

News story: Plans launched to boost digital skills for adults

Free courses will be offered to thousands of people to help the 1 in 5 adults with no or low basic digital skills learn how to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

The new qualifications, unveiled today by Apprenticeship and Skills Minister Anne Milton, will be based on new, rigorous national standards and will be available for free to anyone over the age of 19 from 2020.

They have been designed to help adults learn the essential skills, such as sending emails, completing online forms or using a tablet, that many people take for granted.

[Research shows](#) that digital skills have become as important in getting a job and being part of society as English and Maths. An estimated 90% of all jobs in the next 20 years will require some form of digital knowledge, but one in five adults still lack these skills.

The new offer will comprise of:

- range of new essential digital skills qualifications, available from 2020, that will meet new conditions and requirements set by independent exams regulator Ofqual, also published today.
- digital Functional Skills qualifications, available from 2021, that will support progression into employment or further education and develop skills for everyday life.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

I want people of all ages to have the skills and confidence they need for work and everyday life.

Being online is more important than ever and yet one in five adults in the UK don't have the basic digital skills that many of us take for granted. This is cutting many people off from so many opportunities – from accessing new jobs, further study and being able to stay in touch with friends and family.

I am thrilled to launch the new 'essential digital skills' qualifications which will give adults the chance to develop a whole host of new skills to help get ahead in work, but also to improve their quality of life overall.

Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, Margot James, said:

The new entitlement will give everyone the opportunity to participate in an increasingly digital world and take advantage of digital technology, whether it is using a smartphone, learning how to send emails or shopping online.

Implementation of the new entitlement will be complemented by the work of our Digital Skills Partnership to boost digital skills at all levels – from the essential digital skills that support inclusion, to the digital skills we increasingly need for work, right through to the advanced digital skills required for specialist roles.

The new national entitlement from 2020 will fully fund adults with no or low digital skills to undertake the new qualifications. They will be supported to use digital devices like tablets, smart phones and laptop computers and to perform everyday activities like how to navigate the internet, send an email and make online payments.

The announcement follows a [12-week consultation](#) and extensive work with a wide range of providers, employers, subject experts, Ofqual, awarding organisations and digital inclusion charities.

The announcement builds on steps already taken to drive up the government's digital offer including making computing a statutory national curriculum subject and introducing a new Computer Science GCSE and A Level.

Press release: Small and medium enterprises lead outstanding British businesses honoured by Her Majesty the Queen

- More than 200 businesses, including 151 small and medium enterprises and 6 double award winners, will be honoured at a Buckingham Palace reception
- previous international trade business winners have seen a 73% boost to their international sales and worldwide recognition

Her Majesty The Queen has today (23 April 2019) named 201 businesses as among the best in the country in the prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise to celebrate Her Majesty's 93rd birthday.

The winners include businesses leading the way in a huge range of industries – from construction, agriculture, motoring and software development. This year, three quarters of the total are SMEs, 30 of which have fewer than 10 employees. They will join more than 6,000 British businesses in receiving the prestigious honour and will have the privilege of displaying the Queen's Awards for Enterprise emblem for 5 years.

The Awards, now in its 53rd year, are the most prestigious awards for UK businesses, with companies from across the UK recognised for their contribution in the 4 categories.

There are:

- 129 International Trade winners
- 61 Innovation winners
- 6 Sustainable Development winners
- 5 Promoting Opportunity winners

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

These prestigious awards help shine a light on all that is great about UK business today. I am extremely impressed to see such a wealth of talent and innovation from across the UK being recognised today by Her Majesty The Queen.

These awards recognise the innovative products and services being provided by British businesses that are in demand across the world, as well as the sheer determination and hard work that comes with starting and running a business.

Many of these winners are small businesses – the backbone of our economy – and we are backing them to grow, increase their productivity and create more jobs and opportunity across the UK through our modern Industrial Strategy.

Among the double-award winning businesses recognised for outstanding achievements in both International Trade and Innovation categories are:

- DriveWorks Ltd, a software developer
- Ideal Boilers Ltd, a leading boiler manufacturer
- Niftylift Ltd, one of the largest manufacturers of 'cherry pickers'
- driving simulation software company rFpro
- tool manufacturer Snap-on UK Holdings
- innovative technology company Markes International Limited

Niftylift Ltd is the only company to get the double award twice, having won awards for International trade and Innovation in 2013.

Roger Bowden, Niftylift's chairman and founder said:

We are honoured to be recognised for not one, but two prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise in 2019. These awards help to illustrate how our dedication to design and innovation, together with our attention to detail and strong customer focus, have allowed us to compete so successfully in this global marketplace.

I am very proud of the strong and close-knit team we have here at Niftylift and I'd like to thank them all for their professionalism and commitment to ensuring our worldwide reputation and success over the years.

Shaun Edwards, CEO of Ideal Boilers, which won awards for International Trade and Innovation said:

It is an honour and a privilege to receive these awards, which reflect our continued commitment to innovation and international relations. This high recognition emphasises and reflects the hard work and determination of all our employees whose core values of excellence, integrity and an entrepreneurial spirit will continue to drive our business further towards greater achievements.

Tim Hawkins, managing director of Markes International Ltd, which won in International Trade and Innovation said:

It is a great honour to be recognised by Her Majesty The Queen for our excellence in Innovation and, for the second time, International Trade. We take great pride in introducing new technologies to our field of analytical chemistry, and alongside our valued trading partners, have been successful in supporting customers around the world and enhancing scientific progress.

Chris Hoyle, technical director at rFpro, which also won in International Trade and Innovation said:

We are delighted that the hard work of everybody at rFpro has been acknowledged by the Queen's Awards judging panel and we are so proud to be one of just a few companies to achieve a double award. Our contribution to making the world's road networks safer is reward enough, but it is fantastic to receive such prestigious recognition.

Applications for the Queen's Awards for Enterprise 2020 open on 1 May 2019 and close on 10 September 2019. They are free to enter, and it is a self-nominating process. Applicants may apply for more than one award and entries are welcomed from all sectors. For more information and to apply, visit: www.gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise.

Entries for the 2020 awards open on 1 May 2019. The Awards were established in 1965 and the first winners announced the following year.

The full list of winners is available on [The Gazette](#) website.

These awards are relevant to the [foundations of the Industrial Strategy](#) – Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places.

Through companies such as these, the UK will tackle the [Grand Challenges](#) and help put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future.

Winners are:

- invited to a Royal reception
- presented the award by one of The Queen's representatives, a Lord-Lieutenant
- able to fly The Queen's Award flag at the main office, and use the emblem on marketing materials for 5 years
- given a Grant of Appointment and a commemorative crystal trophy

Past Queen's Awards winners have reported benefiting from worldwide recognition, increased commercial value, greater exposure and a boost to staff morale. Research also shows nearly 73% of past international trade winners attribute the Queen's Awards to increased international sales.

The awards are valid for 5 years. [Innovate UK](#) has provided funding to 1 in 5 of this year's winners. For more information visit gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise

[News story: Flags flown at half mast for Sri Lanka victims](#)

Union flags on Downing Street and Foreign Office Buildings will be flown at half mast on Tuesday 23rd April 2019 as a mark of respect to those who lost their lives and all others that were affected by the attacks in Sri Lanka on Sunday. Flags will also be flown at half mast at The British High Commission in Colombo.

[News story: D-Day 75: Veterans to be](#)

saluted by land, sea and air in June

More than 4,000 Armed Forces personnel will lead the nation in marking the 75th anniversary of D-Day with major commemorative events in Portsmouth and Normandy in June.

A major national commemorative event on Southsea Common in Portsmouth will be attended by D-Day veterans, VIP guests and service personnel.

Members of the public are invited to attend the commemorations in Portsmouth, where a flypast of 26 Royal Air Force aircraft will salute the veterans in gratitude for their service.

Up to 300 veterans, who are now all over 90 years old, will leave Portsmouth on a specially-commissioned ferry to attend events in Normandy on the following day. Up to 11 Royal Navy ships will accompany the veterans as they depart Portsmouth to provide a spectacular salute on the eve of the 75th anniversary.

HMS St Albans will accompany the veterans as they depart Portsmouth

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

75 years ago troops from 14 Allied countries united together, many on the south coast of Britain, before launching the historic operation to liberate occupied Europe. Britain must always keep the legacy of that special generation alive. I urge people to join our Armed Forces in showing that all of us, young and old, will never forget the price they paid for the freedom and peace we now enjoy.

Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Nick Carter said:

The Armed Forces are honoured to dedicate so many personnel and assets to this significant commemoration. Our forebears, who planned and executed Operation Overlord, and those who enabled it to happen by fighting in Italy, Africa and beyond, have the enduring respect of our Armed Forces. We will ensure the example of that special generation lives on.

Aircraft from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will also take part

At 0726 on 6 June, a lone piper of the British Army will play at Arromanches in Normandy to mark the exact moment the first British soldier landed on Gold Beach.

Later that morning, the Normandy Memorial Trust's statue will be inaugurated by senior UK and French figures in a ceremony at Ver-sur-Mer.

Service personnel will then join veterans at Bayeux Cathedral and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Bayeux War Cemetery for The Royal British Legion's traditional annual commemorative ceremonies.

[News story: UK government supports global action to fight illegal wildlife trade](#)

Schemes to combat poaching and protect species like marine turtles and grey parrots from being illegally traded, are among fourteen new projects set to benefit from a UK government fund to combat wildlife criminals around the globe.

Ministers have today marked [Earth Day](#) (22 April) by announcing that the schemes will each receive a share in £4.6 million from the [Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund](#).

The projects set to benefit include:

- [Fauna & Flora International's](#) project for reducing demand for marine turtle products in Nicaragua
- [ZSL's](#) work to disrupt the illegal wildlife trade in grey parrots in Cameroon
- Cracking wildlife smuggling in Madagascar, a project run by the [Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust](#)
- Strengthening anti-poaching techniques and countering wildlife trafficking in Uganda, a project run by [WCS](#)

New education resources for school children around the globe will also be launched on Earth Day. The online packs aim to teach the next generation about the dangers of fuelling the illegal wildlife trade. The UK government has provided £40,000 to create these packs for children in multiple languages. The resources can be viewed and downloaded online at [WWF-UK's](#) and [Tale2Tail's](#) websites.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The illegal wildlife trade is an international tragedy. This serious organised criminal networks do more than just damage wildlife – corruption and illegal activities undermine sustainable development and the rule of law, bringing misery to local communities.

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is backing projects that

will tackle the criminals at source and in countries that are destinations for items made from illegally traded plants and animals.

Through the online education packs, we will make sure that younger generations understand the importance of not fuelling demand for products made from illegally traded wildlife. This will provide a strong legacy from last year's Illegal Wildlife Trade conference for schoolchildren and teachers around the world.

This is real progress to crack down on environmental crime. Working together, we can end this insidious trade.

Six months since the Duke of Cambridge and world leaders gathered in London for the biggest IWT conference in history, progress has been made at a pace around the world to tackle and end this crime.

In recent weeks, the UK has brought together some of the world's leading specialists to form a consortium which will look at ways of reducing demand and driving behavioural change, to share knowledge and experience and inform further work to dampen demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products.

Defra and the [British Embassy in Hanoi](#), with support from the consortium members, recently held a successful workshop in Vietnam to look at ways to tackle the demand for illegally traded species and products (25 to 26 March 2019).

The workshop brought together local specialists from Vietnam and the wider region, along with Defra's Demand Reduction consortium members and global academics and practitioners, to consider and share experiences on existing approaches to reducing demand for illegal wildlife trade products.

The outputs of the workshop will help inform the approach and scope of new initiatives and innovative projects to reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products. The discussions and outputs of the workshop will also inform other global work.

Further action

But that's not all – other actions from the conference are now well underway too.

Among the achievements so far, the UK government has established a new counter-poaching partnership programme. The first training has been completed and a deployment is underway in Africa.

British diplomatic work has been taking place to support the development of the Ivory Alliance 2024 and the [British Embassy Bangkok](#) has run a campaign called: '[Elephants are like us](#)'. This work is promoting the UK as a global leader on the issue of IWT and helping to close ivory markets and reduce pressure on elephant populations.

The [WILDLABS Tech Hub](#) was formed at the London conference to harness the power of technology, data-sharing and machine-learning to combat wildlife crime. The Tech Hub has completed an open-call for conservation technology developers and data providers to join the project. An impressive 37 developers applied. Projects selected from these applicants will participate in a three-month programme, receiving support from Digital Catapult, Satellite Applications Catapult, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, [the FCO](#), the [Open Data Institute](#), as well as seven international conservation organisations.

And next month, a review meeting on how countries are tackling the global illegal wildlife trade will take place at the [Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species Conference of the Parties](#) in Sri Lanka.

Mark Field, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, said:

Six months ago we hosted the London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference and I'm hugely encouraged by the progress that's been made so far. The UK is committed to finding new ways to combat this illicit trade through a coordinated, global response and stamping out demand for illegal wildlife products is a crucial part of this.

Additional funding

With support from the [Department for International Development](#) (DFID), Defra has invested a total of £23 million in the IWT Challenge Fund.

DFID pledged an extra £6 million of UK aid for the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund before the start of the IWT conference in 2018 and further rounds for funding applications will be opened shortly for projects to bid.

Harriett Baldwin, Minister for State for International Development, said:

The Illegal Wildlife Trade conference provided renewed impetus for all of the delegates and nations attending last year. This despicable trade in endangered wildlife and plants also destroys the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest people, robbing communities of the great economic benefits of wildlife, including tourism.

UK aid will be giving life to projects whose aim is to protect these species and secure the futures for people living alongside wildlife.

This is a win for those communities and a win for animal lovers across the world. None of us want to see these majestic animals dying out.

Reducing demand for illegal wildlife products is critical to stopping the

illegal wildlife trade. As long as the demand for these goods persists, criminals will seek new ways to circumvent anti-trafficking and anti-poaching enforcement efforts, and the threat to wildlife populations worldwide will continue.

Promising consortium outcomes

The UK is encouraging a global shift in our approach to demand reduction interventions to ensure that they are properly evidenced, impacts are measured and evaluated, and results and best practice are shared. The UK is also keen to see an increase in interventions that have a strong basis in behaviour change science.

That is why the UK established a consortium of demand reduction and behaviour change specialists to develop recommendations on approach and scope of future illegal wildlife trade demand reduction initiatives.

The consortium helped Defra deliver a workshop that focused on exploring the following existing approaches to reducing demand: environmental education, social marketing, social and behavioural change communication, and behavioural economics.

Attendees considered when these approaches might be best utilised in demand reduction interventions, how interventions using these approaches might be designed, implemented and evaluated to 'good standards', and who needs to be involved to ensure interventions are successful.

Naomi Doak, Head of Conservation Programmes for [The Royal Foundation](#), said:

Looking at how the conservation sector approaches behaviour change for illegal wildlife products is crucial if we are to improve our efforts.

The workshop provided a crucial space for those discussions and how we build on previous actions.

Dr Vuong Tien Manh, from Vietnam CITES, said:

We appreciate the support from the UK government and international organisations to help tackle the Illegal Wildlife Trade.

Although good work has been done in this area, there is still demand in some parts of Vietnam. Interventions need to be based on scientific research. Vietnam is contributing to global action on IWT but there is a need to do more.

The consortium currently consists of [Oxford Martin School](#), [TRAFFIC](#), [Wildlife Conservation Society \(WCS\)](#), [United for Wildlife \(The Royal Foundation\)](#), [UN Environment Programme](#) and [USAID](#).

Education packs

WWF-UK has produced two packs aimed at primary (KS2) and secondary (KS3) school students. These will be available from today for schools to register to access from the [WWF-UK website](#).

Tale2Tail has produced a separate and beautifully illustrated pack which is also accessible online and provides teaching notes and lesson plans to help teachers in the classroom. There are illustrations of animals in their pack from Axel Scheffler, the illustrator behind the Gruffalo; and photography from world-renowned photographer David Yarrow. The images bring the story telling alive for young people. Download the pack here:
<http://www.tale2tail.org>.

Background

WWF-UK education pack:

WWF-UK, in partnership with DEFRA, is today launching two new resources for schools focusing on raising awareness of the illegal wildlife trade – what it is, and the part we can play as individuals to tackle it.

Illegal Wildlife Trade Detectives (KS2) and Illegal Wildlife Trade: Investigations (KS3) are now available to teachers and include activities that can be delivered through different subject areas or as part of a themed week on sustainability.

Activities include an interactive quiz, photo cards and a map showing species at risk from the illegal wildlife trade. Together, these activities combine to create an engaging resource to inspire school communities to take action to help protect nature and wildlife, both locally and globally.

Schools are encouraged to register on [the WWF-UK website](#) to access this new, free classroom resource.

Tale2Tail education pack:

Tale2Tail, a charity which uses storytelling, art, photography and creative materials to educate children about saving wildlife, has produced this beautiful education pack, with over 20 hours of illustrated lesson plans, including a play, to raise awareness of the trade in Illegal wildlife and build a worldwide child wildlife ambassador network.

The pack includes stunning photography and illustrations by renowned wildlife photographer David Yarrow and the illustrator behind 'The Gruffalo,' Axel Scheffler.

By helping children understand and find their voice on this global issue, Tale2tail aims to change behaviour around the buying and selling of elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales, cheetah cubs and other endangered wildlife. The charity wants today's children to be the generation that takes the lead to ensure the survival of wildlife.

Kate Studholme, CEO of Tale2Tail said:

We need to ensure elephant and rhino don't become the 21st century's unicorn, only to be found on the pages of a book, so we have created an original and beautifully illustrated education pack to raise children's understanding and awareness of illegal wildlife trade. With over 20 hours of lesson plans, including a play, it will engage children across the UK and international curriculum. By helping children find their voice on this crucial issue, Tale2Tail aims to change behaviour around the buying and selling of endangered wildlife.

The charity is looking for support in both finding channels to further distribute their educational materials in the UK and globally, and to reach influential readers in a number of countries worldwide.

The [Tale2Tail education pack can be downloaded on their website](#).

London Declaration 2018

The London Declaration 2018 committed the UK to investing more than £36 million between 2014 and 2021 to take action to counter IWT, including work to reduce demand, strengthen enforcement, ensure effective legal frameworks and develop sustainable livelihoods.

The [full text of the London Declaration 2018](#) is available online.