

Digital Skills Scaling Impact Project

April 2022

Background and context

Catch22 is a 200-year-old charity and social business. Our mission is to design and deliver services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities across England and Wales. Last year we supported 160,000 people to lead better lives.

Catch22 supports people into employment and apprenticeships, provides education in alternative provision and specialist schools and supports rehabilitation in prisons. Our work is underpinned by the 3 Ps: People, Place and Purpose. We believe that to thrive, everyone needs strong relationship in their lives, somewhere safe and stable to live, and something to feel passionate about.

Our endgame is to innovate on the frontline and encourage government adoption of innovative services, to influence systemic change. We do this through policy and influencing activities with central government and local commissioners. Our Reform work is focused on tackling youth unemployment and underemployment in the UK through targeted interventions and systemic change.

Our current delivery

Catch22 provides digital skills training for people facing barriers to work. Our philanthropic delivery, funded by Microsoft, Salesforce and other tech organisations, addresses what we see as a gap in the market. Our digital skills training focuses on the 'missing middle', people who have essential digital skills but do not yet have the capability to engage in advanced training. The 'missing middle' means that people from underserved backgrounds cannot take advantage of the fast-growing opportunities in high-wage, high-productivity sectors of the economy. In a tight labour market this is a loss to those people and to employers

Government focus

Government funding has been focused on advanced digital skills training, such as Bootcamps and advanced level apprenticeships. Although this is important work to help bridge the need and the skills economy both for tech and non tech companies, we believe more focus is needed on pre-apprenticeship and pre-entry level job training. It might be that government thinking is catching up, with the Department for Education announcing its review of adult qualifications below Level 3.

There are plenty of talented people with essential digital skills who need low level technical training, inspiration, and support to enter tech and tech enabled roles. Currently this demographic is untapped talent and Catch22's digital skills work date has focused on this cohort. We specifically work with people facing social barriers, such as mental health, low educational attainment, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities, experience of the criminal justice system, experience of the care system, homelessness and beyond.

Traineeships

Traineeships are an education and training programme with work experience for young people whose preference is to find an apprenticeship or job but who lack the skills, experience and behaviours sought by employers. Unlike an apprenticeship, a traineeship is a programme of learning and skills development. It is not a job. Traineeships have certain requirements, such as work experience and number of hours in the classroom. They are the government-funded parallel to our philanthropically funded interventions, focusing on early-stage skills acquisition and practical experience.

Catch22 has developed a digital traineeship, using elements developed from philanthropic work. We have a hunch about what critical success factors must translate from our current digital skills programmes into traineeships to make them successful. However, we are seeking an independent organisation to review the curriculum and delivery of these programmes, identify critical success factors and support our mission to scale this impact.

We see digital skills as a win-win; a way to strengthen the UK economy whilst creating opportunities to level up inequalities. If the UK is to have continued pipeline of talent in tech and tech-enabled roles, we need to invest in early skills interventions as well as re training for mature workers. For the participants we support, digital skills offer roles with good pay, strong progression, stable work contracts and transferable skills.

Summary of our requirements

Catch22 is seeking a partner to an organisation to build a project that will inform our approach to scaling digital skills interventions. The successful organisation will work collaboratively with Catch22 to evaluate current interventions, consider opportunities to scale through government-funded methods and deliver a series of recommendations for next steps.

Aims

The aims of this project are:

- To assess and identify the critical success factors of Catch22's philanthropic digital skills delivery to date, using existing programme evidence / evaluations
- To review digital traineeships delivery across England and Wales, and identify routes to success from Catch22's philanthropically funded programmes to mainstreamed delivery; establish if the ESFA-funded traineeship model can help sustain and scale Catch22's digital innovations, considering any limitations that, if addressed by the Department for Education, could aid the scaling up of entry-level digital skills programmes
- To create recommendations for scaling the impact of Catch22's digital skills delivery through adoption and/or systemic influence. This could include recommendations in local commissioning practices, national policy, employer engagement practices, adjustments in provider delivery and beyond.

Key deliverables

The key deliverable in this project is a report containing a series of recommendations which will enable us to scale the impact of our digital skills work.

We expect the scope will involve the following, but we will also be guided by the successful partner on the specific approach to take:

- A desktop review of existing Catch22 digital programmes, considering their structure, 'what works' and existing impact evidence
- An analysis of digital traineeships in England and Wales, and the ESFA framework through which they are commissioned
- A light touch analysis of market opportunity for digital apprenticeships and digital entry level roles (below Level 3 equivalent)
- A series of recommendations for scaling the impact of philanthropic programmes into government

The audience for this work will be policymakers, government officials, employers and other third sector organisations and training providers in the digital skills space.

Notes on terminology and training levels

At Catch22, when we talk about digital apprenticeships and digital entry level roles, we mean digital careers in organisations across all industries, not just tech companies. Our digital skills programmes enable participants to choose from a menu of options so that they can pursue what interests them.

Common career pathways include, IT Customer Service, Data Analyst, Cloud Technician, Social Media Manager, Cybersecurity, Digital Marketing Apprenticeship, Business Admin, ICT Tech Support Apprenticeship, Software Developer Apprenticeship.

Most training support during our skills programme are L1 and L2 equivalent (though they are not currently accredited), with some advanced training for suitable participants.

Most apprenticeships participants move into Level 3 placements, such as apprenticeships.

Budget

We expect this discrete piece of work to cost in the range of £25,000-£30,000 inclusive of VAT. We expect the work to take approximately 4-6 weeks.

Submission requirements

Please submit

- A written proposal on how you could respond to this brief. We are asking for no more than four pages of A4 paper, or four PowerPoint slides.
- A costed submission within the pricing envelope.

Selected applicants will be asked to join a call to discuss their brief before appointment – it will take the form of a presentation followed by Q&A.

We may ask for references from previous clients you have delivered work for before appointment is confirmed.

Selection process and timelines

Activity	Date
Brief advertised and providers approached	11 th April 2022
Clarification discussions with providers	w/c 18 th May 2022
Submissions received from providers	1 st June 2022
Clarifications (if required)	6 th – 10 th June 2022
Successful provider notified	14 th June 2022

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following scoring:

Criteria	Weighting
Methodology: approach to meeting core requirements	55%
Ability to deliver project on time (project plan and risk awareness)	15%
Approach to collaborative working and relevant experience	10%
Value for money (additional value for fixed price)	20%

Background documentation

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/our-services/partnerships/>

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/news/digital-skills-and-reskilling-an-opportunity-to-address-inequality/>

<https://cdn.catch-22.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Digital-Edge-Flyer-June-2021.pdf>

For more information contact: Kat Dixon, Director of Partnerships

Kat.dixon@catch-22.org.uk