

Innovate UK: Talent and Skills Connect Design as a Skillset

1 October 2025 | 10:00-12:00



Innovate
UK



Vision, Approach, Ambitions

Tony Ryan

CEO

The Design & Technology Association



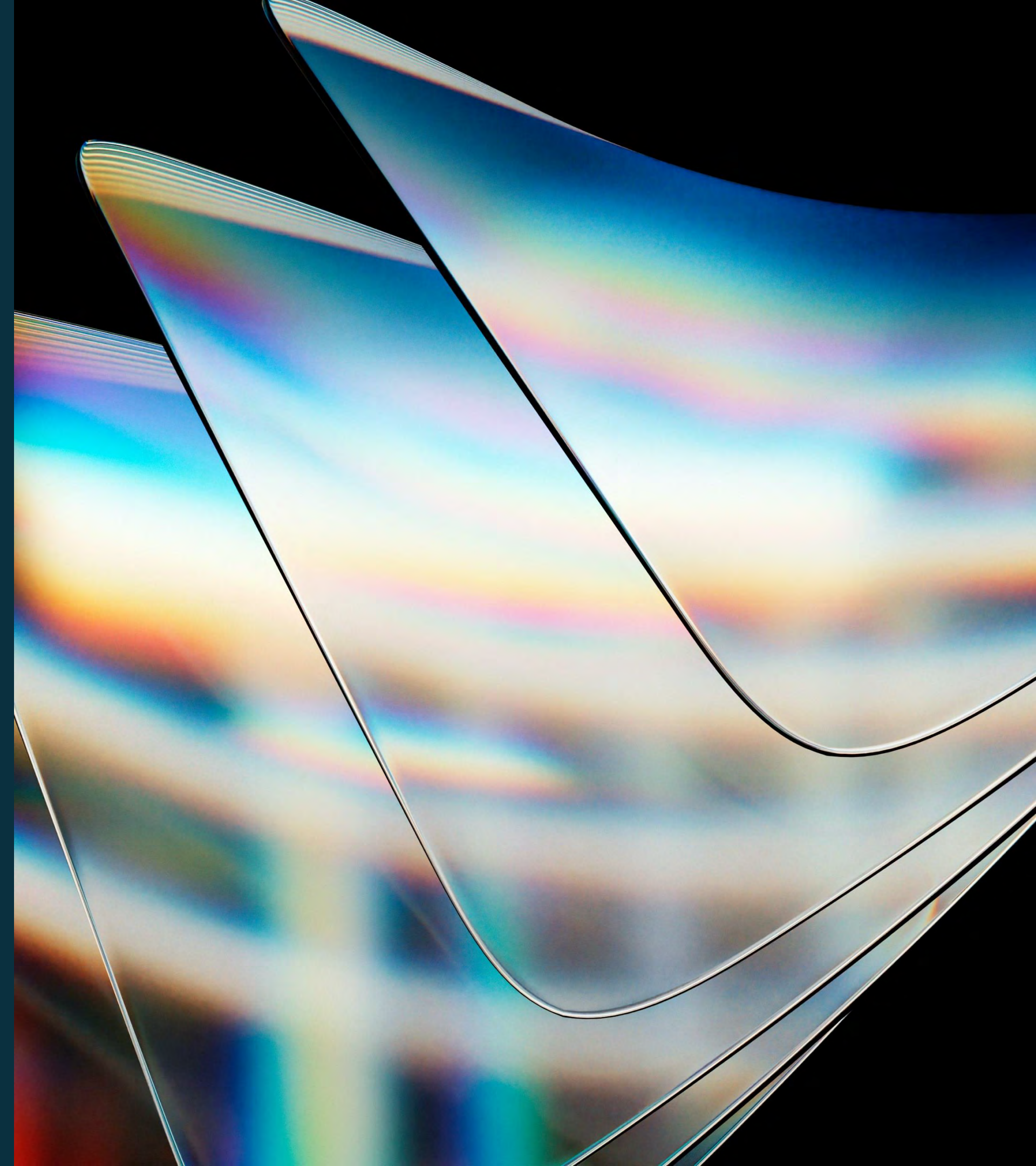
**DESIGN &
TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION**

**TALENT & SKILLS
CONNECT FOCUS EVENT
DESIGN AS A SKILLSET
FOR INNOVATION**

October 1st, 2025



Presented by Tony Ryan
CEO, The Design & Technology
Association



VISION

As the UK's expert authority for design and technology, the Association believes that there should be the opportunity for all students, across all abilities, to study high quality D&T as part of a broad and creative curriculum up to the age of 18.



MISSION

The Design & Technology Association supports, develops and promotes high quality design and technology teaching and learning as an essential part of the rounded education of all young people. We link schools and students with the world of business, manufacturing and industry and lobby government and key decision makers to ensure that the subject's value is duly recognised and supported.

SCALING NATIONALLY

We are looking to pilot this from November this year with two initial regions. These are Bristol and a second region to be identified, depending on funding. Expanding to 4-6 towns and cities by the end of 2026.

A comprehensive research project will guide the national rollout.

Long-term (next 2-4 years): expand to 14–16 towns and cities across England and Wales as indicated on the map.



IMAGINE THE IMPACT!

By partnering with us, you're not just supporting schools - you're **developing an entire generation of future designers, engineers, and innovators.** Together, we can ensure D&T is not only delivered but **delivered brilliantly.**



Imagine the positive impact we could have if every school was offered membership at no cost.



All that's needed is the school's engagement - and we know how to inspire it.



This offers a unique chance to influence design and technology education at scale.



This is our offer. The chance to positively impact learning across the UK



HOW DOES THIS TRANSLATE TO NUMBERS IN ONE REGION?

Bristol and surrounding Gloucestershire:

1,791 Schools (within a 40-mile radius of the city centre)

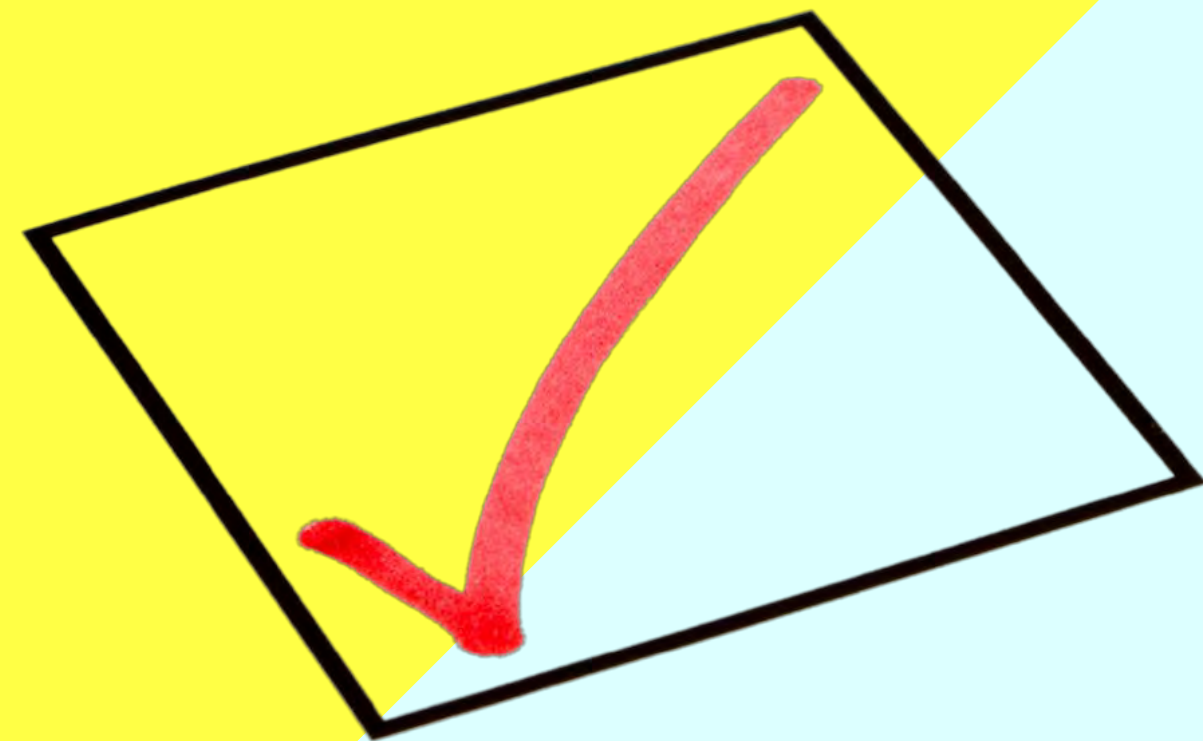
1,467 Primary schools

324 Secondary schools

22 Special schools

What we offer:

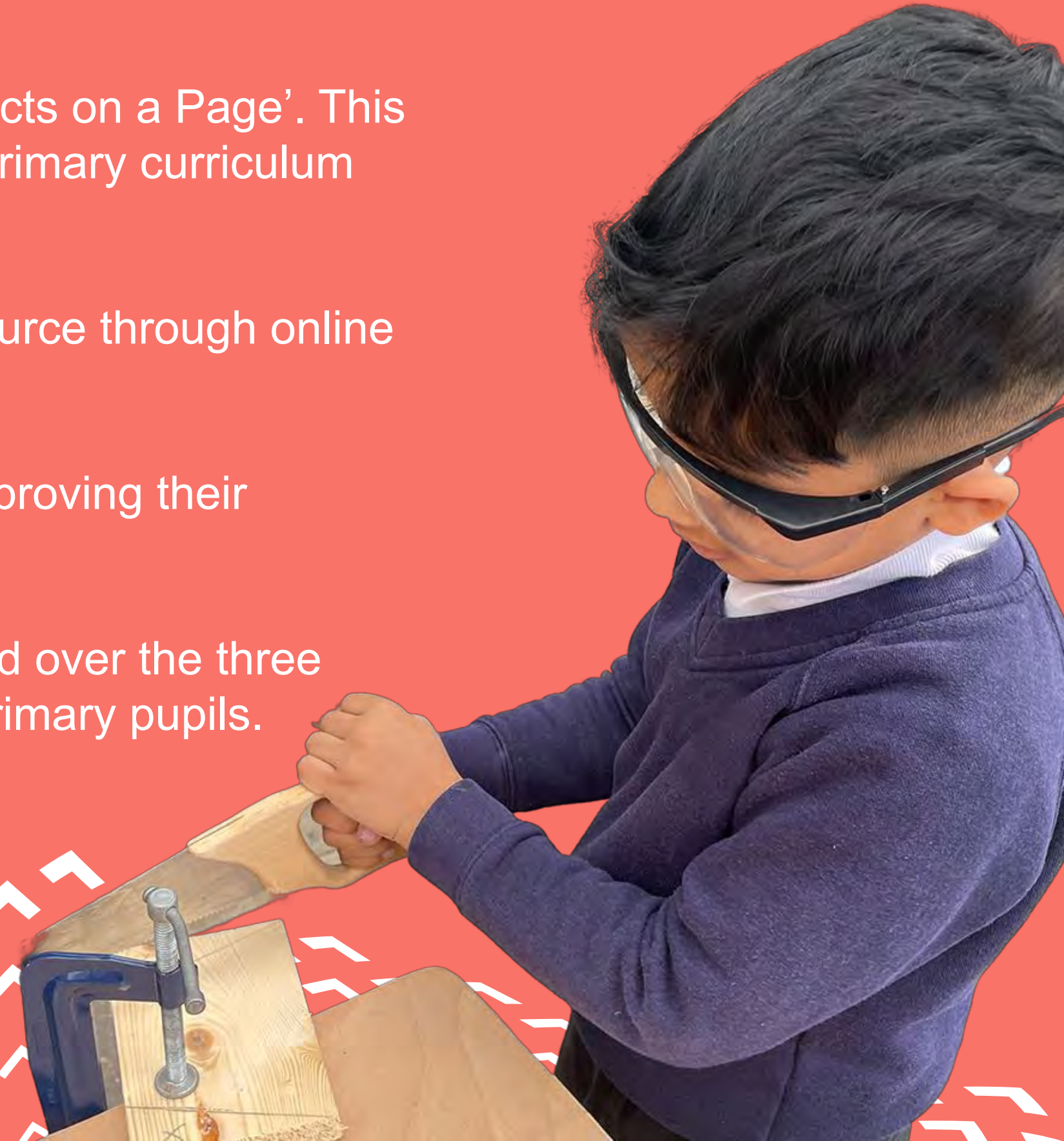
- ✓ Free Teaching resources
- ✓ Free training
- ✓ Online support
- ✓ Enhanced connection with local business and industry



**AMBITIOUS AND
EXCITING? YES.
BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE
CAN THIS MAKE?**

PRIMARY EDUCATION

- ✓ Free access to our best-selling primary resource – ‘Projects on a Page’. This helps primary teachers to set and deliver a challenging primary curriculum mapped to National Curriculum requirements.
- ✓ We can train teachers on how to effectively use this resource through online and in-person training sessions.
- ✓ We will run leadership coaching for D&T coordinators improving their confidence and giving them advice and support.
- ✓ We will introduce a CAD/CAM programme which will build over the three years introducing professional CAD and 3D Printing to primary pupils.



SECONDARY EDUCATION

- ✓ Full access to our 'Inspired by Industry' content (including over 100 support units written by teachers for teachers).
www.inspiredbyindustry.org.uk
- ✓ We will run online and in-person training for teachers to help them introduce elements of the 'Inspired' suite to their students. This training will include us and partner companies that have helped produce the resources.
- ✓ We will run in-person and online curriculum development and leadership training for Heads of Department and for non-specialists delivering D&T at KS3.



**DESIGN &
TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION**

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO
CONTACT ME IF MORE
DETAIL WOULD BE
BENEFICIAL**

Tony Ryan, CEO

tony.ryan@designtechnology.org.uk

designtechnology.org.uk



Supporting the design community and the upskilling opportunity

Cat Drew

Chief Design Officer
Design Council

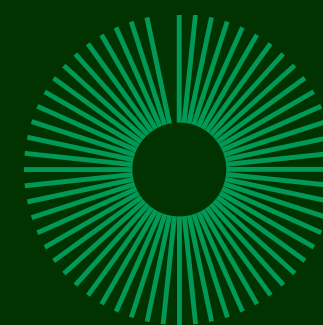
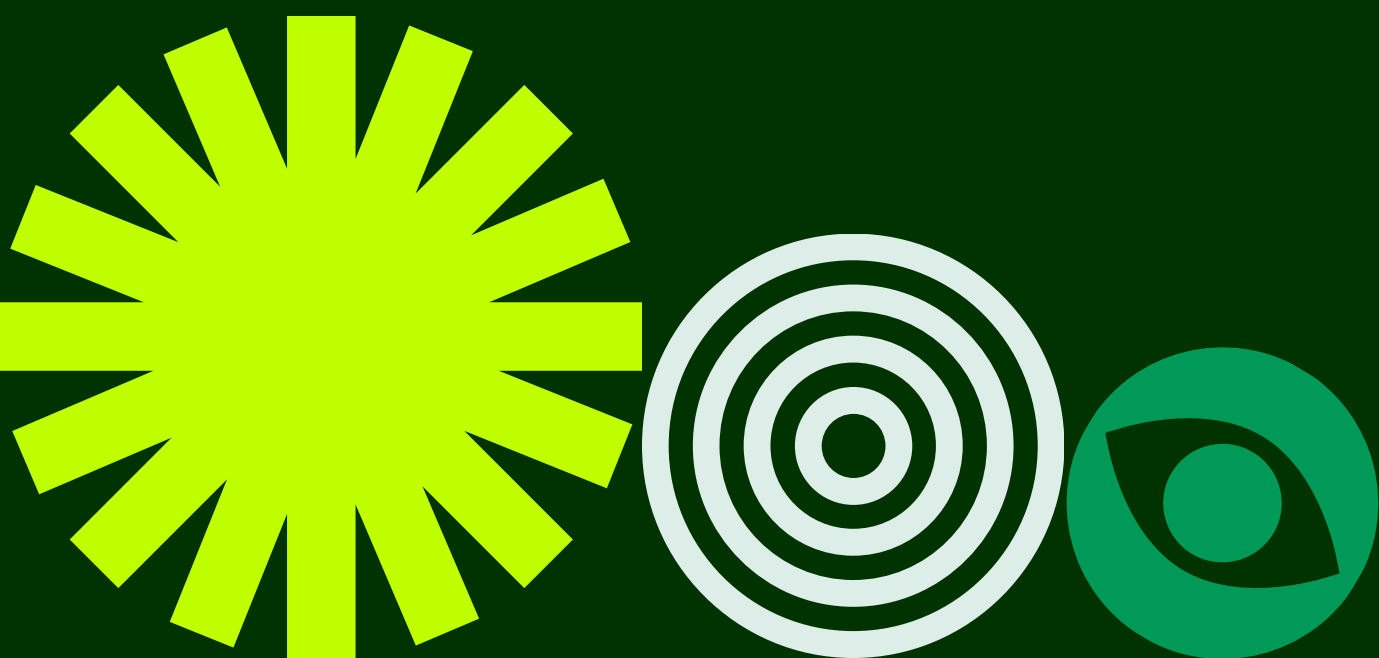
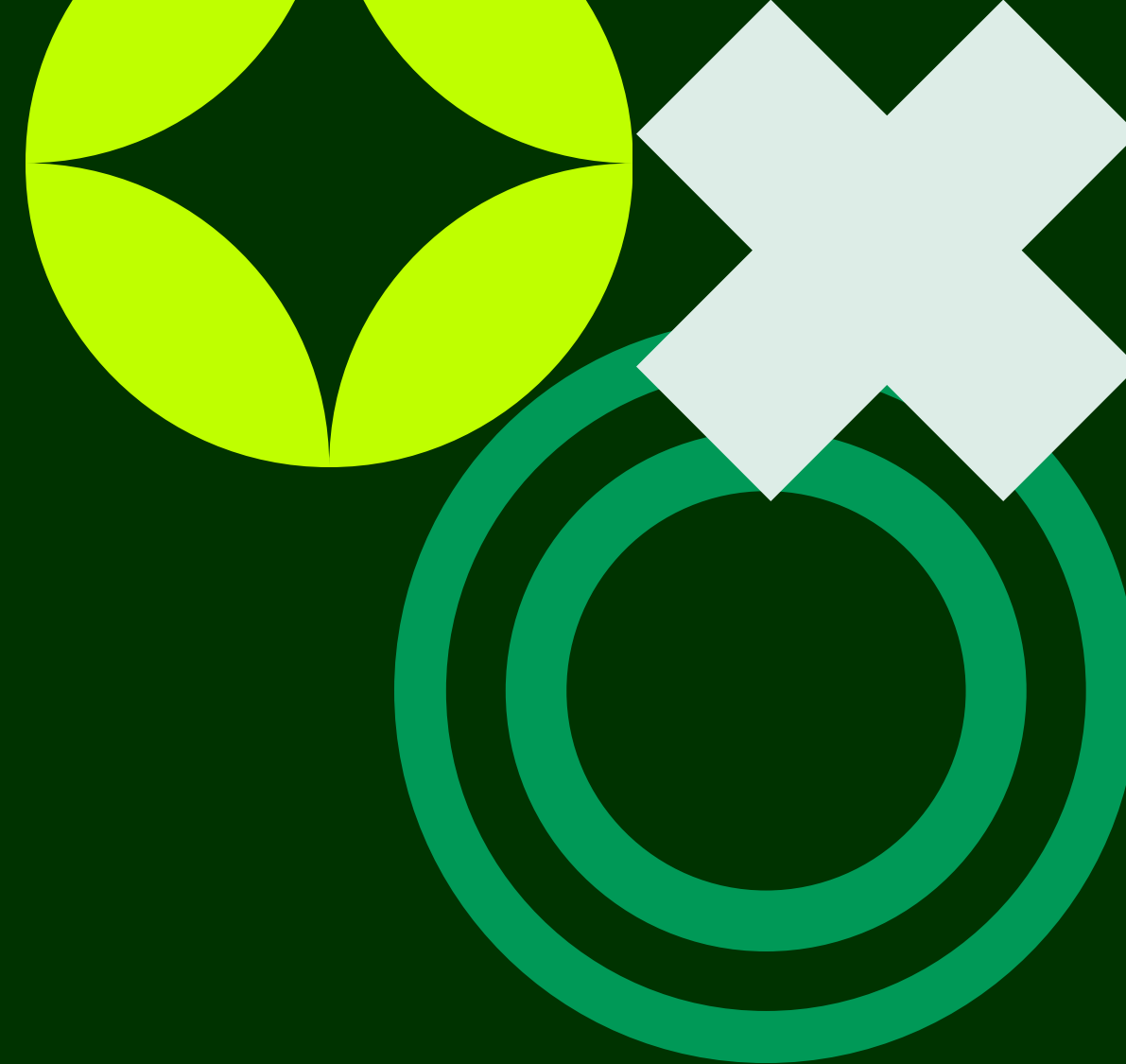


Innovate
UK



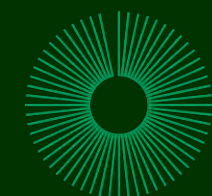
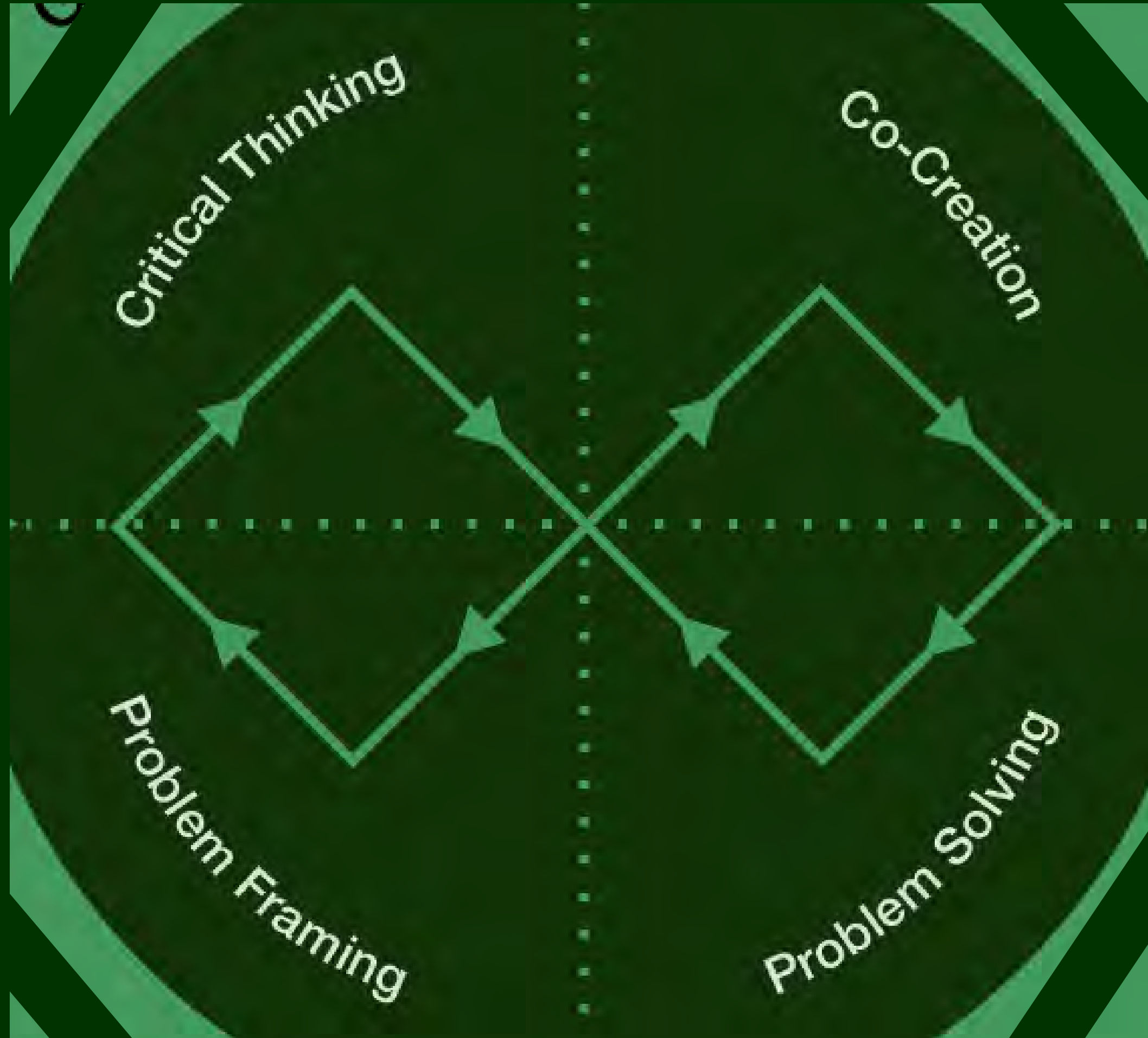
Skills for Planet

Innovate UK Talent & Skills Connect



**Skills
for
Planet**

**Design
Council**



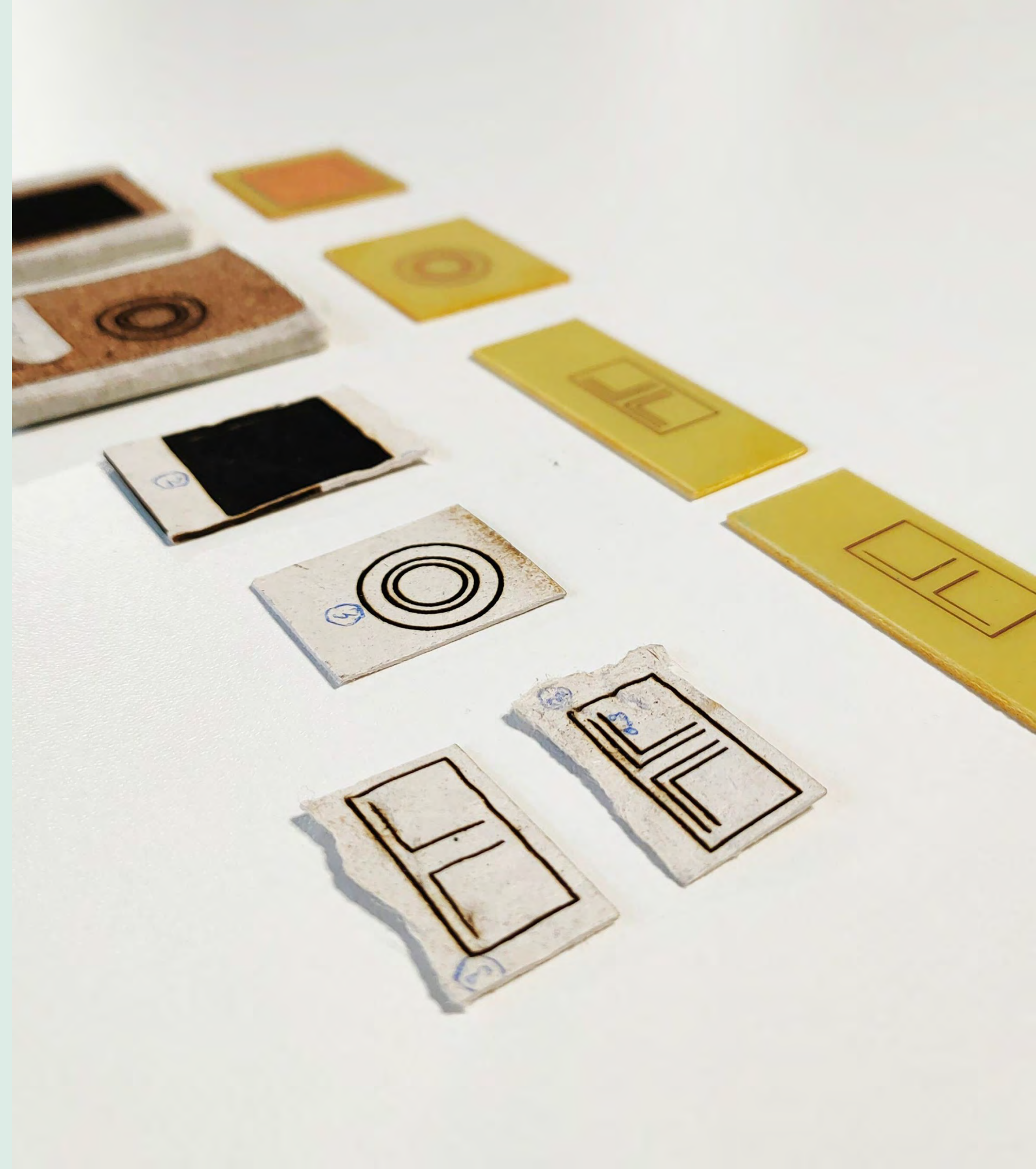
Skills
for
Planet



Critical thinking

Turning ideas into action

PulpaTronics



Co-creation

Engaging people (and nature)

East London Waterworks Park



Problem-solving

Testing and learning

Duku





Our Goal:

Upskill

1 million

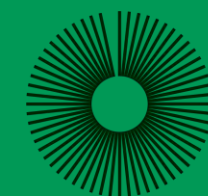
designers in
Green Design skills
by 2030.



71%

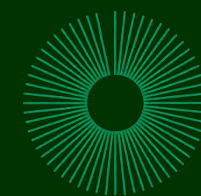
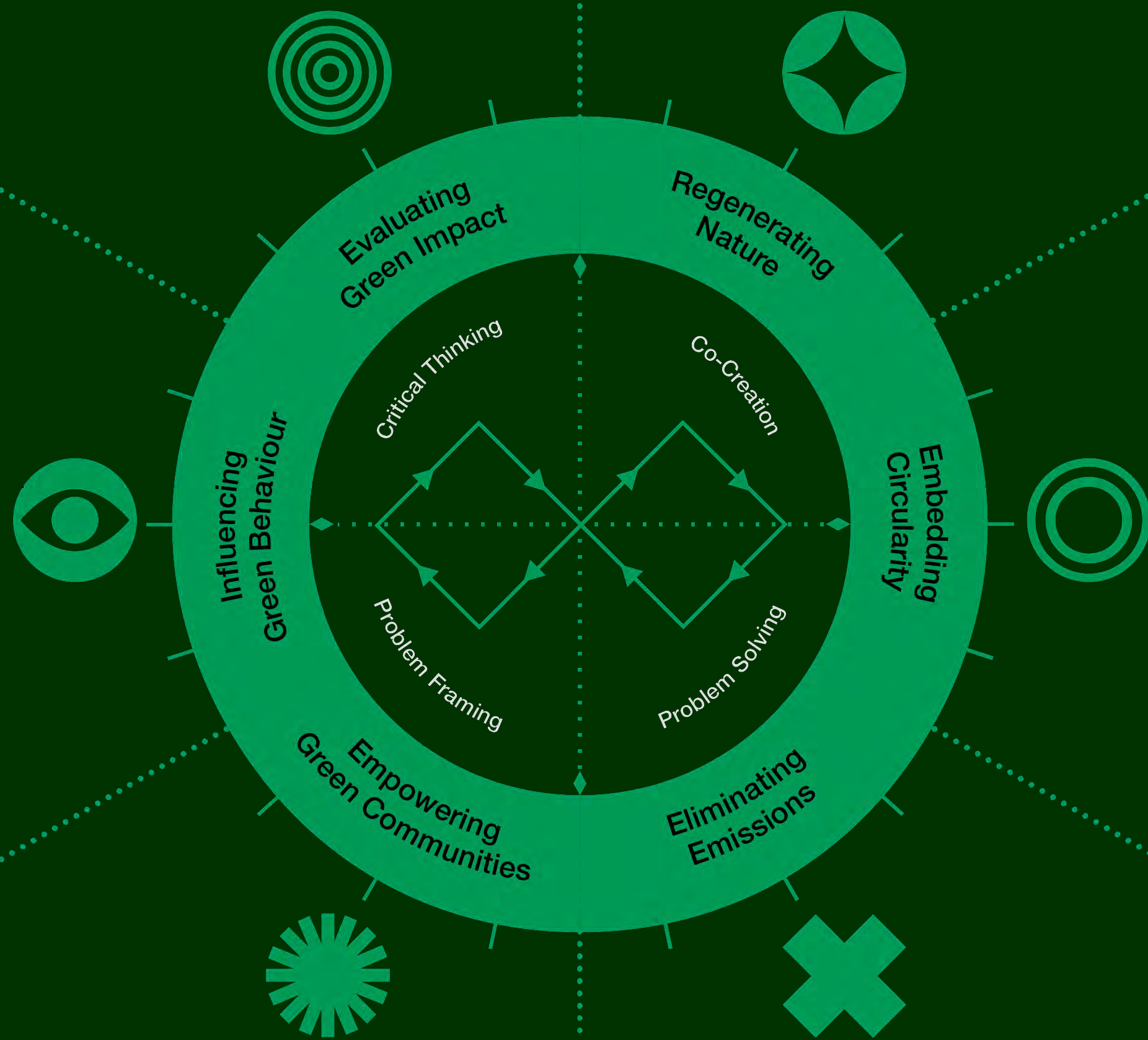
of designers say
the demand for
green skills is rising.

but only
43%
feel prepared.



**Skills
for
Planet**

**Design
Council**



**Skills
for
Planet**



Developing Green Design Skills



Regenerating
Nature



Embedding
Circularity



Eliminating
Emissions



Empowering
Green Communities



Influencing
Green Behaviour



Evaluating
Green Impact

SKILL 1

Implementing nature-
focused strategy

SKILL 4

Implementing
circular strategies

SKILL 7

Implementing
decarbonisation strategy

SKILL 10

Gathering
community insight

SKILL 13

Facilitating green
choices

SKILL 16

Setting measurable
goals

SKILL 2

Representing nature
in decision-making

SKILL 5

Adopting a circular
business model

SKILL 8

Analysing emissions
data

SKILL 11

Nurturing community
stewardship

SKILL 14

Communicating
business value

SKILL 17

Reviewing benefits
and risks

SKILL 3

Collaborating
with nature

SKILL 6

Selecting materials
responsibly

SKILL 9

Planning for future
climate scenarios

SKILL 12

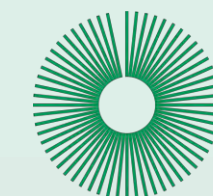
Prioritising justice
and equity

SKILL 15

Sharing success
stories

SKILL 18

Iterating based
on evidence



**Skills
for
Planet**



Regenerating nature



Faith in Nature



Embedding Circularity



BEEN London



Eliminating emissions



BedZed



Eliminating emissions



Carbon Cell



Empowering Green Communities



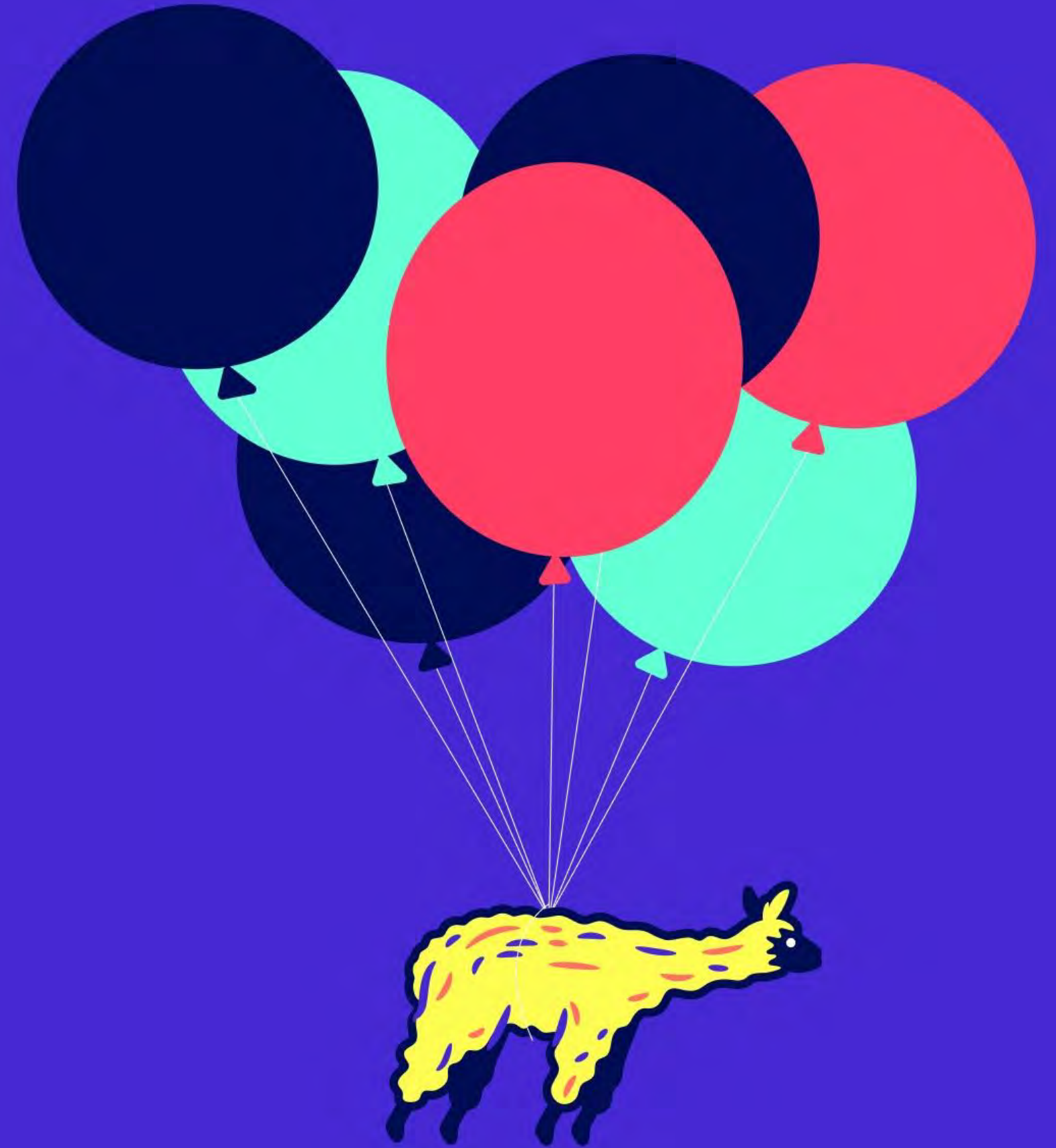
Voluntary Sector Futures



Influencing Green Behaviour



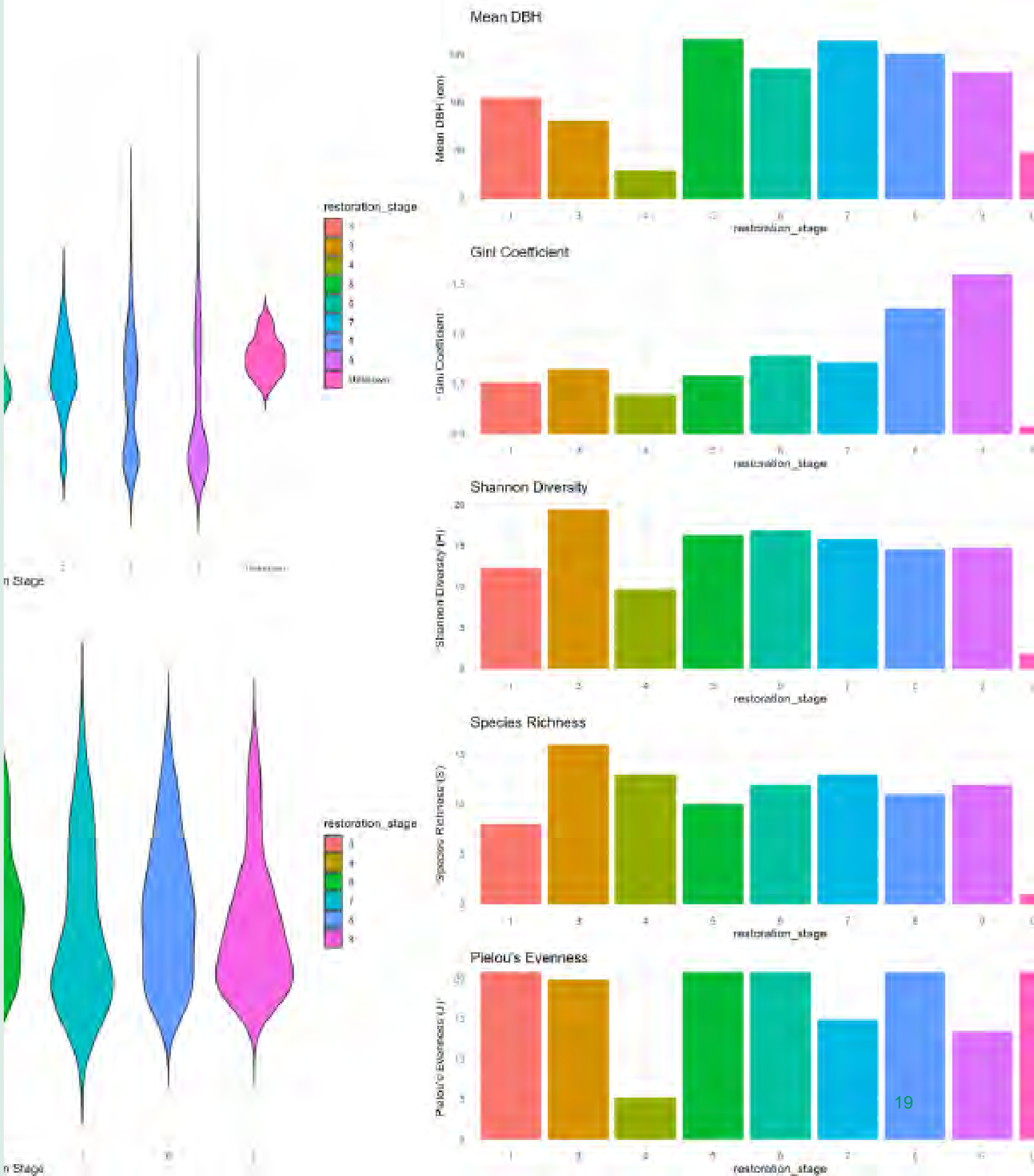
Fat Llama



Evaluating Green Impact



SUPERB



Skills for Planet as catalyst for long-term impact



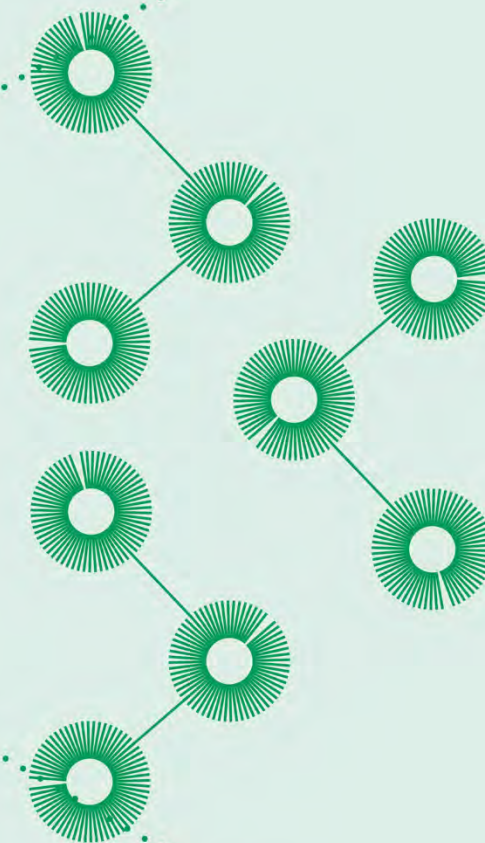
2010
Contemporary
Design Practice



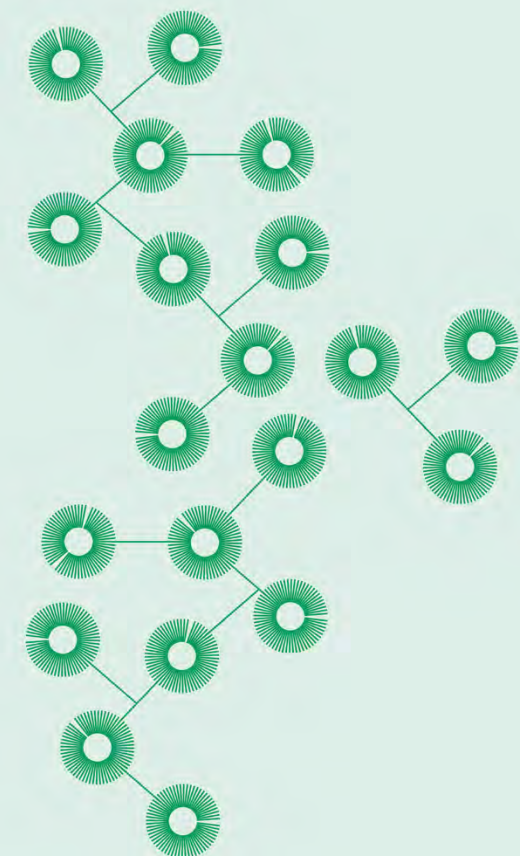
2020
Systemic Design
Approaches



2030
Skills for
Planet Mission



2040
Green
Design Shift



2050
Green Design as
Everyday Practice

Ways in which we're delivering this mission:

Create

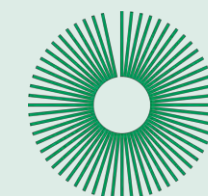
Creating meaningful interventions that plug significant gaps across school, HE and industry

Influence

Using our voice to build a movement across industry, education and government

Champion

Through thought leadership, events and amplifying the work already being done



**Skills
for
Planet**

**Design
Council**

Embedding the Blueprint across the design ecosystem

...in schools



...in universities



...in industry



**Access all these Skills
for Planet Resources
and more here**



**Join our Skills for Planet
Mission and access the
full Blueprint here**

Supporting Design Foundations

Harry Kerr

Design in Innovation

Innovate UK



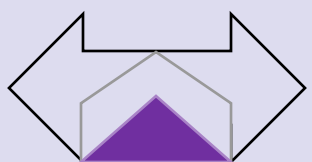
Innovate UK Business Connect

Design Innovation Support Activities

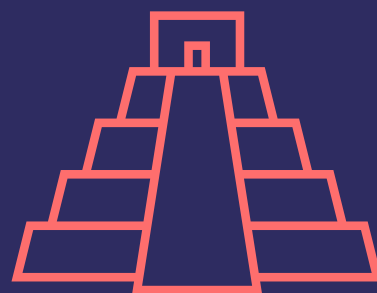


Innovate
UK

Business
Connect



To ensure a **consistent understanding and awareness** of what innovation is, so that **anyone** can map their own **innovation journey** and develop **innovation capability independence**.



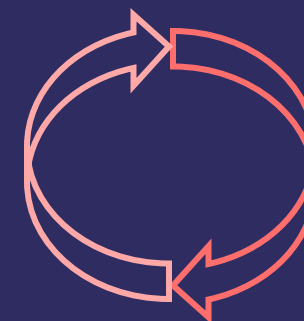
INNOVATION ACADEMY

Upskilling colleagues and organisations in innovation skills, knowledge and ability



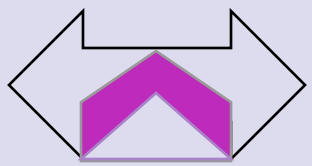
INNOVATION CANVAS

Identifying the most important challenges in developing an innovation, prioritising next actions and seeking other views or advice



MaDE

Connecting materials science researchers with design communities to stimulate innovation



Design Capability

Empowering innovators, businesses and policymakers with **the design capabilities needed** to create **scalable, responsible and high-impact solutions**, through **hands-on experimentation, collaboration and knowledge sharing**



IGNITE LABS

Tackling market failure of innovation projects early with key design tools and methodologies



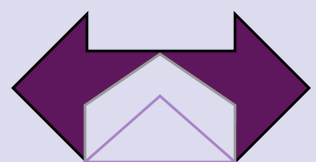
CAPABILITY COMPASS

Mapping core business challenges to respective design capabilities



RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

Developing tools and resources to foster a responsible innovation mindset through design



Design for System Change

Harnessing the power of design **to drive systemic innovation**. Through **deep engagement with businesses, policymakers and communities**, innovation and design capabilities will be **translated into actionable strategies** to reshape industries, enable sustainable transitions and **create lasting market impact**.



DISA CATALOGUE

Articulating what design innovation support activities are available and appropriate for specific needs



WORKSHOPS

Reframing systemic challenges to ensure robust co-design of programmes



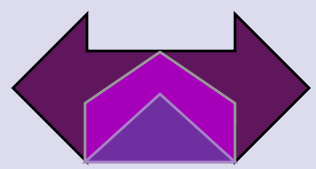
DESIGN IN INNOVATION FRAMEWORK

Developing a common language and terminology around design for use across the Innovate UK system



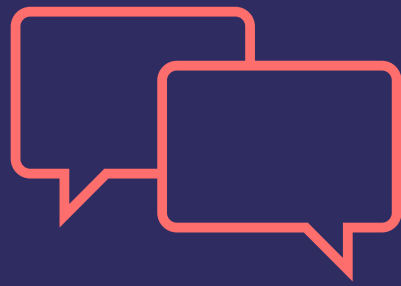
DESIGN IMPACT REPORT

Demonstrating what good design looks like, and what the risks are in not applying it



Design in Innovation Platform

Providing a **digital space** where innovators from various industries come together to **discuss and address complex innovation challenges** with the support of a network of peers, innovation funding leads and design experts.



LIVE FEED AND CHAT

Providing real-time connections between users to foster agile collaboration



CONNECT

Connecting innovators and designers according to place, sector, expertise and experience



WORKSPACES

Convening communities around specific programmes, projects and challenges



MENTORS

Bringing together qualified experts from the Institute of Engineering Design with those new to innovation

Thank you



Innovate
UK

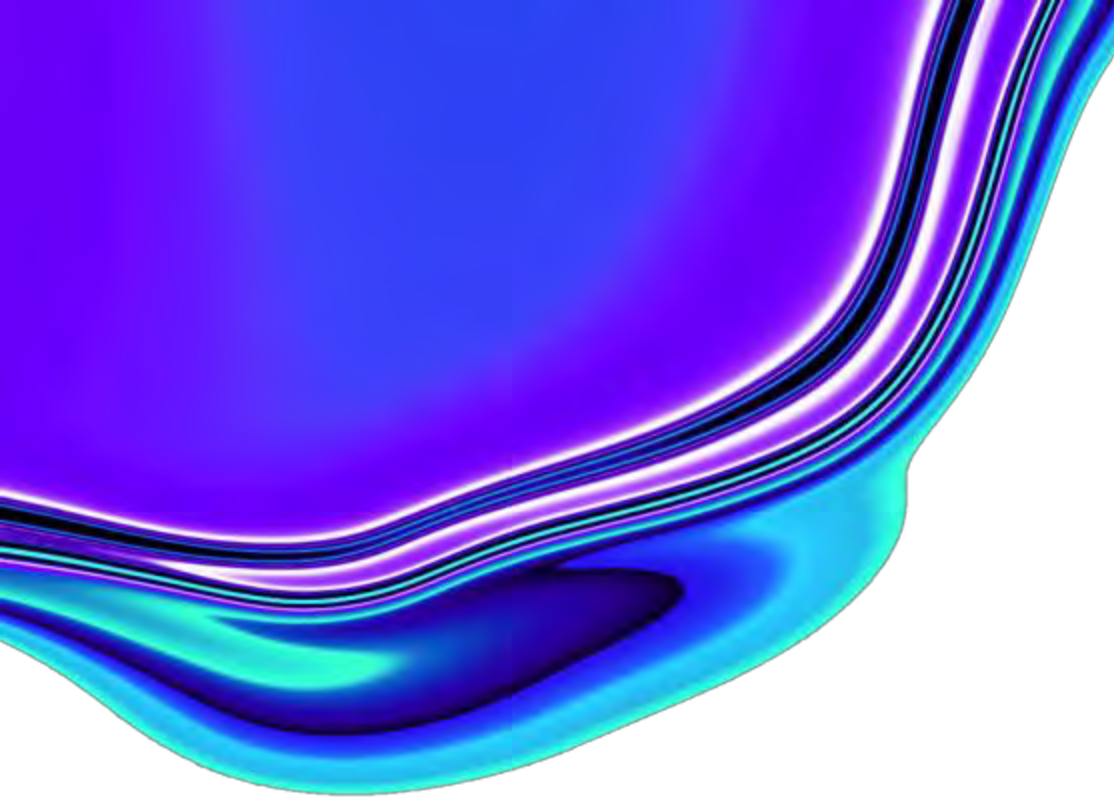
Business
Connect

Design for Growth

Toby de Belder

Executive Director
Magnetic





magnetic

Design Coaching

Innovate UK Talent and Skills



Our purpose

Design  We do this
 ...to make things ***better***
futures  ...for your
business, people
and planet

magnetic

Our work leads to growth and impact



Revenue-generating products that will improve the health of thousands of dialysis patients



Design for Growth: the coaching programme that's helped 500+ SMEs to grow



Helping Google Cloud become the world's fastest-growing cloud services provider



Preventing 16 serious product issues for PepsiCo across Europe in one year



Improving life for 350,000 cocoa farmers across Mars' global supply chain



A profitable new publication and a million fashion industry subscribers for Condé Nast

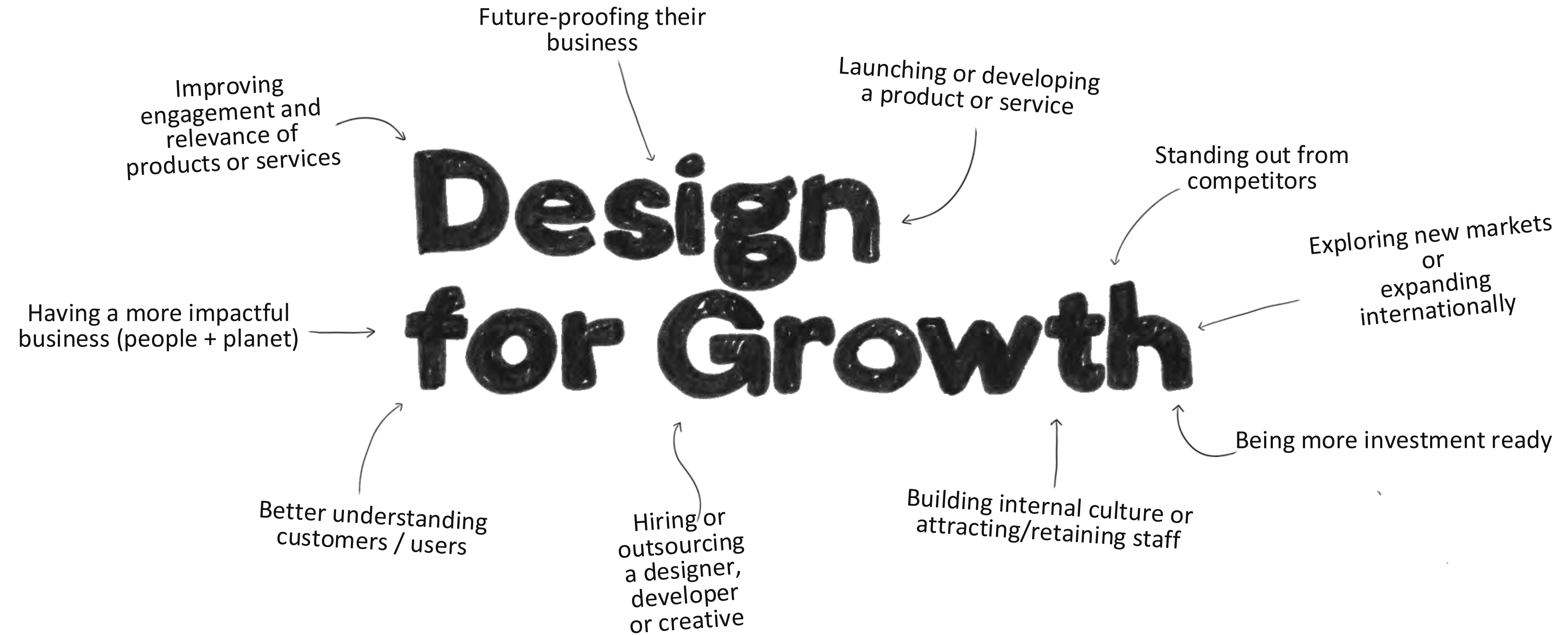
What is Design for Growth?

Design for Growth (DfG) is a bespoke design *coaching* service for UK SMEs.

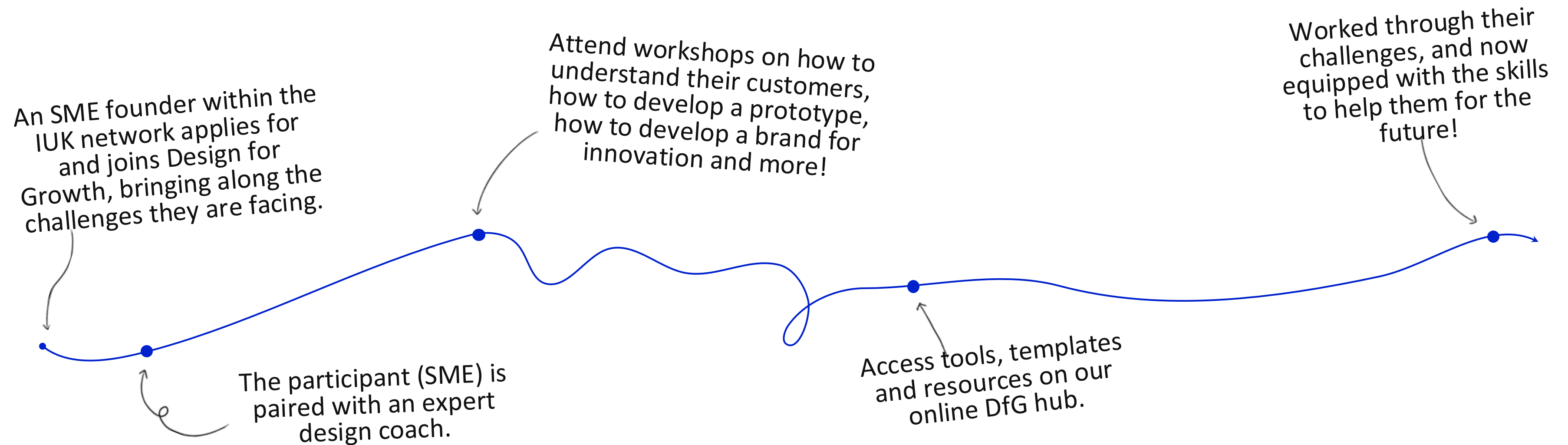
The DfG initiative has been designed and run by Magnetic, on behalf of Innovate UK (UKRI), since 2021.



Did you know every
£1 invested in design
returns £20. (Design
Council)



DfG offers UK-based SMEs, within the Innovate UK network, the opportunity to enhance their business, using design as a problem solving tool. [Here's how DfG works:](#)



Over the course of 12 weeks, the participant will receive 12 hours of 1:1 coaching

The impact of Design for Growth

By the end of 2025 we will have supported 16 cohorts of SMEs on DfG.

That's 647 UK based high-growth businesses!



What this means in numbers...

4

Years running

16

Cohorts

647

Businesses supported so far

76%

Of businesses have seen, or are forecasting, higher turnover as a result of DfG support

88%

Of businesses have seen growth as a result of DfG

96%

Of participants were highly satisfied, or satisfied, with their Design Coach pairing

642

Jobs created by 2029*

83%

Of businesses have seen improved market opportunities

> £88m

Forecasted net GVA by 2031*

*Independent evaluation of Design for Growth March 2025 (based on 298 businesses)

SME story



Bioliberty

Lifestage: Seed

Industry: Healthcare

Region: South West

Partner Organisation: RTC North

Cohort: 9. June-Oct 2023



The focus whilst on DfG:

Develop the brand. It was increasingly out of date for their stage of growth. We coached the team on branding principles and supported the team to begin to define their brand positioning, personality and values. At the same time, we helped develop a brief and search for an agency for a strategic rebranding project.

The result:

The team is in a good position to define their brand for future launch in the USA next year as well as get the most out of user customer engagement in the product development process.

“DfG has taught us to step back and look at how design affects all aspects of the business, not just product development. It was mind-boggling how well they understood our company in the short space of time they had.”

Conan Bradley, CDO and Co-founder



Now

Next

- \$3m pre-seed raise for product development (in 2023)
- Products FDA-registered (in 2024)
- Set up US site in Boston, MA (in 2024)
- Team expanded 3x, including key hires in US (in 2025)

- Further expansion in US



“Design for Growth is almost like having a director on the board, who is a design expert, it really has been immensely valuable to us... I truly believe that DfG type support is a critical part of the commercialisation journey of any SME, to put them in a more investment ready state.”

Keith Binding,
Director and Founder, Binding Sciences Ltd



“The [DfG] course was actually amazing! Managed to implement a lot and it’s led to 200% growth so far this year which has been amazing!”

Simon Stanfield,
Director, Icaruus Ltd



Thanks!