Tech Talent Charter Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

GENERAL

What is the Tech Talent Charter?

The Tech Talent Charter (TTC) is a commitment by organisations to a set of undertakings that aim to deliver greater diversity in the tech workforce of the UK, one that better reflects the make-up of the population. This covers organisations in the technology sector itself, organisations across all other sectors, who have employees in tech roles, and recruitment agencies who are supplying candidates for tech roles. Signatories of the charter make a number of pledges in relation to their approach to recruitment and retention. Although it is very much an employer-led initiative, in March 2017 the TTC was supported in the government's policy paper on the UK Digital Strategy.

Why is there a need for a Tech Talent Charter?

Just 17% of Tech/ICT workers in the UK are female, only one in ten females are currently taking A-Level computer studies, and yet there is a looming digital skills gap where the UK needs one million more tech workers by 2020. Half the population cannot be ignored, and nor should it be, if there is to be a more diverse, inclusive, fairer and commercially successful tech workforce and industry.

Is the Tech Talent Charter only about the gender imbalance, or about diversity more widely?

Signatories fully acknowledge that diversity encompasses much more than gender, and while the majority of the charter principles and pledges are generically about diversity and inclusion, many actions relating to gender will lead to diversity on other workforce demographics. However, the low number of women in tech is by far the most pressing issue at present, and the charter therefore specifically includes one reference to gender in relation to recruitment practices.

The Tech Talent Charter includes a goal that, wherever possible, women are included on the shortlist for interviews. How can we achieve this when so few women apply for our tech jobs?

The charter recognises that challenge by setting this as a goal for signatories to work towards, and by the phrase "wherever possible". To help signatories achieve that goal the TTC team has pulled together all sorts of material on best practice that has been proven to increase the number of women applicants, ranging from how job specifications are written to ensuring your employer branding represents females in your imagery and videos. In the US National Football League a policy called the "Rooney Rule" was created in 2002 that requires leagues to interview minority candidates for certain roles, and led to a significant increase in the percentage of African American coaches – this is a similar idea.

ENGAGEMENT

Who is involved in the Tech Talent Charter?

The TTC was founded by a number of organisations across the recruitment, tech and social enterprise fields that included Monster.co.uk, Code First Girls, Stemettes, Apps for Good, RBI, Michael Page, S3 Group, JLR Solutions and Global Radio. From early 2017 engagement widened further to Nationwide, the BBC, Cogeco Peer1, Tech UK, Tech London Advocates and the Cabinet Office. Work to expand the signatories is now well underway with the support of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) who are leading on the UK digital skills agenda for the current government.

What resources are available to support us in achieving signature, and to follow through on the charter pledges?

To help you carry the message into your organisation and get its buy-in to signing up, the following materials are available to download from the TTC website www.techtalentcharter.co.uk:

- The charter itself, in document form
- A briefing pack on the TTC, aimed as a board-level presentation
- This document with its set of Frequently Asked Questions

To put your TTC plan into action, there is a range of supporting materials also available on the site. These include:

- Best practice guidelines and case studies on recruitment
- Best practice guidelines and case studies on retention

These materials are continually being enhanced as collaboration grows around the TTC purpose, and as new ideas and success stories emerge.

The site also includes links to many related initiatives and advice, for example around engagement in the education sector to help grow the talent pipeline, and around legislation on gender pay reporting. TTC aims to help signpost to such work, rather than duplicate.

And lastly, there are occasional TTC events where organisations share their experiences and ideas.

My organisation wants to make progress on staff diversity but isn't ready to do everything in the TTC, so how can we participate?

The charter deliberately and explicitly acknowledges that it will take time for a signatory to achieve all the five pledges in the TTC, by saying that each signatory undertakes to "define its own timetable for change and implement the strategy that is right for their organisation (acknowledging that all signatories will have different starting points)". So you do need to have a senior leader overseeing the work, to have an action plan and deliver on it, and be

willing to share anonymised data, but all this doesn't have to be operational upon signing.

Can I be involved as an individual or do I have to be part of an organisation?

While the main focus of the TTC is the work of signatory organisations, we recognise there are individuals who wish to advocate and support change in this space. Individual TTC supporters are welcome at all TTC events and can contribute to workstreams and further development of best practice content without their organisations being signatories themselves.

My organisation needs more evidence to support the case for change, can you help?

Here are some of the sound commercial arguments for gender diversity – at its broadest, not specific to digital/tech skills:

- Researchers discovered that shifting from an all-male or all-female office to one split evenly along gender lines could increase revenue by roughly 41 percent. (Source: study from Journal of Economics and Management Strategy.)
- Publicly traded companies with male-only executive directors missed out on £430bn of investment returns last year. ([Source](#))
- The Tech Sector accounts for 67% women-led businesses with 35% of the businesses growing 50% or more per annum. (Source: Sherry Coutu research)
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. ([Source](#))
- Studies reveal that gender diverse companies are 45% more likely to improve market share, achieve 53% higher returns on equity, and are 70% more likely to report successfully capturing new markets. ([Source](#))

There are so many initiatives in this area, particularly around women in technology, women in digital, girls and STEM subjects at school, it's really hard to keep track of what is going on. How do I know what my organisation should best participate in, and contribute to?

It's great that there are now so many strands of activity, as the challenge needs tackling on many fronts at once, and they are all serving slightly different purposes. The TTC aims not to re-invent the wheel and indeed with signpost to such initiatives rather than create new ones. Signatories are encouraged to share the work that they are doing in this space and the TTC website will link to relevant content.

DATA

Do we have to share our organisation's gender diversity profile data to participate in the Tech Talent Charter?

The belief that "what isn't measured isn't managed" is a key belief under-pinning the TTC. And so, yes, one of the five pledges of a TTC signatory is to measure their employee diversity, and to share that data. However, this is anonymised and collated, which then

allows you to benchmark your own organisation's diversity position – which only you can see – across the TTC signatory group.

How will you gather and use the gender diversity profile data we share with you?

A very basic data set is required from all signatories, that we would expect all organisations to already hold in their HR systems. Further data can be entered on an optional basis, and over time we expect that more and more employers will also gather this optional information, enabling richer insight and analysis. You will find that you already need to gather some of this data under the recent UK gender pay gap legislation.

How will the security of the anonymised data be managed?

The company providing this service, Attest, carry out all the data management. Research data is gathered and stored in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct. Attest is a member of the MRS (mrs.org.uk), and is a fully-accredited Fair Data company (fairdata.org.uk). They are also an Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Registered Data Controller (ZA120737), use SSL encryption, and run on secure servers based in the EU to ensure all data is treated securely. All data is covered by joint NDA agreements which are available upon request.

Additionally, Amali de Alwis who works with the data steering group on the Charter's report and research is herself an MRS-qualified market and social research practitioner, and previously worked as a researcher at both TNS and PwC.

What form does the annual report take?

Note that as at October 2017, the TTC data collection is just beginning to get underway, and the TTC team will be are working with early charter signatories to optimise the most practical and useful data set. A sample report with "dummy data" was produced during June 2017, with the first report containing real data being scheduled for the end of 2017. As a first report with a relatively small data set, what can be reported on will be limited and it will lack the year-on-year comparison that will be possible in future annual reports. Instead, this first pilot of the report will offer a "proof of concept" and demonstrate the potential of subsequent reports in terms of breadth, depth and degree of segmentation that will be possible over time. Our first 100 supporters will be key to helping shape that.

What is the purpose of the annual report and research?

One of the biggest challenges to an organisation hoping to make change is the ability to measure the impact of that change over time. This is especially true when it comes to understanding diversity in a business, being able to monitor progress, and understand what the real differences are in jobs done by men and women at different levels across tech roles (with anonymised pay benchmarking) is a critical aspect of making effective change.

As such, the Tech Talent Charter will help to collect this data from its membership companies and beyond, and so help its member companies to improve diversity through

collection of consistent and comparable tech talent data.

This data collection will be conducted with the support from the pioneering research company Attest, with direct support from Attest CEO, Jeremy King, who will not only ensure the research is conducted to industry leading standards of data privacy and security, but also support the Charter with interpretation and analysis of the aggregated and anonymised data.

GOVERNANCE

How is the TTC organised and managed?

The TTC is a Community Interest Company (CIC), a community-oriented enterprise movement. Details of how such organisations run generally are provided here: http://www.cicassociation.org.uk/about/what-is-a-cic

The TTC has a board of 5 directors who works closely with a steering group that meets monthly. Members of both groups can be found on the TTC website.

How is the steering group selected? Can my organisation be on it?

The steering group in its current form was established in April 2017 on a collaborative collective basis, and includes a range of employers and not-for profit organisations working in the field of UK tech and digital skills development. Membership - for practical reasons - is capped at sixteen organisations.

How do you know whether an employer is following through on their action plan?

This is a voluntary scheme, and so the emphasis will not be on close monitoring of progress by TTC but on transparency via published plans and submission of data.

What is the process for managing any press enquiries and press releases?

When you sign the TTC, a pack of promotional material becomes available, including the TTC logo, and draft tweets and press releases for you to adapt. New signatories will be publicised in regular cohorts to create more impact in showing the collective growth in employer numbers. There will also be specific social media publicity around TTC-run events. All of this is under the direction of the Marketing and Promotion workstream led by Sinead Bunting, Marketing Director (UK & Ireland) for Monster.

What is the role of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the TTC?

The vision of the DCMS includes "leading the digital revolution to make the UK the most competitive and innovative market in the world". They are supporting a range of initiatives to improve the digital skills of the nation and in a January 2016 report noted that "Barriers exist especially for women who are under represented on higher education courses in computer related subjects, and within the industry as a whole." They are a supporter of this employer-led charter and are represented on its steering group.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492889/DCMSDigitalSkillsReportJan2016.pdf

Government support for the TTC is also referenced in their UK Digital Strategy of March 2017 – search for "tech talent" in this section of the report:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy/2-digital-skills-and-inclusion-giving-everyone-access-to-the-digital-skills-they-need

How does the TTC compare with the Women in Finance Charter sponsored by the Treasury? What does it mean for employers of technical staff in financial services companies?

The two charters are complementary. They do have a slightly different focus as there are slightly different challenges in each sector. The Women in Finance Charter has an emphasis on the lack of women in senior roles and on the gender pay gap, which are the issues where the financial services sector is most imbalanced. The TTC looks at diversity and inclusion across technical roles in all industry sectors. Work you undertake to support both charters will be complementary.

Are there any fees associated with being a signatory of the TTC?

TTC is committed to being a not-for-profit, employer-led scheme. The goal is to make all operations as lean and automated as possible and to make use of pro-bono support from signatories. However, in order to remain sustainable, TTC may at some point in the future require funds from events, services, reports or a membership fee. It would do so as a Community Interest Company i.e. a not-for-profit organisation.