Cheshire East Partnership

Digital Inclusion Strategy

Draft Delivery Plan 2023-2026

Draft Delivery Plan

Several recommendations were made by residents, NHS colleagues, Cheshire East Council staff and representatives from VCFSE organisations during the engagement phase of this strategy. These recommendations form the basis for an initial delivery plan which is enclosed within this document.

There will be more ideas that we haven't yet heard and, as such, this plan will remain flexible with CEDIP continuing to add developing ideas to the table.

The timescales for each activity will be confirmed by CEDIP to ensure that agreed timescales are feasible for all those who will contribute towards their success.

Area	Idea	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
Digital Buddies Scheme	The idea of a digital buddies scheme was raised to help support confidence building in relation to digital skills. 1-2-1 support was noted as very helpful with better opportunity to troubleshoot issues as and when they arise.	We will re-establish and strengthen our Digital Buddies volunteer capacity in our Cheshire East Libraries, targeting volunteer recruitment from local high schools and colleges. We will leverage our network in the Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership Group to further strengthen our Digital Buddy offer. The idea of drop-in sessions held across the community was also raised as an informal way to provide support which could also be considered by Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership. We will explore and develop pathways for drop-in sessions in the community that are accessible to all who would benefit from this type of support.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership which includes: • NHS organisations • Cheshire East Council • Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations • Residents Cheshire East Libraries will also be heavily involved due to the nature of this action	Residents will be equipped with the skills and information to be able to access digital technology themselves.

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Complete Beginner Skills Training	Residents wanted skills support for complete beginners, starting from the very beginning of switching on a device. Residents and our VCFSE sector said smaller groups is the preferred format to create a better learning environment. Ideally sessions will be bitesize to allow information to be digested and for learners to not be overwhelmed. Accessibility was raised; it may be difficult for some residents to travel to training due to mobility, rurality and cost. Therefore, a focus should be on delivering local skills development support. Community-based courses and night schools were suggested.	We will develop a One Cheshire East digital skills offer to ensure our residents can access skills support, no matter where they live. Through our partnership approach, we will identify, join up and build upon digital skills activity taking place across the borough so that all residents have access to the skills support they need. We will focus on developing a network of peer-support to deliver digital skills and ensure our offer does not assume a basic level of understanding.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership as a whole will be involved	Residents feel they have the basic skills to use digital tools and the internet with confidence.

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Learn from Each Other	One resident raised the idea of learning from those who are digitally enabled such as teenage children who may be looking for volunteering opportunities. Equally, another resident raised about neighbours supporting neighbours.	We will target local high schools, colleges to drive up volunteer recruitment. We will explore a neighbours supporting neighbours scheme.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership Residents will also be heavily involved to support their community	Residents feel supported by their community to become digitally included.
Access in Community Centres	Having access to digital tools in community spaces was raised as a way of promoting the benefits of using the internet and allowing people to try it in a relaxed yet supportive environment.	We will bring together assets to map the digital inclusion activity taking place across the borough. We will build on the Hublet rental scheme in Libraries and explore more opportunities to increase access to digital devices, such as device recycling schemes and lending libraries. We will work with partners to map out digital connectivity spaces and identify 'not spot' zones.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership Cheshire East Council and Cheshire East Libraries will be heavily involved through Connected Community centres and community libraries	Residents have access to the digital tools they need, alongside support to be able to use them.

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Improve Connectivity	Connectivity in certain areas such as those that are particularly rural was raised. Connectivity ranged from poor to intermittent at best by some residents and a suggestion as made to improve this across the area.	This is an ongoing project, led by four local authorities across Cheshire – Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington borough councils – to "deliver faster broadband to areas where it had not been commercially viable to invest previously, in particular our outlying and rural communities".[1] Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership will support communication of this project.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership Cheshire East Council will be heavily involved due to their link to the Connecting Cheshire scheme	Residents and organisations are kept up-to-date with the Connecting Cheshire scheme.
Free Wi-Fi Access	Providing free Wi-Fi access to those in social housing was raised by a VCFSE sector employee. Masts could provide Wi-Fi to those who cannot afford it, and whilst the speed of this broadband may not be fast given the likely number of users, it would be a good start for improving access.	We will explore how this has worked in other areas and whether housing-based organisations could provide digital support in this capacity. We will also explore further opportunities for free Wi-Fi access and communicating this effectively across the borough.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership	Residents who are facing a barrier of Wi-Fi affordability have fair opportunities to access the internet.

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[1] https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/about_cheshire_east/connecting_cheshire.aspx

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Social Value	A VCFSE representative raised whether digital inclusion could be a social value topic for organisations who are commissioned by organisations such as Cheshire East.	We will include digital inclusion as a social value priority at Cheshire East Council. We will provide direction to businesses across Cheshire East who wish to engage in Corporate Social Responsibility around digital inclusion. The partnership will act as a link, understanding resident needs in relation to digital inclusion as ensuring these gaps are highlighted to organisations as opportunities to make a real difference.	Cheshire East Digital Inclusion Partnership. Cheshire East Council's Social Value Unit will also be heavily involved due to the nature of this action.	Digital inclusion projects are sourced from commissioned services and these projects add value to our communities.