

Skills framework Consultation Survey

Research report, 2024



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Summary

Background

In March 2024, the Local Government Association conducted a consultation, in the form of a short survey, to gather views on its recently published draft Cyber, Digital, Data and Technology (CDDaT) skills framework for local government (the 'skills framework'). The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that the skills framework met the needs and expectations of councils, and to assess levels of interest in future developments of the framework.

Key findings

- Responses were received from just 10 per cent of councils, which may reflect the level of awareness of the skills framework among councils. As such, the results of the survey should not be taken to be more widely representative of the views of all councils. Rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents
- Most respondents thought the skills framework was useful for:
 - 'Identifying which skills are needed or missing to deliver your services' strategic digitalisation objectives (55 per cent to a great extent and 35 per cent to a moderate extent)
 - 'Developing a better understanding of CDDaT skills in general' (52 per cent to a great extent and 42 per cent to a moderate extent)
 - 'Developing a better understanding of the CDDaT skills needed to deliver your service's strategic objectives' (52 per cent to a great extent and 42 per cent to a moderate extent)
- The additional features most respondents would find useful were 'training and qualification pathways for each skillset' (61 per cent) and 'describing skills in levels from basic to advanced' (58 per cent)
- Almost all respondents said that they would find 'a practical guide to using this framework for workforce planning' very useful (65 per cent) or fairly

useful (32 per cent). Similar proportions thought 'a learning pathway toolkit' would be very useful (61 per cent) or fairly useful (32 per cent)

- The most common ways respondents thought they would use the skills framework were to conduct skills audits / maturity assessments and to help draw up job descriptions
- Over half of respondents (52 per cent) thought that the proposed strategic objectives were appropriate for digitalisation in councils to a great extent while 45 per cent thought so to a moderate extent
- The proposed strategic objectives aligned with 43 per cent of respondent council's strategic objectives to a great extent, and to a moderate extent for a further 43 per cent
- All respondents thought that the skills listed in the framework reflected the CDDaT skills which are most useful and relevant to achieving councils' digitalisation objectives (75 per cent to a great extent and 25 per cent to a moderate extent)

Introduction

In March 2024, the LGA's Cyber, Digital and Technology team invited officers from English councils to take part in a short consultation survey designed to gather their views on the CDDaT skills framework. The consultation sought respondents' views on its usefulness overall, and the appropriateness and usefulness of its elements, whether anything was missing, and which additional features they would find useful.

Methodology

A link to the online survey form was published on the LGA's website alongside the draft skills framework on 19 March 2024. An article about the consultation was also published in the April Cyber, Digital and Technology newsletter and posted on social media platforms. The survey closed on 6 May, after around seven weeks in the field. A total of 31 responses were received representing 10 per cent of councils. This level of response means that these results should not be taken to be more widely representative of all English councils. Rather, they are a snapshot of this particular group of respondents.

The following should also be considered when interpreting the findings of this survey:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases can vary throughout the survey
- Numbers and percentages are provided for any questions where the base was less than 50
- Throughout the report, percentages may not appear to add up to exactly 100 per cent due to rounding
- All brand, organisation and council names have been redacted from the text answers provided by respondents and replaced with descriptors shown

inside angle brackets. For example, where a council mentions its name in an answer, this is shown as *<Council name>*

Skills Framework Consultation

This section contains analysis of the full results from the consultation survey.

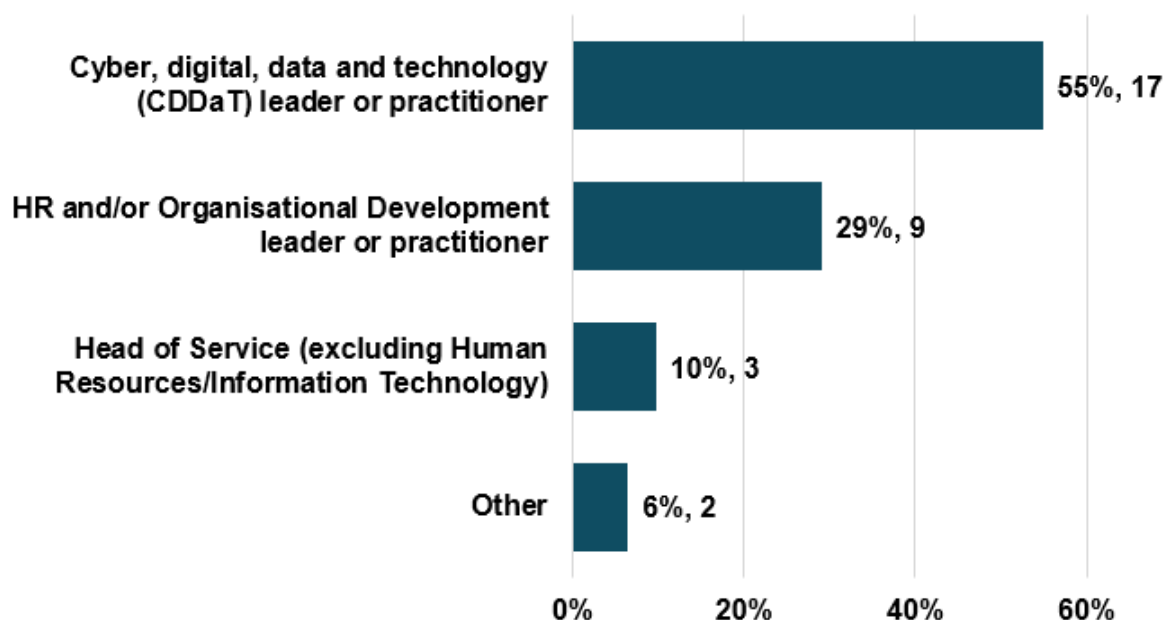
Respondents

The officers who took part in the consultation were asked to identify their role, using a list provided. Just over half (55 per cent, 17 respondents) were a Cyber, Digital, Data and Technology (CDDaT) leader or practitioner, almost a third (29 per cent, nine respondents) were a HR and / or Organisational Development leader or practitioner, and 10 per cent (three respondents) were a Head of Service (excluding Human Resources / Information Technology). A further two respondents (six per cent) stated they did other roles, these were specified as:

- “Digital Engagement lead at Digitising Social Care”
- “Strategic Lead collating the information from our relevant leads”

A breakdown of the respondents is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Are you a...



Base: all respondents (31)

Usefulness of the content / format of the skills framework

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought the content / format of the skills framework was useful for a number of different purposes. Over half (55 per cent, 17 respondents) thought it was useful for 'identifying which skills are needed or missing to deliver your services' strategic digitalisation objectives' to a great extent, while a further 35 per cent (11 respondents) thought this to a moderate extent. 'Developing a better understanding of the CDDaT skills needed to deliver your service's strategic objectives' and 'developing a better understanding of CDDaT skills in general' were both considered useful to a great extent by 52 per cent (16 respondents) and to a moderate extent by 42 per cent (13 respondents). Table 1 shows a full breakdown of these findings. None of the respondents thought that the framework was not at all useful for any of the purposes listed.

Feedback on the content / format of the skills framework and suggestions for what would make it more useful were also invited. A small number of comments were received, those relating to the content / format of the skills framework included making the web pages more dynamic and producing it in a downloadable format. Suggestions for what would make it more useful included the addition of application examples, providing an indication of the levels of skills required, and adding success criteria against the skills. All the answers provided are listed in Table A1 in Annex A.

Table 1: To what extent do you think the content / format of the skills framework is useful for:

| | To a great extent | To a moderate extent | To a small extent | Not at all | Don't know |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Identifying which skills are needed or missing to deliver your services' strategic digitalisation objectives | 55% (17) | 35% (11) | 10% (3) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |
| Developing a better understanding of CDDaT skills in general | 52% (16) | 42% (13) | 3% (1) | 0% (0) | 3% (1) |
| Developing a better understanding of the CDDaT skills needed to deliver your service's strategic objectives | 52% (16) | 42% (13) | 6% (2) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |
| Understanding how CDDaT skills link to your service's objectives | 32% (10) | 58% (18) | 6% (2) | 0% (0) | 3% (1) |
| Understanding which skills to prioritise in your training programmes | 32% (10) | 61% (19) | 6% (2) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |
| Understanding which skills to prioritise in your recruitment programmes | 32% (10) | 52% (16) | 16% (5) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |

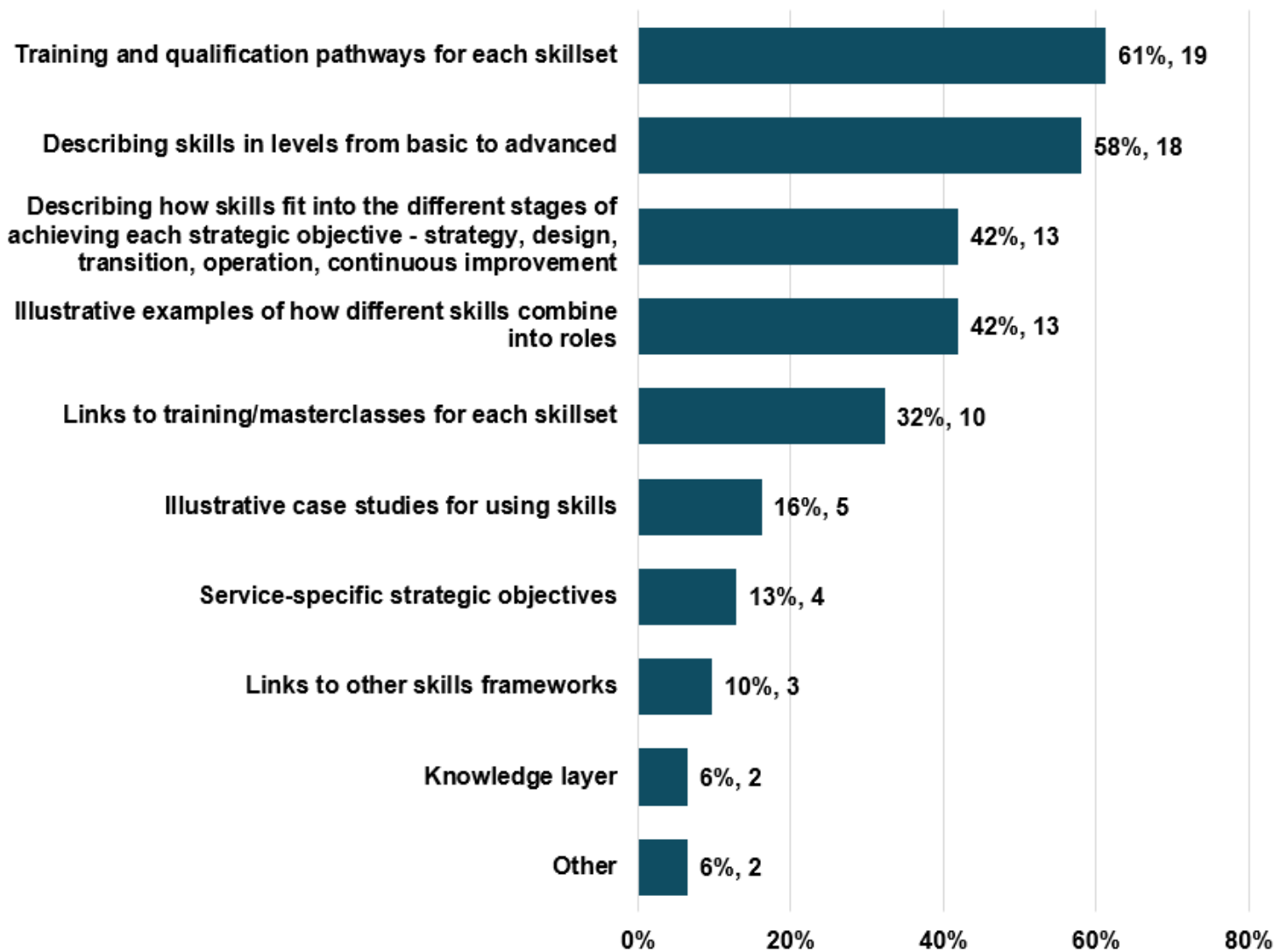
Base: all respondents (31)

Potential additional features

When asked to choose up to three additional features which would potentially be useful, from a list provided, 61 per cent (19 respondents) selected 'training and qualification pathways for each skillset'. A similar proportion (58 per cent, 18 respondents) chose 'describing skills in levels from basic to advanced' while both

‘illustrative examples of how different skills combine into roles’ and ‘describing how skills fit into the different stages of achieving each strategic objective – strategy, design, transition, operation, continuous improvement’ were selected by 42 per cent (13 respondents). These findings are illustrated in Figure 2. The two respondents who select other mentioned links to pay, as can be seen in Table A2 in Annex A.

Figure 2: Please pick up to three additional features which would potentially be useful



Base: all respondents (31). Please note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Usefulness of additional formats

Two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent, 20 respondents) said that they would find ‘a practical guide to using this framework for workforce planning’ very useful and a third (32 per cent, 10 respondents) would find it fairly useful. Similar proportions thought ‘a learning pathway toolkit’ would be useful, with 61 per cent (19 respondents) reporting they would find this very useful and 32 per cent (10 respondents) saying they would find it fairly useful. There was a more mixed perception of the usefulness of ‘a bespoke workforce planning consultancy service, using this framework as a basis’, with a quarter of respondents (26 per cent, eight respondents) reporting it would be very useful and the same proportion saying that it would be not very useful while 42 per cent (13 respondents) said they would find it fairly useful. Table 2 shows a full breakdown of these findings.

Table 2: How useful would you find these additional formats?

| | Very useful | Fairly useful | Not very useful | Not at all useful | Don't know |
|---|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| A practical guide to using this framework for workforce planning | 65% (20) | 32% (10) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 3% (1) |
| A learning pathway toolkit | 61% (19) | 32% (10) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 6% (2) |
| A bespoke workforce planning consultancy service, using this framework as a basis | 26% (8) | 42% (13) | 26% (8) | 0% (0) | 6% (2) |

Base: all respondents (31) Please note: Three respondents answered ‘other’ but did not specify their answer so they have been excluded from this analysis.

How the framework will be used

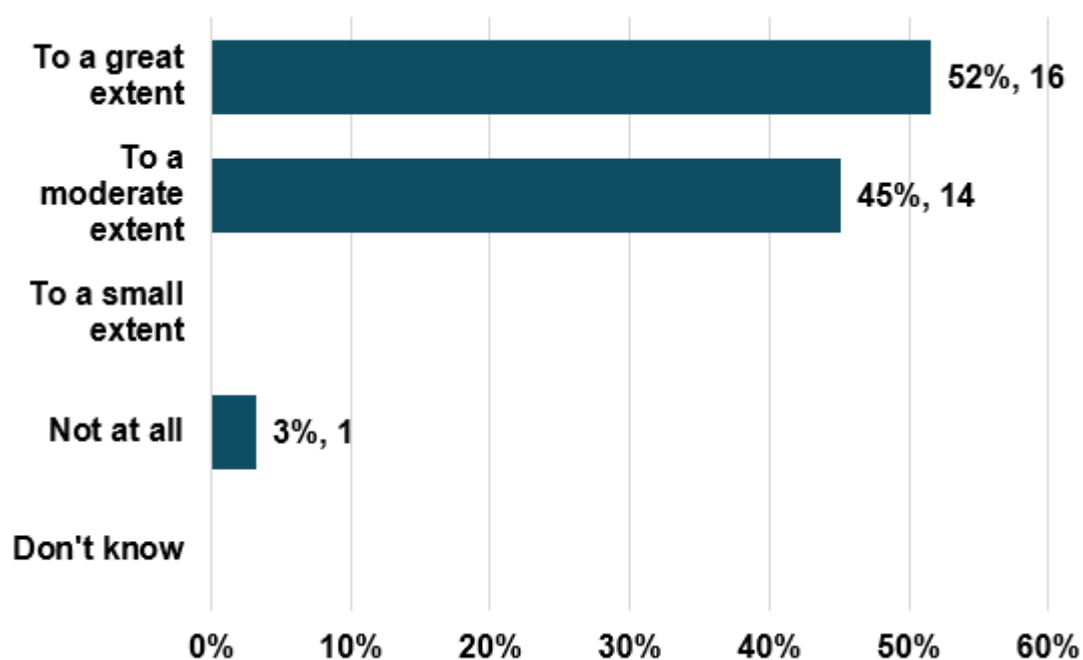
The most common ways in which respondents envisaged themselves using the skills framework were to conduct skills audits / maturity assessments and to help them draw up job descriptions. Other ways they felt it would be used included to inform training, build career pathways, for organisational development and in support of

business transformation. All of the answers provided can be seen in Table A3 in Annex A.

Strategic objectives

Over half of respondents (52 per cent, 16 respondents) thought that the proposed strategic objectives for were appropriate for digitalisation in councils to a great extent while 45 per cent (14 respondents) thought so to a moderate extent. Only one respondent (three per cent) thought they were not at all appropriate. These findings are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Looking at our proposed strategic objectives, to what extent do you think these are appropriate strategic objectives for digitalisation in councils?

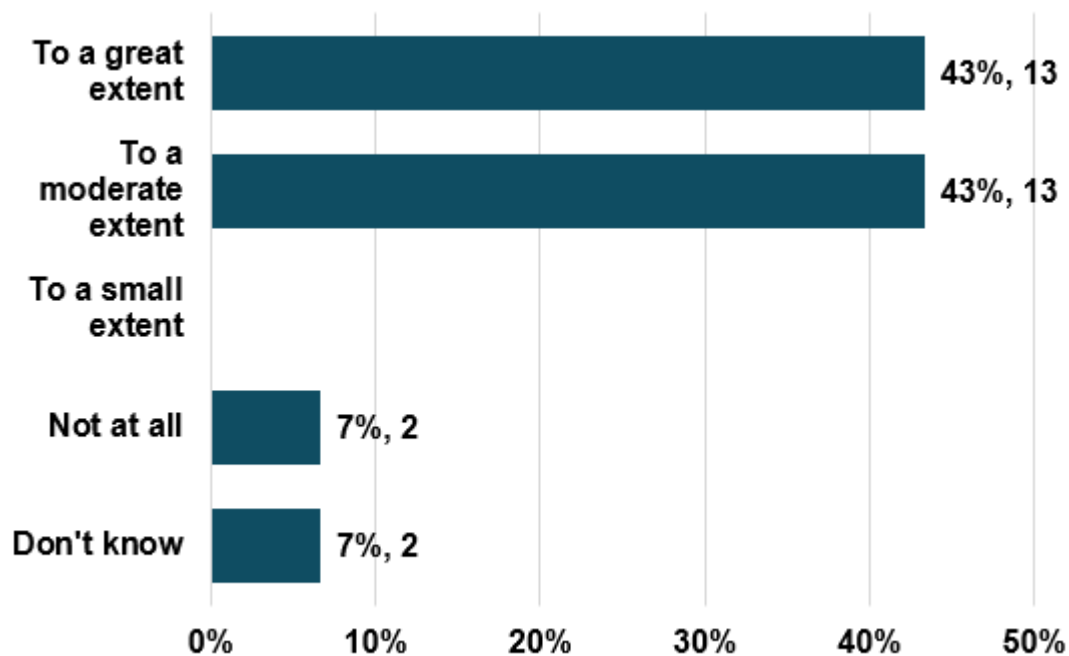


Base: all respondents (31).

When asked the extent to which the strategic objectives aligned with respondent's council's strategic objectives, 43 per cent (13 respondents) said they did to a great extent and the same proportion said they did to a moderate extent. A further 7 per

cent (2 respondents) stated that they did not align at all while the same proportion did not know. Figure 4 illustrates these findings.

Figure 4: To what extent do the proposed strategic objectives align with those of your council?



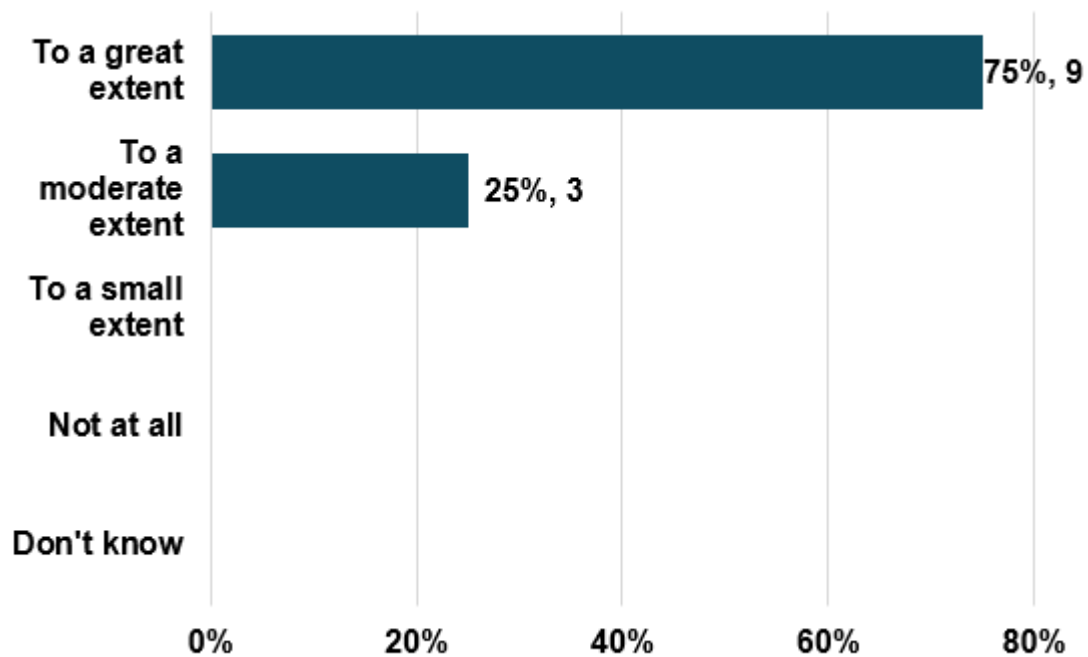
Base: all respondents who answered the question (30).

A small number of respondents provided feedback and suggestions for additional strategic objectives relevant to digitalisation, these included adding shared working and the development of sustainable digital products. All of the answers provided are listed in Table A4 in Annex A.

Usefulness of the skills listed in the framework

Three-quarters of those who answered the question (75 per cent, nine respondents) thought that the skills listed in the framework reflected the CDDaT skills which are most useful and relevant to achieving councils' digitalisation objectives to a great extent. The remaining 25 per cent (three respondents) thought that they did so to a moderate extent. These findings are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: To what extent do the skills listed in the framework reflect the CDDaT skills which are most useful and relevant to achieving councils' digitalisation objectives?



Base: all respondents who answered the question (12).

Respondents were asked whether any CDDaT skills were missing and to specify which and why. A small number of answers were provided, these included skills relating to project management, data presentation and large language models. All the answers are shown in Table A5 in Annex A.

Annex A

Answers provided to open text questions

Table A1: Feedback on the content / format of the skills framework and suggestions for what would make it more useful.

| Feedback on the content / format |
|---|
| I think the best use of this frame work is to introduce a common set of terms and language when discussing IT skills |
| I would like a PDF of the framework to download |
| The content is really text heavy. Given the role of DDaT is really dynamic and incorporates a wide range of skills, assets and connects it would be great if the page was more dynamic - engaging the reader into the essence of the text a bit more. |
| The skills framework is good. There is a huge amount of content in there but this will mean thought will need to go into how it is applied against existing roles / staff. |
| This provides a reference for explaining data practices in presentations and reports |
| Suggestions for what would make it more useful |
| Application examples based on the different types of Local Authorities (LA) and what can be achieved with these different types of LA's. The practicalities of using it is difficult as this is a vast list of skills, however, have found the categorisation of it useful. |
| It would be useful to have success criteria against the skills to be able to measure progress |
| Linking to example job roles & showing which skills might be involved, including where there might be overlap. between job roles. |
| The framework focuses on the high level and extensive skills required in the ICT / CDDaT area, it does not give any indication of the level of skills needed across the workforce as a whole to work in this new environment. |

Table A2: Please pick up to three additional features which would potentially be useful – Other answers provided

| |
|---|
| A link to pay scales / pay ranges would be useful to link to the objective around retaining staff and proper competitive salaries. |
| I would be keen to get some pay benchmarking or recommended pay / grade against roles. Please see if there is a way of doing that. It would help with the establishment of a pay structure for a local government DDaT profession |

Table A3: Please provide details of how you envisage yourself using the skills framework in practice.

| |
|---|
| Advising individuals and teams. |
| Benchmarking to inform data maturity levels against capability to ensure to create an improvement action plan and to feed into an OD strategy. Doing a skills audit against the framework would allow us insight from the learning pathways to fill in the missing areas. It would expand wider than our HD and OD team as this should expand to all line managers, where through continuous conversations and personal development, this could guide the training. |
| Help to shape the service moving forward taking into account skills required to do the job. Helps shape culture of the organization also. OD colleagues would need to be included in the conversations to support the development of skills in the organization |
| If unsure which skills to obtain, the skills framework would include a survey asking related questions to different career paths. It would then provide suggestions in relation to the answers submitted. |
| Illustrating from a policy perspective the value of a coherent career pathway. It would help in terms of future spending reviews to make specific reference to DDaT pathways and the unique value said professionals in councils bring not only to their local setting but also the wider integration / digital tech agenda across social care. |
| Interviews, job descriptions |

Job evaluation for specialist / technical roles is always difficult as the traditional scoring criteria around budget, team size and spans of control does cater for these roles. Having a modern skills framework designed for Councils would help with this.

Mapping against our digital strategy and transformation plans and using to as a basis to identify skills required in the future from the list that we do not have / or have in a limited way to then start to put into JD's, training plans and looking at our apprenticeship offer and standards.

Skills gap analysis to start. Inform our strategy and roadmap. Improve data maturity across the org. Develop dev paths. Improve culture from top including members, SLT etc.

Team and organisation skills audit and identification of training and development. Link to our organisation data maturity assessment

Tech Division Skills Matrix and basis for a maturity assessment. To support conversations with HR / OD colleagues to inform investment and focus for organisational strategy. When drafting JDs and PDPs.

The elements of the frame work that apply to my department align quite well with what we already have. However with this in place we can ensure that in communications and documentation that the common language and terms are utilised.

The skills framework will help to plan what skills are missing and how they can fit into delivery of strategy. The framework will help to outline key requirements and job descriptions and will help to plan a development path for existing staff.

This would be disseminated through the service, use of supervisions, meeting, and development forums

To review and revise job descriptions within the service. To develop a common language across authorities and sectors when describing the skills necessary to deliver projects or initiatives or indeed where we have shortages.

We are currently looking at building a skills inventory for transferable skills, and a process that will enable internal mobility through skills mapping and head hunting

within the LA. Therefore, this will enable us to align the digital skills framework with the general one.

We are developing Digital Skills Learning Pathways which will link directly to content and learning opportunities and this work complements it. We are also going to be providing digital skills support to services that are undergoing transformation, and this will help services describe where they are vis a vis where they need to be, so that we can support them in the right areas.

When we are review roles and structures as part of business planning or responding to budget challenges we will use the framework to support this.

Would be useful in drafting skills profiles sections for Job Descriptions / Person Specs and to support the development of shortlisting criteria

Table A4: If you have any feedback, or any suggestions for additional strategic objectives which are relevant to digitalisation, then please provide comments here:

Development of sustainable digital products. Reusing common tools and platforms, working in collaboration with other councils to develop and share solutions.

It would be good to define the terms intermediate and advanced / super user against something more formal. The baselining of such terms would be useful in terms of measurement but unsure whether a national framework of definitions exists currently that is relevant?

More clearly linking to benefits for residents linking to being able to do more with less money & increase recruitment & retention & train up existing staff

Partnership working, i.e., shared working, shared skills, shared data platforms, organisations sharing one platform and shared data opportunities

Table A5: Are any CDDaT skills missing - which and why?

For a very small council a number of the skills listed is too extensive. We would pick and choose some and some wouldn't be relevant due to budgets or team size.

Agile Project / Product Management

I think there may be some new skills related to adapting and managing large language models to work better within a council setting

Storytelling with data, drawing out and communicating actionable insights from data and evidence; commissioning research; developing a research culture; using data evidence and intelligence in a political environment (avoiding 'we need more information' to put off decision making, ensuring data collection and results communication is not gamed for political ends)

Annex B

Questionnaire

Surveying the Standard

Created in 2019 by the Government Digital Service, the Service Standard helps teams to create and run great public services. It replaced the previous Local Government Digital Service Standard to create a common standard across central and local government.

The LGA and LocalGovDigital are keen to understand the level of take-up and effectiveness of the Service Standard in councils, and establish a working group to review the findings. Even if you weren't aware of the Standard before reading this we'd like your views.

This survey is very short and should only take a few minutes to complete. The survey will close on 9 August 2024.

- Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
- Use the buttons at the bottom of each page to navigate through the questions.
- Use the 'previous' button if you'd like to change an earlier response.
- To preview the questions, you can access a PDF here: [<link>](#)
- Please complete this survey in one go – your answers may be lost if you exit before finishing.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our privacy statement. Non-identifiable data will be shared with LocalGovDigital. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

Please enter your details below to help us with our analysis.

Name _____

Authority _____

Job title _____

Department / Service _____

Email address _____

Q1: Are you aware of the Service Standard?

- Yes
- No

If you answered 'No' to Q1 please go to Q6

Q2: Have you used the Service Standard?

- Yes, I currently use the whole Standard
- Yes, I currently use elements of the Standard
- Yes, I have previously used the whole Standard
- Yes, I have previously used elements of the Standard
- No
- Don't know

If you answered 'No' to Q2 please go to Q6

Q3: What, if anything, do you find helpful or unhelpful about the Standard?

Helpful _____

Unhelpful _____

Q4: What steps did you go through to be able to use the Standard in your council?

Q5: How do you use the Standard for your online services, including those which you procure?

Q6: What barriers, if any, have prevented you from using the Standard?

- Not heard of it
- Lack of time
- Lack of resources
- Lack of understanding or skills
- Lack of alignment with business needs
- Lack of alignment with policy needs
- Lack of alignment with risk management
- Lack of alignment with tools and products
- Difficult to use across collaborative teams
- Difficult to meet the Standard's requirements
- Use other quality assurance methods in the council (Please specify below)

- Other (Please specify below)

- Have not experienced any barriers

Q7: Do you have any suggestions for improving the Service Standard (we will explore these things in upcoming workshops)?

Q8: Would you be interested in joining a working group or workshop to explore the next steps?

- Yes
- No

Q9: Please confirm your email address so we can contact you regarding a working group or workshop.

Once you press the 'Submit' button below, you will have completed the survey.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. You are in control of any personal data that you have provided to us in your response. You can contact us at all times to have your information changed or deleted. You can find our full privacy policy here: [privacy policy](#)



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