

Press release: Coding to be taught in prison to help offenders return to the world of work

- New funding for pilot scheme to help carefully vetted prisoners learn digital skills
- Plans are part of a £1.2 million package to help underrepresented groups get jobs
- Three new Local Digital Skills Partnerships will help people get the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy

Prisoners will be taught coding to prepare them for work as part of plans to help marginalised groups become skilled in tech.

CODE 4000, an organisation that works with carefully vetted offenders and has led a successful trial at HMP Humber, has been given new funding by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to expand its scheme to HMP Holme House and reach more than a thousand more offenders.

The £100,000 award will also fund a new employment hub in Sheffield, providing support, mentoring and training for graduates once they have left prison, as the organisation looks to achieve its aim of developing a network of coding workshops in UK prisons.

The programme is modelled on the Last Mile project in the San Quentin prison in California which has helped almost 500 offenders with a zero per cent reoffending rate of participants. The national average reoffending rate in the US is 55 per cent.

To tackle reoffending – which costs society around £15 billion a year – the Government has launched the Education and Employment Strategy which aims to create a system where each prisoner is set on a path to employment from the outset.

Minister for Digital, Margot James said:

The Government is committed to stopping the cycle of reoffending and a valuable asset to prevent recidivism is employment.

Equipping offenders with coding skills will help them into life-changing work and give them a path to a hugely rewarding career.

We have a world-leading digital economy and this new funding will help keep people out of prison so they can give back to their local communities as well as be a boost for our tech businesses.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

I want to see more offenders learning the kind of workplace skills which can set them on a path to a better future, which is precisely why we launched our Education & Employment Strategy last year.

Code 4000 is an excellent example of what can be achieved through education and training in prison. It not only helps offenders turn their lives around but also benefits society by reducing the chances of their reoffending, and I am delighted to see it receive this further funding.

Neil Barnby, Workshop Instructor, HMP Humber, CODE 4000 said:

Code4000 workshops are reducing re-offending at a measurable rate, because we keep in touch with our graduates. We are constantly seeing success after success. When I started teaching in prisons I thought that if I could change just one life, turn one person away from crime then I have achieved something truly marvellous.

I look back on the years that I have been teaching coding in prisons and can see all the lives I have had a part in changing for the better. Not just the ex-offenders but their families and, more importantly their children. It is an enormous sense of achievement and with this funding I look forward to changing even more lives.

Digital Skills Innovation Fund

More than £1 million will be used to fund regional and local initiatives to help people from underrepresented groups gain the skills they need for digital roles.

Programmes being funded include those targeted at helping women from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with autism and people living in lower socioeconomic areas. The aim is to help people get the skills to succeed in roles such as data analysts, programmers, software developers and digital marketers.

The funding will see new training courses, workshops and seminars led by tech experts alongside a mentoring scheme tailored to businesses.

Research reveals only 19 percent of women make up the tech workforce and are underrepresented in the uptake of digital qualifications. While unemployed adults are five per cent more likely to lack the basic digital skills than the national average.

The following Local Enterprise Partnerships will receive a share of the money to invest in their local communities:

West of England Combined Authority

Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) LEP working with Sheffield City Region and supported by Leicestershire LEP and Greater Lincolnshire LEP

The following Local Enterprise Partnerships will receive a share of the money to invest in their local communities:

Lancashire LEP

Heart of the South West LEP

More regions to launch Digital Skills Partnerships

Local Digital Skills Partnerships (Local DSPs) bring together regional businesses, charities, local authorities and academics to increase the digital skills of individuals and organisations in their region. Three launched last year in Lancashire, Heart of the South West and West Midlands Combined Authority.

Three more Local Digital Skills Partnerships will be set up in the South East; Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; and Cheshire and Warrington. This takes the number of people with access to the programme to more than 10 million, boosting digital and technical skills, job opportunities and productivity across the regions.

More than 2.5 million free training opportunities, in areas such as basic online skills, cybersecurity and coding, have already been delivered through the Digital Skills Partnership.

ENDS

Notes to editors and further info:

Contact the DCMS Press Office on 0207 211 2210.

CODE 4000

Offenders take part in a four-stage programme from initial training to developing the technical skills to qualify as full-time developer and find employment on release. The courses are led by volunteers and industry experts.

Stage 1: is a training phase, and begins with teaching the basics of HTML, CSS, and Javascript, before moving on to more advanced concepts such as Git, TDD, MVC, databases and full stack development.

Stage 2: allows successful graduates of Stage 1 to then work on real-world projects for external clients, which will also provide a modest income to the project.

Stage 3: will then see them working for clients in the real world on temporary day release.

Stage 4: aims to help them find full time employment as developers.

This employment hub in Sheffield will help them into work, stay in work and out of prison, and give back to their communities.

Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund – further quotes and info

Mike Blackburn, Lancashire LEP Board Director and Chair of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership, said:

We're delighted to have been awarded this funding which will enable us to deliver more accessible digital skills training to residents who are currently underrepresented in the local workforce.

The investment will also complement other programmes which focus on driving the region's digital economy as well as contributing to our wider inclusive growth strategy.

Lindsay Wetton, Senior Programme Manager, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership said:

D2N2 are thrilled to be leading this exciting innovative digital skills project across the area in collaboration with Sheffield city region.

The focus is to support women and people with Autism, into digital skilled jobs through workshops, work experience and jobs.

West of England Mayor, Tim Bowles, said:

This is fantastic news and supports one of my key ambitions of improving job opportunities across the region. I want to ensure that everyone, regardless of background or personal circumstances, can access support to develop workplace skills so that they can fulfil their potential.

Digital and tech is an important part of the West of England's economy, and businesses have a particular need for skilled employees now, and this demand is expected to grow in the future.

Women are currently under-represented in digital roles and this new project will seek to tackle this by engaging with a wide group of women in communities, with the aim of moving us towards more representative and inclusive employment in digital roles across the region. This could include roles in virtual reality, VFX design or software development.

Digital Skills Partnership – further quotes and info

Clare Harris, Senior Skills Officer for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP said:

We are delighted to have secured £75,000 of Digital Skills Partnership funding. As one of the best connected regional economies in Europe with a thriving tech sectors, it is important that people have the skills and confidence to take full advantage of our distinctive digital assets.

The project can make a tangible difference to residents, organisation and the economy of our area, helping to access and embrace the digital world and the opportunities that it brings.

By investing in the region, working with government and our partners, we can radically increase our contribution to the UK economy, while pioneering new systems, technologies and skills ways of working.

Philip Cox, Chief Executive of Cheshire and Warrington LEP said:

We are very excited to be a part of this initiative and to have a Local Digital Skills Partnership for Cheshire and Warrington. Being recognised by DCMS as one of the LEPs to deliver this project, shows the great potential Cheshire and Warrington has to increase our digitally-focused economy and increase productivity. Having the right digital skills offers fantastic opportunities for schoolchildren and adults when choosing a role.

Cheshire and Warrington LEP are keen to build upon our already dynamic economy by embracing and encouraging the skills our businesses need now and in the future. The Local Digital Skills Partnership will enable us to continue supporting the growth of our priority sectors as we move towards delivery of our Local Industrial Strategy.

More information on these three new Digital Skills Partnerships can be found [here](#).

Press release: Close season for coarse fishing on rivers starts

The close season runs from 15 March to 15 June 2019 and applies to all rivers and streams in England but does not apply to most still-waters and most canals.

During the close season Environment Agency officers, with support from Angling Trust Volunteer Bailiffs, will be conducting patrols to enforce the

close season as part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, now in its seventh year.

During last year's coarse fish close season campaign, 927 patrols were conducted, recording more than 250 illegal or unlicensed offences.

Kevin Austin, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders.

During the close season our fisheries enforcement officers, supported by Angling Trust volunteer bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing. We take illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and face a substantial fine. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Public consultation on the future of the close season for coarse fishing on rivers –

The Environment Agency recently conducted an 8 week public consultation on the future of the close season for coarse fishing on rivers. It has now closed and more than 13,600 responses were received. The results are now being collated. Along with the existing evidence, this information will be used to determine if there is a case for changing the current close season byelaw.

Any proposed change to the current byelaw (whether to change the dates or remove the close season) must be advertised, to give everyone the opportunity to object (or support). We will respond to these objections, before applying to government for confirmation. The final decision rests with Government.

Any decision to change the byelaw will not affect the 2019 close season.

[Press release: UK sends humanitarian experts ahead of Mozambique cyclone](#)

The UK is sending humanitarian experts to assess the impact of an expected cyclone in Mozambique which could leave hundreds of thousands of people without food and shelter.

Specialist humanitarian advisers, from the UK's Department for International

Development (DFID), are expected to deploy from London this evening (14 March). The experts will assess what UK aid is needed to support people affected by the cyclone and plan and co-ordinate relief efforts.

The Met Office predicts that flash flooding, large waves and extremely high-speed winds pose a danger to life and could also significantly damage buildings and other infrastructure. The cyclone is expected to make landfall this evening (14 March), and thousands of Mozambicans have already been evacuated for their own safety.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We are sending UK aid experts to Mozambique to be our eyes and ears on the ground and to make sure we're ready to rapidly increase our response if needed.

UK aid is already helping people and families affected by the heavy rains, as we had pre-positioned items including tents, buckets for clean water and basic cooking items. We are ready to offer further help to anyone in need.

My thoughts remain with those people who have already been affected by the recent extreme weather, and anyone who has lost loved ones.

UK aid prepositioned vital relief items in Mozambique to support any response to a humanitarian emergency – some of which have now already been given to people in need – including:

- 9,000 hygiene kits, which include basic hygiene items such as soap, toothbrushes and buckets to carry clean water;
- 7,000 tool kits, which include shovels, saws and other items to help repair homes and clear debris;
- 6,000 family kits and 1,000 latrine kits, which include solar lamps, water purifiers and toilet paper;
- 5,000 shelter kits, 10,000 tarpaulins and 600 plastic rolls to provide emergency shelter to those that have been made homeless; and
- 1,573 family tents and 15 community tents.

In addition to the humanitarian aid items, the UK is supporting the World Food Programme (WFP) to help 130,000 people feed themselves for two weeks. WFP will distribute emergency food and food vouchers for people to use at local markets.

The cyclone is also expected to hit Malawi, which has been suffering from severe flooding over the last five days, leaving at least 56 people dead, and may also affect Zimbabwe. The START Fund, which is managed by a group of NGOs and to which DFID is the biggest donor, has allocated £400,000, to enable Trocaire and HelpAge International to meet immediate needs such as clean water and shelter in Malawi.

Tomorrow in Mozambique, a UK government team is leading a meeting of donors

and other countries, alongside the Government of Mozambique, to help co-ordinate the response.

Notes to editors

- DFID has provided £764,000 to the World Food Programme to provide food and food vouchers. This is an allocation from DFID Mozambique's annual budget for 2018/19.
- DFID provided approximately £1.5 million from the 2018 Mozambique bilateral budget to preposition relief items in warehouses of the Mozambique National Institute for Disaster Management.
- DFID is the largest donor to the Start Fund. In 2018, we committed an additional £37.5m over three years

ENDS

[Press release: Total investment for Borderlands reaches up to £447 million](#)

Communities across the Borderlands area of the North of England and South of Scotland will benefit from up to £447 million investment.

The announcement of fresh funding in the Spring Statement brings the historic Borderlands Growth Deal to deliver investment, create jobs and encourage economic growth in the Northern Powerhouse and across the Borderlands region a step closer.

The funding will provide the opportunity to explore key priority projects such as regenerating Carlisle Station and developing the Lilidorei attraction at Alnwick Gardens, one of the North East's most popular tourist destinations.

Discussions will now continue with the local partners – including the local authorities of Carlisle City, Cumbria County, Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland County and Scottish Borders – to further develop their proposals and work towards reaching a Heads of Terms agreement for the Borderlands Growth Deal later this year.

Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP, said:

Our exciting and innovative Borderlands deal recognises that the cross-border region is a single economic unit.

Investment north of the border has an economic benefit south of the border and vice versa.

It is the right approach and I'm absolutely confident the Borderlands deal will deliver a massive boost to the region, supporting business, creating jobs and improving quality of life for everyone who lives there.

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, Jake Berry MP, said:

Today's announcement demonstrates the government's ambition to develop the next phase of growth across the Northern Powerhouse and Borderlands so no one is left behind.

This investment will go a long way to supporting jobs and boosting economic growth and tourism within the regions and improving people's lives with increased job opportunities and improved transport infrastructure.

People in the Northern Powerhouse and Borderlands regions are not forgotten and are an absolute priority for the government and we are determined to ensure these communities continue to thrive

The UK government's Borderlands Champion, John Stevenson MP, said:

As Borderlands Champion I'm absolutely delighted with the announcement of substantial new money going into the Borderlands region.

It gives us a great opportunity to seek other investment to boost the local economy and strengthen ties within the region.

Today's announcement builds on significant UK government investment to encourage housing growth and support coastal communities.

Further significant investment in the region from the Coastal Communities Fund and Coastal Revival Fund is due to be announced later this month.

A total of up to £447 million will be invested in the Borderlands region. The UK government will invest up to £260 million in the Borderlands Growth Deal. In combination with the recent £102 million investment in Carlisle from the Housing Infrastructure Fund, this means that up to £362 million of UK government funding will be invested into the Borderlands region. The Scottish government will contribute a further £85 million to the Borderlands Growth Deal.

Funding for both the regeneration of Carlisle Station and the Alnwick Gardens projects, as with all of the local Borderlands Growth Deal proposals, are subject to full business case approval.

News story: £260 million announced for the Borderlands growth deal

Scotland is set to benefit from new funding for a Borderlands growth deal the Chancellor announced in the Spring Statement.

Five local authorities from north and south of the border have worked in partnership with the UK Government on the ambitious Borderlands Deal that will deliver wide-ranging benefits throughout the region.

The funding levels for specific projects will be confirmed later this year and is expected to focus on energy projects, improving transport links, rural productivity and tourism across the region – boosting jobs, creating opportunity and encouraging further inward investment.

Up to £260 million for a Borderlands Growth Deal covers the border regions of England and Scotland. This includes £65 million new funding from the UK Government for the Scottish areas of the deal, the Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway. This is in addition to the £102 million recently announced from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for Carlisle, giving a total of £362 million of UK Government funding to the Borderlands area.

Scottish Secretary, David Mundell said:

The announcement of £362 million UK Government funding for the Borderlands is absolutely fantastic news for the region.

This exciting deal will boost economic growth by helping existing business, encouraging new ventures and bringing a wealth of improvements to people who live and work in the area and to visitors.

It is an ambitious approach to cross-border working between Governments, local authorities and partners and I'm confident that together we can create jobs and opportunity and bring investment.

This new funding from the UK Government brings our investment in growth deals in Scotland to more than £1.35 billion, and shows our huge commitment to growing Scotland's economy.