Plymouth City Council - Digital Academy

Chris Squire Service - Director HR & Organisational Development

13th October 2025

Data & AI Academy

- **What is This?**

    - Using an apprenticeship framework, the development of skills in data and artificial intelligence.

    - Partnering with a company called Multiverse – specialists in data & AI.

    - Potential impact across customer experience (digital services), budget, demand forecasting.

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Nottingham City Council — 70 Apprentices

Sheffield City Council — 135 Apprentices

BCP Council — 50 employees

Essex County Council — 55 employees

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Examples from Elsewhere

Adult Services

Using data to build a framework for Adult Day Services, to deliver **£360k predicted savings**

(Strategic commissioner)

Housing

Building a system to spot people on the brink of housing crisis, leading to justifying **+£2m budget** to provide **Early Intervention**

(Senior Policy Officer)

Planning

Leveraging AI to review plans & flag regulatory violations & safety risks requiring human review, **saving days of manual work** across a team.

(Area Planning Manager)

Parking

Embedding AI to build models and predict revenue from parking, to **boost revenue** and **improve decision making**

(Parking Services Manager)

Children's Services

Saving £600k Using Data Analysis to Uncover Overspend in Continuing Healthcare for Children & Young People

(Disability Specialist)

Highways

Improving forecasting, to **justify budget** for classified road repairs, and **reduce cost of inspections**

(Highways Manager)

Public Health

Long-term prevention of cardiovascular disease by building a dashboard to illustrate uptake of health checks

(Prevention Lead)

Compliance

Automating Compliance Report to **reduce the need for external contractor** to 3 days per week

(Contracts Manager)

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- **How?**

  - Apprenticeships for existing members of staff.

  - 49 staff in Cohort One.

  - Funded through apprenticeship-levy transfer from large tech company - £750k.

  - Designed following fact-finding interviews with senior leaders in PCC.

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- Key Programmes:

Data & Insights for Business Decisions - 13 Learners *Level 3, Data Technician* **FOR DATA USERS**	Data Fellowship - 15 learners *Level 4, Data Analyst* **FOR DATA CHAMPIONS**	AI-Powered Productivity - 9 learners *Level 3, Digital Support Technician* **FOR AI USERS**	AI for Business Value - 10 learners *Level 4, Digital Support Technician* **FOR AI Implementers**
• Reduces time spent on manual analysis through **automation in Excel & Power BI/Tableau**. • Empowers teams to independently generate insights—**less reliance on central analytics**. • Improves decision-making with skills in **data storytelling and visualisation**. • Champions a **culture of data-driven efficiency**, enhancing everyday performance.	• Enhances data quality and access - minimising errors and **streamlining data handling**. • Builds core and advanced analytics skills—**from SQL to machine learning**—to reduce process inefficiencies. • Encourages **evidence-based decisions** by training staff in predictive and statistical modelling. • Develops agile thinking through hackathons and hands-on projects that **solve real operational challenges**.	• Increases daily efficiency using **Microsoft 365 Copilot** and Generative AI tools across teams. • **Reduces admin burden** by integrating AI for tasks in Outlook, Word, and PowerPoint. • Enables **measurable productivity improvements** through impact tracking and goal setting. • Cultivates a workforce confident in **ethical and effective AI tool use**, supporting broader digital adoption.	• Empower your teams to **design AI solutions** that are grounded in the needs of the business • Ensure technical teams are **translating business objectives accurately** into solution design • Reduce friction and resistance to new AI implementations through **effective change management** • Ensure **responsible utilisation of AI** in your organisation

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Summary

49 active learners across 6 programmes

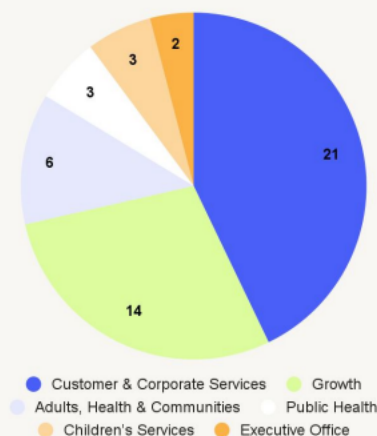| Data and Insights for Business Decisions (L3) **12 + 1PT** | AI-Powered Productivity (L3) **9** |
Data Fellowship (L4) **14 + 1PT**	AI for Business Value (L4) **10**
Business Transformation Fellowship (L4) **1**	AI for Machine Learning Fellowship (L6) **1**
Data Academy 29 Learners	**AI Academy** 20 Learners

6 Directorates

- Customer & Corporate Services — 21
- Growth — 14
- Adults, Health & Communities — 6
- Public Health — 3
- Children's Services — 3
- Executive Office — 2

The First 3 Months in Numbers

91% Of **managers** believe their apprentice is **meeting or exceeding** expectations.

83% Of **learners** feel **well supported** on their apprenticeship.

66% Of **managers** agree/strongly agree their learner has **delivered business impact** in the last 3 months

Numbers based on 55% of learners who have completed a Progress Review to date.

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Multiverse & PCC Joint Success Plan

Using Data & AI to Enhance Plymouth City's Health & Support Programme

Themes	Elevating Customer Experience	Reducing Financial Pressures	Championing Digital Skills Culture
Applied Goals *What does success look like across PCC?*	❑ Automation of heavy manual workflows e.g. compliance checks, facilities management, etc. ❑ Implementation of unified data governance structures to enhance data-based decision making. ❑ Implementation of AI tools (e.g. Copilot) to support line managers and allow support desk staff to focus on more impactful tasks.	❑ Improvement of service demand forecasting for better budget planning. ❑ Reducing operational costs through efficiency improvements and process automation. ❑ Use of AI tools in HR & recruitment processes for better resource allocation.	❑ Positive community engagement in learning skills in data & AI. ❑ Adoption of data & AI tools into existing workflows. ❑ Growth of the Data Insights & Artificial Intelligence Service (DIAS) movement through events & knowledge sharing. ❑ Creation of frameworks connecting different data & AI initiatives across departments.
Current related risks & challenges	★ Disconnected systems & siloed data across 20+ platforms ★ Manual data processes consuming significant time ★ Potential Health & Safety risks	★ Inability to accurately forecast service demand, leading to unplanned budget expansions ★ Escalating social care costs ★ Operational cost inflation	★ Skills gaps due to lack of investment in workforce development ★ Skepticism about apprentice project alignment to organisational goals ★ Motivation levels dropping after initial launches
Key Metrics for ROI & Impact	*% of staff enrolled in Data / AI programmes; % of line managers who agree their apprentice has delivered business impact; Learner health metrics*		
	Time saved per learner through productivity improvements *Learner time-saving / automation project examples*	*Examples of projects focusing on predictive analytics / cost savings* *Reduction in budget variance or measurable cost savings*	*% of learners who feel the programme is aligned with PCC goals* *Apprenticeship completion rates* *Staff participation in community engagement events*

Multiverse — Private and Confidential

MV-owned Metrics · **MV Impact Stories** · **Customer-owned Metrics**

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Example Events

- **AI Activate Workshop Sessions**

In progress - equipping leadership with the required understanding

- **Hackathons (Data Academy) - Nov, Feb, May (DF)**

Option to run in-person hackathon events where apprentices spend 1 day / ½ day focusing on key challenges for the organisation.

NB: requires leadership stakeholder interviews in advance to shape focus of the event

- **Lunch & Learns**

Sessions open to learners & the wider PCC community to raise awareness of learner projects & share knowledge across different directorates.

- **Apprentice Manager Engagement Sessions**

Dedicated sessions for any AMs looking to support their learners better & share best practices.

- **Multiverse Coffee Chats**

Offering moments for informal knowledge sharing & networking

- **Graduation Ceremony**

EDF Data & Tech
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💡 We recently worked with Multiverse to host an exciting Hackathon for our Apprentices, where they tackled real-world business problems and worked together to present creative solutions to a panel of EDF leaders!

☕ The day gave Apprentices the opportunity to see how their skills and roles connect to EDF's bigger picture, while collaborating with peers and learning from subject matter experts. It was also a chance to bring their work to the forefront and celebrate everything they've been learning!

🙌 Thanks very much to Veronika Pramukova and John Docherty from Multiverse, and our panel of judges Ian Holland, Julia Adler, Di Ford, Gemma Willcocks, and Lillian Philip!

#EDF #Innovation #Apprenticeships #Collaboration #TechTalent #Hackathon #FutureSkills

EDF X Multiverse Hackathon

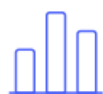Working together to solve real business challenges creatively

CHANGE IS IN *OUR POWER*

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AI Activate – Leadership Sessions (90 minutes each)

Workshop Series

Activate Foundations

- Explore AI applications with a focus on Generative AI

- Practice crafting effective prompts for Copilot and other large language models through hands-on exercises

Activate Business Transformation

- Learn to identify AI implementation opportunities to streamline processes and boost productivity

- Identify AI opportunities to streamline processes and boost productivity within the workplace using gap analysis

Activate Governance and Ethical Use

- Learn strategies to incorporate fairness, transparency, and accountability in AI applications

- Explore legal frameworks and ethical standards for AI use, focusing on compliance and best practices

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Learner Projects

Karen **- Technical Expert - Customer & Corporate Services**

Data and Insights for Business Decisions L3
Data & Insights for Business Decisions - Module 1

Improving Customer Experience by Resolving Garden Waste Complaints

Problem: The Digital Services Team at Plymouth City Council needed to improve the process for handling customer complaints, specifically regarding the garden waste service. Customers were experiencing issues with the registration process, leading to a high volume of feedback and complaints that required manual review and resolution, negatively impacting the customer experience.

Solution: Karen downloaded raw customer feedback data into Excel and filtered it to identify common registration issues. She used this analysis to contact affected customers directly, resolving their problems. Karen then shared these findings with their manager and team, leading to the implementation of clearer password instructions on the registration portal.

Impact: Karen's work led to a significant drop in complaints related to registration issues after the changes were implemented, demonstrating a positive impact on customer experience and service delivery. This project also helped Karen develop her data analysis skills and improved her ability to proactively identify and solve business problems.

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Learner Projects

Michael - **Technical Expert - Customer & Corporate Services**

Data Fellowship L4
Module 1: Foundations Of Data Analyst: Kickoff

Optimising Windows 11 Upgrade Efficiency in IT Operations

Problem: The Windows 11 upgrade project faced a major hurdle due to inefficient manual processes. The project manager spent 2-3 hours daily manually collating and analysing inconsistent Excel data from an external IT provider to identify staff laptops with insufficient disk space for the upgrade. This was time-consuming, error-prone, and risked service disruption.

Solution: Michael developed an automated solution in Power BI to consolidate and analyse the data. He merged daily IT extracts with HR data, modelled the relationships between datasets, and built a dashboard. He also created DAX columns to categorise devices and included interactive visuals to identify at-risk staff.

Impact: The automated solution reduced the project manager's manual work from 2-3 hours to under 30 minutes daily, saving over 10 hours per week. It also enabled proactive identification of at-risk devices, preventing potential disruption for at least 21 staff during the initial rollout. The solution has been adopted as the primary tool and is a template for future projects.

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Learner Projects

| Alex Arthur | Customer + Corporate Services | **Name: Alex ﹒**
Role: Service Accountant
Programme: AI-Powered Productivity L3
Module: AI-PP Module 1 Kickoff Workshop

Improving Finance Support with Intelligent Automation

Alex implemented Microsoft Copilot Agents to centralise finance queries, addressing time-consuming technical support and improving 24/7 information access for Finance staff.
 Problem: Alex identified that the Corporate Accountancy Team spent significant time answering repeated queries already addressed in extensive finance guidance notes, which diverted time from other tasks and impacted the team's ability to maintain up-to-date technical resources.

Solution: Alex proposed implementing Microsoft Copilot Agents, embedded in Microsoft 365, to act as a centralised, intelligent assistant. This tool can interpret and respond to queries based on the guidance documentation, addressing the challenge of time-consuming technical support.

Impact: The proposed solution is expected to lead to faster response times for Finance staff and budget holders, reduced workload for the Corporate Accountancy Team, improved 24/7 access to information, and more time for complex queries and strategic tasks. |

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What's Next?

- Cohort 2 – target AHC, Children's, ODPH
- Leadership sessions
- Hackathons & other events
- Communications programme
- Formalise the connections to strategic programmes and Medium-Term Financial Plan
- Skills Audit
- Explore other learning programmes e.g. Digital Bootcamps

Thank you