

## **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital Skills Better Connected – Delivering Digital Britain by 2030 – Call for Evidence**

The APPG on Digital Skills is launching a call for evidence to inform our next report and forthcoming evidence sessions in the second half of 2022 and the first half of 2023.

### **Background**

Over the last 12 months, the APPG on Digital Skills has been focusing our work on the importance of digital skills in the workplace in the post-pandemic work. We have heard evidence from figures in national, regional and local government, key employer organisation, businesses, training providers and campaign groups on the imperative of equipping both our present and future workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

In the last period of our work, events have moved rapidly with two significant developments.

Firstly, the publication of the Government's long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper contained two challenges that should have a significant impact on the development of digital skills. These include:

- 1) Delivering nationwide gigabit capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for most of the population by 2030.
- 2) Significantly increasing the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training across every area of England by 2030 to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality training annually and 80,000 doing so in the lowest skilled areas.

These are laudable goals with the potential to revolutionise our country and the lives of our population over the next decade. Both ambitions are integral to delivering a digital skills revolution but cannot be realised without a successful rollout of digital skills. The symbiosis of these goals is what will underpin the next phase of our work as an All-Party Group.

Secondly, the UK currently faces unprecedented economic challenges, encapsulated by a spike in inflation of the kind not seen in four decades. Government is understandably focusing on mitigating the impact of cost-of-living pressures in the short-term. However, it must be recognised that the Prime Minister's ambition of realising a high skill, high wage economy, can only be met by delivering a levelling up in digital skills. We view this as the core component of the vision of a 'Digital Britain' being delivered by 2030.

The APPG has decided to launch a call for evidence as part of our 'Better Connected' inquiry. It will examine the interaction between access to digital infrastructure and growth in digital skills, and how this can help realise the Government's ambitions in this area and exceed them.

In addition to this call for evidence, the APPG will be holding oral evidence sessions with expert witnesses in the autumn ahead the publication of our report before the end of 2022.

**[We are taking written submissions for our report to the Government with a deadline of Friday 30 September 2022. Please see further details of the areas we are seeking evidence on below.](#)**

The key themes we are seeking evidence on are:

1. What are the key factors constraining the Government's ambitions of highly digitally skilled and connected Britain from being delivered by 2030?
2. What lessons have employers carried forward from the pandemic in terms of supporting their workforces in world where digital skills are more necessary to every work than ever before? What role employers and employer groups be playing in fulfilling the Digital Britain ambitions?
3. How do the ambitions set out the Levelling Up White Paper interact with the evolving digital skills agenda and where should government (national, local, devolved and regional) be looking to go further and faster?
4. Do the lowest skilled areas have the necessary digital infrastructure needed to realise the digital skills revolution envisaged in the White Paper and vice versa?
5. Are there sufficient education and training providers across all parts of the country to deliver the necessary digital skills to fulfil the ambitions in the White Paper?
6. How will the envisaged UK National Academy improve education in digital skills among young people across the country?
7. Are current government programmes, including the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, sufficiently targeted to help the lowest skilled areas realise the ambitions of the White Paper?
8. How are the needs of employers in relation to digital skills reflected in the Local Skills Improvement Plans?
9. Are the nine new Institutes of Technology sufficient in scope and support to boost higher level digital skills among adults?
10. Will the Government's proposed In-Work Progression offer seek to address the digital skills gap among the poorest in society?
11. Can you provide specific example(s) of where digital inclusion has been successfully implemented?
12. Can you provide specific examples(s) of where digital inclusion has not been as successful, and suggestions for areas of improvement?

## Submissions

Please limit your submission to **2 sides of A4**, use clear sub-headings and include a brief bullet summary of your evidence at the top of the submission. **We will also accept submissions in video or other non-written formats such as audio files of no more than two minutes in length.**

Send with the subject line:

APPG on Digital Skills – Call for Evidence, to: [appgdigitalskills@connectpa.co.uk](mailto:appgdigitalskills@connectpa.co.uk).