



Un Llais Cymru



One Voice Wales

A Guide to Digital Inclusion & Support

At a glance:

Digital exclusion can significantly exacerbate the cost of living crisis, affecting various aspects of individuals' daily lives and their ability to manage finances, access essential services, and secure opportunities for employment and education.

IMPACTS:



Supporting digital inclusion is crucial for communities. The digital divide affects many varied groups such as the elderly, low-income families, and rural residents.



Rural and remote communities in Wales face significant digital infrastructure gaps. Poor or unreliable broadband and mobile connectivity make it difficult for residents in these areas to access online services.



Many financial services, including banking, are increasingly moving online. Those without digital access may be forced to rely on physical bank branches, which are becoming scarce.



Energy providers are moving to digital-only communication, including billing and customer service. People who are digitally excluded might not be able to take advantage of online accounts and initiatives that could help lower their overall energy costs.

Challenges:

Many essential services are moving online such as government benefits, healthcare services, job applications and without access to digital tools or the skills to use them, certain groups may become further marginalised.

People without access to the internet or digital devices can't access online comparison or shopping sites so may miss out on cheaper options, leading to higher living costs.

Key Opportunities & Solutions

- 1 Provide public access points:** Ensure that libraries, community centres, and other public spaces offer free Wi-Fi and devices for those without internet access at home.
- 2 Offer digital literacy workshops:** Provide free or low-cost training for people of all ages to improve their digital skills. This can include basic computer skills, online safety, and using government services online.
- 3 Engage with your local third-sector organisations:** Many community groups are already working to improve digital skills—support them with funding or resources.
- 4 Councils can work with local businesses, schools, and residents** to collect old but functional devices, refurbish them, and distribute them to those in need. This can be a cost-effective way of providing digital tools to digitally excluded residents.
- 5 Collaborate with national organisations:** Engage with digital inclusion programs like Digital Communities Wales, which supports digital literacy and access across Wales.

Cwmpas Digital Toolkit provides resources to make digital changes in your council

Fixing the Digital Divide with **The Good Things Foundation**

Digital Communities Wales – creating a more digitally inclusive Wales

Why should you do it?

As technology becomes increasingly integral to everyday life, ensuring that all community members have access to and can use digital resources effectively is critical for their well-being, economic participation, and overall quality of life.

Useful Information



More households in Wales now have access to the internet but some people are being left behind

Audit Wales

Powers

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 is a piece of legislation that ensures community and town councils in Wales are able to provide digital support and inclusion, allowing residents to engage more easily with local governance.

The Act promotes hybrid meetings, digital inclusion, and online transparency, helping councils ensure that no one is left behind in participating in democratic processes.

Powers & justifications can differ, councils should consider their specific circumstances. For advice & guidance, councils may wish to contact their One Voice Wales Development Officer.

admin@onevoicewales.wales



Watch our One Voice Wales Bridging the Digital Divide Webinar:

Social tariffs: Cheaper broadband and phone packages
Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits

Like a foodbank but for mobile data, the **National Databank** provides free mobile SIM cards for people who can't afford to access the internet.

Towards a Welsh Minimum Digital Living Standard:
Summary of the findings, outcomes and recommendations for the Welsh minimum digital living standard.

Increased use of digital technology puts older people at risk of social exclusion, warns
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Existing Services & Projects:



Rhosilli Community Council partnered with their local community hub and delivered a Bridging the Digital Divide Project which provided training and support for residents on a number of digital topics to help increase their skills and confidence.

Llwchwr Town Council run a Digital Cafe where residents can access IT and support to get online.

Bedlinog & Trelewis Community Council have partnered with The Good Things Foundation to provide free data sims to residents.

One Voice Wales, has developed a comprehensive set of guidelines to assist Councils in digital operations and online services. Find support here: **Digital Advice Repository**.

Funding Information & Potential Opportunities



The National Lottery Community Fund

Electricals Recycling Fund

One Voice Wales offer a **training module** on 'Making effective grant applications'

One Voice Wales offer a **training module** on 'Use of IT, Websites & Social Media'

Want to Find Out More?



For more information on the One Voice Wales Cost-of-Living Crisis project contact the team at:



CoLC@onevoicewales.wales



<https://bit.ly/3KYHftK>