Digital inclusion guide for health and social care

Revised version July 2019
A guide to help healthcare providers, commissioners, and designers ensure that services delivered digitally are as inclusive as possible, meeting the needs of all sections of the population.

Are you looking for...

- Benefits of digital inclusion
- Case studies
- Commissioning digital inclusion support
- Definition of digital inclusion
- Design principles
- Digital champions
- Downsides of digital inclusion
- Evaluating digital inclusion
- How many people are digitally excluded
- Libraries
- Health inequalities
- Partner organisations to work with
- Policies covering digital inclusion
- Social prescribing
- Who’s likely to be digitally excluded
- Widening Digital Participation
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Introduction

Key messages

The NHS, and the wider health and care system, is committed to delivering information and services digitally wherever appropriate.

For patients, digital health can mean better access to information and care, increased convenience, and more opportunities for greater control of their own health and shared care.

For the health and care system digital health can mean more effective delivery of care, better outcomes and reduced costs.

However many of the people who could most benefit from digital services are the least likely to be online.

Eleven million people (20% of the population of the UK) lack basic digital skills, or do not use digital technology at all. These are likely to be older, less educated and in poorer health than the rest of the population.

Local health and care services should take into account the needs of people who may be digitally excluded.

There is a strong business case for the benefits of improving digital inclusion.

Health and care organisations can work with a range of community partners to improve digital inclusion.

This guide includes a range of resources which can help commissioners and providers to take action locally.

Who this guide is for

This guide to digital inclusion is aimed at local health and care organisations to help them to take practical steps increase access to digital services for all in their communities.

It should be relevant to:

- commissioners of health and care services, including clinical commissioning groups – so they can take into account the needs of local populations who may be digitally excluded
- integrated care systems – so they can ensure digital inclusion is central to the design of future services
- providers of health and care services – so they can ensure services delivered digitally are as inclusive as possible
- local authorities and voluntary organisations – so they can make the most of partnerships with the health and care sector to improve digital inclusion
- designers of digital health services – so they can take into account the needs of those who might be digitally excluded, and design inclusive and accessible services
How this guide can help

The guide is intended to help you understand:

- what we mean by digital inclusion
- who is likely to be digitally excluded and the barriers they may face
- why digital inclusion matters in health and care
- the benefits of supporting people to get online
- practical steps you can take to support digital inclusion locally
- the tools you can use to commission, provide and evaluate digital inclusion support
- resources for developing digital skills of health and care staff, carers and patients

Case study

This video shows how North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups has used the Digital Inclusion Guide to inform local action in their Digital Citizens Education programme.
What we mean by digital inclusion

Definition of digital inclusion

Digital inclusion covers:

Digital skills

Being able to use digital devices (such as computers or smart phones and the internet. This is important, but a lack of digital skills is not necessarily the only, or the biggest, barrier people face.

Connectivity

Access to the internet through broadband, wi-fi and mobile. People need the right infrastructure but that is only the start.

Accessibility

Services need to be designed to meet all users’ needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.

Barriers to digital inclusion

Research for the UK digital strategy suggests that there are a number of important barriers, and more than one may affect individuals at any one time.

They are:

- **access** - not everyone has the ability to connect to the internet and go online
- **confidence** - some people fear online crime, lack trust or don’t know where to start online
- **skills** - not everyone has the ability to use the internet and online services
- **motivation** - not everyone sees why using the internet could be relevant and helpful

As access, skills and confidence improve, it is increasingly important to tackle other barriers, including:

- **design** - not all digital services and products are accessible and easy to use
- **awareness** - not everyone is aware of digital services and products available to them
- **staff capability and capacity** - not all health and care staff have the skills and knowledge to recommend digital services and products to patients and service users

Good Things Foundation has produced an informative report on motivations of non-users of the internet.
People likely to be digitally excluded

There has been real progress in internet and online services.

- 90% of households have internet access
- 78% of people go online via a mobile device
- 89% of people go online at least weekly

Use Ofcom and Office of National Statistics data to see the latest figures on internet access. But there are still significant levels of digital exclusion for example:

- 11.3 million people in the UK lack the basic digital skills they need to use the internet effectively
- 4.8 million people never go online at all

The Government Digital Service has developed a digital inclusion scale which maps individuals’ digital capability on a scale from 1 to 9, from those who don’t use the internet at all to digital experts.

Some sections of the population are more likely to be digitally excluded than others. These are:

- older people
- people in lower income groups
- people without a job
- people in social housing
- people with disabilities
- people with fewer educational qualifications excluded left school before 16
- people living in rural areas
- homeless people
- people whose first language is not English

For more information on digitally excluded populations see the annual UK consumer digital index. Good Things Foundation publishes an annually updated Digital Nation infographic showing who’s digitally excluded in the UK and the reasons why they are not online.
Assisted digital

Digital inclusion initiatives can help users improve their digital skills so that they can use online services. However some people will still need assisted digital support such as:

- Help from others to use online services
- Access through alternative channels (telephone, face to face)

Health literacy

As health information and services are increasingly delivered digitally, the ability to use digital technologies is increasingly a form of health literacy. There is good evidence from the World Health Organization that people with lower health literacy have worse health outcomes.

Read more about health literacy in the NHS digital service manual and in the Health Education England health literacy toolkit.

NHS digital health services

This guide is part of the NHS empower the person pillar of work. Other programmes include:

- NHS.UK website
- NHS app
- NHS apps library
- NHS wi-fi

Users of digital health services

54% of adults in the UK looked up health information online over the past three months.

There are 40 million visits a month to the NHS.UK website. Most of these are made by smartphone (65%) with 24% by computer and 11% by tablet.

40% of adults are aware of GP online services. There has been an increase in the number of people booking appointments online (18% in 2018, up from 12% in 2017) and ordering repeat prescriptions online (17% in 2018, up from 12% in 2017).

9% of adults own a wearable, such as a fitness tracker or smartwatch.

Sources:
- NHS.UK live service analytics
- Ofcom adult media use and attitudes 2018
- Office of National Statistics, Internet access: households and individuals 2018
- GP patients survey
Why digital inclusion matters to health and social care

Digital inclusion matters to health and social care organisations

- It’s crucial to achieving priorities
- They have an obligation to reduce inequalities
- There are clear policy commitments
- There’s a strong benefits case

How digital inclusion can support health and social care priorities

Supporting people to get online and use digital health resources can be crucial to achieving local priorities including:

- physical and mental wellbeing
- prevention
- self care
- shared care and shared decision making
- long term condition management
- appropriate use of urgent and emergency care

In these videos, healthcare and digital leaders talk about the importance of digital to local service transformation, and why digital inclusion is important so that nobody is left behind.

- Digital inclusion: improving access - Rob Webster, Chief Executive, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Trust talks about how digital inclusion is making a real difference to mental health service users.

- Digital inclusion: social prescribing - Sir Sam Everington, GP and Chair of Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group, talks about social prescribing at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre.

- Digital inclusion: long-term conditions - Dr Ruth Chambers, GP and Clinical Telehealth Lead at Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group, talks about how local clinical commissioning groups are taking on board digital inclusion.

- A digital NHS for everyone – Martha Lane Fox, Executive Chair, Doteveryone, talks about key steps to digital inclusion including developing staff digital skills, focusing on the furthest first, and free wi-fi throughout the NHS.
Digital inclusion and health inequalities

The NHS Long Term Plan makes a commitment to a more concerted and systematic approach to reducing health inequalities and addressing unwarranted variation in care. In today’s society, digital exclusion can be seen as a form of inequality. There is a close correlation between digital exclusion and social disadvantages including lower income, lower levels of education, and poor housing. Health inequalities should be addressed in the local plans being developed in response to the national Long Term Plan.

In an increasingly digital world, people who are digitally excluded are at risk of worse access to services and worse health outcomes. People who have characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, race) are less likely to have access to the internet, and the skills to use it. Health and care organisations should take this into account when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs).

Policy commitments

Important commitments to digital inclusion have been made in recent policies, including:

NHS Long Term Plan

“People will be empowered, and their experience of health and care will be transformed, by the ability to access, manage and contribute to digital tools, information and services. We will ensure these technologies work for everyone, from the most digitally literate to the most technology averse, and reflect the needs of people trying to stay healthy as well as those with complex conditions”.

The future of healthcare

“Different people may need different services and some people will never use digital services themselves directly but will benefit from others using digital services and freeing resources to help them. We must acknowledge that those with the greatest health needs are also the most at risk of being left behind and build digital services with this in mind, ensuring the highest levels of accessibility wherever possible”.

Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future (Topol Review)

“The NHS is founded on a commitment to the principles of equal and equitable access to healthcare for all UK citizens. Yet use of digital healthcare technologies could undermine these principles by exacerbating inequalities, unless consideration is given to how they affect equality and equity, including the risk that vulnerable groups might be excluded or exploited.”
Benefits of digital health

When considering the business case, there is increasing evidence of the benefits of digital health.

The benefits to patients and carers include:

- improved self-care for minor ailments
- improved self-management of long-term conditions
- improved take-up of digital health tools and services
- time saved through accessing services digitally
- cost saved through accessing services digitally
- reduced loneliness and isolation
  And benefits for the health and care system, including:
  - lower cost of delivering services digitally
  - more appropriate use of services, including primary care and urgent care
  - better patient adherence to medicines and treatments

Those who are digitally excluded risk missing out on the benefits to individuals of digital health. And the health and care system will not save money and transform services unless it engages with the one in five of their population who are not online or lack digital skills – and are the heaviest users of health and care.

Evaluation of Widening Digital Participation

Evaluation of Phase One of the NHS Widening Digital Participation programme provides the most detailed analysis of the impact of increasing digital inclusion on health. Of those who were supported by the programme:

- 59% felt more confident in using online health information
- 52% feel less lonely or isolated
- 21% have had less visits to their GP for minor ailments
- 22% have progressed to booking GP appointments online and 20% to ordering prescriptions online
- 39% have saved time through carrying out health transactions online

This evaluation estimates a return on investment of £6.40 for every £1.00 spent by the NHS on digital inclusion support.

Read the evaluation report in full here.
Benefits for society and return on investment

Increasing digital inclusion has benefits for society as a whole as well as for the NHS. It is important to take these benefits into consideration when considering the impacts for public health.

A 2014 report from BT on valuing digital inclusion calculated the social return on investment (SROI) of digital inclusion for individuals and for workers. For individuals, getting online is worth £1,064 a year due to increased confidence, less social isolation, financial savings and opportunities in employment and leisure. For workers, getting online is worth £3,568 a year due to opportunities for remote working and increased earnings opportunities.

A 2016 analysis of Scottish data carried out by Ipsos MORI for Carnegie UK Trust illustrates how the wider societal benefits of internet use is associated with better health and wellbeing. Those who use the internet are more likely to have been to a cultural event, visited the outdoors for recreation, taken part in sport or volunteered. Conversely those who are not online are more likely to have visited their doctor once a month or more.

Downsides

While there are significant benefits, remember that being online can also have downsides. Some people have been scammed or victims of cyber-crime. Others (particularly young people) have been victims of online bullying. There is an abundance of “fake news” in health with poor quality health information online. Increasingly digital skills support is focusing on helping people approach the internet critically so that they can appraise information, and mindfully so they are not overwhelmed by it.

Read more about this in Victoria Betton and James Woollard’s Teen mental health in an online world.
Discover levels of digital exclusion

There are several useful tools you can use to check levels of digital exclusion locally. The Digital exclusion heatmap shows overall likelihood of digital exclusion by local authority. It does this by combining indicators including infrastructure (broadband and 4G), access (percentage of adults online), basic digital skills, and social indicators (age, education, income and health). The heatmap was last updated in 2017.

The Consumer Data Research Centre has produced detailed mapping of neighbourhoods by internet user classification.

Practical steps to help with digital inclusion locally

Once you’ve mapped levels of digital exclusion locally, there are several approaches you might consider to tackle the problem, such as:

- Widening Digital Participation
- Digital skills training
- Digital champions
- Intergenerational mentoring
- Assistive technology
- Free public wi-fi
- Social prescribing
- Digital skills of staff
- Raising awareness
Widening Digital Participation

The Widening Digital Participation (WDP) programme has been running since 2013, originally managed by NHS England and now by NHS Digital. WDP is being delivered through the Good Things Foundation.

In phase one (2013-16), WDP focused particularly on helping people develop digital skills so they can take a more active role in their own health. Over three years:

3 YEARS

387,000 people were involved in the programme

221,000 people received digital skills training

You can read more about phase one of Widening Digital Participation.

WDP phase two runs from 2017 to 2020. Rather than necessarily adopting a digital skills training approach, phase two is using discovery, service design and co-production methods. This involves working with Pathfinders in local communities to take a fresh look at the barriers to digital inclusion and how they might be overcome. Pathfinders are based in areas with particular digital inclusion challenges, working with groups including homeless people, young carers, people with long term conditions, isolated older people, and people in social housing.

Full details of all the Pathfinder sites, with descriptions of how the service design has been implemented, case studies and practical how-to-guides based on the lessons learned are published on the WDP digital health lab.

WDP Pathfinder sites are fully allocated to 2020, but there are still plenty of ways in which you could implement digital inclusion support locally, such as the following.

Digital skills training

There are Online Centres in most communities which provide places where people can go to get online in supported environments. Most also provide training in digital skills. You can read real life case studies of the support provided by Online Centres.

Learn My Way is a set of free online courses which help people develop digital skills to make the most of the online world, from digital beginners to courses focusing on specific topics, including improving your health online.

The government’s essential digital skills framework has been designed to support providers, organisations and employers across the UK who offer training for adults in essential digital skills.

It is also worth taking a look at Scotland’s essential digital skills toolkit. It gives a clear description of the skills we all need to make the most of new digital opportunities. It contains simple checklists for measuring digital skills, and guidance on how to interpret the results.

The Digital Skills Partnership brings together public, private and voluntary sector organisations to boost skills for a digital economy.
Digital champions

Many organisations have trained staff and volunteers as digital champions. Digital champions help others to develop their digital skills and understand the benefits of getting online. Digital Unite’s digital champions network provides learning resources, practical tools and an online community.

The North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups has established a digital citizen education programme. Volunteers are trained as “digital ambassadors” who in turn are responsible for training residents who need support using digital health services. This video describes the Digital Citizens Education Programme and the role of digital ambassadors in North West London.

Intergenerational monitoring

Younger people who have grown up in the digital age can be a great resource to introduce older people to digital devices and all the things they could do online. The North West London Digital Citizens Education Programme is beginning to link up local schools with care homes.

The best developed example of intergenerational digital mentoring is the digital heroes programme in Wales. This inspirational video shows how children from a primary school in Tredegar have buddied up with a local care home. Visits from the schoolchildren have enthused older residents about digital technology, and led to measurable reductions in medication and falls in the care home.

Assistive technology

Older people and people with disabilities may be able to use assistive technologies to help them to stay independent and manage their daily lives. Technologies include telehealth and telecare, remote monitoring systems, wearable devices and smart home devices. This review provides an overview of assistive technologies and the latest research into their use.

Some people may find it difficult to use a computer keyboard because of reduced eyesight or lack of digital skills and confidence. Voice activated systems or “virtual assistants” such as Amazon Echo (Alexa) and Google Home can open up new opportunities for people who might otherwise be digitally excluded. Local authorities, including Hampshire and Oxfordshire, are now using virtual assistants successfully in care homes. In Cornwall, a partnership between Age UK and the University of Plymouth is improving digital inclusion through provision of Echo Spots. Online health information, including Start4Life on breastfeeding, is increasingly available for access via Alexa.

The government’s new Digital Inclusion Fund has provided support for care homes in rural Essex to install smart technology, and train home owners to become “digital boomers” to help others improve their digital skills.
Free public wi-fi

Access to free wi-fi can be crucial for people who might find it difficult to afford data costs on their digital device. Free public wi-fi hotspots are increasingly available dotted around towns and cities (although less in rural areas). This handy guide outlines where you can find free wi-fi and how to access it, what to watch out for when you’re using it and the free wi-fi options you may be able to access via your mobile or broadband provider.

Free wi-fi on NHS premises makes it easier for patients to use information and services when they most need them. Nearly all GP practices now provide free wi-fi for their patients, as well as most hospital trusts. The following examples show how free wi-fi is improving the experience of patients and their families.

NHS wi-fi case studies

Benefits of NHS wifi at Crystal Peaks Medical Centre - video

Social prescribing

Social prescribing is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker. Link workers give people time, focusing on ‘what matters to me’ and taking a holistic approach to people’s health and wellbeing. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support. Find information on social prescribing and links to further resources. This animation shows how GPs are using social prescribing in primary care. A social prescribing network has been established to share good practice.

In some areas social prescribing is being used to link up with organisations providing digital inclusion support. In this video, Sheffield GP Dr Ollie Hart talks about how he refers patients to the Heeley Development Trust for help with getting online. Good Things Foundation has produced a how-to-guide on using social prescribing for digital inclusion in health.

Digital skills of staff

Health and care staff do not always have knowledge and confidence in using digital health resources themselves. This means they are unlikely to act as digital champions and recommend digital tools to their patients. This can be one of the biggest barriers to digital inclusion.

Health Education England is leading work on digital literacy for health and care staff, as part of the building a digital ready workforce programme. This video explains why digital literacy is important to the health and care workforce. A health and care digital capabilities framework has been produced which can be used to support digital literacy training for staff.

Digital inclusion now forms part of module 4 (User-centred design and citizen-driven informatics) of the NHS Digital Academy.
How we can commission digital inclusion support

A digital training and support framework is available for use by public sector organisations (including clinical commissioning groups and local authorities). The framework includes over 50 companies, social enterprises and voluntary sector organisations that specialise in providing digital skills training and assisted digital support. Using the framework can provide a simpler and quicker route than carrying out a full-scale procurement exercise.

How we can evaluate digital inclusion support

A range of quantitative and qualitative methods could be appropriate for evaluating digital inclusion. These include activity measures (such as numbers engaged or trained), surveys, user interviews, stakeholder interviews, observation, and case studies.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has produced a practical toolkit evaluating digital inclusion initiatives to demonstrate social impact. The Digital Inclusion Evaluation Toolkit contains a range of resources which you could use to measure the impact of digital inclusion initiatives.

The patient activation measure is being used in the NHS to measure the knowledge, skills and confidence a person has in managing their own health – and the improvement in activation following an intervention. It may be appropriate to use as a tool for measuring the impact of a digital inclusion intervention such as digital skills training.

Look at the digital health lab to see how different evaluation methods have been used in Widening Digital Participation pathfinders.

Raising awareness

Many people are not aware of the support available to help them get online and improve their digital skills. Health and care organisations can get involved in awareness raising campaigns, including the annual Get Online Week which takes place every October.

Good Things Foundation has downloadable marketing materials on digital health. Here are some examples of how the local NHS in Hackney promoted access to online GP services during Get Online Week.
Summary: supporting digital inclusion step by step

You can reflect the approach of the [NHS commissioning cycle](#) by following these steps to implementing digital inclusion support locally:

1. **Assess need** – map the digital inclusion status of local population
2. **Review digital maturity** – enablers including public wi-fi and staff capability
3. **Review local existing resources/plans**
4. **Review any existing digital inclusion support** – including local Online Centre, voluntary organisations, libraries etc.
5. **Work with local stakeholders to identify needs and co-design the best approaches to digital inclusion support**
6. **Identify potential delivery partners**
7. **Develop appropriate evaluation mechanisms**
8. **Establish targets and performance indicators**
9. **Commission appropriate digital inclusion support**
10. **Evaluate, refine and scale**
Providing accessible online services

In the UK, one in five people have a disability - this could be visual, hearing, motor or cognitive (affecting memory and thinking). But the concept of accessibility doesn’t just apply to people with disabilities - all users will have different needs at different times and in different circumstances.

Someone’s ability to use a service could be affected by their:

- **location** - they could be in a noisy cafe, sunny park or area with slow wi-fi
- **health** - they may be tired, recovering from a stroke or have a broken arm
- **equipment** - they could be on a mobile phone or using an older browser

Accessibility is about making sure your service can be used by as many people as possible. Thinking about this from the beginning will help you:

- make sure that nobody is excluded
- find out earlier if any parts of your service aren’t accessible

Whether you are building or commissioning an online service, there are tools and standards available to ensure the service is accessible to everyone. You can:

- use the [NHS digital service manual](https://www.nhsdigital.nhs.uk/service-manual) for things you need to consider to make consistent digital services
- draw on web accessibility guidelines such as the [web content accessibility checklist](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG2AA-checklist) to ensure online services conform to Level AA standards
- use online accessibility checklists such as [WAVE](http://wave.webaim.org) to give a quick view of how accessible your services are
- read the GOV.UK guidance on [making your service accessible](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-your-service-accessible) and [designing for different browsers and devices](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designing-for-different-browsers-and-devices)
- view this video from Citizens Online on [making technology work for everyone](https://www.citizensonline.org.uk)
**Accessible Information Standard**

All organisations that supply NHS care or publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the accessible information standard. The standard sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

**Accessibility software**

Texthelp works closely with over 60 NHS organisations currently, helping make websites and digital platforms more accessible to all.

Case studies such as Bridgewater Community Healthcare Trust and Guys and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust, show how NHS organisations are using assistive software to make digital services more accessible.

**Design principles for digital inclusion**

Through service design work in Widening Digital Participation pathfinders, a set of principles are being developed for designing for digital inclusion:

1. Go to where people are
2. Work with the people who know them best
3. Co-design: from initial discovery phase to live service and beyond
4. Build solutions that fit into people’s everyday lives
5. Use existing tools and resources wherever possible
6. Outcomes first, then digital
7. Watch your language

**NHS Design Principles**

The NHS has produced a digital service manual with a set of design principles. Use these when starting any digital project and to guide decision making along the way:

1. **Put people at the heart of everything you do**
2. **Design for the outcome**
3. **Be inclusive**
4. **Design for context**
5. **Design for trust**
6. **Test your assumptions**
7. **Make, learn, iterate**
8. **Do the hard work to make it simple**
9. **Make things open. It makes things better**
Local authorities

In some places the local health service has formed a partnership with the local authority to tackle digital exclusion. The local authority may take the lead in delivering digital inclusion in the sustainability and transformation partnership or integrated care system.

Check whether your local authority has a digital inclusion strategy. For example Norwich and Stoke-on-Trent have a digital inclusion strategy and action plan.

Digital Inclusion Strategy – Norwich City Council
Digital Inclusion Strategy – City of Stoke-on-Trent

Public libraries

Your local public library can help local people be digitally included. A core responsibility of every public library is to provide:

- free to use public access computers
- staff trained in accessing digital information resources

Almost all public libraries now have free wi-fi access. Many public libraries are Online Centres, providing free digital skills training. Good Things Foundation has produced a practical guide to doing digital inclusion: libraries handbook.

Libraries Connected (The Society of Chief Librarians) has made a commitment to a universal health offer which should be available in public libraries. The Universal Health Offer aims to help people manage their health and wellbeing by signposting to community resources and books including Reading Well self-help reading lists.

There is also a universal digital offer which aims to ensure that all public libraries offer a basic level of digital service to the public, including free wi-fi and access to computers. Libraries are also working to develop staff so that they have the skills to help customers who do not normally access information and services online.

See how Leeds libraries are working with local partners towards 100% digital Leeds.

NHS library and knowledge services

Your local NHS library and knowledge service can support the digital, information and health literacy of the healthcare workforce by signposting to high-quality electronic patient information. NHS knowledge services work in partnership with public libraries and voluntary organisations, ensuring access to inclusive digital resources.
Voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations are important partners in digital inclusion support. A number of local voluntary organisations are Online Centres.

Age UK has a leading role in the One Digital partnership, working to embed digital champions in local Age UK activities with pilots in Leeds, the Lake District, Lancashire and Hereford and Worcestershire. Age UK has also produced a useful evidence review on digital inclusion and older people.

Voluntary organisations have been successful in securing funding from the Digital Inclusion Fund, managed by Citizens Online for Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. New projects are being delivered by Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Service, Down’s Syndrome Association, and Weldmar Hospicecare Trust.

Online centres

Brought together by the Good Things Foundation, the Online Centres Network is made up of over 5,000 local organisations working to tackle digital exclusion by providing people with the skills and confidence they need to use digital technologies.

Some operate in libraries, community venues, leisure centres or shopping centres, as well as some in more unusual locations like pubs and cafes. Many centres also run outreach sessions, in places like care homes or tenants’ associations.

You can find your local Online Centre and talk to them about support available for local people by using the Online Centre search.
Commercial organisations

In some parts of the country local organisations have developed partnerships with commercial organisations to support digital inclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial organisation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barclays Digital Eagles</strong></td>
<td>A digital champions programme which includes both face-to-face support in branch with bank staff, and online training modules. Digital Eagles have worked with the Patient Online programme and local CCGs to use Tea and Teach sessions to teach patients to book GP appointments online.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lloyds Bank</strong></td>
<td>Has been training its staff as digital champions, and in 2017 entered a strategic partnership with Good Things Foundation to create and fund a network of centres that will support learners to improve their digital and financial literacy skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Google Digital Garage</strong></td>
<td>A digital skills training programme targeted initially at small and medium sized enterprises rather than individual citizens. However there are now courses for online beginners in partnership with Good Things Foundation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Freeformers</strong></td>
<td>A digital skills training programme from Facebook enabling 18-30 year olds to develop the confidence and the skills they need for future employment in a digital economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vodafone</strong></td>
<td>Is launching free TechConnect classes during 2019, following its report on harnessing technology to tackle loneliness.</td>
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Specialist digital inclusion partners

There are a number of specialist organisations with a wealth of experience in tackling digital exclusion. Here are the leading organisations which you could approach to discuss working together.

**Good Things Foundation** is a national digital inclusion charity, and NHS Digital’s delivery partner in the Widening Digital Participation programme. Good Things coordinates the Online Centres Network, provides the online learning platform Learn My, carries out research into which digital solutions really make a difference to people’s lives, and delivers major digital inclusion projects.

**One Digital partnership** (funded by the Big Lottery) includes Age UK, Citizens Online, Clarion Futures (part of Clarion Housing Group), Digital Unite and SCVO. They are developing a collaborative approach to training and supporting digital champions so they can help people to learn digital skills. The One Digital Knowledge Hub shares different approaches to training and supporting Digital Champions.

**Citizens Online** is a national charity set up to tackle the issues of digital exclusion. Their Switch approach is designed to help organisations ensure the switch to digital doesn’t exclude people - increasing online service uptake, supporting people to get the benefits of being online, and building skills and sustainable partnerships in local communities. Citizens Online manages the government’s Digital Inclusion Fund.

**Digital Unite** focuses exclusively on vocational training and support for digital champions. Their Digital Champions Network is a comprehensive training and support system for aspiring and experienced digital champions. It has over 140 member organisations and supports thousands of digital champions nationwide with helping others with digital skills.

**Nominet Trust** is the UK’s largest funder of social tech initiatives, with over £17m made in grants since 2009. Currently funded projects include Digital Reach which is funding local projects supporting digital skills for hardest to reach young people. Nominet and the Learning Foundation are now leading Digital Access for All which focuses on ensuring children and young people are not digitally excluded.

**AbilityNet** is working to build a more digitally accessible world, through accessibility audits, user testing, and expert advice to deliver more accessible websites and apps. Their network of AbilityNet IT can help volunteers visit disabled and elderly people in their own homes to fix IT problems. Factsheets and other resources are published.

**mHabitat** is an NHS hosted team specialising in co-design, digital skills and inclusion, policy and strategy, and evaluation. mHabitat has been leading work on digital practitioners helping health and care practitioners develop digital skills and confidence so they can make things better for people who access their services.
Case studies: how digital inclusion transforms lives

Getting online and building digital skills and confidence can transform people’s lives. These case studies show how.

Ron was homeless but found a home and took control of his health through learning online skills.

Ken went online and learned more about to support his wife Val with dementia.

Bertram got his life back on track after breakdown and is now a digital champion in Manchester.

Neel improved her mental wellbeing by getting involved in her local Online Centre.

Aisha uses her digital skills to manage her own health and volunteers to teach others.

Paul overcame anxiety and stress by learning digital skills for work and health

Simon learned how to lose weight and manage his diabetes using online health information
Hyperlinks to the resources mentioned are provided throughout this Guide. Click on the links to read more.

To get you started, here are the most important resources on digital inclusion and health:

- The NHS Long Term Plan
- The future of healthcare: our vision for data, digital and technology in health and care
- Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future
- Adults’ media use and attitudes (Ofcom)
- Internet access: households and individuals (Office for National Statistics)
- Consumer digital index (Lloyds Bank)
- Digital nation infographic (Good Things Foundation)
- Digital exclusion heatmap (Tech Partnership)
- NHS digital service manual
- Widening Digital Participation
- Digital Health Lab
Widening Digital Participation

The Widening Digital Participation programme was set up to help the millions of people who lack the confidence and skills to access and use digital health services and information and benefit from their convenience.

Learn more about Widening Digital Participation

Download the latest version of the digital inclusion guide for health and social care.

https://digital.nhs.uk/digitalinclusion