



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Improving people's lives through digital technologies



## Digital Inclusion Progress Report and Forward Look 2018

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# Introduction

Our Digital Inclusion Strategic Framework and Delivery Plan (March 2016) set out a clear goal for reducing digital exclusion so many more people can benefit from being online and using digital technologies. It assumed a five year timescale, to the end of 2020.

Our National Strategy (September 2017) set a central mission of delivering Prosperity for All, outlining what needs to be done to deliver our priorities, how we will join up services and work differently with our partners to have a greater impact in improving digital skills. The ability to engage with and use technology in a meaningful way cuts across the five identified priority areas: early years, housing, social care, mental health and skills and employability.

Our commitment to tackling digital exclusion is further demonstrated through the aspirational Programme for Government target to help 95% of people to gain the basic digital skills needed for the 21st century. This is a challenge we as Government cannot tackle alone – it is something all sectors and wider society must fully embrace.

There is a need to keep pace with technological advances, and support people to gain maximum benefit from the vast opportunities they present. Despite significant progress over the last five years, there are still too many people missing out on these opportunities. Those who remain digitally excluded are in danger of being left behind in society, as more and more services, including vital public services, go online.

The National Survey for Wales (2016-17) showed that 15% of adults do not regularly use the internet in Wales with older and disabled people, those with limited qualifications and those on lower incomes still the least likely to use digital technologies. Although a higher percentage of women are digitally excluded compared to men, analysis suggests no statistically significant relationship between internet use and gender when other characteristics are taken into account. We will continue to work with partners to reach all groups who can benefit from the opportunities offered by the internet and other digital technologies.

This document provides an overview of the key activity across Wales since the publication of the Framework and Delivery Plan and identifies key challenges for the next 12 months.

# It's still important!

## Digital Inclusion cuts across Society

There is a growing expectation that access to public services should be more convenient - available online at any time, in the language of choice, through any device. Switching to high quality, easy to use digital services has the potential to realise significant savings for organisations through channel shift, streamlining back-end business processes and developing new services that can be reused and shared across the public sector.

Access to employment is now heavily reliant on digital. Those who lack basic digital skills are unable to search for the vast number of jobs now solely advertised online. Welsh Government employability programmes help assess whether individuals need to be signposted to further support. Those already in employment need support to retain and develop their basic digital skills as technology advances. The numerous actions relating to Employment Support and Employability-focused Adult Learning are all supporting this work.

Digital and financial exclusion are very closely linked. Having the skills and access to digital technology can hugely increase financial inclusion. Being able to use the internet to buy essential goods and services can bring significant savings to families who struggle financially.

Public libraries remain paramount to our work by providing free access and support to computers and the internet in a safe, neutral space in the community. Financial pressures have resulted in some changes to opening hours, location of branches and availability of staff. This critical infrastructure, and the support offered to use it, will become increasingly important for those people who don't have a computer or internet access at home as the roll out of welfare reform gathers pace.

With ongoing developments in infrastructure, whether this is for super fast broadband, fibre or emerging 5G mobile connectivity, Welsh Government recognises the support required for everyone to fully benefit. Funded schemes help widen access to reliable internet services, which is an enabler for tackling digital exclusion.

The ability to provide affordable broadband in multiple tenancy social housing or for community support organisations is critical to reach those who remain offline. There are some examples of housing associations proactively developing broadband solutions to provide tenants with connectivity in communal areas. However, in order to significantly increase digital inclusion amongst social housing tenants, affordable solutions need to be found where tenants can benefit from the opportunities of using online services in the comfort and safety of their own homes.

The image below shows the importance of continued investment in digital inclusion, alongside further digital skills development and infrastructure improvements in order to make Wales a truly digital nation.

# Making Wales a Truly Digital Nation

Making Wales a truly Digital Nation will need a continued investment in generic skills and training alongside infrastructure improvements.

Encouraging and supporting people across Wales to gain the 5 basic digital skills.

## Digital Inclusion

Digital Communities Wales encourages organisations to embed digital inclusion within day to day working practices.

## Skilled Workforce

Utilising digital skills and tools to enhance business practices

## Digital skills Development

Enhancing digital skills and literacy for employment and personal needs

Skills for employment

Confident digital skills for personal tasks

Enhancing critical thinking

Professional digital training & links between education and the Welsh economy

University innovation

Support for high tech companies

Science and tech hubs

## Digital Exploitation

Driving forward the digital sector and use of digital tools across Wales to ensure we are developing the economy to meet emerging trends.

# digitalcommunities.gov.wales

Encouraging and supporting everyone in Wales to gain basic digital skills



Wales Co-operative Centre  
Canolfan Cydweithredol Cymru

Cymunedau  
**Digidol**  
Cymru

**Digital**  
Communities  
Wales



Rhaglen  
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government  
Programme

# Developments



Digital Communities Wales (DCW), the Welsh Government's dedicated digital inclusion programme, focuses on supporting those individuals who have very limited or no digital skills, by working through partner organisations and co-ordinating activities. DCW commenced in April 2015 and runs until March 2019 with a Wales wide remit and a focus on the most deprived areas. It has built upon the strong partnership approach and co-ordination role undertaken by previous digital inclusion programmes. It supports organisations which work with the most digitally excluded groups to help engage their clients/customers; make use of volunteers; provide front line staff training; and assist with embedding digital inclusion into their activities.

Working with a wide range of organisations enables a more strategic approach to tackling exclusion based on the local needs identified. Through a Get Online Partnership model developed under previous digital inclusion programmes, DCW have looked to re-establish these networks at local authority levels to further support the work. The Partnerships include a wide range of local delivery bodies, including libraries, job centres, local authorities, housing associations, and voluntary sector organisations which are well placed to identify the issues and solutions to engaging those digitally excluded with technology in a meaningful way.

The sustainability of digital inclusion activities is reliant on these Partnerships being developed in a way so local partners take ownership of the interventions to support their citizens.

Volunteers play a key role in providing the support necessary to break down skills and attitudinal barriers, including through peer-to-peer or inter-generational learning. DCW has trained over 2,500 front line staff and volunteers since April 2015 to help show people the benefits of being online and teach them basic digital skills. We are continually exploring how to engage employees from different sectors, including Welsh Government, in dedicating volunteering time to support digital inclusion. For some sectors this could form part of their Corporate Social Responsibility and staff Learning & Development opportunities.

## Digital Heroes

Through working with the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC), we wanted to develop opportunities for pupils and students who were interested in helping other people to get online, using their own skills and interests in the process. Digital Communities Wales created an initiative called Digital Heroes, where young people volunteer to support older people who are falling further behind, as technology continues to expand into our lives.



The community challenge is a great way for those undertaking the Key Stage 4 and Advanced Qualification to develop and deliver activities in their community. We aspire to create a nation of Digital Heroes, all helping others to use the internet to improve their lives in a positive way.

Staff and students of Coleg Gwent were among the first to become Digital Heroes.  
[https://youtu.be/M5LuLhoS\\_Xc](https://youtu.be/M5LuLhoS_Xc)

**Health Case Study:** Following training by DCW, young people from Griffithstown Primary School supported a session at County Hospital in Pontypool (Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) exploring how engaging digital content can be used to help stimulate patients as they recover on the ward.



*Griffithstown pupils showing a patient pictures of a Dakota he flew home injured from in WW2*

## Community ICT Pilot

We have developed and piloted a Community ICT scheme in collaboration with e-Cycle, EE, Microsoft and Welsh Government ICT. The purpose was to redistribute refurbished Welsh Government laptops for community organisations to undertake digital and financial inclusion activities. Using recycled equipment across community settings can help individuals, who would otherwise struggle with the recognised barriers such as the costs of purchasing equipment, by showing them the wider benefits of engaging with technology and in turn help to develop their basic digital skills.

Merthyr Tydfil was identified as an area with limited digital inclusion activity taking place. The Get Merthyr Online partnership was re-established by DCW and members were asked for proposals to support citizens to get online and do more online.

Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association (MTHA) wanted to support residents who would otherwise struggle with the costs of IT to tackle digital and financial exclusion for a 12 week duration. Seven refurbished laptops were provided and whilst MTHA had an internet connection in communal areas, EE provided mobile broadband devices which allowed residents to have connection to the internet in their own homes. At the end of the pilot, MTHA reported that the laptops helped them to successfully tackle social isolation, health matters, as well as financial inclusion issues with residents.

## Digital Inclusion Charter

Supported by a wide range of organisations across Wales, the [Charter](#) promotes helping people to gain basic digital skills through asking organisations to sign up to [Six Principles](#) including giving all staff and volunteers the opportunity to learn about new technologies.

To date, 280 organisations have signed the Charter. Signatories range from GoCompare, BT Wales, Welsh Water, local authorities, housing associations, national charities, Care Homes and regional support organisations – all committed to help digitally excluded people enjoy the benefits of digital technology.



# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

## BARRIERS TO ENGAGE

Becoming digitally included is a **continuous process** requiring ongoing support



Users struggling to overcome online barriers

- motivation
- cost
- online safety
- equipment

## DIGITALLY EXCLUDED:

Not regular internet users  
*(National Survey for Wales 2016-17)*

UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE	10%
SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS	23%
DISABLED PEOPLE	25%
AGED 50+	27%
AGED 75+	60%

## ENCOURAGING

more citizens and organisations to

**ADOPT DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

remains a huge challenge

## ONLY

**77%** of Social Housing residents have Internet access compared with

**87%** owner occupied and

**88%** private rental

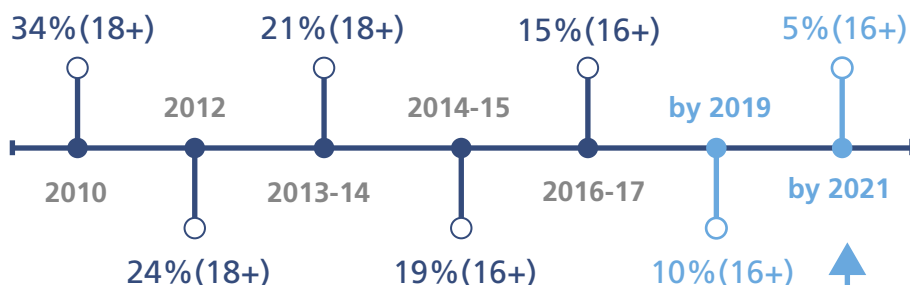
## Single pensioner households

*(no children)*

are least likely to have internet access at just

**51%**

## Digital Exclusion – Welsh Adults



**AIM: 95%** of people to have basic digital skills by 2021

## Digital Inclusion by Gender (16+)

**87%** of men compared with **84%** of women

## Welsh Government

funds **EXCITING DIGITAL PROJECTS** to promote everyday use of Welsh language through digital technologies



Achieving these **5 Basic DIGITAL Skills** should not be the limit of ambition for **NEW** and **LIMITED USERS**

**1 Managing Information**  
e.g. Use a search engine to find the information you need

**2 Communicating**  
e.g. Keep in touch using email, instant messaging, video calls and social media

**3 Transacting**  
e.g. Manage your bank account or understand and use marketplaces to buy and sell



**4 Problem Solving**  
e.g. Teach yourself simple tasks using video lessons or access support services such as live chat

**5 Creating**  
e.g. Create and share feedback using shopping websites or create a social media post

# Forward Look

Market forces have encouraged many more people to use the latest digital technologies, helped by cheaper equipment and faster broadband speeds, yet a lack of motivation, skills and access still prevents significant numbers of others from engaging. Taking forward this agenda requires commitment from organisations across all sectors.

We will look to the findings from the Tech Partnership and Lloyds Banking Group consultation on Basic Digital Skills and consider alongside the National Survey for Wales 2017-18 publication in Summer 2018.

Over the next 12 months digital exclusion will continue to be tackled by a wide range of Programmes and activities within Welsh Government, including Digital Communities Wales as well as our Skills and Employability programmes and through the work of the Valley's Task Force and Rural Development Plan Funding.

However, we must appreciate those who will always be unable or unwilling to use digital technologies. Therefore, alternative ways to access goods and services need to be considered to ensure they are not left behind.

Below we have outlined four key areas of focus for the next 12 months, which will require cross-Government and sector engagement to achieve:



## Intergenerational

We will continue to look at innovative ways to support intergenerational learning to engage older people with technologies, encouraging skills transfer between generations resulting in greater understanding of issues/challenges facing different generations.

- We will look to work with the Girl Guides and Scouts to gain a recognised 'Digital Heroes' badge which is delivered consistently across Wales.
- We will continue to explore the potential for providing Digital Inclusion volunteer training to all Police Cadets across Wales given their trusted relationships with some of our key priority groups.
- We will continue to raise awareness and promote the benefits of the Welsh Baccalaureate Challenge Brief to encourage more students to support older people.
- We will work with Digital Communities Wales to explore the potential for training Young Farmers members in digital inclusion so they are able to provide support to those within their rural communities.



## Health and Social Care

There are some great examples of successful digital engagement activities within the Health and Social Care sector. However, there is a need to align these so that engagement is consistent and accessible across Wales.

- Through Digital Communities Wales we will look to share lessons learnt from initial work with Health Boards and explore the potential of replicating activities across Wales.
- Look to engage with NHS Wales to encourage more digital inclusion activities to take place across a range of health settings.
- Continue to explore ways to raise awareness of digital inclusion within the Health Sector, including but not limited to promoting digital inclusion at Health conferences.
- Encourage the Health and Social Care sector to invest in basic digital skills training for all staff in order to support citizens in the continued move towards digital services. This could include training administration staff with General Practices across Wales to support customers to register and manage their appointments online.

**Case Study:** A service known as GP Test Requesting & Results Reporting (GPTR) is allowing GP practices to shift from paper-based processes, to using a fully electronic system to make test requests and receive results. It is helping to ensure blood tests are ordered accurately every time, avoiding occasional missed tests due to the paper process. This further demonstrates the increased importance within health to support the upskilling of staff in digital skills.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/nwis/page/92590>

- We will look to engage with the Informed Health and Care Workstream 1 'Information for You' Steering Group to ensure digital inclusion is taken into consideration when developing and delivering citizen facing digital technology that aims to support people and give them more control to manage their own conditions.

## Private Sector



We recognise the important role the private sector can play in reaching digitally excluded people and providing resources to support them. The ability of large national organisations to highlight digital inclusion to wide scale audiences through media campaigns such as Barclay's Digital Eagles can play a crucial role in helping raise awareness.

It is clearly in an organisation's interest to encourage its customers to improve their basic digital skills. Online comparison companies, like GoCompare (Charter Signatory), Confused and MoneySuperMarket, are heavily reliant on individuals having the basic digital skills to use their services.

Supermarkets have branched into the digital space in recent years, offering citizens the option to complete their weekly food shops from the comfort of homes – with delivery or collection services. Yet this business model requires those who would benefit most (older people during winter for example) to be able to engage with the service digitally.

Other companies, be it telecommunications (EE, Three, O2, BT and Virgin), utility companies (British Gas, Welsh Water, and E.On), financial services (Natwest, Lloyds, Prncipality, Santander and Barclays) and Insurance companies (Aviva, Admiral and Endsleigh) are increasingly looking to customers to manage their accounts online, thus reducing costs for paper based services.

- We will encourage the sector to lead by example and consider their digitally excluded customers whilst ensuring staff have an opportunity to learn basic digital skills.
- Continue to promote how the sector can donate their redundant ICT kit for community benefit digital inclusion schemes.
- Encourage the sector to engage with Digital Communities Wales and look at how becoming a Digital Inclusion Charter signatory can promote how they are helping get people online and developing basic digital skills.
- Encourage the sector to inspire their staff to become Digital Heroes (volunteers) to support community sessions.



### Work Based Learning (Apprenticeships)

We know the ability to use digital is a necessity for employment. However, there are differences in the extent to which Digital Literacy is fully embedded as a requirement for apprenticeships within Wales. Digital skills are an essential transferable skill and should be a priority in apprenticeships. This includes encouraging more women into Technology roles through apprenticeships, which is imperative if future demand for Technology skills at all levels is to be met.

- We will explore with skills officials how we can support Digital Literacy Level 1 to be embraced and embedded as a mandatory requirement within all Apprenticeship Frameworks.
- Through discussions with Skill Sector leads, Employers and Colleges we will aim to demonstrate the importance of digital skills as transferable skills. This will include raising awareness to Skill Sector leads on the relevance of digital within their sector e.g. **Construction**; ability to manage online platforms to advertise business and answer job requests. **Health**; ability for care home staff to meaningfully engage citizens with technology which can include video chat with family to reduce isolation or using applications for exploring interests/hobbies.

# Case Studies

Through Digital Communities Wales's work to encourage organisations to embrace and embed digital inclusion into their day to day activities, we have a wide range of case studies which highlight the outcomes achieved.

This has included providing front line staff and volunteer training to those who reach and engage with digitally excluded individuals and supporting Digital Heroes.

Case studies are available on the Digital Communities Wales website and YouTube channel: <https://digitalcommunities.gov.wales>

# Resources

## Barclays Digital Wings

<https://digital.wings.uk.barclays/for-everyone/topics-and-modules/>

## Microsoft Digital Literacy

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/digitalliteracy/overview.aspx>

## Learn My Way

<https://www.learnmyway.com/>