Digital Skills Partnership

Report 2021 –2022

First stages

February 2021

The LLEP Skills Advisory Panel allocate £300,000 towards addressing Digital Poverty as part of local Covid recovery efforts

March 2021

LLEP Digital Poverty call for evidence launched to help target funding. 31 survey responses received from local partners plus other supplementary evidence (partners included local authorities, public heath, colleges and voluntary groups).

May 2021

Findings published identifying 3 areas of need:

·Skills
·Connectivity
·Devices

ONS data at the time showed

(2019 survey)

1 **11.5%** of the East Midlands population are non-internet users (third highest out of nine regions)

2 **71%** of the East Midlands population have the 5 basic digital skills (joint lowest)

3 **9%** of the East Midlands population have no digital skills whatsoever (third highest)

Digital Poverty recommendations

Following the LLEPs call for evidence, solutions suggested by grassroots practitioners were used to commission digital poverty projects. Ideas included:

- Buddying schemes
- Internet access for all
- Equipment loan schemes
- Recycling and refurbing IT equipment
- Integrate digital skills with ESOL

"

The Good Things Foundation estimates that every £1 invested in digital inclusion could see a return of £9.47 for the economy. This equates to **£2,841,000** for the LLEPs investment.

**LLEP Digital Skills
Partnership Phase 1**

Local Digital Skills Partnership

Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
creating economic prosperity

To support all local digital skills activity, the LLEP also decided to create a Digital Skills Partnership, based on the pilot government programme.

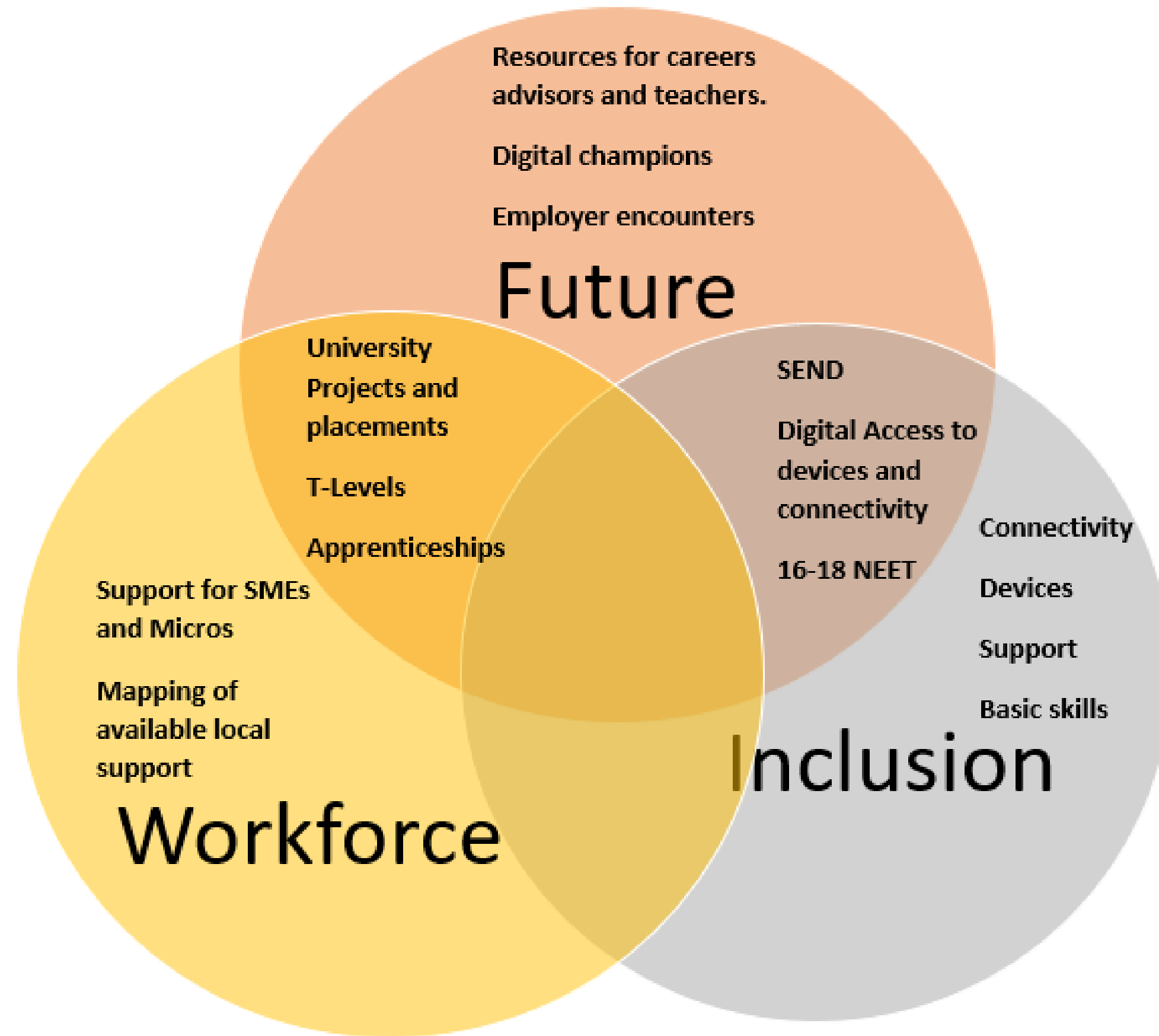In September 2021 – local partners convened around 3 themes:

- **Inclusive workforce**
- **Skills Workforce** (inc. upskilling and reskilling)
- **Workforce of the future** (focussed on education)

The Inclusive workforce and Skilled Workforce groups have met regularly since with the Workforce of the Future breaking into smaller pockets of work.

Events for employers, such as at the 2021 Leicester Business Festival, have been held and regular 'local offer' leaflets have been produced.

The DSP engages with over 70 local individuals across the groups, with direction and thought leadership provided by Amit Sinha, a Microsoft CTO and resident of Leicester. Amit has chaired several meetings and provides ongoing mentorship to the LLEP Skills lead for the project.

Issues identified by the groups

Future
- Resources for careers advisors and teachers.
- Digital champions
- Employer encounters

Workforce / Future overlap
- University Projects and placements
- T-Levels
- Apprenticeships

Future / Inclusion overlap
- SEND
- Digital Access to devices and connectivity
- 16-18 NEET

Workforce
- Support for SMEs and Micros
- Mapping of available local support

Inclusion
- Connectivity
- Devices
- Support
- Basic skills

A diverse portfolio of seven Digital Poverty projects was commissioned to begin in spring 2022.

The projects aim to support at least **1229** disadvantaged people in the LLEP area over the next two years.

The 7 Digital Poverty Projects commissioned

Refurb IT
- Community Interest Company to collect and refurbish used IT equipment. Equipment will be distributed to those in need with some items being sold
- **Target** 100 items refurbished for people facing digital poverty

Digital Buddies
- Scheme to provide 1-2-1 support for people developing basic digital skills
- **Target** 84 disadvantaged people receiving 1-2-1 support

Highfields Digital Hub
- Establishing a digital hub, including tuition, in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Leicester
- **Target** 400 people worked with

Leicester Connected
- Laptop lending scheme hosted by the city council Adult Education and library service
- **Target** 300 device loans

Essential Digital Skills
- Equipment for a digital skills training hub in Loughborough
- **Target** to engage at least 75 individuals from hard to reach groups

Student assisted technology coaching
- Scheme for students at a Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) college to share digital skills with the community
- **Target** Work with 50 SEND young people

Christ Church community hub
- Providing free-to-use community broadband in community facility in disadvantaged area
- **Target** 220 service users over 2 years

Bringing partners together

The partnership has brought together partners to share good ideas, resources and good practice but also work on practical projects. For example:

Digital Creativity Live at the Museum – a partnership between De Montfort University, Leicestershire Ageing Together and Leicester museums. The project has now received funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

We Discover Digital – LLEP Careers Hub working with local employers to create case studies of using digital skills in a range of different jobs. This was shared at national level by the Careers Enterprise Company.

Future Influencers – a partnership between the LLEP Careers Hub, HQ Music Studios and DMU Media production experts and to work with three cohorts of disadvantaged young people to create digital CVs. Commissioned and due to start November 2022.
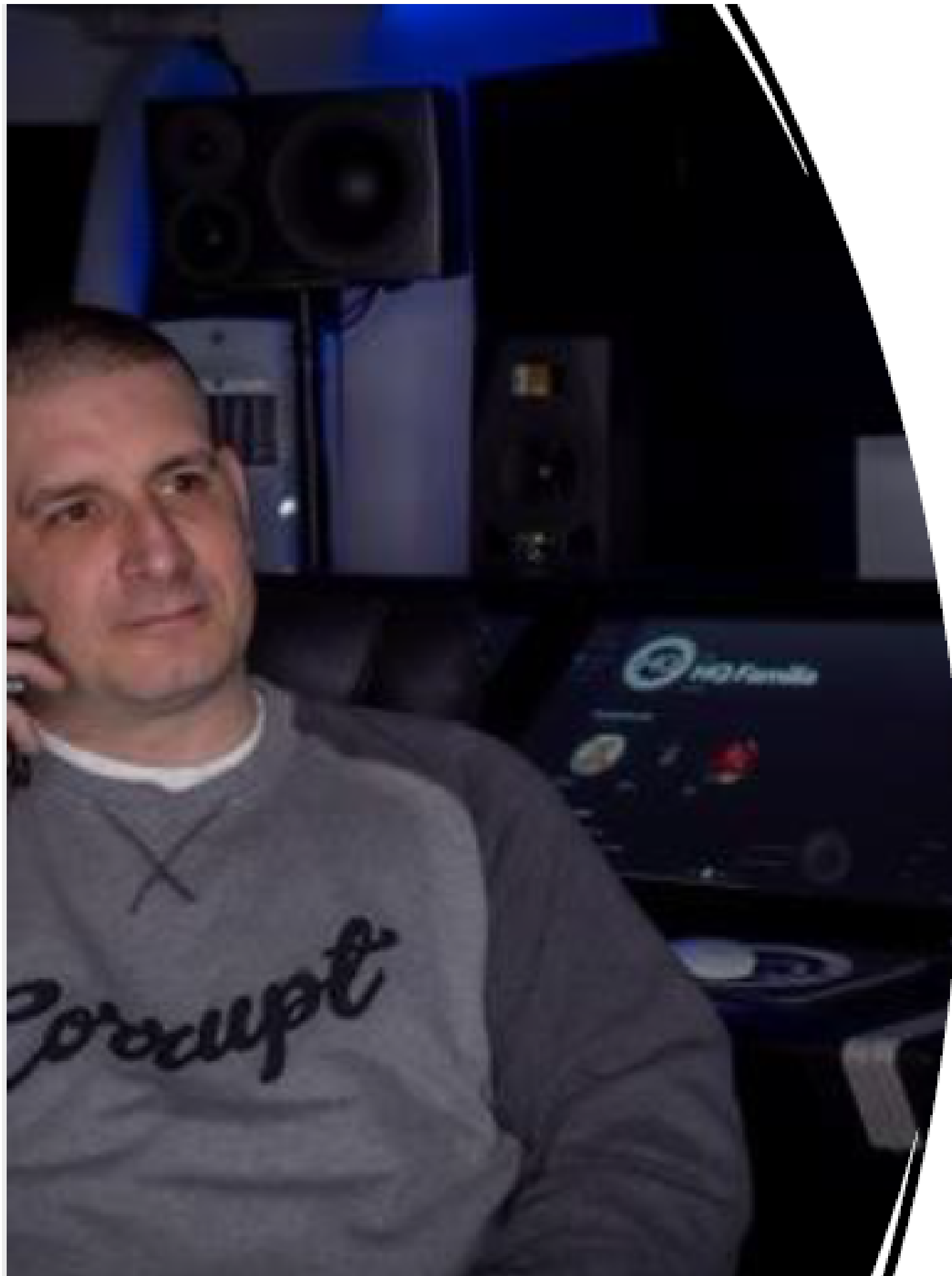

THE **CAREERS & ENTERPRISE** COMPANY

we discover **Digital**

Divya
Picker in a Distribution Centre

"I have to use a device which monitors speed and efficiency when picking and packing items ordered by customers online. I struggled when logging-in and updating records. My attendance and time keeping was good, I work hard, and my boss says my attitude is great...but my monthly report flagged my performance as 'RED – requiring improvement'. After some basic digital training, work has become less stressful and I'm getting more done."

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

we discover **Digital**

Yasin
Studio Owner

Hi, I'm Yasin,

I'm the owner and founder of HQ studios and I've always loved music. I've always said I was a bit of technophobe, I really don't understand technology and I'm not very technical, which people often laugh at because I'm surrounded by kit all the time.

Once the business started taking off and the music started taking off, I realised I needed technology and programs for my label management, for meetings, for video calls around the world. Although I still say I'm a bit of a technophobe and I'm definitely not technical, I definitely rely on technology and digital.

Case study

Microsoft Get On

LLEP joined Microsoft's Get On skills programme as a founder member in March 2022 and have been the first LEP to promote the programme widely at a local level. This has led to over 400 click-throughs for LLEP links to Get On.
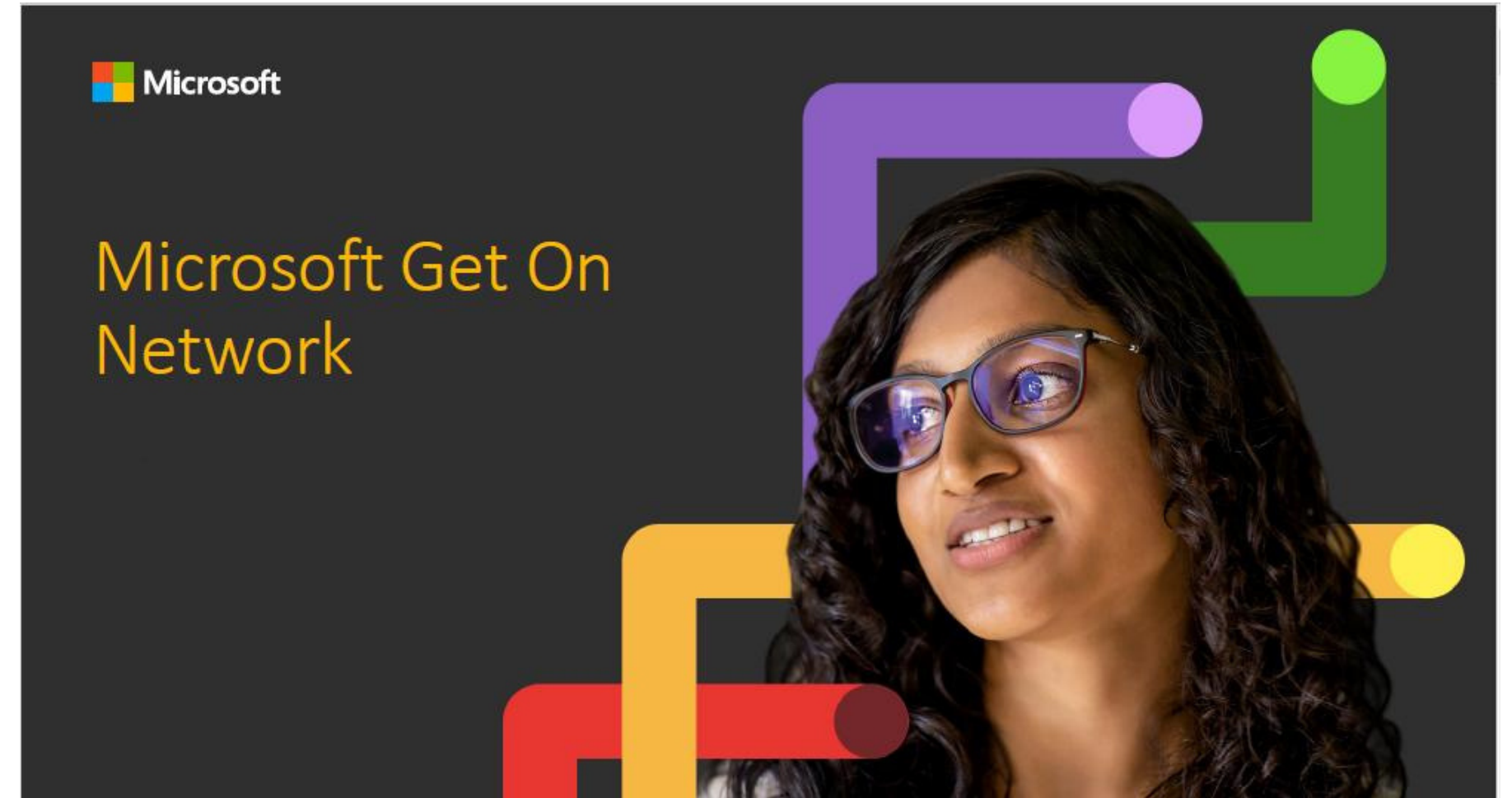
Other digital support

The work of the Digital Skills Partnership does not cover all digital skills activity in the LLEP area and Adult Education, colleges, universities, training providers, the voluntary sector and other commissioned projects (for example the Community Renewal Fund, Virtual Community Centres and Heath led work) all play an important role in addressing the needs of the area.

Other area developments

Institute of Technology

Awarded to Loughborough college and university* with a strong emphasis on digital skills. Scheduled to open September 2023

Skills Bootcamps

The government skills bootcamp programme is now growing in the LLEP area after not being chosen as one of the original pilot areas.

Cyber Cluster

DMU are leading local partners in a bid to bring a government backed Cyber Cluster to the region.

Local Skills Improvement Plans

LSIPs will be rolled out nationally in autumn 2022. This will help to track the supply and demand of local skills.

*in partnership with Derby College and Derby University

Digital Skills Partnership - phase 2

Digital Skills Partnership Phase 2 – October 2022 - 2024

For Phase 2 of the DSP Oct 2022 – Sept 2024, the LLEP have commissioned Leicester De Montfort University to lead the Digital Skills Partnership. DMU have had a strong presence across the DSP work to date, including involvement in projects and active participation in all work streams.

DMU are already involved in several digital skills initiatives to drive forward the area skills agenda, including:

- Skills Bootcamps
- Pilot of degree level short courses
- Leading a bid to bring a Cyber Cluster to the region
- Degree level apprenticeships

Future work

Official DSP status

During phase 2, the LLEP also hope to become an 'official' DSP as part of the DCMS programme. Conversations have been ongoing with the project lead and it is hoped that the Leicestershire DSP will join the DCMS programme during 2022-23.

As part of the new commission, DMU will:

- Hold events at the Leicester Business Festival under the banner of Digital Leicestershire

- Produce quarterly summaries of activity for partners including new courses and initiatives

- Produce a Digital Landscape tool for employers to understand the local skills offer

- Seek additional funding sources to integrate DSP and LSIP* activities

- Seek additional funding to create a digital skills strategy for local schools

*Local Skills Improvemnt Plans - see next page

The different types of people in a team.

Local Skills Improvement Plans LSIPs

LSIPs will be central to local area skills provision in the future. Leicestershire has been a pilot area for an LSIP and has already started to engage employers via employee representative bodies.

The DSP will work alongside the LSIP to identify the digital requirements of businesses in the area.

Photo - excerpt from LSIP promotional video for schools, commissioned by the LLEP Careers Hub

Kick starting phase 2

Phase 2 will start to take shape in Autumn 2022 with several activities to raise the profile of Digital Leicestershire, including:

- Digital Transformation
- Digital Skills gaps
- Data analysis
- Digital Marketing
- Start up and Scale Up business event
- School presentations by global tech company employees
- Event by PayPal aimed at the Asian business community
- Digital Influencers project to help 3 cohorts of disadvantaged young people

Digital Inclusion

An important strand of the DSP work so far has been to address Digital Inclusion.

The commissioned projects have made a strong start here but there is still more to do.

Partnership work between the public, private and voluntary sector is crucial to matching those most in need with the resources available.

Leicester City survey

A survey in Autumn 2021 showed that citizens were not confident in the following:

19% accessing council services (8% don't know)

17% determining if a website is trustworthy (6% don't know)

15% identifying spam (5% don't know)

14% searching and applying for jobs (12.2% didn't know)

20% managing privacy settings (6% didn't know)

13% doing online learning (7% didn't know)

10% doing online shopping (3% didn't know)

19% paying bills/online banking (8% don't know)

6% sending emails (2% didn't know)

6% using a search engine (2% didn't know)

12% using social media (5% didn't know)

15% of the Leicester adult population would equate to **35,190** people

Digital Inclusion priorities for the DSP

- Increase number of community organisations accessing free data via Good Things Foundation data National Databank

- Support equipment recycling and lending schemes by joining partners and promoting existing projects

- Engage with more grassroots organisations to access hard to reach groups

- Support and be consistent with local authority plans and initiatives (city, county and district)

- Engage more businesses via their Corporate Social Responsibility plans

- Increase use of on-line learning resources, such as Microsoft Get On programme and Good Thing Foundation Learn My Way

Higher digital skills

Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Aug 2021 - Aug 2022)
💼 Programmers and Software Development Professionals	9,041 / 3,775
💼 IT User Support Technicians	3,678 / 1,760
💼 IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers	2,760 / 1,353
💼 IT Operations Technicians	1,739 / 870
💼 Web Design and Development Professionals	1,617 / 769
💼 Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals n.e.c.	1,686 / 729
💼 Management Consultants and Business Analysts	365 / 151

Source: Lightcast economic modelling

Alongside basic digital skills, there is also a strong demand for specialist IT roles.

Leicestershire has seen thousands of roles advertised in the past year.

A coherent local skills system will seek to address the supply and demand mismatch with more opportunities to learn at different levels.