

November 2020

Islington Digital Inclusion Resource Pack: Support and Signposting for Local Organisations

The purpose of this Islington Digital Inclusion Resource Pack is to provide practical support and signposting for partners in Islington working with **residents, service-users, or patients** who are **at risk of or currently affected by digital exclusion**. It also provides signposting for **organisations looking to digitally upskill or seeking digital and tech support**.

This pack provides general information on digital inclusion and local Islington spaces which provide free access to computers, in addition to signposting on a range of organisations providing funding, free or low-cost digital equipment, training, learning and general support.

The vast majority of opportunities listed here are free to access. This pack is not an exhaustive list – if you would like to contribute an opportunity, please get in touch: partnerships@islington.gov.uk

This resource pack will tell you about:

- [Digital Inclusion: What it is and the impact of COVID-19](#)
- [Funding available for digital projects and equipment](#)
- [Digital / tech equipment – access and provision](#)
- [Digital training, learning and mentoring for residents and service-users](#)
- [Support and training for organisations](#)
- [General online resources to improve digital literacy and access](#)

Introduction to Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion is all about ensuring that everyone has the **confidence** and **capability** to safely use – and can **consistently access** – the internet and digital technologies. Below are 7 key pillars of digital inclusion, based on an [NHS definition](#):

- **Devices and equipment** – these can public devices (such as in libraries), but increasingly the focus is on mobile phones and tablets.
- **Connectivity** – access to the internet through broadband, Wi-Fi and mobile. People need the right access infrastructure.
- **Digital skills** – being able to use digital devices to confidently and effectively access internet-based services.
- **Online Safety** – a collection of personal training together with software and support to prevent fraud and exploitation.
- **Technical Support** – access to affordable technical support, from broken devices to configuring printers and network connections/Wi-Fi.
- **Accessibility** – services need to be designed to meet all users' needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.
- **Motivation** – not everyone sees why using the internet could be relevant and helpful.

In the UK, [11.9 million people \(22% of the population\)](#) lack the digital skills needed for everyday life in the UK. People with a disability are [35% less likely](#) to have essential digital skills for everyday life, while over half of all adults who never use the internet are [over the age of 75](#).

Groups that face a higher risk of digital exclusion include:

- People with a disability and/or who are chronically ill
- People in lower income groups and/or who are unemployed
- Homeless people
- Migrants and refugees and/or people for whom English is a second language
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- People who left school before the age of 16
- Older people

Not being digitally included – digital exclusion – has negative impacts on health, wellbeing (including social connectedness) and educational outcomes; restricts access to public, health, and financial (such as online banking) services; and creates significant barriers to employment, education and training.

The Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 has accelerated the digitisation of public and health services, education, and the provision of the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Although bringing benefits for many, the rapid transfer of services from in-person to online has **exacerbated the impacts of digital exclusion and marginalisation** for millions – most of whom are the **poorest and most vulnerable people** in British society.

Covid-19 has also brought challenges for organisations in Islington – some examples within the health sector and the VCS are below:

- In **health**, there are increasing concerns that current telemedicine offers are not meeting patients' **privacy** needs, particularly for those who are at risk of re-experiencing trauma and facing or at-risk of abuse. There are new challenges in supporting patients for whom **English is not a first language**, and questions around the **clinical effectiveness of virtual treatment** – what signs or symptoms are missed without face-to-face engagement?
- In the **VCS**, some organisations have reported issues in **adapting their services for online provision** – staff lacked the requisite digital training or confidence, and were concerned about their capacity to continue an online offer when in-person restrictions lift.
- The **VCS** also reported that some service-users, who lacked digital skills and/or were from low-income households, **lacked the requisite confidence, equipment, or consistent connectivity to participate in online activities**. 82% of 17 organisations surveyed desired more digital training and support for service-users and staff, while 100% reported that they would benefit from a digital inclusion resource pack.

Funding available for digital projects and equipment

Clarion Futures Digital Grants

Digital Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 available for projects committed to getting Clarion residents, and the wider community, online. Projects must aim to support individuals to improve their digital skills to safely and confidently access online services on a regular basis. **Deadline for this funding round: 12 noon, Wednesday 25 November 2020.** Website [here](#).

Mayor's Resilience Fund

Grants of up to £30,000 available to support the design and testing of tech and digital innovations which create positive social change. Businesses, social enterprises, and community groups are matched with innovators to help them find new ways of delivering services to keep up with the accelerated pace of change and to improve their own resilience. **Deadline: December 2020.** Website [here](#).

Neighbourly Community Fund

Micro-grants of up to £400 to support good causes that are helping communities affected by the coronavirus outbreak. **Applications currently paused** but organisations can **register for future funding rounds**. Website [here](#).

Rank Foundation

The Foundation's Pebble Grants Funds capital works – including the purchase of long-term equipment –and one-off short-term activity for organisations with an annual income of less than £500,000. **Funding is year-round.** Website [here](#).

Yapp Charitable Trust

Up to £3,000 for small UK charities – less than £40,000 annual expenditure – for ongoing core funding. Funding must target at least one of the following cohorts or areas: elderly people; Children and young people aged 5 – 25; People with physical impairments, learning difficulties or mental health challenges; Social welfare; Education and learning. **Funding is year-round.** Website [here](#).

Local Initiatives Fund

Local ward councillors have an annual budget of £14,000 per ward for small grants that deliver benefit to the residents of their ward. This is an open programme and welcomes applications regarding digital exclusion. Funding is ward specific. There are **no funding deadlines for 2020-2021**. Website [here](#).

Voluntary Action Islington provides regular updates for all coronavirus funding opportunities. Website [here](#).

Digital / tech equipment – access and provision

Local spaces in Islington providing free computer and WiFi access

Islington Libraries

10 libraries across Islington – all have free public computers, printers, copiers, and scanners to USB, and WiFi access. Website [here](#).

Lift Youth Hub - *for young people*

Computer room/study space – seven computers with basic Microsoft packages and free WiFi. Laptops available on request. Website [here](#).

St. Luke's Community Centre

Online Centre open with social distancing – free use of PCs and WiFi. Printing available for small fee. Website [here](#).

Local and national organisations providing free or low-cost devices

Computer Aid

Provide low-cost computers and software to non-profit organisations. Website [here](#).

Devices.now and The Good Things Foundation

Providing physical and connectivity devices – including tablets, smartphones, laptops, SIMs, portable hotspots, and dongles – to community partners and groups. Website [here](#).

London Rainbow

Distribute donated SIM card-compatible tablets and phones to London health and care services. Accept requests from doctor, nurses, carers and community workers. Website [here](#).

Mer IT

Islington organisation, based in Mildmay, providing laptops and computers to schools and organisations supporting vulnerable clients and residents. Also provide free repair of devices and gadgets for local residents. Website [here](#).

Wavelength

Provide donated TVs, radios, tablets and other devices to VCS organisations and groups to help people maintain and increase the number of meaningful connections they have in their lives. Website [here](#).

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation

Provide free tablets with internet data to women who identify as Black, and Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) to help access online support services and reconnect within their community. Accept self and professionals' referrals. Website [here](#).

Digital training, learning and mentoring for residents and service-users

AbilityNet – for older people and people of any age with a disability or impairment

AbilityNet's ITCanHelp volunteers provide free IT support to older people and people with disabilities of any age. Request support [here](#).

Age UK Tech Break – for older people over 60

Weekly one-to-one support sessions on Thursday 12pm, helping older people gain confidence in using a smartphone or digital device. Register [here](#).

CityLit – taught in BSL

Free online computing classes at different levels for Deaf people, taught in BSL. Website [here](#).

Groundwork 'Silver Connections'

Free 6 week course via Zoom for residents in Hackney, aged 60+, to learn smartphone top tips. Website [here](#).

Healthwatch Islington

Free 1-hour sessions with digital champions to improve digital confidence and online group sessions on using smartphones, tablets and laptops. Sign up for group sessions [here](#). Contact Philippa Russell, Healthwatch Islington Community Link Worker, for mentoring: philippa.russell@healthwatchislington.co.uk

Healthy Generations

Online digital class every Wednesday, 4.30-5.30pm, for older people, in partnership with Islington Pensioners Forum. Website [here](#).

Islington Adult and Community Learning (Islington Council)

Free online courses on a range of digital skills, including web development (HTML, CSS, JavaScript) and opportunities to gain certification, and face-to-face support in enrolling online. Open to Islington residents, aged 19 or over and unemployed or low waged. Website [here](#).

Support and training for organisations

Covid Tech Support

Community of over 1500 digital volunteers supporting VCS organisations and groups who are affected by or tackling COVID-19. Volunteers are matched with an organisation or group and provide free digital project support. Website [here](#).

Digital Candle

Free service for charities / non-profits – one-hour phone call with a digital expert on any aspect of digital or digital marketing. Website [here](#).

Digital Unite – Digital Champions Network

Costed training – provides digital champion training for organisations including digital health champion training. Website [here](#).

Good Things Foundation

Design and deliver social inclusion and digital inclusion programmes for organisations. Website [here](#).

Healthwatch Islington

Able to support small community organisations based in Islington to move their activities online. Contact Philippa Russell, Healthwatch Islington Community Link Worker, for more information philippa.russell@healthwatchislington.co.uk

Superhighways

Free training courses to help VCS organisations choose and use digital technology to attract supporters or help people in need. Also provide costed personalised training. Website [here](#).

General online resources to improve digital literacy and access

Ability Net My Computer My Way – *for people of any age with a disability or impairment*

Free step-by-step guide to individual adjustments you can make to your computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone to make it easier to use. Website [here](#).

GCF Global

General website covering a broad range of topics, with video tutorials, to improve digital skills and build confidence in using online services. Website [here](#).

Techboomers

Website with hundreds of mini courses and article about internet use and how to make the most of it. Website [here](#).

Learn My Way

Free online courses and guidance on a range of digital skills. Website [here](#).