

7.6 Improvement Project Charter – digital and tech sector

Improvement Project Title Increase uptake and completion of qualifications to support the digital and tech sector by 20% by 2026.				
Executive Sponsor Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children’s Services Board				
Project Lead Name: Charlie Love Job Role and Organisation: Quality Improvement Officer - Digital, ACC Email Address: chalove@aberdeencity.gov.uk				
Aim statement Increasing the number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector by 20% by 2026.				
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcome 7: 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.				
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan There are no community ideas from the Locality Plans aligned to this project.				
Why this is it important and issues • Digital is a key growth sector for the North East and an essential part of the transition away from oil and gas, as the economy is diversified. • The digital skills gap is a significant issue nationally and in the North East. Nationally the sector has a need to fill over 13,000 roles each year. • Young people equipped with appropriate digital skills can drive local start-ups and/or support the local skills need. • The SDS Regional Skills Assessment for Aberdeen City and Shire 2022 identifies that there will be changes in the types of roles workers undertake within sectors, as new ways of working and technologies are introduced to the workplace. This supports growth in IT and technological-based roles across a broad range of sectors, from manufacturing to retail to professional services – with impacts beyond the digital sector. • As can be seen in the chart below, in 2021/22 942 students completed courses aligned to the digital and tech sector. Number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Number of young people completing courses</th></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>942</td></tr></table> ■ Aim for achievement by 2026 • It is recognised that attitudes/perceptions of the digital and tech can be a barrier and through increasing and diversifying the offer in relation to digital and tech and at early years promoting this through different creative mechanisms we aim to achieve the aim and increase the number of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) sustaining a positive destination upon leaving school.	Year	Number of young people completing courses	2021/22	942
Year	Number of young people completing courses			
2021/22	942			
Measures Outcome measures Number of young people completing courses related to the digital and tech sector by end of 2026. (Baseline: 942, 2021/22) Process measures • Number of young people participating in digital courses (S4 and above) • Number of qualifications offered across SCQF levels 3 to 7. • Number of NPAs offered across city schools broken down by level				

• Termly pulse surveys of pupil attitudes to new digital qualifications (May 2024 to March 2025). • Teacher predictions of pupil attainment in NPA courses (gathered termly). • % of children and young people with positive attitudes to digital careers and who see this as their career pathway (Primary and secondary) • % increase in staff confidence with computing science delivery		
Change ideas • Develop new National Progression Awards and wider range of digital qualifications with aim of 1 NPA, related to digital and tech sector, available in each test location by May 2024. (step 1) • Develop and introduce new “gateway qualifications” which provide digital experiences without high levels of coding or other technical complexity (e.g. Level 4 / Level 5 Esports, Games Design, Data Science) with at least one offered or in development in each test location by March 2025. (step 2) • Introduce targeted professional learning specifically on teaching of Computing Science and Digital across broad general education (Early Years to S3) to increase confidence of staff and to broaden the pipeline into qualifications through the delivery of professional learning		
Location/Test group • ASG Group - St Machar Academy (TBC) • ASG Group - Bridge of Don Academy (TBC) • ASG Group - Lochside Academy (TBC)		
Resources • Potential partner organisations to support curriculum development, training and research. • Existing resources will be able to deliver on the other change ideas. • Potential funding from external sources (Digital Xtra Fund, STACS, Digital Sector and existing vendor/partners) to support events and experiences for learners across all stages.		
Potential risks and/or barriers to success and actions to address these • Lack of resources to broaden the talent pipeline so more children and young people see Digital and Computing Science as a positive pathway. Consultation with SQA and other partners to identify resources to support. • Lack of awareness of career pathways for the digital sector and negative perceptions of careers roles. Work with SDS, Opportunity North East and other partners to increase the profile of digital and computing science with learners and parents/carers. • Gender imbalance across the digital sector. Review initiatives, such as Dress Code, to address gender imbalance across digital courses. Work to address how the subject is perceived and to use positive female role models to exemplify subject careers.		
Project Team Allison Horne (Project Manager), ACC Shona Milne, ACC Stuart Craig, ACC Brendan McCart, STACS Arabella Sinclair, University of Aberdeen John Isaacs, Robert Gordon University Karen O’Hanlon, Opportunity North East Cameron Walker, NESCOL TBC, Young people TBC, Skills Development Scotland		
Community/User Representation/Engagement • Consultation with young people and families on perceptions of computing science and digital courses. • Review of available pathways. • Consultation with current CS and Digital Staff to identify skills gaps. • Feedback from staff and C&YP will inform the project throughout.		
Outline Project Plan		
Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	• Project team established • Development of Project Charter	September / October 2023
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	• Design changes to be tested	November 2023 to April 2024

	• Prepare curriculum resources to support change ideas. • Commence testing and measuring success of change ideas • Review change ideas	May 2024 to March 2025 Ongoing
Implementation (Project Score 7-10)	• Project end report • Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains	April 2026
Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	• Subject to recommendations of end report	August 2026