

## Achieving Digital Excellence: The GMI and YTKO Help Warrington SMEs Thrive

### Supporting SMEs on Their Digital Journey

The Tech Adoption Programme is a critical resource for Warrington's SMEs, providing access to cutting-edge digital tools, expert advice, and personalised business support. The initiative focuses on helping businesses achieve tangible outcomes, such as enhanced customer engagement, improved operational efficiency, identification of new revenue streams, and greater resilience in the face of market changes.

**Graham Leigh, Programme Director at YTKO**, explains the purpose behind the initiative:

*"Our goal with the Tech Adoption Programme is to empower Warrington's SMEs with the knowledge and technology they need to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. The Digital Maturity Index plays a crucial role in this by giving businesses a clear understanding of their current digital capabilities and a roadmap for future growth."*

As digitalisation continues to reshape industries worldwide, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face increasing pressure to adopt new technologies to stay competitive. In response to this challenge, Warrington Council commissioned YTKO to deliver the Tech Adoption Programme. The initiative is designed to equip local SMEs with the tools, knowledge, and guidance necessary to integrate digital technology effectively into their business operations.

At the heart of this programme is the **Digital Maturity Index (DMI)**—a diagnostic tool within the **Growth Maturity Index** that provides invaluable insights into how well SMEs are integrating and using digital technologies.

### The Digital Maturity Index: A Roadmap for Transformation

At the core of the Tech Adoption Programme is the Digital Maturity Index (DMI), a tool that assesses a business's level of digital integration across key areas such as marketing, sales, operations, and risk management.

#### The DMI categorises businesses into five stages:

- **Transactional:** Basic digital tools are in place, but usage is minimal.
- **Operational:** Digital tools are used to support some processes, but integration is limited.
- **Tactical:** Digital tools are used strategically, but there is room for improvement.
- **Strategic:** Technology is fully integrated into the business strategy, driving growth and innovation.
- **Optimal:** The business is at the forefront of digital transformation, leveraging cutting-edge technology to lead its market.

The DMI not only assesses the current digital maturity of an SME but also identifies opportunities for improvement and growth. This helps businesses build tailored action plans aligned with their long-term goals, ensuring they adopt and integrate technologies that best suit their needs.

# Benefits for Warrington SMEs

The Tech Adoption Programme and the Digital Maturity Index have delivered several key benefits to participating SMEs, helping them transform their operations and stay competitive.

## 1. DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

The DMI provides a clear, data-backed understanding of how well a business is currently using technology. This enables SMEs to make informed decisions about where to invest in digital tools and systems.

**Daniel Nichols, Director, Mayfield Home Care Services Ltd**, reflects on his experience:

“The DMI helped us realise where we were falling behind. It pinpointed gaps in our digital marketing and customer engagement that we hadn't seen. Thanks to the support we received through the programme, we've implemented new CRM and e-commerce systems, which have really helped us connect with our customers and improve sales.”

## 2. TAILORED ACTION PLANS

The insights generated by the DMI are used to create bespoke action plans for each SME. YTKO's business advisors work closely with clients to develop strategies that are specific to their needs, ensuring that digital tools are not only adopted but also effectively integrated into day-to-day operations.

For example, a manufacturing business that had been slow to adopt digital marketing tools received targeted support to improve their online presence and automate customer outreach. With the help of the programme, the business increased its lead generation and expanded its market reach.

## 3. ACCESS TO GRANTS AND DIGITAL TOOLS

The Tech Adoption Programme also provides SMEs with access to grants, which can be used to procure the digital solutions, hardware, and software necessary for their growth. This financial support enables businesses to overcome budget constraints and invest in technology that boosts efficiency and growth.

**Sam Abbott, Senior Business Advisor**

“The grant funding element of the programme is crucial because it allows SMEs to make tangible investments in the right technologies without being held back by financial barriers. We've seen many businesses take significant strides forward because of this support.”

## 4. ENHANCED OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

With the right digital tools, SMEs have reported considerable improvements in efficiency. Automated processes, CRM systems, and cloud-based platforms have reduced manual labour, minimised errors, and freed up time for businesses to focus on strategic growth initiatives.

**For example**, a local service business adopted Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to streamline administrative tasks, reducing their operational costs by 20%. This increased their capacity to serve more customers without having to hire additional staff.

## 5. BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

Digital tools make businesses more resilient to market changes. By fostering greater adaptability through technology, the Tech Adoption Programme is helping Warrington SMEs weather market disruptions and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

**Graham Leigh, Programme Director at YTKO**, emphasises the programme's role in fostering local economic growth:

“The Tech Adoption Programme is instrumental in enhancing the competitiveness and resilience of local businesses. By equipping SMEs with the right digital tools and skills, we're helping them adapt to the challenges of today's market. What's particularly valuable is our ability to track the impact this programme is delivering for Warrington Council by monitoring the Digital Maturity Index (DMI) results across our business community. The data from the DMI allows us to see real progress in areas like operational efficiency, customer engagement, and digital integration, which directly contributes to the long-term growth and sustainability of Warrington's economy.”

With the Digital Maturity Index at the heart of the programme, Warrington's SMEs are well-equipped to navigate the challenges of digitalisation, enhance their operational efficiency, and achieve sustained growth.

See [ytko.com/techforgrowth](https://ytko.com/techforgrowth) for more information.

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