

# DIGITAL STRATEGY 2024/25





## WELCOME

**Welcome to Novus' Digital Strategy; this document outlines our vision for how we will develop and enhance Novus colleagues' digital capabilities and how they can support prison learners to build digital skills, use digital technology, and therefore thrive on release.**

Technology moves at an incredible pace, even six months in prison can result in learners being at a digital disadvantage on release. Previously in prison, learners didn't have access to digital learning, so leaving prison often felt like they were returning to a foreign country, a country where people scan their phone to get on a bus or train, where most services and job applications are accessed online and chat bots answer questions that you have, rather than picking up the phone and speaking to a person.

Over the last few years, we have made real progress in changing what goes on in a prison classroom from a digital perspective. Novus colleagues from all curriculum areas have started to embed digital into their teaching and this strategy brings together the knowledge and understanding that we now have into clear objectives for all of our colleagues.

Whether we are giving learners the opportunity to expand on classroom teaching through in cell technology, freeing up staff time by using AI in

lesson planning, or teaching learners how to build websites and stop online scams, we are fostering a culture of digital literacy across our organisation and for learners.

All of the above has been done with safety at the heart of what we do, and with limited access to technology due to security and IT policy in prisons, we have often had to be truly innovative in our approach. We can't wait to build on what we have already achieved and make an even bigger impact over the next 12 months and this strategy is the starting point for how we will do that.

If you are interested in working with us or finding out more about our digital strategy, please visit our website or connect with Novus on LinkedIn.

Many thanks,

**Jayne Hill**  
Digital Learning Team  
Manager, Novus



## VISION AND OBJECTIVES

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**The digital strategy for Novus is centred around leveraging technology to enhance learning outcomes, improve administrative efficiency, and enrich the overall experience for colleagues and learners. The strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:**

- Enhance the quality of education, and support innovative teaching methodologies.
- Provide learners with a flexible and engaging learning environment.
- Streamline administrative processes through use of digital tools, enabling our teachers to plan and develop lessons and resources quickly and more efficiently.
- Foster a culture of digital literacy and adaptability.
- Embrace Artificial Intelligence to aid colleague wellbeing and to free up time for teachers to concentrate on learners.

## VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### Case Study: *TeacherMatic in action*

**TeacherMatic is a comprehensive set of tools designed to support teaching colleagues. It includes a wide range of AI generators that help teachers create a variety of materials; everything from lesson plans and quizzes to learning activities and schemes of work, helping to save planning time and maximising classroom time.**

We have been testing the platform across a number of our sites and it has been a real success. One of our colleagues, Alison Brown shares how she uses it and the benefits.

As a teacher, Alison uses TeacherMatic in a number of different ways to refresh lessons and create multiple choice questions that are shared using digital tools. These tools help with:

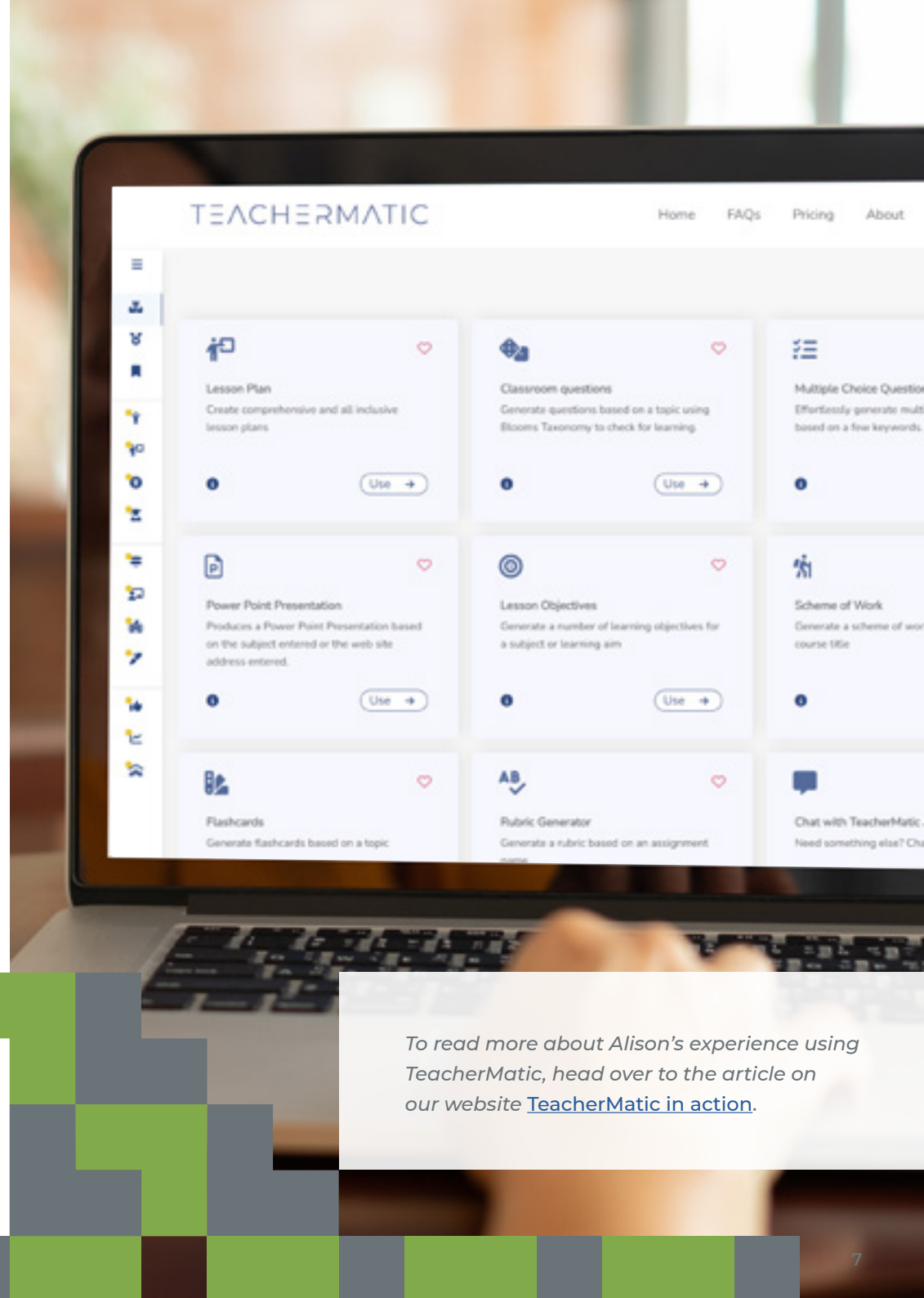
1. Introducing new topics and concepts
2. Checking learning
3. Creating lesson plans for key topic areas, such as Cultural Capital, British Values and equality and diversity

Additionally, she works with the Chatbot to give learners a live experience of interacting with AI and building their Prompt Craft skills. I.e. asking learners for a question regarding their graphics course, such as what font would be best

for a particular audience, how to approach the design and demonstrating how to use correct prompts to get the best response.

As a manager, Alison has demonstrated to tutors how TeacherMatic can aid them in the development areas such as in their ETLA based on planning and refreshing teaching resources. She has also used TeacherMatic to assist the Reading Group in generating a rubric to link with the progress tracker for when a learner hits emerging, developing or mastery.

Also Alison uses TeacherMatic in her role as Virtual Campus Digital Champion (VDCs). She recently demonstrated at a training session how TeacherMatic can support teachers in searching for strategies to assist with LDD or to create PowerPoint presentations specific to their course.



To read more about Alison's experience using TeacherMatic, head over to the article on our website [TeacherMatic in action](#).

# INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING

## Prioritise learning experiences by integrating technology effectively:

- **Building Digital Skills:** Utilise technology in the classroom and maximising use of computer suites using blended learning rotational methods.
- **Digitally Blended Learning Classroom:** Make full use of digital tools, whitelisted websites and Open Borders available in the classroom to create an engaging learner environment.
- **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):** Utilise the current VC2 VLE to enhance classroom delivery, using online resources and use as a blended learning tool where establishments have in cell technology. Embrace new VLE platforms when released.
- **Interactive Content:** Develop multimedia-rich content, including videos, interactive simulations, and virtual reality to enhance engagement and understanding.
- **Adaptive Learning:** Implement adaptive approaches to personalise learning paths and support diverse learning styles, utilising artificial intelligence to speed up processes.
- **Online Assessments:** Increase use of secure online assessment to provide more efficiency with initial assessment, data sharing and speed up end exam results for learners.

## Improving digital skills at HMP Hatfield

Colleagues at HMP Hatfield have been piloting the Open Borders system with learners to help improve their digital knowledge ahead of release.

A digital suite has been created to support digital learning, where teaching staff are allocated time slots to bring their learners in. One of Novus' digital trainers recently visited the site where the vocational warehouse class were taking advantage of the digital suite.

The session was based around researching a career as a warehouse worker and learners were shown various YouTube videos about what it's like to be a warehouse worker. The tutor and digital champions directed the learner's internet use and supported them throughout the session.

Through Open Borders, learners can log in to their Open Borders account and complete various tasks that support them to be successful in the community. The tasks include researching their job goals, finding bus routes for when they are released on temporary license (ROTL), learning how to search for jobs in their area and looking for educational opportunities.

The pilot has been a success with learners asking for more time in the digital suite.

To read more about HMP Hatfield's use of Open Borders, head over to the article on our website: [Improving digital skills at HMP Hatfield](#).



## COLLEAGUE DEVELOPMENT

### Empower colleagues to effectively incorporate technology

#### into their teaching practices:

- **Professional Development:** Offer digital support and training; remotely, face-to-face and self-directed to help colleagues leverage digital tools and pedagogical techniques.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Promote and inspire colleagues to purposefully, consciously and ethically employ AI for the improvement of teaching and learning.
- **Collaborative Platforms:** Engagement and collaborations using online spaces such as the Digital Practice Community on Teams and Digi Hub on Moodle. Colleagues can utilise to share best practices, provide peer to peer support and receive updates on new digital learning innovations.
- **Blended Learning Strategies:** Encourage the use of blended learning approaches that combine traditional and current digital enhanced teaching methods for a well-rounded learning experience.



### CPD sessions to encourage use of Learning on Screen at HMP Wetherby:

Since the beginning of 2023, colleagues at HMP Wetherby have been learning how to embed digital skills across their planning, delivery, and assessment.

Facilitated by Tony (Digital Learning Technologist), over six hours of CPD sessions have been provided to support colleagues with improving their own digital skills and to learn new ways of using digital in their lessons.

These 'click and play' style CPD sessions involve using the digital one-minute teaching tips and support guides available to colleagues on the Digi Hub. The session gives them an introduction to a digital tool and some suggestions on how to use it. The colleagues then met the following week at a share session, where they each demonstrate how the digital tool can be utilised within their curriculum.

These sessions have been popular at Wetherby and the 'click and play' sessions have been repeated with different digital tools such as Wordwall and Britannica. One colleague commented that they now felt confident with understanding different avenues to using technology in class.

To learn more about the CPD sessions at HMP Wetherby, head over to the article on our website: [CPD sessions to using learning on screen at HMP Wetherby.](#)

## COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### Strengthen communication and engagement among stakeholders:

- **Learner Portal:** Utilise and populate VC2 VLE for learners to access their personal learner plan, assessment outcomes, reading screeners, LDD information and learning resources.
- **Distribute** digital information in colleague update emails, provide digital updates and demonstrations, drive and promote Digital Awareness month.
- **Maintain** and update digital pages on the Hub (Novus colleague intranet).
- **Share** good practice and new initiatives through social media channels to keep Novus colleagues and partners informed about events, updates, and important information.
- **Virtual Collaboration:** Organise webinars, cross lot team calls, and engage with team spaces to share and support others through a digital community.





## ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

*We aim to facilitate independence and support progression through enabling appropriate access to technology for all Novus users.*

### Accessibility Tools and Hardware include:

- Reading Pen
- Speech-to-text
- Read aloud
- Headphones
- Colour Veil
- Screen Magnifier/adjustable display size settings
- Adjustable contrast settings
- Keyboard and mouse alternatives and adaptations
- Talking calculators

The Novus Digital Team work with Novus Special Educational Needs Coordinators, Occupational Health and Novus Managers to agree safe and appropriate use of assistive technology for colleagues and learners.

**Web Accessibility:** We follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to create online content and platforms to support all users.

**Alternative Formats:** We aim to accommodate different learning, physical and sensory needs through the provision of digital resources in multiple formats, such as audio, transcripts, and captions. We can also provide printable versions of resources for in-cell activity.



## DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY

### Prioritise the security of digital assets and sensitive information:

- **Cybersecurity Measures:** Implement strong cybersecurity practices, including regular software updates, firewalls, and encryption, to safeguard college data.
- **Data Privacy Compliance:** Adhere to UK data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR) and ensure transparent data handling practices.
- **Security Protocol:** Adhere to IT security processes and procedures when using prison computer networks; MOJO, Education Network, Virtual Campus and private providers systems.



# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## Regularly assess and adapt the digital strategy to evolving

### needs and technologies:

- **Performance Reviews:** Implement quality assurance initiatives to review classroom delivery and use of digitally blended learning approaches through digital learning walks and review of teaching resources.
- **Quality Improvement Plans:** Inclusion of digital action plans within establishments QIP, regular reviews and updating based on organisational needs.
- **Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of Novus digital strategy, digital tools and the digital learning offer, ensuring it meets the needs of Novus establishments and is in line with Novus' Strategic goals.

## Online exams at HMPYOI Low Newton:

Low Newton have been running online exams for over two years now. It began with just vocational qualifications and then expanded to include functional skills exams, and most recently essential digital skills.

**Of the nine courses that currently contain exams, HMPYOI Low Newton offers online exams in five of them, these include:**

- City and Guilds Functional Skills Maths (Level 1 and 2)
- City and Guilds Functional Skills English (Level 1 and 2)
- City and Guilds Hairdressing (Levels 1, 2 and 3)
- City and Guilds Food Safety (Level 2)
- NCFE Essential Digital Skills (Entry Three and Level 1)

There are plans for all courses to switch to online exams once the other courses offer the opportunity.

For learners to take their online exams, they require a certain level of digital skills which the tutors at Low Newton understand and have been working hard to embed digital skills into their education delivery, regardless of course.

## The benefits of online exams:

**There are many benefits to using the online exam process such as:**

- **Exams are live for 30 days** – If a learner does not attend an education session on the scheduled day, the exam can be completed anytime within the 30 days.
- **Quick results** – Depending on the exam, results can be instant or within a short turnaround from the Awarding Bodies.
- **Exam breakdown** – Most exams provide a breakdown for each section of the exam which together, tutor and learners can review and build on for improvement.
- **Tutor insight** – The exam breakdown can be used to analyse any trends in questions learners are struggling with, allowing for adjustment of teaching to address this.

The team's dedication and hard work are enabling an increasing number of learners to acquire digital skills that will help them to be successful upon their release.

To learn more about the online exams and how tutors are incorporating digital skills into their curriculum, head over to the article on our website: [Online Exams at HMPYOI Low Newton](#).

By implementing this digital strategy, Novus can harness the benefits of technology to enhance the learning experience, streamline operations, upskill and maintain colleague's digital skills and prepare learners for success in a rapidly changing digital world.



# NOVUS

FOUNDATIONS FOR CHANGE ®

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*Technology will never replace great teachers, but technology in the hands of great teachers is transformational.*

George Couros

