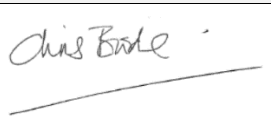
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Equality impact assessment helps SDS meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, SDS took the decision to use the impact assessment process to make progress as a Corporate Parent in relation to care experienced young people, which is a component part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The process might also be used to consider other groups that SDS has evidence of experiencing discrimination or underrepresentation.

Name of EqIA (e.g., directorate, large project or service)	Skills Planning and Sector development –Digital Economy Skills Action Plan
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): name and job title	Chris Brodie – Director of Regional Skills Planning and Sector Development
Does your project link to any other published EqIAs? If so please provide the name of the EqIA (e.g. WBL)	SDS Work Based Learning EqIA

Approved by:	**Director of:**	**Date approved:**	**Review date:**
Signed: 	Regional Skills Planning and Sector Development	13/02/2023	

1. Purpose of project, policy, or product

Provide details of what is being impact assessed below, including the target audience for this project:

Scottish Government have an ambition for Scotland to be a digital nation and their strategy Digital Scotland: A Changing Nation details how they will support every business and every individual in Scotland to embrace the economic opportunities presented by the digital economy.[1] Achieving this ambition requires an inclusive skills and education system which is responsive to the ever-changing needs of the digital economy. This will enable individuals to access the high-quality digital economy job opportunities, contribute to community wealth building, and support businesses across all sectors to innovate and benefit from digital transition.

The SDS Digital Economy Skills Action Plan (DESAP) is the SDS skills response to this ambition, as it sets out a series of skills actions which should be delivered in partnership through cross-agency, industry, and Government collaboration to ensure employers have the digital economy talent they need. The development of DESAP as a document is new; the actions within DESAP are combination of existing actions which will be scaled, as well as new actions.

DESAP identifies that a 'one size fits all' approach to developing skills interventions and actions will clearly not suffice, due to the diversity and complexity of the digital economy. A concerted and collaborative effort will be required by partners operating in the skills sphere, coupled with the use labour market evidence and expert knowledge and insight, to ensure that the implementation of digital economy skills actions take account of equality, diversity, inclusion, and rurality.

The digital economy brings significant disruption as jobs and skillsets change, but with the right action it also presents the opportunity to support inclusive growth, and to tackle existing inequalities in the labour market. To achieve this, it is essential that equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are embedded within the development and implementation of every DESAP action, and in addition DESAP Priority Action 4 outlines the specific actions which will be taken forward to ensure that skills opportunities contribute to a fairer, inclusive, and diverse digital economy. Priority Action 4 identifies the need to:

- Assemble expert knowledge and insights including that of our learners, to ensure that every DESAP action is delivered with equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations from inception
- Collate the right evidence on equality, diversity, and inclusion to demonstrate impact
- Inform the development of inclusive learning pathways into new high value digital economy jobs
- Support and enable businesses across all regions to benefit from the digital economy

The DESAP actions which will contribute to achieving this include:

[1] A changing nation: How Scotland will thrive in a digital world

- Stress testing all proposed DESAP activities for barriers to inclusion including geographical, by establishing a DESAP Equality Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Advisory Board consisting of appropriate experts who can inform and endorse the development and delivery of all DESAP projects, activity, and further research.

- Under the guidance of the ED&I Advisory Board identify and address gaps in the baseline digital economy research and indicators which has been collated.

- Gather all project evaluation and monitoring data disaggregated by ED&I criteria, including geographical where possible

2. Evidence and Impact

DESAP has been Developed with partners across Scotland and across the digital economy and is an evidence-based plan which draws on insight and expertise to highlight the skills challenges and opportunities which will support Scotland's digital economy employers.

The development of DESAP was supported by a DESAP Expert Group whose membership included Highlands & Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Federation of Small Business, Scottish Government, AI Alliance, Inclusion Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, and Business Gateway/Digital Boost. Consultation was also undertaken with the SDS equalities team to help refine the E,D&I actions which were recommended by stakeholders. Throughout this document and in DESAP a range of evidence has been utilised and these include:

- Equality Evidence Review – a literature review of key research into the education and employment outcomes for different equality groups.
- Employability Fund Statistics – data and analysis on the number of programmes starts and achievements by age, disability, gender, ethnicity and care experience.
- Foundation Apprenticeship Report 2020 – data and analysis on number of Foundation Apprenticeship starts by disability, gender, ethnicity and care experience.
- Modern Apprenticeship Statistics – data and analysis on number of Modern Apprenticeship starts and achievements by age, disability, gender, ethnicity and care experience.
- Graduate Apprenticeship Report 2019 - data on number of Graduate Apprenticeship starts by age, disability, gender, ethnicity and care experience.
- Developing essential digital skills 2021 which is a UK Government report into the potential for digital inclusion for certain age groups as well as for other factors such as whether someone has a disability or their socioeconomic status.
- Tackling the Technology Gender Gap which is SDS research to address the under representation of women in technology roles.
- Neurodiversity in Digital Technology, which is SDS research looking at the strengths and barriers associated with the neurodiverse conditions themselves and how neurodivergent people can be attracted, recruited and retained in tech occupations which are best suited to
- Diversity and Inclusion in UK Tech Companies which is research by the TechUK to identify how diverse the tech sector is.

- Bridging the digital divide for care experienced young people in Scotland: If not now, when: which identifies the challenges associated with digital exclusion for those in the care system or those moving on from the care system

- Socio-economic diversity in the tech sector, produced by the Sutton Trust have and the Bridge Group to highlight the challenges of socio-economic diversity in the tech sector.

2.1 Age

Context: Younger and older workers continue to be the most disadvantaged in the labour market as both groups are more likely to be unemployed and face barriers to entry and progression into work. Unemployment at a young age has long-term detrimental impact on employment, progression and pay.[2] An ageing workforce in Scotland raises the possibility of discrimination, with older workers more at risk of being displaced as the impact of AI and automation transform jobs and workplaces.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
Modern Apprenticeships For technology Modern Apprenticeships there is prevalence towards older apprentices. For example, in year 20/21: Information security MA • 13% were 16 - 19 • 46% were 25+ Data Analytics MA • 9% were 16-19 • 65% were 25+ Digital Media MA • 21% were 16-19 • 48% were 25+ IT Telecoms MA • 28% were 16 – 19 • 45% were 25+	SDS MA Published Data 20/21 SDS GA Published Data 20/21 Scotland's Digital Strategy – A Changing Nation Scottish Household Survey UK Parliament (2021) Developing essential digital skills Young People Views on Computing Science	• The public funding contributions for Modern Apprenticeships vary by age in line with Scottish Government policy to support youth employment with apprenticeship providers accessing a higher contribution for the 16-19 apprentices. • Digital World has been established to promote technology careers with a specific focus on young people and includes information and case studies on apprenticeships. • SDS delivers multiple campaigns to promote apprenticeships to employers, young people, parents, and career changers. • SDS works with partners to deliver Tech Industry into Schools programme and a feature of this is to promote to young people in school the opportunity to do a technology apprenticeship.	• Continue to promote apprenticeship opportunities to young people in school and their parents/carers, with a particular focus on those with protected characteristics. • Further analysis of apprenticeship statistics for example to identify whether there is a lack of young people applying for a technology apprenticeship, or if employers are favouring the transferable skills associated with an older apprentice. • Continued delivery of campaigns such as Digital World which target promotional messaging on digital careers, apprenticeships and reskilling to young people and careers changers.

[2] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
In contrast young people are better represented on the Digital Applications MA: Digital Applications MA • 55% were 16-19 • 23% were 25+ **Graduate Apprenticeships** For technology GAs there is a broad spread of age groups participating although individuals aged 16- 19 still tend to be are underrepresented. This may be a consequence of employers favouring GAs as a mechanism to reskill existing employees. IT Software GA • 30% were 16- 19 • 14% were 34 – 49 IT Management GA • 27% were 16- 19 • 37% were 35- 49 Data Analytics GA • 15% were 16-19 • 27% were 35-49 Cyber Security GA L10 • 41% were 20-24 • 15% were 35 – 49		• SDS has worked with the National Parent Forum for Scotland to develop materials to promote to parents the value of cyber/tech apprenticeships. • The content and branding of technology MAs has been refreshed and this may make the pathways more attractive/resonate more with younger people. • SDS has developed diversity materials for employers supporting them to understand the value of diversity and implement inclusive recruitment practices. • SDS has established a Digital World network consisting primarily of careers advisers to ensure that messaging about digital careers can be communicated through our work in schools and drop-in centres. • Significant resources are deployed through Developing Young Workforce (DYW) and Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) to attract young people into the sector. Entry routes, including Foundation Apprenticeship, Modern Apprenticeships and Kickstart are targeted specifically at young people	• Continued promotion to employers of the existing diversity resources. • In developing digital economy skills training programmes consideration should be given to the accessibility of delivery for different age groups. For example, whether f2f or online, or a combination of both is most appropriate for different age groups. • Continue to monitor any changes to uptake of the refreshed technology MAs by age group to identify if there has been a positive or negative impact. • Create opportunities to engage learners, and especially young learners in our planning and decision making to ensure interventions are relevant and impactful to the different customer groups.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
Cyber Security GA L11 • 19% were 25- 34 • 14% were 35 - 49 For all the GA technology frameworks the largest percentage of apprentices are existing employees being reskilled. For year 20/21: • IT Software: 63% upskilling • IT Management: 92% upskilling • Data Analytics: 85% upskilling • Cyber Security: 85% & 95% upskilling **Other** • Individuals are living longer, and the proportion of older workers in the Scottish workforce is increasing so it will be important for employers to improve how they retain and retrain existing staff. • Technology continues to have an older workforce; 72% of tech workers across the UK are aged 35+. • Research indicates that individuals aged 60+ are likely to be less digitally literate, however there are some positive indicators of progress including an increase in internet use amongst 60+		• Due to the industry need to reskill existing staff there has been a focus on promoting technology apprenticeships to career changers who will typically be aged 25 and over. • Two technology FA pathways have been developed to support the articulation of young people into further technology GA or MA opportunities. • SDS established and continues to support Digital Xtra Fund which encourages young people to experience digital technology skills and careers experiences. • SDS delivers Discover Cyber and Discover Data Live Lessons in schools to encourage more young people into digital technology careers and education. • SDS has delivered Digital Start Fund and Digital Skills Pipeline which are aimed at supported careers changers into technology roles.	

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
individuals from 37% in 2007 to 66% in 2019. • The way in which individuals access the internet varies by age group with 98% of 16–24-year-olds most likely to a use smartphone. Similarly older internet users are more likely to use a tablet to access the internet than younger users. • In 2020, insight identified that only 46% of people aged 65+ in the UK had essential digital skills for life, compared with 96% of people in the 15-24 age group category.[3] • Digital technology college students tend to have an older age profile from other student disciplines as almost half were aged 25 or over. • The current focused activity on reskilling career changer for professional digital technology roles will most likely target individuals 25+.			

[3] UK Parliament (2021) Developing essential digital skills

2.2 Disability

Context: Disabled people generally have poorer employment outcomes and are more likely to go into Further Education after school. Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed or under-employed than their peers, for example a disabled person with a degree is more likely to be unemployed than a non-disabled person without a degree.[4]

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Data indicates that internet use is lower amongst adults who have a limiting long-term physical or mental health condition or illness (71%), than those who have a non-limiting condition or illness (90%) and those who do not have a condition or illness (94%). • The employment rate amongst autistic people is low as only 32% of autistic adults are in paid work compared to 76% in the UK population. However, over 75% of autistic people would like to work full-time. And 10% of people who responded to an Autistic Society's survey said that their ideal job was to work technology. The cost of lost employment for autistic adults in the UK is estimated at £9bn per year.	Equality Evidence Review Scottish Household Survey Scotland's Digital Strategy – A Changing Nation Neurodiversity in Technology SDS MA Published Data 20/21 SDS GA Published Data 20/21	• SDS has been raising awareness with training providers of the different funding options available from SDS and other partners to help support disabled individuals. • SDS published research to better understand the challenges and opportunities for neurodivergent individuals in technology careers. This has included establishing a workstream consisting of Scottish Government and organisations like Auticon who can provide specialist advice. The workstream also supports the delivery of projects originating from this research such as supporting capacity building for colleges to attract and retain more neurodivergent individuals on cyber/tech programmes. .	• Continue to review information on digital economy careers for accessibility (marketing materials and digital services), to ensure it promotes a diverse range of positive role models. • Continued collection and monitoring of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Data to ensure a representative number of disabled people are benefiting from digital economy interventions. For example, accessing technology apprenticeship data disaggregated by framework and disability.

[4] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019 and the Scottish Government's A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Plan

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• There are several specific traits, skills, and strengths that research indicates are associated with neurodiverse conditions and are a good fit with technology occupations. • Consultation has highlighted that some employers may lack understanding of the benefits of employing disabled people and are unaware of how to access support for workplace adjustment. • Consultation has highlighted that some employers may lack understanding of, and confidence in implementing positive action versus positive discrimination. Organisations like the Federation of Small Business have an HR and legal advice service which can support their members on this topic. • Employers have highlighted disclosure as a challenge, with some individuals not disclosing their disability/support needs and potentially missing out on opportunity to benefit from support. • The participation rates for disabled individuals in apprenticeships – - GA participation by disabled people is 7.8%	SDS FA Published Data 20/21 The Changing Workplace: Enabling Disability Inclusive Hybrid Working. Is Hybrid Working Here to Stay?	• SDS has developed employer materials to support with more inclusive recruitment practices. Similarly, organisations like Auticon work with technology employers to provide additional support and guidance on the recruitment and retention of neurodivergent employees. • SDS has worked with partners to develop 500 new BSL signs for technology words which previously did not have a specific tech sign. • ScotlandIS which is the trade body for the technology industry has been delivering multiple events and information to help employers understand that neurodiverse talent should be an essential part of their pipeline.	• Explore opportunities to work with wider SDS and Government to promote the business benefits of employing disabled people and help employers to understand the different funding and support that is available to them.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
- FA participation by disabled people has increased to 16.3%%, from 7.1% - MA participation by disabled people has increased over recent years to 15.4% - MA achievement rates are lower than those who are not disabled 71% vs 78% • Continuing to encourage digital employers to consider flexible working practices should contribute to more diverse workforces. • 70% of disabled workers identified that if employers did not allow them to work remotely, it would negatively impact their physical or mental health. • 85% of disabled workers surveyed felt more productive working from home. • Many digital technology jobs have the potential to offer flexible working with over half of responding technology employers indicating they would permanently offer remote working.			

2.3 **Gender reassignment** (sometimes under heading of Transgender)

Context: This section looks at activity to address potential disadvantage faced by trans customers.[5] For the trans community, there is little data available on employment outcomes however, we know that trans people are less likely to be in employment than their peers. The Scottish Government estimates that around 0.6-1% of the population is transgender.[6] Similarly there appears to be little data available in relation specifically to digital economy jobs and skills, although there is some additional data available for the cyber security industry at UK level. Also, as the digital economy cuts across every sector in Scotland, the inequalities within the wider labour market are also relevant.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Only 61% of trans people identified having paid work in the last 12 months in the (19% less than respondents overall) • Research (2017) identified that 39% of trans employees experienced negative comments and discrimination • Trans customers highlighted that being able to identify how they wish and being addressed by the correct name/pronoun were important issues for them. • In 2018-19, 0.2% of Modern Apprenticeships identified as transgender.	Stonewall (2020) Shut Out National LGBT Survey (2017) SDS Apprenticeship Statistics SDS Equality Evidence Review Decrypting Diversity	• SDS has worked with the Scottish Transgender Alliance to deliver sessions on transgender awareness to learning providers in the apprenticeship network.	DESAP should find opportunities to benefit from the work SDS will be doing including: • The activity to raise awareness of the needs and challenges of trans individuals that they may face moving into learning and employment. • The activity to promote apprenticeships to LGBT people including addressing gendered stereotypes. • The best practice to be gained from the SDS work to expand options for gender on our equality

[5] SDS use the broader definition of 'Trans', to include trans women and men, non-binary and cross-dressing people. It is recognised that intersex is separate, and that intersex people may identify as men, women or non-binary.

[6] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019 and **Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder**

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• In the UK cyber security industry, it is estimated that there is around 1.3% trans and 1% nonbinary individuals which may indicate a greater degree of representation in the cyber industry than across the UK population as a whole.			monitoring form to ensure our monitoring is inclusive of trans and non-binary people DESAP should prioritise the ongoing activity which works with employers to promote inclusive working environments and cultures to contribute to a diverse technology workforce.

2.4 Pregnancy and maternity

Context: EHRC research suggests that pregnant women can face discrimination and bias in the workplace. There is limited data available about pregnancy and maternity available in digital roles across the workforce, but the digital economy cuts across every sector in Scotland so the inequalities within the wider labour market are relevant.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• 40% of employers claim to have seen at least one pregnant woman in their workplace 'take advantage' of their pregnancy. • A third believe that women who become pregnant and new mothers in work are 'generally less interested in career progression' when compared to other employees in their company. • Four in 10 (41%) employers agreed that pregnancy in the workplace puts 'an unnecessary cost burden' on the workplace. • Women working in technology roles have identified that they may find it difficult to return to their previous role due to the speed with which technology skills and jobs evolve. • 31% of female respondents working in technology identified that finding the right work/life balance can also be	**EHRC Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Research** **Tackling the Technology Gender Gap** **Women in Tech Survey 2021**	• Reskilling programmes have been designed to target career changers including women returners. • SDS has processes in place to allow individuals to return to their apprenticeship following maternity. • Organisations like Equate Scotland have worked with SDS and Government to co-deliver technology women returner programmes. Similarly, the DDI City Deal have tailored programmes to encourage women returners to enter data careers. • SDS has developed Virtual Internships to support women to return to work. • Equate Scotland has been working with partners to deliver Women Returner Data Science Courses.	• In the implementation of DESAP consider flexible delivery of training programmes which would meet the needs of pregnant women and new mothers. • As part of the support for employers to recruit and retain diverse workforces, include good practice in supporting pregnant employees to employers and providers.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
challenging and that progression in the workplace is not always easy.			

2.5 Race

Context: Black and Minority Ethnic groups tend to do well at school and are more likely to go into Higher Education. However, they are also more likely to have poorer employment outcomes than the rest of the population. There are differences between different ethnic minority groups, but most research available does not disaggregate data to this level of detail. The evidence does show however that Gypsy Travellers in particular tend to have poorer educational outcomes than their peers.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• The participation of individuals from ethnic minority background in the MA programme has increased year on year since 2014-15 from 1.4% to 2.4%. By comparison, the population of Scotland who identify as from a minority background is s estimated at 4% or at 6.4% for 16–24-year-olds • The participation of younger individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds have lower participation rates on Modern Apprenticeships (54% Modern Apprentices were aged 16-24, compared to 61% of all Modern Apprentices**.** • The participation of individuals from ethnic minority background on GAs is at a rate of 3.6%. • 15% of the digital tech workforce in the UK are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 13% of the wider UK workforce.	**BCS Diversity and Inclusion Report** **Tech Nation Workforce Survey** **Women in Tech Survey 2021** **ScotlandIS Tech Survey** Annual Population Survey, 2019 Census, 2011	• SDS has partnered with Data Kirk who are a social enterprise working with the BME community, to support people into data careers. • SDS has been working with the Skills Recognition Group to support increased employment amongst refugees in Scottish technology companies. • SDS has worked with Code Your Future to support their work to encourage asylum seekers and refugees into technology careers.	• As part of the support to encourage employers to have more diverse ensure information is included on the proactive steps to attract individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds. • Continued work with partners like Code Your Future and Data Kirk. • Ongoing engagement with the Skills Recognition Advisory Board. • Find opportunities to benefit from the wider work which SDS is taking forward such as the Work with refugee organisations and ESOL classes to raise awareness of apprenticeships and the provision of information about work-based learning

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Respondents to a ScotlandIS tech employers survey identified that their workforces were predominantly white at 88%. • In Scotland, Edinburgh has the highest percentage of technology employees from ethnic minority backgrounds at 6%. • In a UK survey of the technology workforce, 43% of women identifying as from an ethnic minority background said they felt their ethnicity was a limitation on career progression. • 53% of working women from a non-white ethnicity worried about their jobs and promotions during the pandemic. • Tech entrepreneurs from ethnic minority backgrounds received in total 1.7% of VC investment, and in contrast 76% of VC investment went to all white founding teams.			opportunities in a variety of languages, .

2.6 Religion or belief

Context: There is little evidence in terms of education and employment outcomes from those from different faiths, although research shows that Muslims (particularly Muslim women) tend to have poorer employment outcomes.[7]

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Data indicates that individuals identifying as having a religion/belief are under-represented, however figures are impacted by much larger proportion of individuals identifying as having 'no religion' compared to the wider population. • 1% of GA and 0.8% of MA identified as Muslim (compared to 1.6% of the Scottish population) • 11% of GA and 11.9% of MA identified as Roman Catholic (compared to 14.5% of the population) • 12.3% of GA and 8.6% of MA identified as Church of Scotland (compared to 24% of the population)	• SDS Equality Evidence Review • Modern Apprenticeship participation data 2018-19 • Graduate Apprenticeships participation data 2018-19 • Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder	SDS has undertaken awareness raising with learning providers on religion/belief and tackling hate speech.	• Find opportunities to benefit from the wider work which is SDS is doing to raise awareness with providers and employers of the potential barriers to employment that individuals from different backgrounds may face • Find opportunities to benefit from the wider work which SDS is doing to better understand the barriers and challenges which contribute to poorer employment outcomes for Muslim men and women to inform future approaches to support this group

[7] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• 3.9% of GA and 3.1% of MA identified as Other Christian (compared to 7.8% of the population)			

2.7 **Sex** (or Gender)

Context: 48% of the UK workforce are female and in Scotland 75% of females were economically active and in work in August 2022. Gender imbalances continue across subject and career choices and gendered choices can be seen from a young age. Girls tend to outperform boys at school and are more likely to go into Higher Education. However, women tend to be disproportionately represented in low quality, low paid work, while men are over-represented within STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) sectors and in senior roles.[8]

Women continue to be under-represented in digital technology occupations which is exacerbated as digital roles are disproportionally based in male dominated industries, but there has been a significant improvement during 2020/2021. Many women face additional barriers to accessing training opportunities because of inflexible working patterns childcare responsibilities and childcare responsibilities.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Whilst often achieving higher levels of qualification in digital related subjects, women are less likely to go into STEM employment. In digital gender segregation continues however there has been a significant increase in female representation in technology occupations from 18% to 24% in 2020, and to 30% in 2021. • Research identified that women tend to feel they have to meet all requirements of a job, before they can apply, whilst men meeting about 60% of requirements of a job feel that it is sufficient • Only 3% of technology VC funding went to all female teams. On the	Digital Tech – Tackling the Technology Gender Gap Tech Nation Haystack ONS Population Survey Learners Views on Computing Science	• There is a plethora of activity delivered by SDS and others to address the gender imbalance in technology. This includes activity by Equate Scotland, Scottish Women in Technology, ScotlandIS and Dess Code who have delivered bespoke female programmes, mentoring, undertaken research and supported employers. • SDS lead workstream Tackling the Technology Gender Gap and action plan implemented each year. Originating form this work has been several projects such as partnering with Girl Guiding Scotland to develop a coding badge for girls in non-tech environments. • SDS worked with others to develop a toolkit to encourage more people	• SDS Equalities Team to continue work with the Tackling the Technology Gender Gap workstream to provide examples of wider best practice to be adopted • Continue to work with partners to have a joined up and consistent approach to messaging and programmes which address the gender imbalance in tech. • Work with partners to develop shared messaging about the positives about a digital technology career opportunity for females in Scotland.

[8] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
other hand, all male teams received 68% of VC funding. • At school there remains a significant gender imbalance in technology qualifications, but there has been improvement and in particular data science is proving more attractive to young girls. **NPA Data Science** - Level 4: 63.6% female - Level 5: 40% female - Level 6: 44.4% female • The number of females taking Nat5 Computing Science has remained broadly stable since 2019; a small increase in females taking Higher level since 2019; a notable increase at Advanced Higher level since 2020, although overall numbers are small and females tend to account for no more than 20% of the computing science cohort. • In a survey of school pupils, most girls said they like technology lessons and think they are important; however, they were less likely to say this than boys	SQA schools' statistics NOMIS Labour Force Survey	to become role models or mentors to inspire girls to get into tech. • SDS delivers Tech Live Lessons which are streamed into school classes to equally reach girls and boys to inspire young people to consider tech careers. • SDS established Digital Xtra fund to increase the reach of coding clubs and which has a specific objective of addressing the gender imbalance. Examples of their funded projects include Blairgowrie High School in Perth & Kinross which will develop both a co-ed as well as a girls-only Robotics Club to help address negative stereotypes and the gender imbalance of women in tech. • SDS has established a SAAB Gender Commission to develop recommendations and proposals to offer business-ready, practical solutions to improving gender diversity in their workforce. • The SDS Work Based Learning EQIA details several actions which SDS is advancing and which will have an impact on technology apprenticeships.	• Continue to ensure that SDS products and that of our suppliers use appropriate terminology, branding which is inclusive and which will encourage females into tech. • Continued delivery of activities which reach young girls in non-technology environments such as Live Lessons and the work of Digital Xtra Fund and code clubs. • Continue to explore options for specific project activity aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in technology.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• At 16% there has been very little change in the overall numbers of females starting technology MA frameworks. But the proportion of technology MA Achievements by females has shown an increasing trend despite no increase in start rates. • For FAs the female engagement in the 'traditional' technology frameworks has declined since 2018. However female representation in the Creative and Digital Media framework was almost half of all intakes in 2020. • Scotland has been cited as having a significant gender pay gap for technology professional roles, with a gap of nearly £20k between male and female techies. Women are more less to be in less senior technology roles and in those which are less technical and require softer skills.			

2.8 Sexual orientation

Context: Data on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) groups in terms of employment outcomes is limited. The Scottish Government estimates the LGB population as 2.4%.[9] There is also limited data on sexual orientation for the Scottish tech sector overall, but some data is available for the cyber security industry at UK level. Also, the scope of DESAP is wider than the tech sector encompassing digitally enabled roles across all of Scotland's sectors.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Stonewall Scotland research (2017) identified 17% of LGB employees had been bullied/harassed at work • In 2018-19, 3% of Graduate Apprenticeships and 3.2% of Modern Apprenticeships identified as LGB. • On Modern Apprenticeships, LGB apprentices tend to have slightly lower achievement rates (69% vs 76% in 2018-19) • The LGB community seems to be better represented in the cyber security industry than the UK average, with 10% of respondents identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. A further 1% of survey	**Stonewall (2020) Shut Out** Modern Apprenticeship (internal statistics) Graduate Apprenticeships (internal statistics) **Decrypting Diversity**	• SDS worked with Stonewall Scotland to deliver sessions on developing an inclusive workplace culture to learning providers	• Promote inclusive cultures that tackle bullying and discrimination with providers and employers • Promote good practice to providers and employers in supporting LGB employees in the workplace. • Continue to work with UK Government and partners to benefit from their research and to identify if Scottish cuts of the data can be provided.

[9] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019 and **Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder**

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
respondents self-describe their sexual orientation.			

3. Assessing impact on other groups

3.1 Care experience

Context: Care experienced young people tend to disengage from school at an earlier opportunity and are therefore more likely to leave school with little/no qualifications. The proportion of care experienced young people moving into Further or Higher Education is low but is increasing within Further Education. At all levels of education, care experienced young people tend to have lower levels of attainment than their peers.[10]

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Modern Apprenticeship participation by care experienced young people has increased over the last 5 years from 0.9% to 1.7% • Achievement rates for care experienced people are lower than those who are not care experienced (64% vs 77%), although this has increased from 59% in the previous year • Foundation Apprenticeship participation by care experienced people was 2.4% • Graduate Apprenticeship participation by care experienced people was 0.5%, which may reflect their	Employability Fund statistics 2019-20 Consultation – learning providers and CIAG staff Consultation with care experienced young people and Action for Children / Barnardo's staff **Bridging the digital divide for care experienced young people in Scotland: If not now, when?** **Socio Economic Diversity in Tech Sector**	• SDS is a Corporate Parent and undertakes work across other programmes specifically focused on care experienced individuals. Guides have been produced in conjunction with Who Cares Scotland to support learners and providers. • For 2020-21, Enhanced Funding for care experienced Modern Apprentices has been updated to focus on those who require additional support to undertake their apprenticeship and allows providers to apply for funding where an individual discloses this during their apprenticeship (in line with feedback from the provider consultation).	• Identify opportunities to align with actions which would encourage care experienced individuals into digital economy careers such as the recommendations in the Care-Experienced Graduates' Decision-Making, Choices and Destinations Project. • Continue to work with employers to encourage participation in programmes like Apprenticeships which open digital economy opportunities to individuals without degree level

[10] SDS Equality Evidence Review 2019

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
lower participation in Higher Education • On the Employability Fund, 7% of participants identified as care experienced. Through consultation, some of the key barriers to employment for care experienced young people identified were: - Lack of qualifications / relevant work experience - Lack of networks / awareness of opportunities - Lack of understanding from employers - Cost of travel - Housing issues - Convictions - May move around which can impact learning at school and employment opportunities • There is potential for care experienced young people to be digitally excluded due to limited income they lack the ability to access technology equipment and/or broadband. • The (UK) tech workforce is unrepresentative with respect to socio-economic		• Travel for Foundation Apprentices is provided by the Local Authority, and travel for Graduate Apprentices is provided by the employer. • Employers are encouraged to offer Scottish Living Wage where possible.	qualifications and without experience. • Using platforms like Digital World to promote positive, inspirational, and realistic digital economy role models. • Benefit from the wider work which SDS will take forward to raise awareness with providers and employers of the needs of care experienced young people and how to support them more effectively.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
background as it tends to attract individuals with higher levels of education. The socio-economic background of technology employees is comparable to that of the 'traditional' professions.			

3.2 Digital exclusion/poverty

Context: Universal digital connectivity is essential to ensure an inclusive and Scotland wide digital economy. The pandemic has demonstrated how essential digital is to our everyday life, working and learning experiences. But there is potential that some individuals could be left behind due to the multiple factors associated with digital exclusion and digital poverty. Whilst these are out with the scope of DESAP to address, it is important they are considered in the implementation of DESAP action to ensure equality of opportunity.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
• Through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme over 95% of premises in Scotland can now benefit from faster speeds. However, gaps in connectivity persist and there remains a divide particularly between urban and rural Scotland. • Internet access in Scottish homes has increased but there remains a digital divide with online home internet access lower in the most deprived areas, and amongst those on low incomes. • There is potential for care experienced young people to be digitally excluded due to limited income they lack the ability to access	Scottish Government COVID response Bridging the digital divide for care experienced young people in Scotland: If not now, when UK Parliament (2021) Developing essential digital skills	Liaison with Connecting Scotland.	Continue to work with programmes like Connecting Scotland which support individuals to access equipment. Working with education and training providers to ensure adequate consideration of online and f2f delivery.

Evidence of positive or negative impact	Sources of evidence	Activity to date	Further activity required
technology equipment and/or broadband. • The way in which individuals access the internet varies by age group with 98% of 16–24-year-olds most likely to a use smartphone and older internet users more likely to use a tablet. • In 2020, insight identified that only 46% of people aged 65+ in the UK had essential digital skills for life, compared with 96% of people in the 15-24 age group category.			