

How BCS will support the government's jobs plan?

Briefing Document – Post webinar 11 August



BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

BCS is a registered charity which exists to promote and advance the education and practice of computing for the benefit of the public and we are on a mission to ensure everyone's experience with technology is positive. It is something we have been committed to since 1957.

We were granted a Royal Charter in 1984 making us the Chartered Institute for IT. Our community includes 60,000 plus individual members in 150 countries and 200 organisational members. A summary of our activities is included at the end of this document.

BCS backing the government's Plan for Jobs

The impact of Covid-19 has reached far and wide and had devastating consequences for some. BCS wants to use our role as the professional body for IT, to assist the government in helping people regain employment and benefit from quality training.

BCS held a discussion webinar in August, to identify and discuss some of the important factors to helping people understand the opportunities and benefits of embarking onto an education pathway or career in digital. Our president, Rebecca George chaired the online event which included representatives from Capita, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Youth Employment UK. You can find a recording of the event [here](#).

BCS future activities include:

- Webinar focusing on the employment challenges for SMEs and how the Plan for Jobs could help
- Information on digital careers and training opportunities
- A central hub of information on IT and digital training opportunities and signposts to other careers information and guidance.

The Government's Jobs Plan Summarised

Strategy

- The Office for Talent will be launched. With delivery teams across government departments, it will be focused on attracting, retaining, and developing top **research and science** talent across the **UK** and **internationally**.

Furlough

- The current furlough scheme will end in October 2020.
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will see an additional one-off payment of £1,000 to UK employers for every furloughed employee who remains continuously employed through to the end of January 2021. Payments will be made from February 2021.

Support for young people

- Support will be available for the 700,000 young people due to leave education this year. There will be **£101 million** for the 2020-21 academic year to give all 18-19-year old school and college leavers in England the opportunity to study targeted high value level 2 and 3 courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

Kickstart Scheme

- A new Kickstart Scheme will be introduced in Great Britain - a **£2 billion** fund to create hundreds of thousands high quality 6-month work placements aimed at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. Funding for each job will cover 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus the associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.

Traineeships

- An additional **£111 million** available this year to triple participation in traineeships in England for 16-24-year olds. The government will pay **£1,000** per trainee to employers who provide work placements and training as part of this scheme. The government will improve provision and expand eligibility for traineeships to those with Level 3 qualifications and below.

Apprenticeships

- A new payment of **£2,000** will be given to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1st August 2020 to 31st January 2021. These payments will be in addition to the existing £1,000 payment the government already provides for new 16-18-year-old apprentices, and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan – where that applies.

Jobs

- **£895 million** to enhance work search support by doubling the number of work coaches in **Jobcentre Plus** before the end of the financial year across Great Britain.
- **£32 million** funding over the next 2 years for the **National Careers Service** so that 269,000 more people in England can receive personalised advice on training and work.
- **£95 million** this year to expand the scope of the **Work and Health Programme** in Great Britain to introduce additional voluntary support in the autumn for those on benefits that have been unemployed for more than 3 months.
- **£40 million** to fund private sector capacity to introduce a **job finding support service** in Great Britain in the autumn. This **online**, one-to-one service will help those who have been unemployed for less than three months increase their chances of finding employment.

Sector support

- **£17 million** to triple the number of **sector-based work academy placements** in England to provide vocational training and guaranteed interviews for more people, helping them gain the skills needed for the jobs available in their local area.
- Protecting 1.8 million employees in the hospitality sector, the Government will introduce the **Eat Out to Help Out** scheme. Meals eaten at any participating businesses between Mon-Weds will be 50% off.
- Temporary VAT cut for food, non-alcoholic drinks, accommodation, and attractions – From 15 July 2020 to 12 January 2021, to support businesses and jobs in the hospitality sector.

The full Plan for Jobs can be found at www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/a-plan-for-jobs-2020.

What the Plan for Jobs means for IT and digital

A digital-first lifestyle emerged overnight as the UK went into lockdown. Organisations and people of all ages embraced digital technologies to ensure some sense of normality and as much as possible stay connected to friends, family, and work. The economic demand for a digital first Britain as we enter a post-corvid economy has never been so critical. The UK is in recession for the first time in 11 years with the steepest fall in of GDP in record of 20.4% due to the coronavirus¹.

¹ www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53753189?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk&link_location=live-reporting-story

What we knew about digital skills before lockdown

Prior to Coronavirus, the UK's lack of digital skills was increasingly on many organisations' agendas. It increasingly recognised that digital skills should be a basic requirement for every role in every industry as more elements of jobs are completed online, use digital technologies or are handling large amounts of data. Despite this, the current supply of diverse talent into the required pathways of education, and the lack of diversity in digital roles within the workforce currently threatens the capability, reliability, and success of the sector itself.

Research by Lloyds Bank shows that nearly 12 million people do not have the essential digital skills needed for life in the UK², which highlights the digital divide the UK is experiencing. The barriers to participation are glaringly obvious with lack of access, often due to the inability to pay for devices and home connection; disregard to the importance of connectivity and digital to better the opportunities available to the individual; and lack of digital skills and education.

How did digital skills play out during lockdown?

As the UK emerges from Covid-19, it is undeniable that our economy has suffered immensely, with over 1.35 million unemployed in the first three months of 2020³. No sector has been immune from the effects of Covid-19, with under 25s being the hardest hit as they are now 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed due to Covid-19. This unprecedented global pandemic has caused the UK economy to shrink over 25% from February to April 2020⁴, with circa 9.6 million jobs across 1.2 million different employers being furloughed in the UK as of 2nd August 2020⁵. Women under 25 face the highest chance of unemployment, being six times more likely than male workers over 25 to work in the highest risk sectors⁶.

Technology has been essential in keeping the economy operating at minimum and ensuring people can attain some normality, although through a digital lens. According to research from BT, four in ten people in the UK agree that they have discovered new digital skills that they plan to continue using post lockdown⁷. Nonetheless the UK's adaptation to a new digital normal, has been driven by necessity, but highlights the urgency of driving a comprehensive digital agenda as we continue to emerge from Covid-19 as digital exclusion will mean not all of society could partake in this monumental shift to a digital normal.

As the BCS webinar highlighted, unemployment and furlough remained low in the technology sector, as it remained a core function and the opportunity to continue operating for many organisations. The BCS Leaders report 2020, asked IT leaders what their priorities would be in 2020 to which they responded with: operational efficiencies (56%), continuous innovation (53%) and business transformation and organisational change (43%)⁸ each of these priorities will have digital and digital skills at their heart. Digital skills and digital transformation should become a necessity for all organisations as we move into a post-covid UK economy, to operate continually at maximum capability.

² www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2020/apr/digital-skills-to-fight-covid-19.html

³ www.independent.co.uk/news/business/coronavirus-uk-employment-furlough-workers-covid-19-ons-a9521296.html

⁴ www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53019360

⁵ www.statista.com/statistics/1116638/uk-number-of-people-on-furlough/

⁶ www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/young-workers-are-most-risk-job-losses-due-coronavirus-crisis

⁷ <https://newsroom.bt.com/half-of-brits-have-changed-their-habits-for-the-better-bt-reveals-how-the-uk-adapted-in-100-days-of-lockdown>

⁸ www.bcs.org/media/5498/itleaders-2020.pdf

What digital skills and job priorities do we need to think about post lockdown?

As the UK eases out of lockdown, Covid-19 has disproportionately affected organisations who are digitally incapable operationally, unable to deliver services online and who do not operate in the cloud. One key reason companies have not successfully digitally transformed is a lack of digitally skilled staff, including company directors.

Digital upskilling is key to companies remaining in business and increasing future growth. ONS data has shown the chances of someone's job being replaced by an algorithm closely correlates to the level of education required for that job. As digitisation accelerates post-Covid, such automation is likely to increase as organisations attempt to mitigate risks from future pandemics. Consequently, high levels of digital competence will be essential for individuals to secure a better job that will not be automated out of existence. Digitisation will become essential in all sectors, and digitally professionalising the whole workforce will be essential for building resilience, increasing productivity and innovation, and consequently increasing growth and revenue.

As organisations realise the importance of a digital first approach, they need to understand how they can futureproof themselves. This would include the following and will be applicable in every sector.

- Resilience and productivity mean automating every tasks/process/service possible in the cloud.
- Build digital first business models for the entire value chain.
- Develop diverse talented interdisciplinary teams that can deliver digital solutions that are flexible and scalable.
- Learn from the best, join communities of practice that know what works and how to make it work.
- Join with your community to talk to policy makers, they are in listening mode.

As employers look to the government's Jobs Plan for available funding to make digitisation possible, and to increase digital skills, it is critical that organisations use this as an opportunity to create a long term internal digital and skills strategy. If organisations use the government's jobs plan as a short term fix for their business it is likely they won't succeed, however if used to develop a coherent digital-first business strategy they are more likely to become resilient against future shocks and grow their business.

How can the Plan for Jobs help?

As the pandemic eases, and the transition period to achieve Brexit gets closer, digital skills will be an essential part of our economic and social renewal, in terms of turbo-charging our infrastructure, creating a workforce with essential digital skills and ensuring fewer and fewer people are digitally disenfranchised.

When furlough ends in October 2020, a more realistic picture of our already volatile economy will emerge. Covid-19 has simply highlighted the urgency around digital skills for our entire population, however the government's Jobs Plan emphasises the need for investment in the hardest hit, under 25's, as they are the potential pipeline of the digital industries and non-digital occupations. There are currently 3.78 million 16-24-year olds in employment, a huge decrease of 100,000 from the last quarter and 87,000 fewer than a year earlier and over 1 million young people not in employment, education, or training⁹. Although organisations may face financial difficulty during this uncertain period, it is essential that they invest in upskilling the employees they do have to improve their future capability.

Creating traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities relies on employers understanding the benefits and importance, to the economy, their business and those who are currently unemployed or facing unemployment. If UK organisations utilise the government's Jobs plan in tandem with other digital

⁹ www.youthemployment.org.uk/youth-unemployment-a-perfect-storm-labour-market-survey-july

government initiatives such as the UK's Digital Strategy¹⁰ the UK will be equipped to be a leader of digital excellence.

To ensure the government's Jobs Plan remains holistic, organisations should look to use this period of transition to invest in those over 25. Employers will be incentivised to hire apprentices over 25 as they will receive a one-off payment of £1,500 for each new apprentice they hire from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. Digital apprenticeships play a significant part in moving our economy forward and offer a sound solution to provide an ageing population with better digital skills. A YouGov poll found that around half of non-retired over-50s want to still be working between the ages of 65 and 70, and only 15% of non-retired over-50s said they would want to stop work altogether between ages 60 and 65¹¹.

Arguably, older workers have a better understanding of the workplace, and with no set age for retirement, 40 to 50-year olds have the potential to upskill into another discipline or increase their current capabilities. Alongside apprenticeships there will be a number of initiatives available for unemployed adults to benefit from as part of the jobs plan such as more work coaches in Jobcentre Plus, increased funding for the National Careers Service to provide personalised advice on training and work, introduction of additional voluntary support for those on benefits that have been unemployed for more than 3 months and a job finding support service in Great Britain.

Government Jobs Plan Information for the Devolved Nations

www.gov.uk/government/news/summer-statement-delivers-plan-for-jobs-in-scotland

www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-guidance-information-for-ni-businesses-employers

<https://gov.wales/business-and-employers-coronavirus>

The Government Incentives Explained

What is a traineeship?

A traineeship is for those aged 16-24 and develops workplace skills and sector focussed vocational learning to prepare for an apprenticeship or job. Traineeships can help young people get experience to help them take the next step into an employed position. They might be appropriate for someone who is not quite sure what their next steps are and what to get an understanding for the industry and role. Traineeships are for level 3 and below and it can last from 6 weeks up to 1 year, though they commonly last for less than 6 months. For more information see the government website on traineeships and the ESFA for funding details.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships--2>

What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships can be the next step from a traineeship and are open to all age groups. Apprenticeships range from level 2 -7 and apprentices are employed, earn a wage and as well as learning on the job, they also completed 20% off the job training. Their competence is independently assessed against an occupational standard defined by employers. Individuals start an apprentice because they are interested in working in a specific occupational area. For more information see the ESFA and government details below, along with BCS' offering for Digital IT apprenticeships.



www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-apprenticeships

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy

¹¹ www.hr magazine.co.uk/article-details/the-benefits-of-employing-older-apprentices

www.bcs.org/get-qualified/apprenticeships/

How do T-levels differ?

T Levels are an alternative to A levels, apprenticeships and other 16 to 19 courses. The T Level is equivalent to 3 A Levels and develops broad vocational skills – it includes 80% off the job learning and 20% work placement (opposite to an apprenticeship). They are appropriate for young people who know the vocational area they want to work in, but are not sure of the exact occupation, and do not feel ready to go into employment.

www.tlevels.gov.uk/?msclid=e4becf78319814e3688c9049309d21d1&gclid=CMeNzvCXkOsCFc3KGwodtDwN1g

Further information on BCS

The purpose of BCS, defined by its Royal Charter, is to promote and advance the education and practice of computing for the benefit of the public. We are the professional body for information technology in the UK. We are also a key stakeholder in a wide range of initiatives that are helping to close the digital skills gap for everyone at every age, to help them thrive in the fourth industrial revolution.

Schools

In 2012 the Secretary of State for Education invited BCS to coordinate the development of the now statutory computing curriculum for schools, in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering. Ever since BCS has played a key role throughout the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in equipping teachers with the skills needed to teach all children the essential computational thinking skills they will need in life. BCS is a partner in the consortium establishing the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in schools, funded by an £84m contract from the DfE to upskill and provide ongoing CPD to computing teachers. Through the Barefoot Computing project⁸, run in partnership with BT, we have helped over half the primary schools throughout the whole of the UK gain initial training in computing. BCS also runs the DfE funded scholarship scheme to attract outstanding candidates onto computing teacher training courses.

Colleges and Adult Education Providers

Through a range of funded BCS flexible digital literacy units and qualifications, including AEB. Our programme of digital learning will appeal to different learner types, build confidence, enhance well-being, and provide future opportunities for career progression from entry level through to advanced.

<https://www.bcs.org/deliver-and-teach-qualifications/training-providers-and-adult-education-centres/deliver-our-digital-literacy-qualifications/>

Universities

BCS has accredited the computing degree programmes in over a hundred UK universities, ensuring that their curricula and teaching methods meet appropriate standards. BCS is a partner in the Institute of Coding⁹, set up by the government to help address the UK digital skills gap at undergraduate level.

Apprenticeships

BCS is recognised to end-point assess 14 digital apprenticeship standards and has delivered over 4,000 end-point assessments, which is central to our role in ensuring IT practitioners achieve the highest

standards of professionalism. As part of this role, we undertake a variety of activities to promote apprenticeships, drive inclusion and diversity, and support the futureproofing of apprenticeships for dynamic tech occupations.

Professional registration

Through professional registration – such as the RITTech standard developed in collaboration with the Gatsby Foundation, and Chartered IT Professional status– we ensure everyone from whichever background can gain the same professional recognition based solely on their proven competencies, whether they've followed an academic route, a technical route or a combination of the two. BCS is a partner in the consortium establishing the new UK Cyber Security Council, funded by a grant from DCMS to support the development of cyber security into a fully mature profession. BCS is also a founding member of FEDIP, which is a professional register for NHS informaticians to improve modern health and care services through digital technologies demonstrated against publicly available competency standards.

Continuous professional development

Through certification, BCS supports practitioners to continuously develop professionally beyond their initial qualification, which may have been through diverse pathways such as an apprenticeship or university degree, e.g. over 100,000 practitioners worldwide hold BCS Business Analysis professional certificates.

Digital literacy

BCS digital literacy qualifications raise the levels of IT literacy and empower people to work and thrive in the digital world. Our programme of digital learning will appeal to different learner types to build confidence, enhance well-being, and provide future opportunities for career progression from entry level through to advanced.

For further information please contact:

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