



Digital Inclusion Strategy

Hull City Council 2025-2027

What is Digital Inclusion?

Digital inclusion means everyone has the support they need to live well – and safely – in a digital world, including:

- Internet access – affordable data, suitable device
- Everyday skills for life and work, including online safety
- Confidence and motivation to go online, and keep adapting

(Good Things Foundation, 2021)

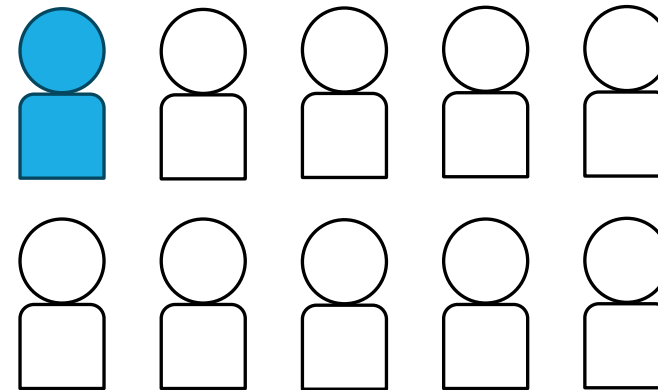


Why Does It Matter?

In Hull, research conducted by Customer Services in May 2023 suggests as many as 30% of customers fall into a category that would benefit from digital inclusion support; 8% do not have a device or internet connection, 4% have device but no internet, 1% have internet but no device, and 17% have device and internet but require moderate to significant support to engage online.

A second digital skills survey, the Adult Social Care Digital Deep Dive, undertaken in December 2024, partially based on the question set used for the 2023 survey, suggested 9% of residents aged 16 and over do not regularly connect to the internet.

In Hull, as many as 1 in 10 residents do not have either a device or internet connection.



(HCC Customer Services Digital Inclusion Survey March 2023)

Financial Implications

Digital inclusion significantly impacts UK economy and employment, with the digital skills gap currently costing around £63 billion each year in lost GDP. According to the Lloyd Bank Consumer Digital Index 2024, people with the highest digital and financial capability are saving four times more often, and saving on average, £1,100 a year more than those in the lowest groups.

The **digital skills gap** costs the UK economy

£63 billion

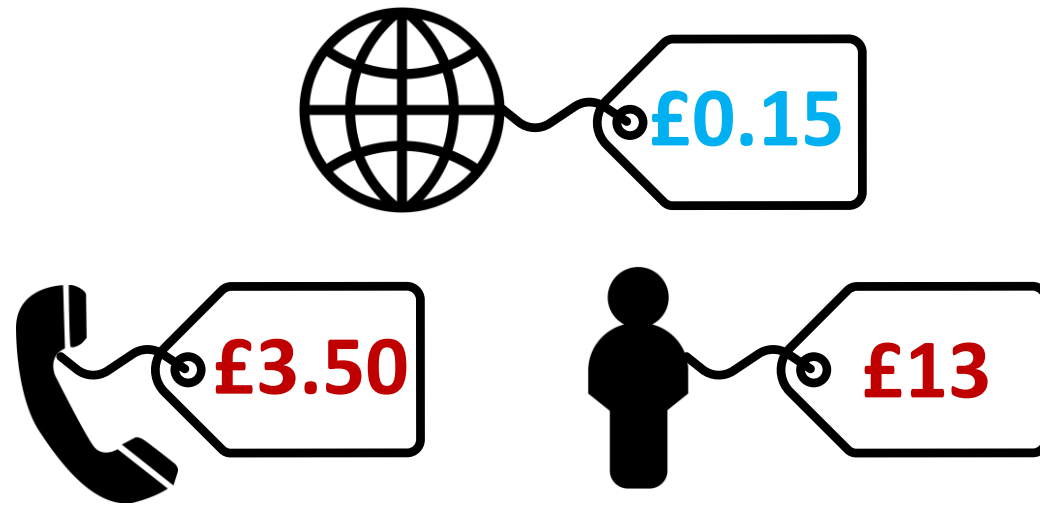
a year in the lost potential for additional GDP.

(House of Commons Science and Technology Committee)

The cost of digital exclusion extends to our own services, with a digital transaction costing Customer Services an average of £0.15 versus £3.50 over the phone and £13 in person.

In Hull there are ~217,000 residents aged 16 or over, with the latest estimate suggestion there could be as many as 19,500 people do not regularly connect to the internet.

For a single transaction from each of these residents, this would cost Hull City Council between £68,250 - £253,500 if contacting by telephone or in person. This cost would be £2,925 if all of these residents contacted online.



Online offers HCC Customer Services' lowest cost per transaction.

Health, Social and Equality Impacts

Health is also a factor, and the NHS propose a number of benefits for their digitally-enabled customers including

- Improved self-care for minor ailments
- Improved self-management of long-term conditions
- Improved take-up of digital health tools
- More appropriate use of services
- Better patient adherence to medicines/treatments



(NHS England, [Why digital inclusion matters to health and social care - NHS England Digital](#))

There are well-established social benefits to being online too, including reducing isolation from others and creating a sense of community.

And in terms of equality, the United Nations state that every child has the right to education, culture and information, much of which is now done online, and yet in the UK 8% of children don't have access to an internet-enabled device at home.

(UNICEF UK, [Closing-the-Digital-Divide-for-Good](#))

“Research suggests **people who do not use the internet are more likely to feel isolated from others**; this is particularly so for those who are less mobile, where the internet can improve well-being through invoking a sense of community through connecting with likeminded people online.”

(Age UK, [Loneliness and digital inclusion | Age UK](#))

Our Corporate Drivers

Hull City Council have a number of corporate drivers that support the need for more action on reducing digital exclusion, including under Ambition 4 of our Community Plan; 'Economic Growth That Works For All' specifies Hull will be a leading centre of digital inclusion, and to improve digital connectivity and choice.

And the Hull and East Yorkshire Devolution Deal references the government commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age, recognising the significant impact digital inclusion could make on the economy and individual wellbeing.

Our health partners in the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership share similar goals, with the aim of embedding digital, working in digital partnership and delivering information and services digitally wherever appropriate.

Our Vision

We aim to facilitate the reduction of digital exclusion in Hull for residents by co-ordinating our corporate approach to support, working closely with partner organisations to ensure effective use of resources, and maintain clear and accurate indicators of digital exclusion.



Priority 1

Onboard a Digital Inclusion Lead Officer

To deliver the priorities outlined in this strategy, we need to onboard a dedicated Hull City Council officer who can work closely with colleagues across the organisation, as well as with Hull Culture & Leisure, VCS and Healthcare partners.



Priority 2

Launch a Digital Inclusion Forum

The Digital Inclusion Forum will bring together resource providers and customer-facing officers to use a co-ordinated delivery of digital inclusion support, facilitated by the Digital Inclusion Lead Officer.



Priority 3

Create a Digital Inclusion Board

The Digital Inclusion Board will consist of senior decision-makers from Hull City Council, Hull Culture & Leisure, Healthcare, partner authorities and VCS partners to ensure the strategic priorities are met, and to identify future priorities.



Priority 4

Implement a Digital Inclusion Directory

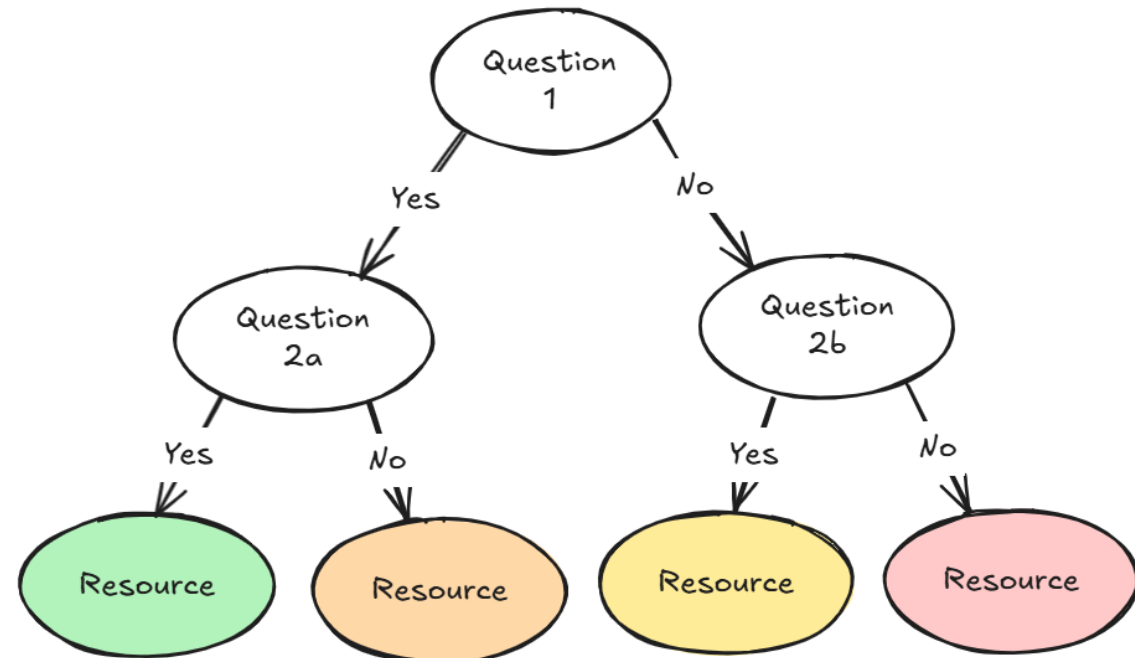
To co-ordinate the vast digital inclusion support resources available across the city, there is a need to implement a shared directory. This will be a dynamic, digital environment where resources can be categorised, mapped, and monitored.



Priority 5

Implement a Digital Inclusion Triage Tool

To ensure effective use of the Digital Inclusion Directory, a Digital Inclusion Triage Tool will be implemented. This will enable a quick, accurate and personalised assessment of an individual's need, allowing the most appropriate support resource to be identified.



Priority 6

Launch a Digital Inclusion Awareness Campaign

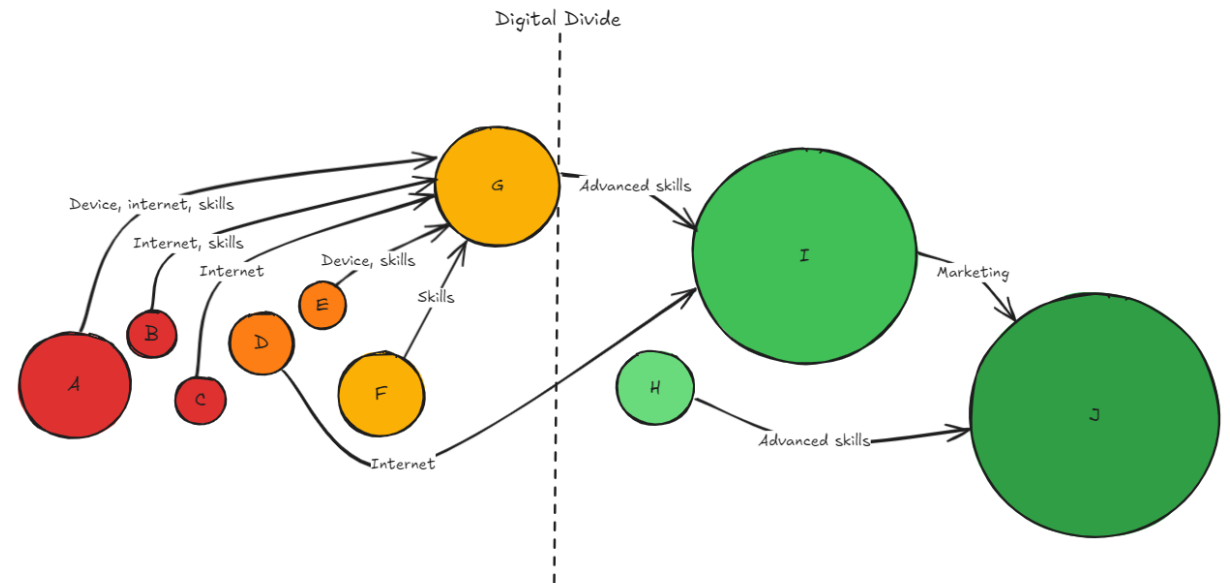
A first step in encouraging uptake of digital inclusion support is showcasing the benefits or getting online those who are digitally excluded. Often a lack of understanding of digital services can propagate disinterest. We need to overcome this barrier through a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of digital inclusion.



Priority 7

Implement the Digital Inclusion Support Model

A core part of our strategy is to implement the Digital Inclusion Support Model. This model links those in need with the resources available by utilising the triage tool and directory. The Digital Inclusion Lead Officer will be responsible for the implementation of this model.



Priority 8

Implement Staff Training

Any Hull City Council staff will need to be able to recognise digital exclusion support need, and be readily informed to promote the triage tool and directory of resources. The Digital Inclusion Lead Officer will be responsible for implementing a council-wide training guide to ensure staff are prepared to support customers.

