

Initiation Form

Summary		Reference:	SKI003
Activity Name:	Digital Upskilling		
Activity Description:	<p>Provision of accredited and non-accredited digital skills training for individuals aged 16+. Helping address current and future skills needs for the digital sector as well as digital needs across sectors, particularly supporting SME skills needs and training requirements, over and above that already fundable by post 16 and adult skills programmes. Delivery responding to need and demand, as highlighted in our recent Digital Skills Deep Dive commissioned by Cornwall & Isles of Scilly (CloS) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). With a particular focus on under-represented groups engaging with digital skills to help address the gender profile of the sector and wage gap. The activity will also focus on highlighting digital career pathways and progression routes for further and higher skills development.</p> <p>Working in partnership with the CloS People Hub and Good Growth Hub to support individual needs and engage and understand employer digital skills requirements. Successful project delivery will be supported by an employment and skills portal being delivered by Cornwall Council, which will provide access to a range of information advice, guidance and support.</p>		
Investment Priority:	People and Skills	Intervention:	E41: Local Digital Skills
Funding Available:	£2,000,000 (Total)	£ 0 (Capital)	£ 2,000,000 (Revenue)
Open Date: Application	05/06/2023	Review point 1	31/07/2023
Review point 2	09/10/2023	Close Date:	09/10/2023

Context
<p>Description: Description of the activity and what is expected to be achieved</p> <p>Our Good Growth Investment Plan identifies that investment will be made into Digital Upskilling.</p> <p>Through this open call we are looking for providers to come forward to identify the need for digital upskilling within CloS and provide targeted, specialist digital skills support to train and/or retrain individuals or to support them to progress within the digital skills field of work. We expect any bid coming forward to offer accredited and non-accredited training for individuals that will help to address current and future digital skills needs at all levels. Bids must outline how the digital upskilling support they will provide will fuel growth in the digital/tech sector by providing a pipeline of talent, making sure every resident has access to the essential digital and data skills that are increasingly required for all jobs, and building on the Council's Digital Inclusion</p>

team's work¹ with community groups to ensure every resident has the right skills, kit, and connectivity to operate in a digital world.

A particular focus will be on supporting SME skills needs and training requirements, over and above that already fundable by post-16 and adult skills programmes. Close cooperation will be needed with the CloS Good Growth Hub and the People Hub in order to avoid any duplication of activity. Delivery will need to respond to need and demand, as highlighted in the recent Digital Skills Deep Dive² commissioned by CloS Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). With a particular focus on underrepresented groups engaging with digital skills to help address the gender profile of the sector and wage gap. The activity will also focus on highlighting and promoting digital career pathways to residents of all ages.

We expect any bid to come forward to work closely with the People Hub and Good Growth Hub to support individual needs and engage and understand employer digital skills requirements. Successful project delivery will be supported by an employment and skills portal being delivered by Cornwall Council, which will provide access to a range of information advice, guidance and support.

Project design should take into account people's and employer needs and views and provide geographical coverage and proximity for the most deprived neighbourhoods, as well as neighbourhoods who have previously been less likely to engage with skills training offers, as this will help drive the inclusive growth ambitions of CloS and should offer the following types of activity:

- Initial Assessment of skills and training needs in partnership with the People Hub
- Assess other needs and barriers which may prevent people from accessing training, education or employment in partnership with the People Hub
- Open up work taster, work experience or volunteering opportunities to help individuals be more job ready and more aware of jobs and careers in digital, data and tech
- Encourage more digital and tech employers to create more apprenticeship and internship opportunities and help to match individuals to such opportunities
- Enhanced awareness, access and pride in local skills provision
- Deliver, in partnership with skills providers and employers, high quality, industry relevant and complementary digital skills provision. Supporting the local community and socio-economic aspirations for the area; enabling businesses and residents to train, re-skill or upskill and help address current and future skills needs for local areas
- Providing access to and promoting basic skills opportunities and wrap around support, for example numeracy (including Multiply) and literacy
- Enable local business engagement and knowledge exchange in order to explore, co-design, develop and deliver digital skills provision. Ensuring skills provision is up-to-date, relevant and effectively meets local labour market needs
- Identify cold spots for participation and undertake targeted activities to support engagement
- Engage with local primary and secondary schools to highlight local skills priorities and digital career pathways and provide business engagement and work experience opportunities
- Provide quality labour market information and intelligence on digital careers and jobs within CloS
- Analysis and evaluation of impact to support learning of future digital skills delivery for individuals and employers

We strongly welcome bids from consortiums of organisations who will work together to deliver activity. All delivery partners will need to be identified in the application.

¹ [Digital Inclusion - Cornwall Council](#)

² [Skills in demand \(cioslep.com\)](#)

Strategic Alignment: Description of how proposals should meet strategic objectives, local need and the programme priorities. Expectations for coordination with other funding programmes.

Proposals should demonstrate strategic fit and link to local community, social or economic needs.

This opportunity contributes significantly to the achievement of Government's Mission 1 for Levelling Up: Improve productivity and pay, closing the gap between regions.

This opportunity contributes significantly to the achievement of Government's Mission 6 for Levelling Up: 200,000 more people per year completing high quality skills training.

People and Skills Objectives:

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work and upskilling the working population, encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers.
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through investment in life and employment support tailored to local need and join-up of mainstream provision and local services within and area.
- Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills.
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work and supplement local adult skills provision both qualification and non- qualification based. This should be supplementary to provision available through national employment and skills programmes.

Interventions:

- E41: Funding to support local digital skills

In 2022, the CloS Digital Skills Partnership commissioned research into the digital and tech jobs landscape in Cornwall and Isles of Silly³. The research found there is a shortage of software engineers, developers and programmers in CloS and the gap is widening. There is an imbalance in the skills demanded versus skills in the talent pipeline, despite interventions already in place. The answer is not only new/improved interventions but also better use of data, collaboration, ambition and focus. At current rates of growth, the tech sector in Cornwall could double in size by 2027. But that growth needs talent to fuel it. In order to make the most of this economic opportunity, the key recommendations were:

- CloS needs more software developers. With regards to the long-term solution, there needs to be more outreach in all schools (especially targeted at girls) and a focus on apprenticeships to ensure they are fit for purpose. Co-development of blended learning programmes needs to be expanded and more needs to be done to promote digital/tech careers to young people. To address the immediate skills gap, the use of bootcamps should be expanded.
- Digital/tech roles are varied and not just about software. Encourage greater collaboration amongst the larger employers of digital/tech workforce in Cornwall as they can work together to resolve the skills gap challenges that they share.
- A diverse and inclusive digital/tech workforce in CloS. Run a campaign to raise awareness of the Tech Talent Charter and to encourage CloS organisations to sign up to the Charter.
- Make data readily available to all that need it. Data such as uptake in education settings, code clubs, STEM ambassadors, labour market insights to include a few should also be put in one place for stakeholders in the digital skills eco-system to access. This could help prevent duplication of several organisations asking for the same data and contacting employers via surveys and focus groups.

³ [Skills in demand \(cioslep.com\)](https://www.cioslep.com)

- Everyone needs data skills. It is recommended that there is short introduction course developed to help employers and potential workers understand basic data literacy and the potential benefits from data insights for an organisation.
- Workforce Planning. Offer support for workplace planning linked to organisation strategy and how scanning for emerging tech can inform strategy. Employers considering their workforce and skills regularly will also be more likely to engage in the digital skills eco-system including offering placements to grow local talent.
- Confident teachers embedding tech across the curriculum. Ensure support and resources for teachers is fit for purpose and promote its uptake. Sustained outreach in key stage 3 is particularly important and the sector should do more to help develop workshops and programmes for these students.
- Lean on the wider system. The national Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) network and the South West Institute for Technology are two large networks that share the same goals as the CloS DSP and could provide critical mass to deliver on the identified programme

Our Good Growth Investment Plan sets out high ambitions for the people of CloS. Our ambitions are to grow the economy, build on our assets and provide everyone with the opportunity to access good quality jobs, whilst setting a course for a decarbonised and sustainable future for business, for people and for our environment. If these ambitions are to be realised then a step change in the skills system is needed, not only to improve productivity levels and to grow the economy, but also to meet the challenges and opportunities arising through the impact of the pandemic, automation, changing working practices and an ageing workforce. Whilst we cannot predict exactly how skills needs will change, we know that they will, and the SPF offers us the opportunity to shape a responsive employer-led skills system to develop a flexible, adaptable and skilled workforce fit for the future.

There are 26,000 (15%) workless households in CloS, which is higher than the UK average of 13.8%. Ill health and caring responsibilities are key factors, hampering the opportunities for some of these households and impacting negatively on our economy. Creating employment and skills opportunities across CloS in new and existing businesses will help to reduce the need to travel and increase the economic opportunities for workless households.

The delivery of skills and training opportunities into local communities, in partnership with local schools, further and higher education, communities and local business is reflected in a number of Council documents:

- Cornwall Strategy and Business Plan 2022/2026: We want a thriving, sustainable Cornwall that offers a secure home, a decent income and a great environment for all. These are the foundation stones of our future. We want to support people of all ages to retrain, learn new skills and realise their ambitions. We are determined that local residents benefit from new job opportunities in our high growth sectors. This will mean increased take up of apprenticeships and fewer people out of work. We will better align training with the skills needs of local employers in our changing economy and accelerate digital skills development. We will deliver proactive outreach to those furthest from the labour market. We will support them with skills and the challenges associated with poverty, insecure housing, ill health and wellbeing.
- Local Skills and Labour Market Strategy 2021/2030: Partnerships between various parts of the skills system are vital for a joined-up approach to learning supply. CloS has some exemplars of employer engagement; these are successfully linking employers, learners, schools and providers to provide employer-led training and effective progression pathways to enable CloS to address local skills needs.
- CloS Local Industrial Strategy: Over 40% of the population live in settlements of less than 3,000 people. Consequently, these places are a major resource in the future economy of CloS and will increasingly depend on digital connectivity and sustainable and affordable transport to sustain employment,

population and vitality in these communities. Our future economy will be built on creativity and technology. Capitalising on consistent investment in creative and digital infrastructure.

- **Digital Future Strategy:** Includes the aim of establishing an academy that acts as a space (virtual or physical) that brings together public sector, private enterprise (local and national) and education to develop the new core digital skills (e.g., data scientists, developers, service designers) and foster a culture of innovation. Helping to raise the aspirations of a future workforce in the future of digital careers in CloS.

Co-ordination with other funding programmes: Applicants should demonstrate how their proposal will complement mainstream funded activity, highlighting what wrap-around support is being proposed, and how employers and individuals will be identified and engaged. Where appropriate, alignment with and signposting to Multiply and other people and skills activities and interventions being delivered.

Applicants will be required to work closely with other parts of the Good Growth Programme in particular the central ‘front door’ for People and Skills support provided by the CloS People Hub and the business support provision put in place through the Good Growth Hub. Applicants will be expected to collaborate and coordinate provision with other people and skills activities funded via the following open invitations:

- SKI002 – Youth Engagement
- SKI004 – Green Upskilling

Please note:

- **Cornwall Council reserves the right to allocate more or less funding than the values set out in this Invitation to bid.**

All funding expended should contribute to the “Good Growth” requirements outlined in the CloS UK SPF Investment plan. Higher levels of funding distribution may be spent on projects, activity or initiatives that deliver the greatest contribution to these objectives, especially where they are located and/or target the areas and people of Cornwall and the IoS most in need of levelling up.

Route to Market: Open Invitations

Explanation of the chosen route to market:

In order to identify the projects that will deliver best value for money an open invitation to bid is viewed as the most appropriate route to market. Organisations applying must be able to demonstrate a proven track record of delivering digital upskilling services of a high quality.

We strongly welcome bids from consortiums of organisations who will work together to deliver activity. All delivery partners will need to be identified in the application.

Specific Requirements: Please identify any specific requirements

As part of the response to this initiation form, we want to see a delivery plan submitted alongside the application form. This delivery plan should articulate the nature and scope of the project and proposed activities and how it will link up provision with the People Hub and the Good Growth Hub and existing skills providers. The delivery plan must set out the role of different providers included in the application as well as how the project will be staffed and managed. Providing a relevant skills offer in CloS and a more holistic approach in areas where there is an identified need, aligned to the overarching aims and aspirations set out in this initiation document. We are particularly interested to see strong narrative around partnership and links

to other SPF and mainstream employment and skills support skills as part of the project activity, given the increasing and important role this will play in the future landscape of the skills and employment market across CloS.

We expect the project(s) to manage effective relationships with the People Hub, The Good Growth Hub and training and skills providers and to agree a delivery model that reflects these interrelationships, which may include active participation in the Economic Prosperity Advisory Panel meetings as and when appropriate. The delivery plan must set out how it will deliver compliantly and effectively with SPF requirements set by both UK Government and Cornwall Council as Accountable Body.

The minimum contact award value is set at £500,000 but applications can be submitted for the full £2,000,000. We strongly welcome bids from consortiums of organisations who will work together to deliver activity. All delivery partners will need to be identified in the application.

Cornwall Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly are committed to ensure that projects supported through the Shared Prosperity Fund deliver green and inclusive economic growth. That the jobs created are well paid, quality jobs, that all our communities are able to access the opportunities available through this fund and that our environment benefits from this economic prosperity.

The good growth outcomes have been designed to ensure that all SPF applicants consider the impact of their project and identify what contribution it will make towards good growth. Whilst we accept that not all projects can contribute to every good growth outcome, we will expect projects to ensure that:

- They contribute the good growth outcomes
- use the good growth outcomes to guide the design of their project and delivery model
- report on the good growth contribution of their activity

Cornwall Council encourages the leveraging in of other funding within project design. However, we recognise not all activities under People and Skills will be able to secure match funding. We would expect leveraging in of an element of match funding from employers where training is offered to a person in work which will benefit that employer. We do not expect to see any leveraging in of other funding in relation to support for individuals outside of labour market or where the training received by an individual will not have a direct merit on the employer they are currently working for. Value for money will be a selection consideration as it has a number of benefits, including enhanced alignment with other provision and efficient delivery which increases value for money. Therefore, we will take the overall funding package for each project, including any match funding, into account.

Proposals should:

1. Set out how people and skills opportunities are clearly embedded as part of wider project delivery and how the proposals will link to existing people and skills activities for example, Multiply, apprenticeships, traineeships, work placements and work experience opportunities.
2. Demonstrate how activity will complement and not duplicate mainstream and other funded activity. Clearly highlight the added value being proposed and how individuals, businesses and local education institutions to be supported will be identified and engaged.
3. Respond to a clearly identified need and clearly describe the need.
4. Not conflict with national policy or local strategies.

Projects shall ensure that all activity delivered is fully compliant with UK Subsidy Control and procurement rules.

Safeguarding – Cornwall Council takes its responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults seriously and has a Corporate Safeguarding Policy which sets out its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults in Cornwall and how this will be implemented by Cornwall Council in the discharge of its duties. The Council expects that any organisation wishing to provide, or providing, services where staff are employed to work directly or indirectly with children, young people or vulnerable adults are able to demonstrate standards of safeguarding commensurate with those expected of statutory organisations. Delivery partners must be able to demonstrate that they are committed to safeguarding and any relevant checks may be carried out prior to any contract being awarded. As a minimum, delivery partner safeguarding policies should be provided as part of the documentation submitted with the delivery plan.

Budget & Spend Profile

Funding Available:	£ 2,000,000 (Total)	£ 0 (Capital)	£ 2,000,000 (Revenue)			
Minimum Award:	£ 500,000	Maximum Award:	£ 2,000,000			
	22/23		2023/24 and 24/25		Total	
Intervention (E)	Capital (£m)	Revenue (£m)	Capital (£m)	Revenue (£m)	Capital (£m)	Revenue (£m)
E41: Funding to support local digital skills	0	0	0	£2m		
Total	0	0		£2m		£2m
Total per year	0		£2m		£2m	
Intervention Rate:	Flexible		Target Leverage:	£200,000 (Total)		
Spend Start:	01/01/2024		Spend End:	31/03/2025		

Good Growth Principles

All SPF investments must be made in consideration of the Equality Act 2010. It is mandatory for all applications to assess impact of their project between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition, the following specific good growth principles must be considered for this activity:

Clean and Green		Business / Economy		Equality/Inclusive growth	
C1 Reduction in CO2 emissions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BE1 Increase % of workforce earning real living wage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EQ1 Invest in projects that encourage a healthy lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Circularity - reduction in use of virgin raw materials. Recycle reuse principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	BE2 Improve productivity of businesses in CloS	<input type="checkbox"/>	EQ2 Reduce gender pay gap	<input type="checkbox"/>
G1 Nature recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>	BE3 Contribute positively to CloS economy, environment and equality through purchasing/procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EQ3 Increased levels of functional numeracy and literacy in the adult population	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
G2 Attracting private sector green finance income to Cornwall	<input type="checkbox"/>	BE4 Upskilling the workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EQ4 Maximise opportunity for people with disability and ill health (including mental health)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contribute to the Environmental Growth Strategy for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	<input type="checkbox"/>			EQ5 Maximise work based opportunities for those with SEND particularly relating to spectrum disorders and dyslexia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				EQ6 support for the aging population to remain economically active	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				EQ7 Support young (under 30) entrepreneurs	<input type="checkbox"/>
				EQ8 Levelling-up of towns and neighbourhoods throughout CloS	<input type="checkbox"/>
				EQ9 Increased capacity and place-based leadership in communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
				EQ10 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (Equality Act 2010)	<input type="checkbox"/>
				EQ11 Assist individuals with complex barriers to employment to access opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				EQ12 Have a positive impact on children and promote and uphold children's rights under UNCRC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Outputs/Outcomes

For this invitation to bid we are looking for activity that delivers the following outputs and outcomes:

E41: Funding to support local digital skills	Output/Outcome	Total for the period 2023/24 and 2024/2025
Number of people supported to engage with life skills	Output	750
Number of people supported to gain a qualification	Output	375
People gaining a qualification or completing a course following support* ⁴	Outcome	375
Number of people engaged in life skills support following interventions	Outcome	400

*Output/outcome has changed slightly compared to original outputs/outcomes published by government: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2)

The outputs and outcomes stated here reflect our Investment Plan submission to Government. Applicants should note Cornwall Council reserves the right to adjust and refine these outputs and outcomes as delivery progresses during the duration of our SPF programme and further national guidance becomes available.

Appraisal Criteria

Strategic Alignment	Good Growth	Deliverability	Value for Money
20%	20 %	40%	20 %

Explanation for criteria weighting

Due to the requirement to spend £2,000,000 of revenue no later than 31st March 2025, a higher weighting for deliverability has been allocated given the need deliver outcomes within the timescales. Strategic alignment, Good Growth and Value for Money remain a committed priority for the programme and should be reflected in project proposals as they remain a key tenet of CloS ambition.

For further information on the programme please refer to the [Good Growth website](#). Completed Applications and relevant documentation must be submitted via email to goodgrowth@cornwall.gov.uk before the deadline stated on this Form.

Support and guidance to assist applicants through the application process is available at [Good Growth website](#).

More information on Shared Prosperity Fund can be found on the UK Government website; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

Date Updated:	20/04/2023	Lead:	Good Growth Team
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⁴ The outcome has changed from 'number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support (numerical value)'