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UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND DUNDEE

PEOPLE AND SKILLS

S36: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs – intermediate and higher-level digital skills

CHALLENGE FUND ROUND 4

Invitation to bid opens	12:00 on 12 February 2024
Invitation to bid closes	17:00 on 5 March 2024
Minimum application level	£10,000
Maximum application level	£100,000 Grants of over £100,000 may be awarded in exceptional circumstances. If your projects costs are over £100,000, please contact DCC’s funding team for an initial conversation – externalfunding@dundeecity.gov.uk
Match funding	Not a requirement but applications with match-funding may be considered more favourably.
Timing	Projects must complete before 31 March 2025.
Application process	Apply via the online portal from 12 February: https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/city-development/planning-and-economic-development/the-uk-shared-prosperity-fund-ukspf Applications submitted late or via any other method will not be accepted. Please ensure you read the full guidance before submitting your application.

Important Information for Applicants

Dundee’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Tay Cities Deal Digital Skills programme, DigiTay, are both launching challenge funds with a focus on intermediate and higher-level digital skills on the 12th of February. The Dundee UKSPF team and the DigiTay team are working together to ensure we can deliver a quality programme of digital skills across the region to make sure public money is spent efficiently and effectively.

There are several differences between the funds.

- The Dundee UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme has grants of between £10,000 and £100,000, with programme delivery to be completed by March 2025. Eligible applicants

include any legally constituted organisations with experience of delivering higher level digital skills. Clients must come from within Dundee.

- The DigiTay Digital Skills Third Sector Challenge Fund will provide grants of between £5,000 and £45,000, with programme delivery to be completed by September 2025. Applicants must be third sector organisations. Clients can come from across the Tay Cities Region.

[Home - Tay Cities Digital Skills Project \(digitay.scot\)](https://digitay.scot)

As a result, by submitting a bid to either programme, you agree to basic information about your application being shared with the assessment panels to ensure no duplication of activity etc. The information to be shared is:

- Applicant organisation
- Brief project description
- Number of clients
- Specific client characteristics e.g. SME upskilling, women returners
- Cost
- Qualifications (if any) proposed
- Timescales

Intervention Specific Guidance for S36

Intervention overview

The UKSPF allows local areas to develop programmes that support demand for skills in the local economy.

With regard to investment in skills, there is a recognised shortage in terms of mid to high level digital skills that we would like to see addressed:

- a lack of diversity within the digital/tech sector;
- need for more industry ready people to support growth in the tech/digital sector;
- people requiring retraining or upskilling to ensure advanced and professional level digital skills are available to support the development of the tech sector and to also address the need for digital skills in general employment such as web development; e-commerce; data visualisation;
- job related digital skills such as in engineering, manufacturing, finance etc.

The digital/tech sector is growing apace, and Dundee has a significant number of tech focused businesses that have the potential to create new jobs. However, the skilled employees are often not found locally, and it is often hard to attract talent to the city. It is therefore imperative that we 'grow our own.' Digital skills become even more important when recognising the fact that virtually every business is now a digital business – with websites, e-commerce, social media marketing, online customer relationship management/ticketing and digital tools being commonplace across industry and manufacturing. Ensuring local people have intermediate to professional level digital skills will ensure they are more employable and that local businesses can use those skills to grow.

The recently published Digital Economy Skills Action Plan (Skills Development Scotland 2023) indicates a range of challenges/opportunities which should be considered when developing any bid. This includes:

- In 2019/20, almost 9% (26,600) of all college enrolments were in digital technology subjects. Despite an increasing appetite from employers to recruit digital technology college graduates, relatively few graduates progress directly into employment, with over three quarters moving onto further study.⁴⁵ Reasons for graduates not moving directly into employment include employers citing a lack of practical technology work experience, and college students opting for further study as they perceive technology employers to expect a degree qualification.

- Analysis forecasts an increase in most digital occupations to 2031, equating to around 15,600 job openings for tech professionals each year.
- In addition to the further and higher education provision there is a diverse range of providers delivering short digital skills-focused courses, seminars, and bootcamps that are predominantly aimed at reskilling individuals for professional digital economy roles. The collective numbers going through these programmes each year is unknown, but they are recognised by employers as an important addition to their digital economy skills pipeline.
- Micro-credentials like these are increasingly recognised by employers as valuable.
- Over half of digital technology professionals are expected to be employed outside of the traditional tech sector as large banks, local authorities, government, and other public sector agencies who are high consumers of technology skills talent.
- It is recognised that the supply of new entrants from mainstream education pathways will not fill all the skills requirements of industry, and therefore reskilling for critical digital skills shortages should be seen by education, government, and its agencies as a strategic response to meeting the ongoing and rapidly changing skills requirements of employers.

The aim is to enable local people to access the skills required to develop careers in the tech sector and to support tech businesses to grow their workforce locally. Ensuring local companies have access to industry ready employees.

The challenge fund is seeking bids that will deliver digital skills training to local people keen to access a career in tech or to advance their career prospects. This could for example be short courses (full or part-time) or the development of micro credentials with a focus on digital skills. Pilot programmes will also be considered.

Projects that support the specific skills requirements of local SMEs will also be considered and projects engaging with employers to address the need to upskill or reskill to support growth are also sought.

The types of projects we are looking for will focus on what could be classified as intermediate/higher level skills e.g. those skills now required to use digital tools in the workplace or skills for those looking to work in the tech sector, creating new digital tools, such as software engineering, data, coding.

Potential clients could include:

- those not in work but looking to move into tech through reskilling or upskilling
- people in work seeking to enhance their skills
- employers seeking to ensure they have the skills needed to grow their business.

This funding is not aimed directly at individual SMEs seeking to upskill their staff, rather at contractors/organisations who can deliver skills to multiple SMEs.

Priority will be given to projects that address intermediate and higher-level digital skills. These are defined in the recent SDS Digital Economy Skills Action Plan as:

- Digital Transition Skills (digital skills that support business transitions such as into e-commerce and online trade, or the ability for the business to understand the value of data)
- Integrated Digital Skills (the integration of professional digital skills into nontechnology job roles)
- Professional Digital Skills (digital skills for roles which were traditionally found only in the tech sector such as cyber security engineering, software development and cloud security).

An understanding of the local tech sector and national skills needs will be important.

Eligible applicants

All legally constituted organisations with experience of delivering higher level digital skills.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs could include the delivery of training; venue hire; participant support; marketing.

Intervention specific questions

In addition to the information contained in the general application guidance on responding to the core questions you should also respond to these intervention specific questions:

Outline how the project addresses key skills gaps; providing an overview of the skills to be delivered ensuring they meet the need for intermediate/higher level skills and insight into the client groups being supported (600 words max)

Provide evidence that your project is additional to existing services. Projects should not duplicate existing activity - they should be delivering new services or adding value to existing delivery. Applicants must provide evidence of this additionality.

Outline how your project avoids duplicating existing activity and/or adds value to existing activity e.g. enables more people to access the training programme (600 words max)

Applicants should provide evidence of previous delivery in relation to digital skills and to the client groups identified. Applicants should provide evidence that their proposals address a gap in current delivery, target a different audience, or add value to existing programmes. How will your project integrate into existing offerings.

Please explain how you will attract Dundee residents/companies to engage with the programme of training/upskilling/reskilling that you propose. (600 words max)

Applicants should provide an overview of how they reached the client numbers proposed and their marketing/engagement approach to ensuring these targets are met.

Outputs and outcomes

S36 Outputs:

- Number of people supported to gain a qualification

S36 Outcomes:

- Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support (numerical value)
- Number of people in education/training (numerical value)
- Number of economically active individuals engaged in mainstream skills education and training (numerical value)

Applicants must select which of the outputs and outcomes the project will achieve. You must also provide a baseline figure in order that progress can be measured in achieving the outcomes and outputs.

Applicants can also identify their own outputs in addition to those listed above if there are additional deliverables.

Further Information

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: overview \(1\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: reporting and performance management \(3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: monitoring and evaluation \(4\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: assurance and risk \(5\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: branding and publicity \(6\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: subsidy control \(7\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: procurement \(8\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: equalities \(9\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Subsidy Control Statutory Guidance](#)