

# Building better digital lives.

Marc Allera  
CEO, Consumer



This year has shown how critical the internet is in helping everyone make the most of their lives. The connectivity that BT and EE networks provide has never been more important. Through our Skills for Tomorrow programme, we're also working hard to ensure everyone has the skills they need in their home and work lives to benefit from the opportunities that technology opens up. We remain absolutely committed to using our scale and reach to tackle the digital divide and support the UK's economic recovery.

We're helping millions of people make the most of life in the digital world. With tech as the enabler, people can stay connected, gain confidence and unlock their potential through our Skills for Tomorrow programme.

## Our progress

### Over 10m

people reached since 2014/15, including:

### Over 5.7m

people reached with help through our Top Tips on Tech campaign with ITV

### Over 3m

teachers and schoolchildren reached with Barefoot lessons

### 357,000

people reached through our online campaign supporting families

### 468,000

jobseekers reached through our Stand Out Skills campaign

### 278,000

small business owners and their employees directly engaged

### 10m goal

achieved five years early, and we've now extended that target to reach 25m people by end of March 2026

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## Helping people make the most of life

More and more of our home and work lives are spent online. Covid-19 has accelerated this trend and, for many, it's become the new normal. Over half (53%<sup>1</sup>) of Brits are using tech more often and in different aspects of their lives.

Building tech confidence is more critical than ever and we're here to help. We build, own and operate the UK's largest fixed and mobile networks, which support the country's digital ambitions. We connect families to each other, businesses to their customers and individuals to their potential.

We're using our reach, partnerships and tech knowhow to help everyone gain the skills and confidence they need to make the most of life in a digital world – and create opportunities to grow our business at the same time.

### Sharing Skills for Tomorrow

Our Skills for Tomorrow (SfT) programme is for everyone. It offers access to free advice, training and support to help people make the most of life in the digital world at home and at work.

We create learning resources and partner with leading UK digital skills organisations to help us get the best advice and information out there to those who need it most. There's specific help for children, parents, teachers, small businesses, jobseekers and those without basic digital skills.

The pandemic put face-to-face training on hold this year. There was a growing need for virtual support to help the nation through successive lockdowns. And our digital first approach meant we were able to respond rapidly.

We launched over 400 new online resources – from homeschooling activities to business skills webinars, training for jobseekers and guides on how to access essential services online. Uptake has soared and so has our positive impact.

We've also reached out to more vulnerable and older people this year to tackle isolation. Meanwhile, our Small Business Support Scheme ([bt.com/smallbusinesssupport](https://bt.com/smallbusinesssupport)), is helping small businesses boost connectivity, cash flow and confidence, and has provided free digital skills training to thousands. And over 5.7m people learnt something new from our Top Tips on Tech ([bt.com/tech-tips](https://bt.com/tech-tips)) campaign (see [page 14](#)).

### Creating positive impact for the UK, the world and our business

This year, in addition to our Top Tips on Tech campaign, we reached 1.5m more people across the country through our SfT programmes with help to improve their digital skills as we stepped up our efforts to meet increased needs during Covid-19. We've reached more than 10m people since 2014/15, meeting our target five years early. And we're not stopping there. We're now extending this to reach 25m by the end of March 2026.

We've also expanded our programmes outside the UK to meet the pressing global need for online learning and digital skills.

We're working with external experts to measure the positive impact we have on the people we reach – using a model based on reach, quality, impact and value. We include impact data in this report where we can.

Bridging the digital divide is good for the UK – it enriches lives, and it enriches the economy. Every £1 invested in essential digital skills returns an estimated £14.80 in economic value<sup>2</sup>. And it's good for the world, playing an important role in supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (see [Appendix](#)).

It's also good for our business. Building digital skills means more people are able to use our products and services, and make the most of our networks, opening the door to new growth opportunities for us. Campaigns like Top Tips on Tech are strengthening our reputation and customer relationships. Colleagues who get involved learn from their volunteering experience and bring fresh thinking to the business. And creating a tech-savvy workforce for the country develops the talent we need for the future.

## Shaping the digital future

We're supporting wider efforts to bridge the digital divide through insights from our research – highlighted in relevant parts of this report – and industry coalitions like FutureDotNow ([futuresdotnow.uk](https://futuresdotnow.uk)).

This year, we provided expert input to the UK Government through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) digital inclusion group and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Digital Skills. We called on the Government to make connectivity and tech skills central to the nation's economic recovery. We're also part of the DCMS Digital Skills Partnership Board.



**Liz Williams MBE,**  
Chief executive,  
FutureDotNow

FutureDotNow is a business coalition coordinating industry action to accelerate the workplace essential digital skills of working-age adults across the UK. BT, as a founding partner and board member, benefits the coalition through its recognition of the importance of workplace digital skills and sharing its expertise.

<sup>1</sup> Research by Opinion Matters on behalf of BT based on nationally representative sample of 2,000 adults.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

## Preparing children to succeed in a digital world

We're helping to equip children for a digital world so they can reach their potential. Our Barefoot Computing programme, in partnership with Computing at School (CAS, part of BCS – the Chartered Institute for IT), makes computational thinking skills fun and relatable. It's reached more than 3m children and teachers since 2014/15.

### Help for homeschooling

Originally designed to help teachers deliver the computing curriculum, we rapidly reinvented the Barefoot programme to help keep kids learning through Covid-19 lockdowns.

Our research found that around half of parents had less than three hours a day for homeschooling and just 24% felt comfortable teaching IT and computer science. We created over 50 curriculum-based homeschool activities this year to help them.

New resources include interactive online learning games, activities for families to do together and live streamed lessons. Quick and easy mini missions introduce concepts like algorithms, patterns and abstraction through fun household challenges – from creating a recipe to arranging leaves or painting abstract art. The online games alone have been played over 170,000 times.

We've also extended Barefoot to younger children. New lessons give four and five-year-olds a head start in computational thinking through fun activities like using movement to bring algorithms to life.

Many Barefoot materials featured on the popular BBC Bitesize learning at home website. The Government's Great Inspirations campaign also included Barefoot in a showcase of UK organisations that have done extraordinary things during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Barefoot's home learning impact



**Sally House,**  
parent of  
eight-year-old Alice

Alice played Code Cracking, The Diamond, Barefoot Zoo and Sorting It Out. She enjoyed the games and I love that she's practising Maths skills in a fun and different way and not realising she's actually doing Maths!

### Supporting teachers

The majority of UK primary schools now use Barefoot – for classroom or virtual lessons. This year, teachers downloaded Barefoot lessons over 46,000 times and home learning activities were downloaded over 57,000 times.

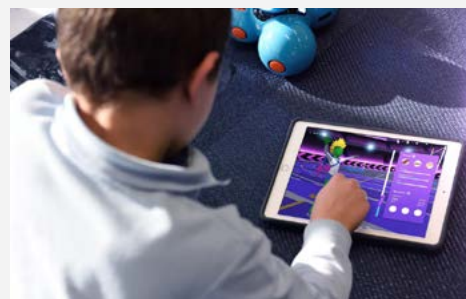
We adapted our support for teachers in response to the pandemic. Face-to-face training workshops became webinars, delivered by teacher ambassadors and over 90 BT volunteers. They reached more than 2,500 teachers across the country and more than 6,000 additional teachers registered with us. We've also released a series of live and recorded lessons by CAS teachers for use at home.

Since Barefoot was first established, computing has become more embedded in the primary education curriculum and the National Centre for Computing Education is helping to provide training and resources for teachers. With a strong network of teachers, we're handing over management of the Barefoot programme to Computing at School, who will continue to develop ambitious plans to meet the needs of primary school teachers and their students. We'll continue to support the programme as well as focusing on helping children learn and explore safely online through our support for families.

### Sports day goes virtual

School sports days went virtual this year with our Digital Dash app. Seven to 10-year-olds used logical reasoning, algorithms and problem-solving skills to create, personalise and train their own avatar sprinter.

Thousands downloaded the app from our Skills for Tomorrow portal. Presenter Reggie Yates and Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes hosted the [final](#). Six finalists raced their avatars in a 100 metres sprint to win £10,000 of tech equipment for their school.



[Watch the video here](#)

## Barefoot Bytes back to school blues

Children across the UK returned to school for the 2020 autumn term not just after the summer holidays, but after months of homeschooling. Barefoot Bytes ([barefootcomputing.org/barefootbytes](https://barefootcomputing.org/barefootbytes)) helped them ease back in and reconnect with classmates through bite-sized joint activities using computational thinking – from class gratitude trees to friendship bracelets and rainbow-inspired garden designs. We also created an algorithm for handwashing.





## Helping families build digital confidence

We're there for families as they deal with rapid technology change and the shift to lockdown life online. Our goal is to boost parents' tech confidence and knowledge, and to help kids stay safe, happy and learning online.

Footballing legend Rio Ferdinand headlined our support for families this year with our [Let's Talk About](#) video and guide that reached over 357,000 parents. Our Top Tips on Tech campaign (see [page 14](#)) also included advice about online family time and exploring the internet safely.

### Staying safe and well online

Digital tech was essential for children to continue learning through lockdown. But with children spending more time online than ever before, parents were worried about how to keep their kids safe online and balance screen time. Our research found that on average parents worried five times a day about online activity and screen time. And 61% of parents were concerned about the safety and security of their children online.

EE launched a new Set Up Safe service to help ease these anxieties. It enables parents to set spending limits on their children's smartphones, add locks to prevent access to adult content, and block calls and texts to premium numbers.



We are founding members of Internet Matters ([internetmatters.org](https://internetmatters.org)), one of the UK's leading child online safety organisations. It's supported by all three of our consumer brands – BT, EE and Plusnet. Families can access their expert advice on our Skills for Tomorrow portal, including guidance on how to raise sensitive subjects like sexting and self-harm.

Parents also told us they needed help giving their kids a balanced online experience. We created interactive guides on topics like digital wellbeing, managing online pressures and understanding the role of online influencers.

We're also empowering children to protect themselves online. On Safer Internet Day, we launched an interactive online game to teach children about cyber security and phishing, as well as a board game based on snakes and ladders.

Working with the National Crime Agency, we developed classroom and home lessons on being cyber smart this year. Launching in April 2021, the lessons will help students learn about online ownership, password security, cyber laws and how to protect themselves from phishing attacks.

We're also helping to protect children from online harm as a result of illegal activity (see [page 23](#)).

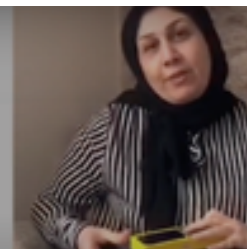
### Leaving no families behind

School closures threatened to widen the gap between rich and poor as home computers and internet connections became essential to keep up with schoolwork. We stepped up with free connectivity to help disadvantaged children keep learning at home.

In 2020, we teamed up with the Department for Education and charities working with vulnerable young people to make free wi-fi available to families in need. We also offered 1,000 tablets to vulnerable families and individuals (see [page 13](#)).

When schools closed again at the start of 2021, we introduced our Lockdown Learning support package – a free support scheme for families, carers and children who need help the most. The scheme provides those most in need with unlimited mobile data, BT Wi-Fi vouchers and free mobile access to BBC Bitesize and Oak National Academy educational content without using up their data allowance. With support pledged until July 2021, it helps children continue learning online, and stay connected to their teachers, classmates and schoolwork.

**Firoozeh Salimi**  
mother of two



I am very happy. Now my children can learn.

Firoozeh's comment, on receiving a free tablet and wi-fi through the DevicesDotNow campaign that we support with our partner Good Things Foundation.

## Tackling the digital divide

Digital tech can be a lifeline – more so than ever with Covid-19 restrictions on human contact. But many are missing out. Around 3.6m people living in the UK are almost completely offline and around 11.7m lack the basic tech skills essential to everyday life<sup>1</sup>. We're helping those most in need get connected and build confidence in being online.

### Supporting vulnerable and older people

We've donated 1,000 SIM-enabled tablets to older and vulnerable people through DevicesDotNow, a campaign run by FutureDotNow and Good Things Foundation. We provided 400 internet-ready EE mobiles to the charity Crisis to support homeless people through the pandemic. And we're providing unlimited data to vulnerable mobile customers. Our social tariff – BT Basic – offers an affordable connection to people on certain government benefits, and we plan to refresh and relaunch it during our next financial year, to support more people.

Through our partnership with Good Things Foundation, we supported local online centres providing personalised support and training to people who lack basic digital skills. This year, we provided funding to help around 80 centres, helping them adapt their services to offer remote support to vulnerable people through the Covid-19 lockdowns. We also encouraged colleagues from our stores and contact centres to volunteer at their local online centre. Together, we've helped more than 4,900 people build their skills and confidence this year.

In October, we promoted Get Online Week, a campaign from the Good Things Foundation with messages on the BT Tower in London, our digital billboards in over 500 high streets and screens in our retail stores. Our colleagues got behind the campaign by pledging to help someone they know or love to build confidence with their digital skills.

Openreach also teamed up with the charity We Are Digital to train over 250 social housing residents on tech skills to help them through the pandemic – from booking a GP appointment to ordering groceries online.

Older people, many of whom can be vulnerable or more isolated, often lack the tech skills, confidence or motivation to get online. We polled 1,000 people who have a close relative over 70 and nearly half said it would be life-changing if their relative knew how to order their own groceries online. While many older people have been reluctant to try and learn new tech skills, 38% of those polled said they thought recent events had made their relative more open to this, but they didn't know where to start.

With face-to-face learning limited this year, we used television to reach out to people who aren't online. Our Top Tips on Tech campaign with ITV (see [page 14](#)) offered practical advice on how to connect with loved ones and access vital services online.

Volunteers at our BT, EE and Plusnet contact centres reached out to isolated residents in care homes by pairing up with a companion and calling to chat to them regularly.

We also sought to combat lockdown loneliness through our Plus One ([bt.com/plusone](#)) campaign in the run-up to Christmas. The idea was simple, encouraging people to reach out virtually to someone in their life that they had lost touch with. BT leaders and colleagues led the way, alongside celebrities like Rio Ferdinand who reconnected with his favourite dinner lady at Manchester United Football Club.

Going forward we will focus on supporting older and vulnerable people to develop their digital confidence through our customer propositions, working with Good Things Foundation as strategic advisers.

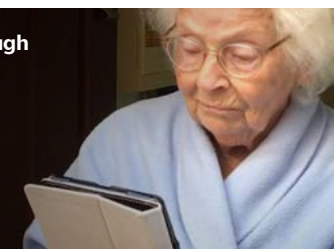
### Taking an inclusive approach

We serve nearly 1.4m customers who are vulnerable or have additional needs. Our Customer Inclusion Panel – including experts from Age UK, Mind and RNIB – helps us understand these needs and make our products and services as accessible as possible for all.

Our Customer Care teams receive specific training to support vulnerable customers who call our contact centres and our home tech experts make in-person visits to set up devices. We also offer free priority fault repair to people with a disability or chronic illness.

Our Including You ([bt.com/includingyou](#)) website offers a one-stop-shop of accessibility products and advice. And we're in our tenth year as sponsors of the Tech4Good awards, showcasing innovative accessible products (see box).

**Mable Clough**  
Age 91



I do get a little bit down sometimes. But just being able to talk to my family has helped a great deal. To be able to talk to and see them – it's like a miracle to me.

Mable used the internet for the first time this year. She got a free tablet and wi-fi connection through our partnership with the Good Things Foundation to connect with loved ones as she stayed safe at home.

 [Watch the video here](#)

<sup>1</sup> Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2020.

## Schoolgirls' invention to dim dyslexia

Seeing fellow classmates struggle with online learning during lockdown inspired a team of London schoolgirls to come up with a solution. Dimming Dyslexia, their prototype app, converts written text into friendlier formats like cartoons and larger font sizes for dyslexic students.

The idea topped over 160 entries to win our BT Young Pioneer Award at this year's Tech4Good awards. Now we're helping the team develop their idea with the British Dyslexia Association. Last year's winner is already working with the Royal National Institute of Blind People to bring her smart walking stick invention to market.



 Watch the video [here](#)

## Top Tips on Tech reaches millions during lockdown

Covid-19 hit the UK in March 2020 and we suddenly found ourselves in lockdown. Overnight, the nation had to learn how to stay connected to life, work and school without leaving home. It was a worrying and uncertain time – especially for the less tech savvy among us.

We joined forces with ITV to help people gain confidence fast. For three weeks in April and May 2020, we took over full ad breaks during This Morning and the ITV Evening News to share Top Tips on Tech. We enlisted well-known television and sport personalities to present simple how-to advice from their homes to viewers.

Sports presenter Clare Balding kicked off the series with a spot on how to use WhatsApp to stay in touch with friends and family. Comedian David Walliams showed parents where to find much-needed support with homeschooling, while hosts Marvin and Rochelle chipped in with tips to keep kids safe online. And England football manager Gareth Southgate – and some of his star players – shared their favourite apps to keep fit at home.

<sup>1</sup> This research carried out by Ipsos MORI used a nationally representative sample and was independently verified by social impact research agency Chrysalis Research.

We picked what to cover by checking search engines to see what tech questions people most wanted help with. Other tips included working from home productively, taking a business online and protecting it, and staying connected with culture virtually. Simple downloadable guides are available on each topic at [bt.com/tech-tips](https://bt.com/tech-tips).

The 12 bite-sized lessons had a lasting impact on many viewers. More than 5.7m people learnt something new and 2.1m have been continuing to put the knowledge they learnt into practice<sup>1</sup>.



**Gareth Southgate,**  
England football manager

BT's Top Tips on Tech campaign is a good idea for everybody, and actively helping during this period.





## Getting jobseekers ready for work

Unemployment is rising as the UK economy faces the sharpest contraction in modern history. Competition for jobs is growing and 82%<sup>1</sup> of vacancies require digital skills. We're helping jobseekers of all ages and backgrounds get the skills and confidence they need to land the job they want – and stand out from the crowd (see box).

Over 3,400 18 to 24-year-olds have completed our Work Ready training programme since 2014 and more than half have gone on to further education, apprenticeships or jobs. This year, we transformed the programme to support jobseekers of all ages and took the usual face-to-face training online to overcome Covid-19 restrictions and bring benefit to a larger number of jobseekers.

In addition to those who attended our Work Ready training programme, over 2,800 people attended live webinars on subjects like how to write a great CV, interview well, and stand out throughout the application and selection process. More than 600 have viewed our webinars with expert partners LinkedIn Learning and Apprentice Nation. Over 850 people joined introductory skills webinars that we ran in partnership with Jobcentre Plus to help them keep up with the surge in demand from new jobseekers (see quote).



**Elaine Townshend**  
Department for Work and  
Pensions on Jobcentre Plus

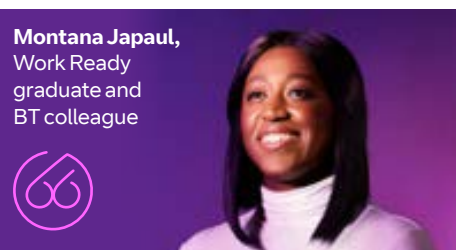
I would like to thank BT Work Ready for developing and delivering this bespoke webinar for the Department for Work and Pensions. A huge void was created during Covid-19 restrictions and our customers were missing out on mentoring and jobseeker skills. Over 850 claimants have now participated in 30 districts and the feedback continues to be really positive.

### Reaching more young people

Young people are particularly in need of support with over 14% of 16 to 24 year-olds out of work<sup>2</sup>.

Hosted by celebrities like football presenter and Hashtag United CEO Spencer Owen, our [Work Ready Live](#) streaming event for young jobseekers has had over 17,800 views since August 2020.

We also joined other leading UK employers to launch the groundbreaking FastFutures programme, run by Avado learning. Together, we're providing 18 to 24-year-olds from diverse backgrounds with three months of digital and personal skills training to help them get started in a tough jobs market. BT colleagues mentored 344 of the 2,100 young people in the first two cohorts and held mock interviews with 183 of them (see quote).



**Montana Japaul,**  
Work Ready  
graduate and  
BT colleague

The placement gives valuable skills to learn and take on, whatever job you go on to do. It helped me learn to stand out – you want to shine! It really boosted my confidence, I wasn't scared to approach people, I just felt comfortable. I connected with lots of people and that led me to getting my current job at BT. Work Ready gave me confidence to try something new.



**Krista Wald,**  
BT colleague and  
FastFutures mentor

The opportunity to participate in the FastFutures mentoring programme was a true highlight for me! The mentees brought incredible enthusiasm, a willingness to learn and a desire to gain as much experience through the BT team as possible. It is an amazing programme and a wonderful chance to pay it forward and share digital skills across a community of brilliant candidates.



### Standing out from the crowd

Our research found that by the beginning of 2021, jobseekers had applied unsuccessfully for 14 roles on average during the pandemic year. Four in five of the 2,000 we surveyed said the job search had affected their mental wellbeing. And just 22% were confident their CV and covering letter would stand out from others.

Through our Stand Out Skills campaign ([bt.com/standoutskills](https://bt.com/standoutskills)), we provided daily support for jobseekers to help them develop their confidence and enable their skills to stand out at every step of their job search. The campaign reached more than 468,000 people.

Presenter Anita Rani, comedian Iain Stirling and drag queen Divina De Campo fronted the 28-day campaign in January and February 2021. It included expert tips, videos, vlogs and webinars on how to shine at every stage of the job search – from polishing CVs and LinkedIn profiles to networking, applications and interviews.

Visit the site [here](#)

<sup>1</sup> Research commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Current and future demand for digital skills – a call to action – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)).

<sup>2</sup> UK Parliament figure for November 2020–January 2021.

## Supporting small businesses in the digital economy

The UK's 5.9m small businesses are the beating heart of our economy, high streets and communities. Covid-19 has hit them hard and many are looking online to power their recovery. We're equipping entrepreneurs and their teams with the tech skills they need through our Skills for Tomorrow programme.

Our face-to-face training sessions have gone online this year with over 200 free webinars. We've created new learning content on topics like how to protect against cyber attacks, pivot your business online, build an e-commerce website and create a social media strategy. We invited BT colleagues, business owners and partners like Small Business Britain, Google Digital Garage and Cisco to join our webinar series and share their knowledge and experience with others.

We offered guidance and asked well-known business owners and industry experts to share their top tips for success in our popular Let's Talk About video series at [bt.com/skillsfortomorrow](https://bt.com/skillsfortomorrow).

By the end of March 2026, we want to reach 1m small business owners and their employees with help to improve their digital skills. This year, we launched the Small Business Support Scheme ([bt.com/smallbusinesssupport](https://bt.com/smallbusinesssupport)), to help small businesses boost their connectivity, cash flow and confidence. We've equipped over 278,000 people in small businesses with free practical digital skills training and advice through online webinars and other resources.

Our help is hitting home, with over 90% of entrepreneurs who attend our webinars saying they will change how they run their business.

We're offering more tailored support through free one-to-one mentoring for small business owners with Digital Boost – a non-profit platform that matches mentors with businesses based on the skills and experience they can offer. BT colleagues, including senior executives, are volunteering to share their expertise on issues ranging from cyber security and social media to marketing and business strategy.

We tapped into the Great British Entrepreneurs Award network to create inspiring new webinars together on timely topics – from flying in the face of adversity to changing consumer habits post pandemic. We also supported the Small Business Saturday bus tour (see box).

During the pandemic, 58% of businesses increased their digital skills in response to the crisis and 74% believe this has enhanced their business. Confidence of surviving, or even growing, in the next year is also higher among those increasing their digital skills.

## Spending surge on Small Business Saturday

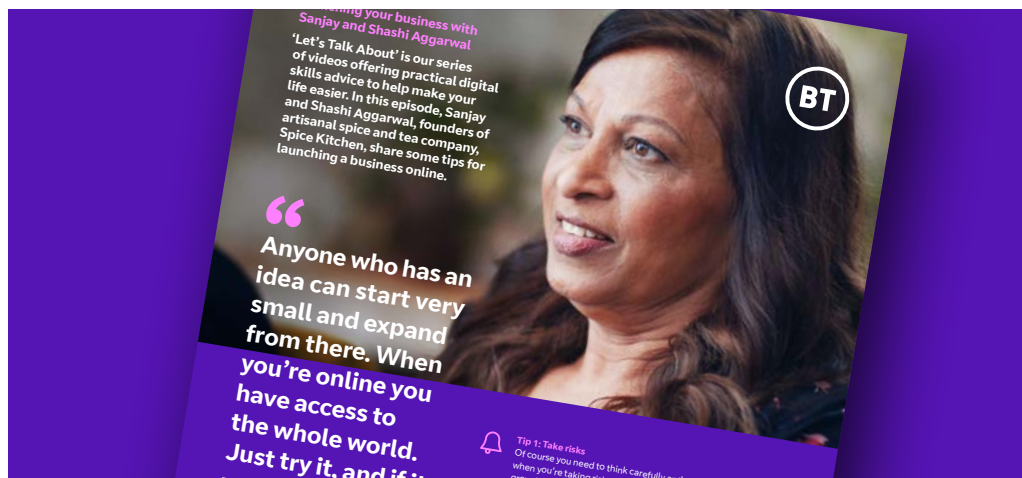
This year's annual Small Business Saturday event in December 2020 raised £1.1bn – 38% more than the year before – as the nation stepped up to help high street stores survive. Almost half of all Brits (48%) were inspired to open their wallets. The Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Mayor of London all voiced their support.

We were the main supporter for the event's virtual bus tour. Over the course of the month, we organised digital skills workshops and mentoring as well as Facebook Live interviews with our business experts. The high-profile event drove millions of social media impressions.



**Sherry Coutu,**  
Founder,  
Digital Boost

At Digital Boost, we help those who work for and lead small businesses and charities to survive the Covid-19 crisis and be more competitive in the long run. BT is a key partner in our effort to help prepare the UK to build back better after the pandemic.





## Boosting digital skills around the world

Our support through Skills for Tomorrow extends beyond the UK. We use our global reach to empower the next generation to make the most of life in a digital world. With our global charity partners, we're helping to educate and enable young people through tech, reaching some of the world's most marginalised groups.

### Partnering with Unicef

Worldwide, Covid-19 lockdowns forced 1.5bn children out of school in 2020. We provided support for Unicef's global digital education platform (see feature), including contributions from our colleagues' fundraising last year.

We're also working with Unicef to bring robotics to life in South African primary schools, and to support youth-led community projects and digital skills training in Brazil. The pandemic has slowed progress, but further rollout of these programmes is expected in 2021.



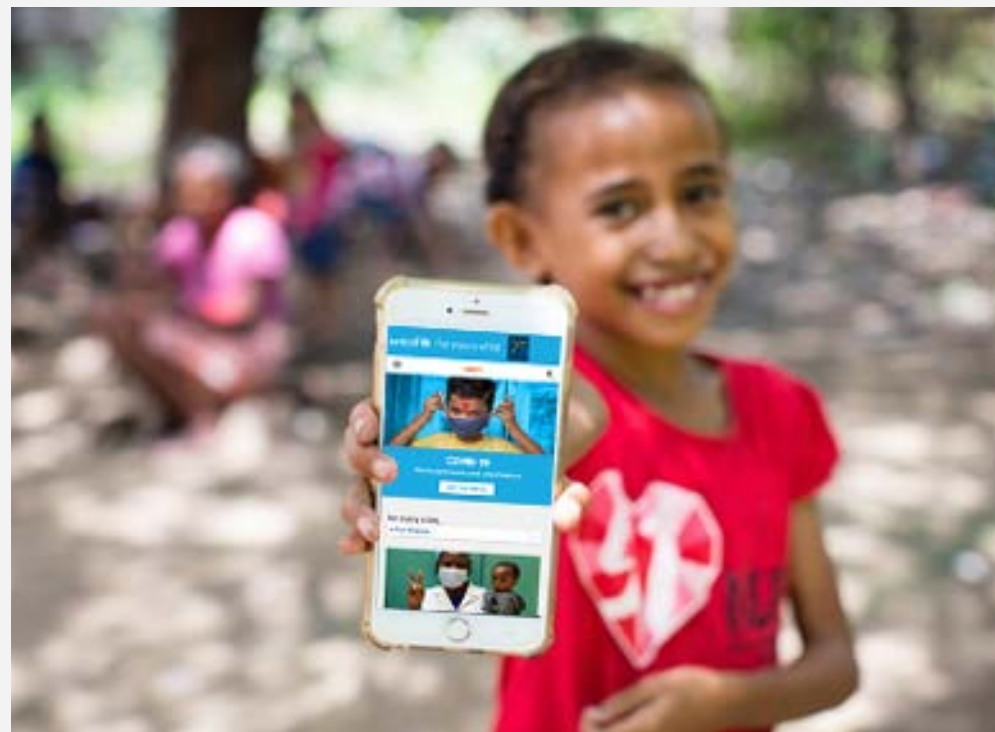
### Passport to digital learning

The Covid-19 pandemic is the biggest and most urgent global crisis children have faced since World War Two, closing schools in over 190 countries.

We helped Unicef scale up its pilot Digital Learning Passport – originally planned for child refugees – to help schoolkids in countries most in need. Launched with Microsoft and Cambridge University, the platform provides free access to e-books, learning videos, recorded lessons and resources for teachers and children, including those with learning disabilities.

So far, the curriculum is available in five countries – Jordan, Kosovo, Somalia, Timor-Leste and Ukraine. The platform already has over 300,000 users. With a further 20 countries in the pipeline, it could reach over 5m potential users by 2022.

The Learning Passport was recognised as one of the 50 Most Influential Projects of 2020 by the Project Management Institute.



**David Bletso**  
Chief financial officer,  
Unicef UK

The BT-Unicef partnership aims to empower young people in Brazil and South Africa to maximise the benefits of digital technologies for their futures. Alongside this vital work, BT has been supporting delivery of Unicef's ground-breaking new digital learning platform, the Digital Learning Passport, to thousands of children across the world whose schools have been forced to close due to Covid-19.

### Supporting young people in India

India, a key international market for BT, faced one of the world's strictest lockdowns this year. This hindered progress on our programmes with non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners, which are mostly delivered in local communities and schools.

Millions without internet access in rural and semi-urban India were particularly at risk of being left behind. But new approaches enabled young people to continue to learn online using messaging groups, digital content, virtual and self-learning modules – and offline through community radio, television, and mentoring and support via mobile.



**Aysha Joffey,**  
IT partner manager and  
BT India volunteer

School TV is making learning accessible to more than 20m kids in India without internet access. I was lucky enough to play a part in this fantastic initiative, creating three short home videos on software testing basics and machine learning for kids. It's been an amazing experience personally and a brilliant way to give something back to the community.

Over 250 colleagues volunteered their expertise to help keep children learning. Some made videos on digital and work ready skills for our partner Going to School that reached over 27.5m people on state TV or online youth channels (see quote). Others mentored young people virtually and built websites for our partners to take skills training online. We also launched a smartphone lending library with our partner ETASHA Society in rural Haryana where young people, especially girls, often don't have access to phones to enable online learning.

We continue to partner with the British Asian Trust (BAT) on our ambition to use tech to improve the health, education and economic prospects of 100,000 teenage girls. We also support the BAT-led Quality Education India Development Impact Bond that aims to improve learning outcomes for primary school children in India. In its first two years, the bond has led to learning gains for over 104,800 students. The programme is achieving over three times its target for learning outcomes.

### Going global with skills partnerships

We're expanding our regional partnerships with customers and communities to help more countries harness tech to support education and skills, employability and equality.

We joined the UN EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, a coalition of business, government and civil society groups. We'll be supporting their digital skills work to help close the gender gap in the tech sector.

In Australia, our partnership with the government and banking sector to fund cyber security lessons in schools won an education award at the Australian Women in Security Network's Awards. We also launched the programme in Singapore to help 10 to 18 year-olds hone their cyber security skills.

We continue to work with major customers and partners, including Facebook, Microsoft and Nestlé, to equip young people with work ready skills through the Global Alliance for Youth. Its Tips from the Top podcast series, featuring our digital impact director, gained over 3.8m social media impressions across eight countries.

## Partnering with charities

We've used our tech and expertise to help generate over £720m for good causes since 2012/13, including £18m this year alone. This year colleagues have donated over £2.4m through Payroll Giving to causes they care about, benefiting 1,373 charities. Over the last four years our colleagues have donated £10.8m through Payroll Giving, which we've topped up to more than £12.5m.

### Supporting charities through Covid-19

This year, the Covid-19 pandemic created unprecedented need for charitable support across the UK and beyond. We used the power of tech and the passion of our volunteers to support charity partners and communities with devices, connections, vital funding and digital skills training.

As a founding patron of the National Emergencies Trust, we helped fund its operating costs so it could raise funds to help over 13,000 charities get essentials like food, shelter and mental health support to millions of people who needed it fast (see [page 7](#)). So far, the appeal has raised over £97m.

BT Sport customers donated over £1.1m to NHS Charities Together and we raised over £14,000 for the Trussell Trust to distribute food and essentials in the UK.

Colleagues across the globe volunteered for over 600 hours, and donated more than 5,000 food items and over £40,000 to stock their local food banks. Our colleagues in India raised over £50,000, including matched corporate funding, for local charities serving those most affected by lockdown.

We also donated £15,000 to support Unicef's Covax appeal which aims to deliver 2bn Covid-19 vaccines for health workers and some of the most high-risk people in low and middle-income countries.

The BT Supporters Club donated over £1m in emergency grants to provide stability to 19 charity partners in the UK and internationally. Its seven-year partnership with Comic Relief raised over £12m for Sport for Change projects in the UK and abroad, directly benefiting over 313,000 people. This partnership has now come to an end as we strengthen our focus on charity partnerships that build life-changing digital skills.

### Virtual volunteering

Despite Covid-19 limitations on in-person volunteering, over 1,800 of our colleagues volunteered their time and expertise to help out this year. Some did so virtually, supporting partners like Education & Employers and TeenTech. Our colleagues' annual Gradventure fundraiser brought in over £5,800 for TeenTech's youth programme and we sponsored its 2020 digital skills award.

We also launched an FA Playmaker volunteer force to support our 4-3-3 partnership with the home nation football associations. These football-loving colleagues stand ready to help their local community clubs once it's safe to do so.