

Further written evidence submitted by Mrs Kay Sawbridge (DIG0077)

As you know the DFE have scrapped GCSE and GCE options for ICT. Please support myself and all the other thousands of teachers, parents and students who are concerned about this issue. Nick Gibb's only answer to this is that Computer Science and ICT occupy the same qualification space (absolutely not true) and that there are new 'robust' vocational ICT alternatives available; unfortunately schools are now dropping ICT as no GCSE/GCE option is available.

A recent survey shows that over 46% of secondary schools have already taken the decision not to offer ICT at KS4, over 64% are not offering it at KS5 and currently over 27% of schools will not be teaching ICT or digital literacy in KS3. At the Science and Technology inquiry into the digital skills gap committee meeting Nick Gibb said that he made the decision to remove ICT GCSE/GCE in 2012 so students would take the new Computer Science qualification, this is short sighted and wrong - students who were going to take ICT will not just 'hop over' to Computer Science, ICT offers life skills needed for university and employment.

I agree that Computer Science is an important subject but Computer Science is a niche subject which hardly any students will use after leaving school. I also agree that the ICT qualification needs redeveloping (perhaps renamed digital skills) but to remove it is detrimental to our young people's future and, in the long run, our economy. Over 110,000 students took GCSE ICT last year compared to 35,000 taking Computer Science. The percentage of girls taking ICT was 43% compared to 14% taking Computer Science. This is extremely concerning. I have a copy of the survey which had 363 responses from secondary school teachers and was completed last week. Please support this and help us to get this decision reversed. We need a new qualification that will help our students, contribute to narrowing the digital skills gap, be useful to employers and therefore have a positive effect on our economy. I and many others have written to the DFE and each time get the same response which does not address our issues.

Please contact me if you would like any more information. I have facts and figures relating to Computer Science and ICT and responses to the emails I sent to the DFE.

March 2016