

UPSKILLING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FOR DIGITAL FUTURES

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

The problem

- There is a digital divide where the poorest groups in our society lack digital access and skills.
- Limited access to the digital world deepens educational and economic inequalities and prevents access to goods and services which are essential for daily life.
- Digital access and digital skills are essential to enabling people to fully participate in our society.

What you can do at a local level

- Develop **local 'minimum digital living standards' frameworks** with public, private, voluntary, and community sectors to provide families with the digital infrastructure needed to participate in today's digital world (e.g., high-speed broadband, a functioning device, and essential digital skills training).
- Support the **development of digital literacy** and educational skills programmes across local areas and in schools.
- Develop **ward-level partnerships across sectors to leverage resources, expertise, and support**. This may include mentorships, training, internships, workshops, equipment provision, and training programmes.
- Work with **local communities to identify local needs** and develop projects and programmes in community settings.
- Work with **schools to extend and enhance the IT curriculum** and support the development of teachers' IT skills.

Evidence-based insights

Digital skills shortages cost the UK **£63 billion** each year.

Due to affordability issues, **one million** households have cut back or cancelled internet packages in the past year.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

Robots in the Classroom

Educational robotics are affordable machines designed to support learning through interactive and practical examples, enhancing the learning experiences of children and young people (CYP), while fostering healthy peer relationships through teamwork.

Leeds Institute for Data Analytics (LIDA)

LIDA narrows the digital skills gap for young people in areas of acute socioeconomic inequality through workshops which address the specific barriers CYP face to participating in digital skills and careers.

Living Well Schools

A forward-thinking initiative which aimed to transform schools into healthy environments. It addresses the digital divide through collaborating with local partners to ensure that CYP and families can access the necessary skills and technology to engage with the digital world.

White Rose Centre for Inclusive Computing (WRCIC)

The WRCIC collaborated with local universities and other stakeholders to demonstrate the benefits and societal contributions of computing to CYP who might not view higher education or tech careers as accessible or attractive.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

Please share this guide and start a discussion in your organisation about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.