and what has not worked to improve inclusion and diversity in technical and digital roles
4. Data: Providing data through an annual, anonymised return (see Annexe 1)

Proposed Tech Talent Charter Adoption Campaign

¹ <https://tallo.com/blog/neurodiversity-recruitment/>
<https://www.triplepundit.com/story/2019/why-your-company-needs-neurodiverse-workforce/83251/>

1. Tech Talent Charter was introduced to attendees of the LEP's SAP Social Mobility summit on the 30th of June 2021.
2. The Digital Skills Partnership would like to propose that the Finance & Resource committee, People Leadership Group and the Inclusion Steering Group take a proposal to the LEP October board meeting that the LEP board becomes a Tech Talent Charter signatory. This will both support the LEP's focus on widening diversity amongst its board (work currently in motion through the Futures Leaders programme) and workforce, through access to the TTC playbook. On a practical level it will provide access to all LEP leaderships groups (and services) to the Tech Talent Playbook. Furthermore by becoming a signatory, the LEP will also lead by example.
3. The Digital Skills Partnership will develop a Tech Talent Charter awareness and adoption plan that incorporates a landing page (tbc SkillsLaunchpad or LEP website) and social media campaign to raise awareness of Tech Talent Charter, to showcase the events and local case studies to organisations in the region.
4. The Digital Skills Partnership will coordinate awareness and adoption throughout the duration of the campaign working collaboratively with the Growth Hub, and the Inclusive Growth and People Leadership groups.
5. 16th of September 2021, the Digital Skills Partnership meeting hosted a further Tech Talent Charter awareness event attended by 38 organisations. At this event, organisations were made aware of two, free Tech Talent facilitated events in November and December.
6. 4th of November 2021, Tech Talent session no. 1: 16 – 32 Organisations who have decided to become signatories, will attend a two and half hour working lunch, consisting of an facilitated panel discussion and then facilitated working groups aimed at getting these organisations started with the Tech Talent Charter playbook resources. After the event each organisation will continue working on their chosen diversity and inclusion theme within their organisation.
7. 8th of December 2021, Tech Talent session no. 2 : The organisations return to share lessons learnt and receive further support from the Tech Talent Charter team on how to advance progress made.
8. The Digital Skills Partnership will create case studies of the regional organisations to help inspire other organisations to embark on programmatic change through Tech Talent Charter. This will be accompanied by ongoing marketing and communication plan that points back to the landing page.
9. This programme of raising awareness and adoption can be repeated annually, with or with Tech Talent Charter's team support to continually help engagement, raise awareness and maintain diverse and inclusive workforce cultures.

Request to Heart of the South West LEP's Finance & Resource Committee

That F&R note the proposed work and the three stages set out in the summary, including the potential for the LEP to acquire Charter status. If this progressed it would mean

- the LEP would become a signatory to the Charters to support a growth in diversity and inclusion in the Heart of the South West's digital workforce
- a Board member would need to work in conjunction with a LEP officer to oversee the TTC charter commitments

Annexe 1: Summary of Annual Data Return Questions

- Sector
- Country of main HQ
- UK region
- No. of tech roles in organisation
 - Gender: No. held by men, women, prefer not to disclose gender, non-binary, other
 - Ethnicity: No. held by Asian, Asian British, Black, African, Caribbean, Black British, Multiple ethnic groups, White, prefer not to disclose
- Data Collection Process
 - Characteristics tracking
 - How many roles are outsourced
- Open Text Questions
 - What intervention has had greatest impact on diversity
 - Most pressing D& I problems or questions
- Training
 - Do you run training designed to appeal to under represented groups
 - Do you track staff retention and career progression