

An Open Letter on Belonging



Open UK's Valentine to the Open Tech Community

Dear Open Tech Community,

One of life's most urgent questions is what am I doing to support others? We, the community and leadership of OpenUK, see this letter as a duty of activism and care.

We want to emphasise across the Open Technology communities, the magnitude of systemic exclusion and discrimination that continue to exist in society today. As Open Technology (open source software, open hardware and open data) is the engine powering the UK's Digital Economy, each one of us has a responsibility, plays a key part, and must do more, must do better, in eradicating these problems.

Covid-19 and the rapid pace of technology development has increased the urgency for action.

At the start of the pandemic, in 2020, Ofcom estimated 1.8m children were without adequate access to devices, the gap that already exists is widening, with 'less than one in five of UK technology workers being a woman or from a BAME background and only one in 10 having a disability' according to Amali de Alwis, in 2020.

The consequences of digital exclusion include narrow talent pipelines, technology that does not represent the people it serves and the refusal to provide those under-represented groups the opportunity to earn equally and to experience the opportunities that come with technology.

At OpenUK, we work on 3 Pillars. One focuses on building Learning in Open Technology, to inspire confidence and motivation in our children from an early age. Our message is that everyone and anyone can belong to the Open Technology community. This reaches the systemic root of digital exclusion and aims to fulfil our purpose of not only developing but also sustaining UK Leadership in Open Technology.

Although we have supported over 47 schools and over 3000 young people learning digital skills in 2020, we must do more to reach those who remain digitally excluded. Our individual work alone will not be enough. Unless collective action is taken, we will be left with a workforce struggling for diversity, in thought and experience, leading to gaps in creativity, innovation and ingenuity.

To take a step forward we must remember that the issue is not Black, White or Female. Regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, creed, colour, age, neuro divergence, socioeconomic status, origin, or sexual orientation - we are people, not labels. Everyone, each of us, should have the opportunity to succeed and feel "a sense of belonging".

We choose the term "belonging" as it represents acceptance and security for each of us. It focuses on people and everyone's innate need to belong. From this point in time, we will focus our attention not on individual groups or certain agendas but to recognise the vital need to accept everyone.

We are counting on you, our Open Technology community to recognise and commit to belonging with us by:

- **Leading with data; capture metrics, set targets and create accountability**
- **Teaching, inspiring and empowering leaders and a culture that promotes belonging**
- **Paying attention to young people, retention and promotion - not just recruitment**
- **Looking outside to develop a supportive ecosystem and make a social impact**

Be courageous. Take action. Be the change you want to create.

Sign up to the commitment in this letter and help OpenUK lead the Open Tech community into a brighter future.

We are counting on you. But more importantly future generations are too.

If you want to do more with us, OpenUK seeks Belonging Partners to be a part of our ecosystem to advance belonging in Open Technology together and sign up to this letter by sharing it on social media.

LIST OF VALENTINE'S DAY SIGNATORIES:

Adrian O'Sullivan	Sponsor, OpenUK
Adrian Woodhead	Honours List, OpenUK
Alexandria Palamountain	Sponsor, OpenUK
Amanda Brock	CEO, OpenUK
Amy Howlett	Support Manager, OpenUK
Andrei Cioaca	Ambassador, OpenUK
Andy Bennett	Awards Committee, OpenUK
Andrew Back	Honours List and Emerging Telco Group, OpenUK
Andrew Katz	Legal & Policy Group, OpenUK
Andrew Wafaa	Sponsor and Honours List, OpenUK
Anne Todd	Legal & Policy Group, OpenUK
Ashleigh Monagle	Digital Inclusion Lead, OpenUK
Ashley Nicolson	Ambassador, OpenUK
Basil Cousins	Honours List, Lifetime Achievement OpenUK
BCS Open Source User Group	Friend to OpenUK
Blessed Tabvirwa	Awards Winner 2020 and Judge 2021, OpenUK
Bryan Che	Sponsor, OpenUK
Carla Gaggini	Ambassador, OpenUK
Charlotte Lee	Legal & Policy Committee, OpenUK
Chris Kranz	Ambassador, OpenUK
Chris Lamb	Honours List, OpenUK
Chris Simmonds	Ambassador, OpenUK
Christopher Eastham	Chief Legal Officer, OpenUK
Christopher Howard	Ambassador, OpenUK
David Jobling	Awards Committee, OpenUK
Dawn Foster	Board, OpenUK
Deb Bhattacharya	Project Manager, OpenUK
Dominique Top	Ambassador, OpenUK
Ebrahim Bushehri	Honours List Honouree, OpenUK
Eddie Jaoude	Honours List Honouree, OpenUK
Elefteria Kokkinia	Web Designer, OpenUK
Fiona Nielsen	Honours List, OpenUK
Henry Nash	Ambassador, OpenUK
Iain Mitchell QC	Honourary QC, OpenUK
Ian Burgess	Board, OpenUK
Ian Watt	Ambassador, OpenUK
Imogen Heap	Kids Camp Contributor and Double Grammy Award winning Singer and Composer
Jack Kelly	Honours List, OpenUK
Jamie Harper	Chief Partnership Officer, OpenUK
Jason Evans	Ambassador, OpenUK
Dr Jenny Malloy	Honours List, OpenUK
Jeremy Bennett	Awards Shortlist and Honours List OpenUK
Jimmy Wales	Honours List, OpenUK and Founder of Wikipedia
John Laban	Board, OpenUK
Jonathan Riddell	Chair, Awards Group and Honours List, OpenUK
Justin Cormack	Honours List, OpenUK
Kara de la Marck	Honours List, OpenUK
Katie Gamanji	Ambassador, OpenUK
Laura Czajkowski	Honours List, OpenUK

Lex Roberts	Museums Committee, OpenUK
Liz Rice	Ambassador and Individual Award Winner, OpenUK
Lorna Mitchell	Ambassador, OpenUK
Lou Peers	Board Facilitator, OpenUK
Lowena Hull	Kids Camp Intern and Awards Shortlist, OpenUK
Lucy Fox	Chief Business Development Officer, OpenUK
Lucy Yu	COP26 Partner and CEO, Octopus Centre for Net Zero
Magdalena Rzaca	Future Leader, OpenUK
Mandy Chessell	Honours List, OpenUK
Marc Cluet	Honours List, OpenUK
Mark Hambleton	Honours List, OpenUK
Mark Kember	Chief Communications Officer, OpenUK
Matt Jarvis	Board, OpenUK
Matthew Buck	Kids Camp Animator, OpenUK
May Cheung	CFO, OpenUK
Max Schulze	COP26 Partner and Executive Chairman Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Alliance
Michael Burling	Chief Relationship Officer, OpenUK
Michael Meeks	Honours List, OpenUK
Nick Jones	Ambassador, OpenUK
Olof Kindgren	Awards shortlisted nominee, OpenUK
Pamela Boal	Curriculum Adviser, OpenUK
Paul Barker	Supporter, OpenUK
Paul Taylor	Learning Group, OpenUK
Rehana Soltane	Kids Camp, Creative Director, OpenUK
Ritwik Sarkar	Awards Committee, OpenUK
Robert Granells	Co-Chair, Future Leaders Group, OpenUK
Rob Knight	Sponsor, OpenUK
Rob McQueen	Board, OpenUK
Rob Taylor	Board, OpenUK
Rochelle Farmer	Legal & Policy Group Member OpenUK
Dr Sara Thomas	Honours List, Open UK
Sami Atabani	Honours List and Legal and Policy Group Member, OpenUK
Serena Ricci	Kids Camp, Media Lead, OpenUK
Shaz Ali	CTO, OpenUK
Simon Phipps	Honours List, OpenUK
Steph Bower	Kids Camp, Voiceover Artist
Steve Helvie	Ambassador, OpenUK
Steve Millidge	Awards Shortlisted Nominee, OpenUK
Stuart Mackintosh	Board, OpenUK
Terence Eden	Board, OpenUK
Tim Davies	Honours List, OpenUK
Tim Pockney	Supporter, OpenUK
Tim Telford	Ambassador, OpenUK
Toby Crick	Legal & Policy Group Member OpenUK
Tomas Lamanuskas	Emerging Telcoms Group, OpenUK
Tumai Hoang	Marketing Manager, OpenUK
VM (Vicky) Brasseur	Advisor, OpenUK
Dr Victoria Betton	Honours List, OpenUK

