

# Cheshire East Partnership

## Digital Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026

**Digital Inclusion** is about making sure that people have the skills, opportunities and confidence to use the internet to do things that benefit them day-to-day such as:



Accessing support services online



Shopping online



Finding information online

**Our Vision is** to make sure that no resident is digitally left behind and that every resident can access the community, health and council services they need.

### We Spoke with Cheshire East Residents

We listened to Cheshire East residents in focus groups, coffee mornings, community centres and lunch clubs to understand experiences of going online.

Some residents told us they do not wish to use technology and are prefer to not be pressured into going online.



- **'My children help me** when I need anything online'
- **'My husband doesn't want to build skills online,** he's just not interested or motivated and I can do it for him'
- **'I value in-person contact** with other people'

Other residents told us they want to go online but there are barriers that mean they can't.

They told us they need support to build their confidence to go online, to learn the skills to use technology and to be able to afford access to technology like a laptop.

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- **'I'm frightened about doing the wrong thing, pressing the wrong button, it crashing and losing my information and money...'**
- **'Courses don't work** as they're in a group with different devices and lots of jargon and terminology that I don't understand'
- **'If I was confident my data was protected** and I know I'm not vulnerable to hacking, I'd love to use the internet more'

Other residents told us they feel confident and able to use the internet. They often use it for online shopping, searching for information and keeping in touch with others.



- **'I'm happy with my level of use of the internet and feel pretty confident with it'**
- **'I'm quite comfortable finding services online'**
- **'The only thing that stops me is connectivity'**



### Improving Digital Inclusion helps us all

Getting online means better access to health-related information, job opportunities and education.

This helps an individual's health and wellbeing.

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### A Digital Inclusion Partnership

We want to create a group that looks at how we can help more people access the internet in Cheshire East.

This group will include residents, voluntary organisations, community groups, faith organisations, businesses in Cheshire East, our NHS and Cheshire East Council. This group will work together to:

1. Understand what activities are helping residents who struggle to use the internet
2. Understand where the gaps in this support are
3. Make sure that we are focusing on the issues residents are experiencing, and not making any assumptions about what they need
4. Find out what our residents need most and what will make the most difference
5. Make sure that we achieve what we set out to and don't let activities fizzle out

### Our Plan to Make Digital Inclusion Happen



Our Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership group will turn ideas into action.

The ideas put forward so far by residents and organisations are listed on the next page.

As more ideas are suggested, these can be added to this list.

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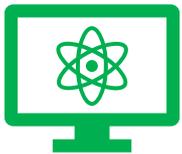
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### Our Cheshire East Community's Ideas

Take a look at the ideas raised by residents and organisations so far:



**Digital Buddies Scheme** – Residents suggested more digital buddies schemes. Residents would have support from someone who is digitally enabled to help them build confidence and skills.



**Beginner Skills Training** - Residents wanted training for beginners, starting from the very beginning of switching on a device. They wanted bitesize sessions to make sure learners are not overwhelmed.



**Learn from Each Other** - Residents raised the idea of learning from others such as teenagers who may be looking for volunteering opportunities. This may also be neighbours helping neighbours.



**Improve access in Community Centres** – Residents suggested improving access to technology in community spaces. This could promote the benefits of using the internet and allow people to try it in a relaxed and supportive environment.



**Improve Connectivity** – Internet access ranged from poor to patchy at best by some residents. Our Connecting Cheshire scheme is improving connectivity and updates could be provided to residents.



**Free Wi-Fi Access** - Providing free Wi-Fi access to those in social housing was suggested to help those who may not be able to afford Wi-Fi.



**Social Value** - Digital inclusion could be a 'social value' topic for organisations who are commissioned by organisations such as Cheshire East Council. This means that organisations who provide a service for Cheshire East do a bit extra, above and beyond the contract, to add value to our communities.