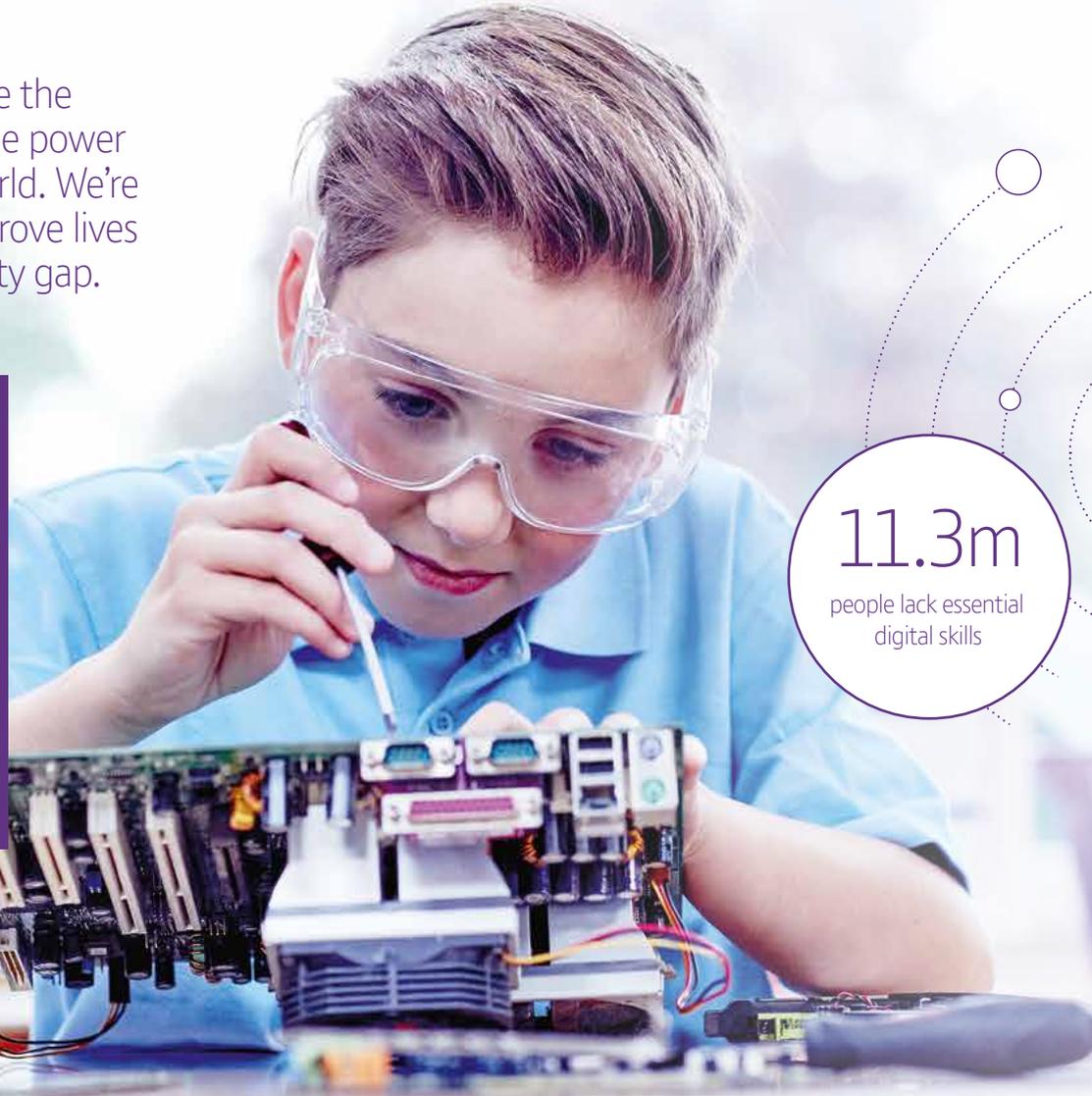


Building better digital lives

We think everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from the power and potential of the digital world. We're investing in digital skills to improve lives and bridge the UK's productivity gap.

In this section

- Making digital skills our priority 07
- Supporting families' digital lives 08
- Supporting working people and businesses 10
- Supporting charity partners 11



Making digital skills our priority

The world is increasingly shaped by technology. But the rapid pace of change is leaving people behind – as many as 11.3m UK adults and 10% of the UK workforce lack basic digital skills. This digital skills gap is costing the UK economy an estimated £63bn a year.

We can help the UK fill this digital skills gap. And grow demand for our products and services too. We're working with partners to make a difference to families through targeted support at key stages of life. We're helping businesses upskill their workforce and boost productivity by doing more digitally, ourselves included (see graphic).

Our commitment to building digital skills is at the heart of our digital impact and sustainability strategy and reflected in our new ambition to reach 10m people in the UK with digital skills training by 2025.

But we're not starting from scratch. Projects such as our flagship Barefoot Computing programme in primary schools and our Work Ready programme to help young people get into work are already well established.

And this is not something we're doing alone. We're advising the UK Government as a member of the Government's Digital Skills Partnership and we're supporting global efforts to bridge the digital literacy and skills divide through the [Coalition for Digital Intelligence](#).

Our partnerships with charities mean we can reach more people in the UK and abroad, in key markets such as India. And our enthusiastic BT volunteers will continue to help.

Building better digital lives Helping people improve digital skills at key stages of life

	For your family			For your business		
	Children	Parents	Older and disabled people	Future workforce	Women in tech	Businesses
The challenge	65% of children who started school in 2016 are likely to do jobs that haven't yet been invented	75% of parents want more advice to help keep their child safe online	3.5m people with a registered disability are offline	The UK needs 500,000 digital workers by 2022	Only 30% of the digital workforce will be women in 2022	Three in four UK businesses report a digital skills gap
How we're inspiring change	Inspiring children to develop computational thinking and encouraging STEM education	Helping parents understand and manage their child's safety online	Improving elderly and disabled people's confidence in and access to digital capability	Encouraging STEM education and improving digital skills for work	Encouraging more women into tech jobs both inside and outside BT	Showing businesses how tech can help them grow and improve productivity Helping employees to reskill
What we've achieved	Reached 2m children through 70,000 teachers with our Barefoot Computing programme	Hosted Safer Internet Day 2019 with Internet Matters to raise awareness of online safety issues	Launched products tailored for customers with hearing impairments with Action on Hearing Loss in 2018/19	Helped over 2,700 16-24-year-olds improve their skills and employability through Work Ready since 2014	770 BT women progressed their careers on our TechWomen programme and taught 21 women how to code in partnership with Code First: Girls	BT Sport partnered with Google Digital Garage to help 1,000+ commercial customers enhance their skills to grow their business

Above data has been drawn from external sources.

Supporting families' digital lives

In a world where life and work increasingly depend on technology, having the right skills can be the difference between getting ahead or being left behind.

We're working to inspire early digital thinking in schoolchildren. We're helping families build their digital confidence and stay safe online. And we're making it easier for more people to get online, regardless of their income, age or physical ability.

Inspiring children's digital thinking

Teachers hold the key to children's digital development. Our [Barefoot Computing programme](#) is training them to help primary school children learn, think and thrive in a digital world.

Computational thinking doesn't have to be difficult. Barefoot breaks it down into fun and easy lessons that teach digital concepts like logic and algorithms (see box). The aim is to help children develop critical thinking, become digitally literate and be active participants in a tech-driven world.

We revamped the Barefoot website this year so teachers can easily download ready-made lesson plans and games. Barefoot workshops by trained volunteers – including BT people – help teachers build their confidence. 92% of the teachers we've trained tell us Barefoot gives them greater confidence to teach computing.

Together with our programme partners at BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, we celebrated a major milestone this year. Barefoot has reached more than 2m children through 70,000 teachers since it started five years ago. We've got 60% of UK primary schools on board. And we're not stopping there.

This year, we became the first strategic partner of the UK Government's newly created National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE). It's designed to improve the reach and quality of computing teaching across England. Among other things, we'll be bringing our Barefoot Computing programme to the heart of the NCCE's offer for primary schools.

Crazy characters for critical thinking

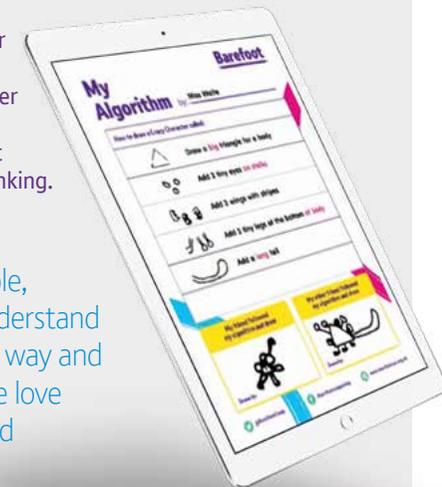


Barefoot's Crazy Characters activity asks children to create their own crazy character and write a sequence of instructions for their friends to follow to draw it. If their friends draw a character that looks different, the pupil rewrites their instructions until it looks the same. They've just written and debugged their first algorithm – an important building block for computational thinking.

“

Barefoot resources make teaching computing simple, fun and uncomplicated. It helps young children understand challenging concepts like algorithms in a hands-on way and develop their logical thinking at their own pace. We love using Barefoot resources and we highly recommend all schools give it a try.”

Lily Sellers
Teacher, Ashmount Primary School



“ I love busting the myth that programming is hard. Teachers can't believe how simple it can be to teach digital concepts. The children jump right in to the games and teachers tell us they love how interactive it is.”

Ian Clapshaw
Barefoot volunteer, BT

Supporting families' digital lives continued

Keeping children safe online



Parents can teach their children how to cross the road safely and tell them not to talk to strangers. But they don't always know how to keep them safe online. Our free parental controls enable them to block unsuitable content and manage children's online activities.

We're a founding partner of Internet Matters and Plusnet is now a member alongside BT and EE. We partner to offer advice and tools to help families stay safe online.

We supported the Safer Internet Day campaign, inspiring customers, our colleagues and teachers to join a national conversation about using technology responsibly, reaching 46% of young people in the UK. We hosted an event for Safer Internet Day 2019 at our headquarters, BT Centre, for school pupils, tech executives and government officials to discuss online consent and we launched a new [Barefoot teaching resource](#) on the same topic.

We also supported Anti-Bullying Week 2018 by promoting the #StopSpeakSupport campaign run by the Royal Foundation Taskforce on the Prevention of Cyberbullying.

Getting communities online

Access to the digital world can offer better health, finance, education and job prospects. But around 12% of UK adults are missing out on these opportunities because they've never been online. We're working with communities to tackle digital exclusion and make sure no one is left behind.

We have 12.2 million superfast fibre broadband customers, covering 86.6% of homes and businesses and we have now rolled out ultrafast fibre to 3.2 million homes and businesses. We are working with government and Ofcom on options for a broadband Universal Service Obligation – to provide 100% of UK homes and businesses with a minimum speed of 10Mbps by 2020. Using Ofcom measures, our mobile network now provides 84% geographic coverage in the UK. We aim to be the UK's first mobile provider to offer 5G, launching in 16 busy UK cities in 2019.

We've also helped connect more than 800 hard-to-reach communities since 2016 with our community fibre partnership grants for broadband infrastructure. And anyone can access free ultrafast wi-fi from more than 350 InLink street units we've installed across 19 UK towns and cities. More than 250,000 people have used them since 2017.

Even when the network is there, some people still don't go online. Our [research](#) with the Good Things Foundation confirmed that barriers include not seeing any benefit to being online and finding it too complicated or too expensive. We're helping overcome some of these hurdles with low-cost BT Basic + Broadband and Plusnet broadband packages for people on low incomes or certain government benefits. We've also supported essential digital skills training for over 600 older, disabled and low-income people in Scotland to tackle poverty, social isolation and inequality.

We're connecting more people outside the UK by helping Jāngala, a tech start up, develop and test portable wi-fi systems for use in refugee camps and during humanitarian relief. We made them available to refugees in Italy and Serbia to contact their families and get support, and our own emergency response teams are using the boxes too (see page [24](#)).

Improving accessibility

We're making technology more accessible for older people and those with disabilities, and we sponsor the annual Tech4Good Awards to support accessible product development.

One in every six people in the UK live with some form of hearing loss, but most mobile tariffs focus on voice calls that they can't use. This year, EE partnered with Action on Hearing Loss to launch special tariffs with more data and fewer minutes so that people with hearing loss can communicate visually via SMS and video calls (see quote).

We provide sign language on our websites and we offer a Next Generation Text relay service so that people with hearing loss and speech impaired customers can make calls. This is now available on all InLink street units too.

We offer accessibility advice and products through our [IncludingYou](#) website. BT customer service teams are trained to support customers with accessibility needs, as well as older customers with conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's. This year, we created a new Customer Disability Team for EE customers.

Transforming tariffs for people with hearing loss

“It's very encouraging to see EE making sure their customers living with deafness and hearing loss are not being financially disadvantaged and are able to access phone packages that are better suited to their needs. We've been working in partnership with EE's excellent Customer Disability Team so that people with hearing loss can benefit from all the latest mobile and assistive technology.”

Tim Willett
Executive Director of Engagement,
Action on Hearing Loss

Supporting working people and businesses

In the UK, more than 500,000 highly-skilled workers will be needed to fill digital roles by 2022. That's three times the number of computer science graduates in the last decade.

We're helping businesses large and small – ourselves included – upskill their workforces and boost productivity by doing more digitally. And we're encouraging more young people – and women in particular – into the tech sector to grow our own and the wider digital talent pipeline.

Supporting young people to access tech jobs

An estimated 300,000 young people in the UK today lack basic digital skills. Many disadvantaged young people are not achieving positive outcomes online, particularly when it comes to education and employment.

We want to help change that. Our [Work Ready](#) programme prepares 16-24-year-olds for the world of work and teaches them practical skills to improve employability. Young people not currently in education, employment or training gain hands-on tech skills and work experience with us. More than 2,700 have graduated from Work Ready since 2014.

More young people than ever took part this calendar year with 982 starting the programme in 2018, and 77% completing it. In the 2017 cohort, 55% went on to get a job or an apprenticeship or went into further education. We aim to ensure that each annual Work Ready cohort is an equivalent size to 1% of our own workforce, as part of our commitment as a founding member of the Movement to Work coalition.

Our Skills for Work one-day boot camps give 14-18-year-olds more confidence to apply for jobs, go to interviews and give presentations. This year, over 1,900 teenagers took part, many of them from areas of high unemployment.

Getting young people work ready



“I'd finished my A-levels and decided I didn't want to go to university. I needed experience to help me find a job. I shadowed an engineer for six days and it was out of this world. You learn so much about what happens behind the scenes of technology. That helps you in all areas, even customer service, because you know how to help people more. I'd recommend BT work placements to anyone.”

Yasmeen Awais
Work Ready participant, Blackburn



Addressing the digital skills gender gap

Science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) roles have historically been male dominated. Even by 2022, women are expected to make up only 30% of the UK's digital workforce. We're encouraging women into tech roles to address this looming gap and we're a signatory to the [Tech Talent Charter](#).

We're encouraging girls – and boys – to improve their STEM learning as soon as they start school through Barefoot (see page 08). And this year, female BT colleagues spoke to more than 900 schoolgirls aged 11-15 about future roles with us.

Our BT further programme in partnership with Code First: Girls takes women from beginner coders to the starting point for a career as a software developer in just four months. We've taken on 21 women as junior software developers in our Technology team this year.

We've also expanded our TechWomen programme for BT women (see box on next page) and supported female colleagues at the middle stages of their career to gain apprentice level qualifications to move into tech roles within our company. A team from Openreach also showcased STEM-related roles on offer to young women at a British Army event celebrating 100 years of women in the forces.

Just 22% of chief information officers in leading UK organisations are women. This year, we hosted an event for our customers' IT leaders, attended by female CIOs, IT directors and heads of IT, to help build a strong network of connections in the technology sector who can lead future change.

Supporting small businesses

Three quarters of UK businesses say they have a digital skills gap. That means they could be missing out on opportunities to save time and costs, increase their profit and keep customers happy. By improving their digital capabilities, we can help them succeed and grow.

We're already helping SMEs with digital skills, through initiatives like the free digital training workshops run in partnership between BT Sport and Google Digital Garage for customers who own pubs and clubs. We held 11 workshops and also visited individual venues, helping over 1,000 BT Sport commercial customers to enhance their online profile of their venues, and attract more customers via social media.

Supporting working people and businesses continued

Our TechWomen of the future



Our TechWomen programme helps hundreds of women in technology and commercial roles progress their careers.

Over the course of a year, participants get face-to-face training, masterclasses, coaching, and access to a new network of peers and senior leaders. The number of women taking part doubled this year to 770. We added a new course for women in early management roles, as well as training senior leaders. We've expanded the programme to India too.

In 2017/18, 41% of participants secured a bigger role after completing the programme. 87% said they were more confident driving their own career and 90% felt more confident networking.

770
Women taking part this year



Supporting charity partners

We're using our technology and expertise to improve people's lives in the UK and globally through charity partnerships and volunteering.

This year, we continued to support major campaigns for charities, including Stand Up to Cancer for Cancer Research UK, SoccerAid for Unicef and Red Nose Day for Comic Relief. Openreach continued its long standing support of SSAFA – the armed forces charity.

Using technology for good

We've continued to use our technology to help charities boost fundraising efforts through our MyDonate fundraising platform and our Digital Tin contactless fundraising devices, But we've made the tough decision to close MyDonate in June 2019. It was the UK's first fee-free platform when introduced in 2011, but there are now many other providers in the market.

We're proud of what we achieved, helping raise more than £400m over the last nine years. But it is now time to lead in another important area for the UK. Our work with charities and other partners will increasingly focus on digital skills. We will continue to report on our ambition to use our skills and technology to generate more than £1bn for good causes by 2020, but it will no longer be a business priority. Since 2012/13, we've used our technology and expertise to help generate more than £646m for good causes, including £109m this year.

As a founding partner of the Geared for Giving campaign, we are building an online tool that will help drive uptake of payroll giving across the UK, in addition to bolstering our own employee contributions. This year our people donated over £2.9m to more than 1,500 charities through payroll giving.

We've also partnered with [Do-it.org](#), one of the UK's leading volunteering databases, to create [Doit.life](#). The digital platform enables people to connect to charities, schools and civil society organisations to find volunteering opportunities. This year, we trialled the platform with some of our people in the UK and opened it to all our people in India.

Partnering with charities to improve digital skills

Going forward, we will focus our work with charities on the area we think we'll deliver the greatest impact: digital skills. This year, we've worked with Unicef to identify a project that will help thousands of young people in Brazil to enhance their digital skills and we stepped up our support through charity partnerships in India.

The BT Supporters Club also funded a groundbreaking digital training programme with Football Beyond Borders. Young people gained digital media, filmmaking and public speaking skills, and the chance to write and produce their own football show for TV. Since it was set up over five years ago, the BT Supporters Club has raised over £10m for Comic Relief thanks to BT Sport customers donating through their monthly bill.

Supporting charity partners continued

Mobilising our people

We want our people to be digital champions. Everyone at BT can take up to three days a year for volunteering and we're encouraging them to use that time to develop digital skills in their communities. Our people can get a lot back from volunteering too. They learn new skills, build confidence and expand their horizons.

This year, we took the decision to no longer focus purely on the proportion of our people who volunteer, which is why the volunteering participation rate dropped to 26%. Instead, we will refocus our volunteering efforts on digital skills – the area we think will deliver the greatest impact for the UK and BT.

In the year ahead we'll develop a new target, to replace our existing participation one, that better reflects the impact and growing contribution our people are making through volunteering. As an example, this year, nearly 2,500 of our people contributed over 6,700 days supporting our programmes on digital skills and helping young people prepare for the world of work.

Empowering young people in India through innovation and technology in education



In India, around 150m school age children are illiterate. Improving their literacy – and digital literacy – can make a big difference to their future prospects.

This year, we launched a three-year partnership with the British Asian Trust to empower half a million young people, with a particular focus on adolescent girls, in India. It will use apps, videos and other interactive digital technologies to break down social barriers and improve young people's health, education, employability and life skills.

We're also pioneering new finance models to support learning on an even bigger scale as the first corporate to support the British Asian Trust's education development impact bond. It aims to improve literacy and numeracy skills for more than 300,000 children in India through local partnerships.

This builds on our existing work to tackle illiteracy in India through the Katha Information Technology and E-commerce School (KITES) that we set up with the charity and publisher Katha in 2001. It's helped over 375,000 children in the slums of New Delhi learn how to read, with support from BT volunteers. This year, we supported the development of new online learning resources to reach more children.