Community-Led digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion Presentation notes

get online > stay online > improve online

A society, such as ours, which is dependent on technology can create inequality. The gap between those who have access to the latest technology and those who do not is defined as the **'digital divide'**. Nationally we know that 20% of the population lack the skills needed to use the internet. Applying this percentage to our population shows the size of the opportunity to make a difference to people's lives:

- In Torbay 27,250 people are digitally excluded.
- For Torbay & South Devon this is 57,500 people.

Digital participation is key to people's daily lives

Digital has transformed almost every aspect of our lives from work to home. It is now so central to how much of society functions on a day-to-day basis and so often taken for granted that it is easy to forget how relatively recently the digital and online world became a reality. People use digital and online means to:

- **Communicate:** sending a personal message via email or online messaging service or carefully making comments and sharing information online.
- **Transact:** buying items or services from a website or buying and installing apps on a device.
- **Manage information:** using a search engine to look for information, finding a website visited before or downloading or saving a photo found online.
- **Create:** creating something new from existing online images, music, and video; or completing online application forms.
- **Solve problems:** verifying sources of information online or solving a problem with a device or digital service using online help.
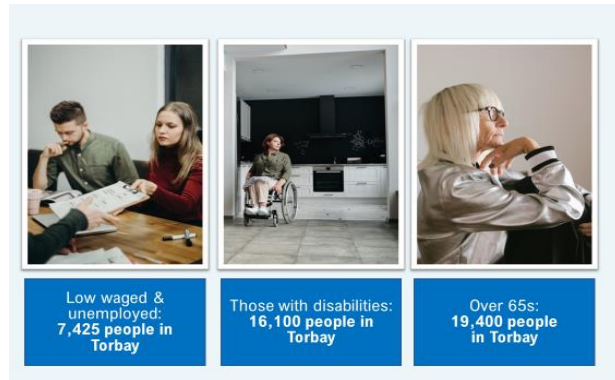- **Engage:** socialise and participate online through social media, Facetime, and Zoom.

As well as these digital activities becoming so commonplace, they are also becoming integral to how people wish to access services, but also how organisations prefer people to access them.

We are concerned about people being left behind

A lack of digital skills and access can have a huge negative impact on a person's life. It is a key social determinant of health. It can mean paying more for essentials, financial exclusion, an increased risk of experiencing poverty. It also means losing a voice and visibility in society.

People who are digitally excluded are primarily those already at a disadvantage. All this leads to:

- poorer health outcomes
- lower life expectancy
- increased loneliness
- social isolation
- less access to jobs and education

Low waged & unemployed: 7,425 people in Torbay

Those with disabilities: 16,100 people in Torbay

Over 65s: 19,400 people in Torbay

Good Things Foundation 2021

From national research, the three key population groups with highest prevalence of digital exclusion are:

- **The over 65s:** the greatest proportion of the population who are digitally excluded are aged over 65. The number of people in Torbay who are Digitally excluded are 19,100. For Torbay and south Devon this equates to 41,400
- **People living with disabilities:** for Torbay alone, this is 16,100 individuals but when including the South Devon population this increases to 30,200.
- **The low waged and unemployed:** in Torbay this is 7425 people whiles across Torbay and South Devon this would be 14,475

Other key groups who disproportionately experience digital exclusion as identified in the Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy are:

- Those in social housing
- Offenders and ex-offenders

Case Studies of Torbay residents

Vignette 1: Margaret is 84 lives in Paignton on her own since her husband died some years ago. She has broadband and a tablet but doesn't know how to use it. Her nephew visits sometimes to show her how to do things like facetime and online shopping but he's too fast and she doesn't keep up or remember what to do. She'd really like to do things online but doesn't want to keep asking or upsetting her nephew.

Vignette 2: Linda from Brixham has a visual and hearing impairment and although she can use the internet for online shopping, she struggles with other online services such as online healthcare consultations. She feels they are not as straightforward to use, and her impairments limit her confidence using useful services like this. She needs support and guidance to do this but doesn't know where to go.

Vignette 3: Adam is currently unemployed and living in temporary rented accommodation. He is trying to find work, but job searching online is an uphill challenge because since losing his last job he cannot afford a broadband subscription. He has a smartphone on a 'pay as you go' contract, but finds he quickly runs out of data and that it is almost impossible to complete job application forms on his phone handset.

The Digital Inclusion Network offers a deliverable solution

The Digital Inclusion Network has an operational model that is routed in communities and collaboration that has grown from experience in connecting and working effectively with those groups who are statistically more likely to be digitally excluded.
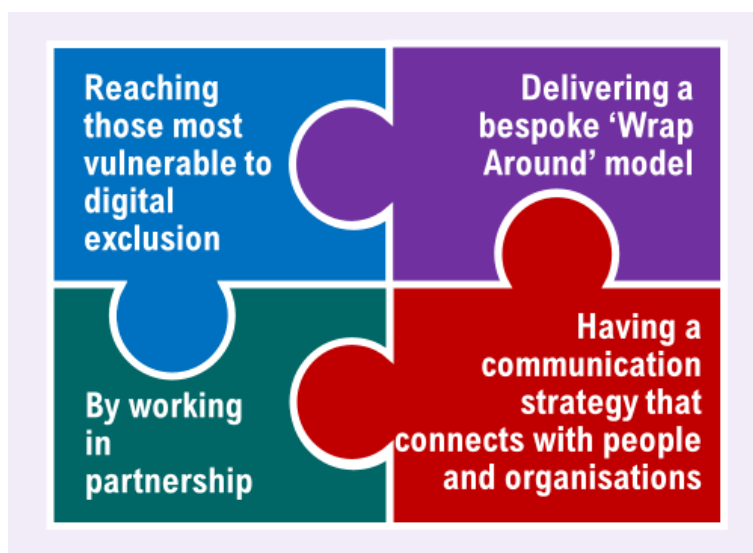
This entails:

1. Reaching those most vulnerable to digital exclusion.
2. Delivering a bespoke 'wrap around' model that supports an individual's long-term digital participation.
3. Being a community-led partnership
4. Having a communication strategy that promotes the offer and approach to both individuals and stakeholder organisations.

1. Reaching those most vulnerable to digital exclusion

The infrastructure for identifying and connecting with those who are digitally excluded is in place and working. This provides a foundation for getting people connected with the support that they identify themselves as needing:

- The community and voluntary sector e.g., Brixham YES, Eat that Frog, community builders.
- Key services e.g., SPOT, 0-19 service, community mental health services, adults social care.
- The TCDT helpline as a one-stop point for support.

2. Delivering a bespoke 'Wrap Around' Model

The core principles underpinning the Digital Inclusion Network are:

From the beneficiaries' perspective	From an organisational perspective
• Any support offer will be asset and strength based. • All interventions are driven by what matters to the person and is most meaningful to them.	• Responses are community driven. • Delivery is through relationships between bodies and people.

The underlying approach of the delivery model is that it is:

- A coordinated response to digital inclusion between statutory, voluntary sector and business.
- About creating pathways to ensure peers are included in the Group and evolution of the partnerships/network.

The defining characteristic of the bespoke, 'wrap around' Digital Inclusion Network model is that the response is determined by the person. Any actions are directed by them to support the person in achieving his or her goals in becoming digitally participative, competent and confident. It is about building a relationship to enable the person to ultimately self-direct his or her online abilities and experiences independently. It is about supporting people to:

- **Get online:** through access to IT hardware such as laptops and Wi-Fi and support to gain the skills to be able to use these.
- **Stay online:** providing ongoing support of people to practice the skills they have learnt so that they become embedded, and the person becomes both IT competent and confident.
- **Improve online:** supporting the person to transfer learning and explore online according to their interests and aspirations.

The process the Digital Inclusion Network adopts in achieving this is:

1. By using the multiple and existing connections people have and make use of to access support.
2. Using these support point to linking people into the Digital Inclusion Network.
3. Build a relationship to understanding where the person and their digital goals.
4. Build and deliver an individualise support programme that will assist people in improving their digital competence and confidence in a sustainable way as well as instilling an appetite for exploring digital opportunities and further skills themselves in the long-term.

3. Being a Community-Led Partnership

The essential approach for the Digital Inclusion Network is that it is a shared endeavour that best uses the skills, experiences, knowledge, and capacity of every partner. The areas of focus in this partnership are concerned with:

- **Accessing resources:** through, for example grant bid applications, or support from local and national businesses
- **Delivering support:** to people in the community through the best placed body or coalition to meet a person's goals.
- **System working:** a participative way of working that is based on the belief that different stakeholders can only understand problems, resolve issues, and implement solutions if they work together. This is on the basis that the knowledge and resources required will be spread among different parts and levels in an organisation, and different groups outside the organisation.

4. Having a communication strategy that connects with people and organisations

The key components comprise of:

- Sharing best practice and innovations in digital access and participation.
- Listening to, involving, and targeting our populations appropriately with digital opportunities that may benefit them.
- Raising awareness of our strategy and plans and linking with the wider system.
- Promoting what is being planned, delivered, and achieved.

A Call to Action

Work with us to enable people to get online, stay online and improving online by:

1. Identifying people and connecting them into the network.
2. Helping us to understand and work with us to meet your organisational needs.
3. Sharing or offering resources.
4. Joining the Digital Inclusion Network.