August 2022

Mapping of digital support across Argyll and Bute
Report

Content

Digital literacy is increasingly essential for people in their life to manage their day-to-day responsibilities. Using these skills people engage with services, including essential health services, and access information. This emphasises the need for everyone to be digitally literate to participate fully in life, work and education.

Executive summary

Essential digital skills for life and work

This is a review of existing activity and assessment of need to support the delivery of Essential Digital Skills (EDS) across Argyll and Bute. The CLD Partnership needed to know what Essential Digital Skills support exists and what is needed across Argyll and Bute. The focus of this review is on Digital Skills for Life and Work. These skills are essential to progress towards employment and manage day to day responsibilities.

There are many barriers to digital inclusion including lack of access to devices, lack of confidence to lack of support and IT help. The previous Digital Connections project outlined criteria for supporting people. These included:

— They currently do not have access to an appropriate device and/or internet connection at home.
— They are from a low-income household – they cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access
— They are actively taking steps to improve their employment prospects. This includes people furthest from the labour market who are not job ready but are undertaking activity to address any barriers to employment or training (e.g. confidence building, improving health or wellbeing, ESOL programmes)
— They are currently unemployed.

The kind of people who are more likely to need help are people who have lower educational qualifications, lower income, lack confidence or connections to ask help from and people in isolated or remote island communities.

EDS support is needed across Argyll and Bute to fit with national strategies including the National Plan for Scotland's Islands. Across Argyll and Bute stakeholders have an anecdotal understanding that many organisations provide support however there is a lack of clarity about who is doing what and where to support people.

Figure 1 Support organisations

Skills Development Scotland	Careers advice and courses (Future Learn - not suitable for all).
Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections	Devices and MiFi distributed and a further 170 devices issued
Community Learning – Learning Hubs	Drop-In services at 6 centres covering all aspects of basic IT.

Argyll and Bute Council ICT	Offering remote online seminar in Cyber security
Library delivery	Devices available for limited times and digital courses in 10 libraries.
Family Learning	Aim to help home-based school work for pupils
DWP/Job Centre	Access to devices and support but only for employability purposes
Volunteers	Digital mentors – (including inter-generational work).
Community intermediaries	Organisations such as Inspiralba, Gar Comm, Blue Triangle Housing, HELP, WeAreWithYou, Garelochead Station Trust (short courses) who alongside the specific support they provide also offer some level of EDS support.

We identified people need improved facilities to train or support people, better understanding of what is available and a helpline/IT support. There was an identified need on the islands and more remote communities where the cost of delivery has meant that EDS services have been neglected. An asset-based approach, building up those community intermediaries who already work with the target groups in specific areas is recommended.

Clarity and a strategic approach would link the assets providing the support needed as outlined in Figure 2. Building on some of these assets will help address barriers faced by digitally excluded people in Argyll and Bute.

Figure 2 Assets delivering support

Barriers to digital inclusion	Existing assets	Build on assets or add support
Access to devices	Available through libraries, Job Centres (employability only) community centres, friends and family	Establish flexible support Fund to buy and distribute suitable devices. Have a digi-bank (like a foodbank but where devices can be distributed to referred people)
Access to connectivity	Space and facilities are available in Libraries, friends and family, public places	Provide mobile WiFi with 24 months unlimited data. Make more public spaces or schools more available at specific times. Inclusion of Essential Digital Skills support into the TSI directory under digital support services. (https://abcd.scot/)
Gaining and developing	Deliver support groups,	Build skills and capacity of those in

digital skills	friends and family, libraries and community centres	organisations including those who are in remote areas. Have peripatetic workers/volunteers to conduct initial training in remote or island communities. Use EDS check-up, guides and tools available through SCVO
Confidence and understanding (relevance)	Support groups, libraries, friends and family	Stimulate peer to peer support and mentoring groups using young people undertaking social action. Digital Champions and promote a helpline
Access to online support and services	Support groups, friends and families, libraries, community groups, support workers	Digital Champions and support/IT helpline from a (funded) community intermediary
Disabilities (Visually impaired, Dyslexia, ADHD etc.)	Community groups, support workers	Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs Disability specific devices
Prefer training and support in Gaelic or another language (incl. refugee support)	Community groups, support workers	Translated training programmes and guides Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs

A Theory of Change outlining he links from activities through short term outcomes to medium- and long-term outcomes is included in the main report. In summary the resources needed are:

— Inclusion of Essential Digital Skills support into the TSI directory (https://abcd.scot/) under digital support services.
— A flexible fund to buy devices and pre-loaded SIMs
— More broadband access within community and public spaces
— Facilities to use devices and get support
— Peripatetic trainers who can visit remote communities
— Diagnostic to identify skill needs (Use SCVO framework)
— Volunteer digital inclusion mentors
— Translated training programmes (Gaelic, refugee languages)
— Drop-in digital clubs (linked to other sessions such as lunch clubs etc)

Our method and approach

To map digital support activity, scope need and determine future resource requirements to meet demand our method included the task elements in

Figure 3 Method

Initial scoping	The first part of the work scoped out the research. We agreed the research design, the key research questions, and the audience for the findings
Desk research	Once the scope was agreed, more detailed research was completed to help us understand what other organisations are working in this field. We considered initiatives through government and other opportunities. The desk research contributed to the overall mapping exercise and informed the structure of interviews and discussions.
Interviews -	We completed an initial focused series of interviews with key stakeholders (18). The interview schedule is attached in the Appendix D.
Case studies	During the interviews and research, we identified local good practice. We tried to reflect approaches that could address some of the identified barriers. We wrote up case studies (included in Appendix A)
Survey	As it became clearer that many of the people interviewed had little specific detail or data about what was being delivered, where and to whom we distributed an online survey. This was then distributed by the TSI to their database. We received 37 responses of which 20 (54%) deliver EDS training or support to adults across Argyll and Bute.
Final report	Following feedback after the draft was discussed with digital workstream sub-group we completed the report with an executive summary and a slide deck presentation

Background

Digital skills for life and work

Argyll and Bute Community Learning Team and the Argyll and Bute TSI commissioned this project:

The CLD Partnership and the Digital Workstream Subgroup of the Partnership needed to know what support existed to support Essential Digital Skills (EDS) across Argyl and Bute. The Partnership will use findings to identify gaps in support to ensure manpower and resources are targeted at people who need support the most. The CLD strategy identified some short-term actions to deliver the strategy. To support digital skills specific actions were needed. The digital subgroup was established, volunteering opportunities were considered and basic upskilling courses were created. Actions were to be completed by the TSI, liveArgyll, the council, Argyll college and SDS.

Our approach to this mapping exercise, related to EDS identified:

— Activity and delivery across Argyll and Bute
— Current needs across Argyll and Bute
— Training and support programmes required to help people, and
— Funding and resource requirements and potential funding avenues where required.

This work did not include a full audit of digital delivery, services, individuals' needs, broadband connection and infrastructure across Argyll and Bute. We focused on elements that will:

— allow people to better achieve skills for lifelong learning
— to be better prepared for the job market, or
— to take part in or use services where some digital understanding is needed.

Digital definitions can be different for some organisations. As a basis for developing the future Digital Skills Strategy for the Argyll and Bute TSI we considered key segments of digital economy skills. The four skills segments set out in Figure 4 are:

— Digital Skills for Life and Work
— Digital enablement skills
— Hybrid tech professionals
— Digital tech professionals

Figure 4 Skills segments
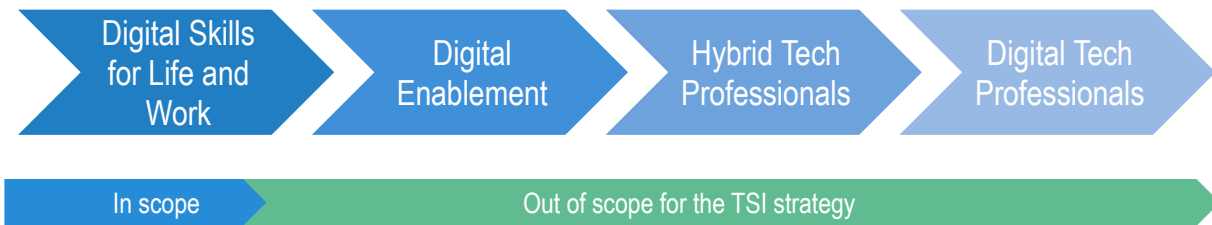
Our focus is on the first step along this pathway, Digital Skills for Life and Work. A lack of digital literacy is a barrier to individuals moving along the pathway to many jobs that require digital skills. Digital Skills for Life and Work are typically entry level digital skills that support people to access employment and undertake their job effectively. The UK Government describes these as Essential Digital Skills (EDS).[1] They are often part of employability provision delivered alongside tailored support to:

— progress people towards employment
— enable them to undertake job searches and applications, and
— to function in the workforce.

But digital literacy is also increasingly essential for people in their life to manage their day-to-day responsibilities. Using these skills people engage with services, including:

— Universal Credit applications
— essential health services, and
— access banking and other information.

This emphasises the need for everyone to be digitally literate and confident to participate fully in life, work and education including supporting their children, if they have any. The pandemic resulted in many people working virtually, and service providers and businesses moving their interactions online. This means that for our target group digital skills for life and work are more important.

Barriers to participation

The Scottish Government's Digital Strategy1 sets out the importance of digital inclusion, saying

"People must be able to access technology, understand its benefits and limitations, develop the skills they need to be safe and creative online and control how their personal information is used."

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework

The UK Digital Strategy 2 cites research that suggests there are four key barriers to digital inclusion, and more than one may affect individuals at any one time:

— access: the ability to connect to the internet and go online
— skills: the ability to use the internet and online services
— confidence: a fear of crime, lack of trust or not knowing where to start online
— motivation: understanding why using the internet is relevant and helpful

Feedback from stakeholders and research echoes these specific barriers are preventing people from getting online. The most commonly cited barriers by stakeholders were:

— Lack of access to devices
— No or limited connectivity (such as parts of Kintyre peninsula)
— Lack of confidence to seek help and support
— Limited access to online support and services especially in remote or island communities (these areas are harder to service)
— Affordability, with people on low incomes unable to purchase devices and internet connection.
— A lack of basic digital skills and confidence
— Social barriers, especially social isolation and loneliness.
— People with literacy issues
— Disabilities, for example visually impaired, Dyslexia, ADHD etc)
— Those who prefer to learn in Gaelic or another language (incl. refugee support)
— Those providing support don't have IT support to help when things go wrong
— Retired people not known to services.

A challenge is numbers requiring specific support are small, with people dispersed in pockets across the council area.

The SCVO publication, Understanding and Measuring Essential Digital Skills[2] states:

'To play our full part in modern society, it is crucial that we all have the digital skills needed for both life and work. Without these skills we will be at a significant disadvantage and unable to access the best deals and services.'

The SCVO Essential Digital Skills Framework can be used as a checklist to identify what skills an individual has and areas where they need support to help them develop their skills.[3] It organises the skills into five areas and in each area, sets out life skills and optional workplace skills. The framework Table 1 identifies the kind of tasks in life and work that people must do.

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[2] https://storage.googleapis.com/scvo-assets/test/digitalparticipation/documents/eds-measuring-understanding.pdf?version=0.0.28
[3] https://digitalparticipation.scot/resources/toolkit-downloads

Table 1 Essential Digital skills framework

	Life Skills	Work Skills
Communication	Use tools like Email, WhatsApp, Facetime and Messenger Post on social media Keep my emails and social media accounts safe	Use online tools, systems and apps e.g., Outlook, Skype and Teams Ability to log in remotely to work related communication tools e.g., email
Handling information and content	Save info and retrieve from a different device Use internet to access entertainment legally e.g., Netflix Check validity of online information	Follow organisation's IT policy when sharing, storing and handling info. Organise, store and share work-related info. on different devices.
Transacting	Buy things online and can check website is safe Use internet for online services Use online banking websites and apps	View pay slips, submit holiday, sickness and expenses forms Book transport and accommodation online.
Problem Solving	Use online chat to ask for help on a website or app Use internet to find out how to do something online	Use internet to find solutions to work-related problems Present and analyse information
Being safe and legal online	Understand importance of using, changing and not sharing passwords Recognise suspicious weblinks Use privacy settings	Identify and report suspicious communications Follow workplace IT and data protection policies

The EDS Framework includes a section on Foundation Skills. These are skills typically required by people who do not use digital technology or use it in limited ways. Before people are introduced to EDS, they must be confident and comfortable at this foundation level. Foundation Digital Skills focus on the ability to:

— turn on devices such as phones, laptops and tablets
— use the controls to adjust volume and other key settings, and
— connect devices to Wi-Fi; and set, know, update and use passwords securely.

UK digital transformation in the workplace has accelerated and in line with this, people in employment are more likely to have Digital Skills for Life and Work than those who are not employed. Age is a correlating factor for digital skills uptake. Despite this increase in the skills of older people aged 65+, in people of working age, there is a widening age-related EDS gap. In the UK, between 2020 and 2021, the prevalence of EDS widened between younger and older age groups, from eight to 29 percentage points – in just one year.

There has been a significant increase in EDS amongst entry age workers, defined here as 18-24 years, likely to have been driven by the acceleration of new ways of learning, working and living as a result of the pandemic. Whilst age is clearly an important factor, the biggest correlating factor is an individual's education level, followed by income then industry (for employed people). People with higher levels of qualifications are more likely to have EDS, and the same holds true for income level so these are unlikely to be part of our target group.

Broadly, education continued to be delivered across most of the pandemic, but it pivoted from a physical classroom to online and hybrid working which meant that staff had to quickly develop their skills and abilities. The pace of digital upskilling to achieve this transition is arguably unprecedented.

Pupils were working at home with devices provided by schools and parents needed the confidence with EDS to engage and support their children. Family learning supports home learning and staff must be familiar with online platforms. But support to parents is not universal and is more prevalent in primary schools.

The percentage of premises with access to fibre broadband in Argyll and Bute was over 92% in 2019 and is likely to be higher today.[4] There are dead spaces where telephone/internet access is limited due to the remote and hilly geography of Argyll and Bute. This is being addressed as additional masts and connections improve. However, for the digitally excluded that we focus on here, it is more the lack of home broadband packages that challenge people or the lack of a telephone data package.

Alignment with local regional and national policies and strategies

Community Learning and Development

The Argyll and Bute CPP reported that from the beginning of the Coronavirus Pandemic digital and online provision was going to play an increasingly important part in delivering information, advice and access to services. Several new initiatives, including blended learning for school pupils, were developed and the use of online provision was fast tracked out of necessity. However, data from UK research indicated approximately 11% of the population did not have internet access at home.

Digital skills for life and work are an important part of the digital economy pipeline. The *Digital Skills: No Longer Optional Report*[5] found digital-skills at some level are becoming near-universal requirements for employment. The research found digital skills are essential entry requirements for

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[4] https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/pages/9/
[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807830/No_Longer_Optional_Employer_Demand_for_Digital_Skills.pdf

two-thirds of UK SOC occupations and carry with them a wage differential. This means not having EDS as a starting point will be a major barrier to employment.[6]

Digital skills and digital participation are high on the Scottish Government's policy agenda In 2014 the Scottish Government published the Digital Participation Strategy[7] stating its commitment that everyone in Scotland should be equipped and can share the benefits technology delivers (this we see later is something that must be emphasised to get people engaged), and to use technologies as a tool to address inequalities. It set out the route map and actions for achieving digital participation including infrastructure, growing the application of digital technologies in businesses, public services and the third sector, and provide everyone in Scotland with the opportunity and support to develop their digital skills.

The Scottish Government published *A Changing Nation: How Scotland will Thrive in a Digital World*[8] its digital strategy in Spring 2021. It aims to maximise the opportunities presented by digitisation to deliver better outcomes for Scotland and demonstrates the Government's on-going commitment to tackling digital exclusion and making sure that 'no one is left behind'. The strategy is built on a set of 'Principles for a Digital Nation' including that it is 'Inclusive, Ethical and User Focused', and there is 'A Skilled Digital Workforce and that 'young people are equipped with the skills to thrive in the digital world.[9] It states:

'We will ensure that everyone has the skills they need to thrive in a digital world at every stage of life.'

Aligning with the National Performance Framework, it sets out actions and some key ones for Digital Skills for Life and Work that we must account for when proposing activity. That is to:

— Provide equipment and digital skills training for those who need it
— Ensure everyone can access services
— Use digital technology to increase community engagement and participation, and
— Ensure digital knowledge and skills has a place in education.

Scotland's overarching *Digital Strategy. The National Plan for Scotland's Islands* states Digital connectivity is a key enabler for economic growth, particularly in Scotland's more remote and rural areas. Access to good quality digital infrastructure is essential to improving most other sectors on islands, including sustainable economic development, depopulation and health and wellbeing. Although progress with broadband connectivity has been positive, further advancement was needed given the variation of both mobile and broadband connection between, and within, the islands of Scotland.

[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807830/No_Longer_Optional_Employer_Demand_for_Digital_Skills.pdf
[7] https://www.gov.scot/publications/digital-participation-national-framework-local-action/
[8] https://www.gov.scot/publications/a-changing-nation-how-scotland-will-thrive-in-a-digital-world/pages/digital-education-and-skills/
[9] https://www.gov.scot/policies/digital/

Unreliable digital connectivity in remote locations is a barrier to sustainable economic development. Resilient communications are important to deliver emergency services on the islands and good digital connectivity is increasingly vital for education, this, as stated earlier, was obvious during the Covid lockdowns. Additionally, remote health care could potentially be improved if an increased standard of digital connectivity allowed for virtual appointments. But these benefits and approaches need people to be connected and to understand how to use digital devices. This Island's plan outlines approaches that will be supported including:

— Develop a digital skills programme designed by island communities to meet their needs.
— Extend the availability of coding clubs and community-based digital inclusion programmes across the islands.

The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband project is a £410m investment to help rural communities and businesses get better connected. It is made up of two projects, one for the Highlands and Islands led by HIE and the second for the rest of Scotland. Every part of Scotland wants access to better broadband, but many rural areas wouldn't have been reached by commercial roll-out of fibre.

Implementation and delivery across Argyll and Bute

Who is doing what?

There is ongoing activity to support the development of EDS and make sure disadvantaged people can access the equipment, connectivity and skills they need for digital participation. This is aimed at tackling the barriers to digital participation including equipping people with the skills they need to progress towards and into employment. Often this provision is part of a broader intervention and delivered in communities, for example as part of employability initiatives, holistic family support, health and wellbeing and projects that work with older people to address isolation and encourage community participation.

Skills Development Scotland

Programmes such as SDS' Future Learn[10] provides free online course across interesting and valuable subject areas, one of which is IT and Computer Science. Again, whilst this is extremely positive, people who lack EDS will not access or take part in this kind of online learning until they have the skills and confidence to use IT. SDS offer help with career advice in some JC+ offices and also provide IT training and careers advice to younger people. However their focus is not aimed at supporting people simply to use digital devices and access to deal with lifestyle issues.

Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections

The work of employability providers and other services has been significantly boosted by Connecting Scotland11. This programme was implemented through a collaboration between the Scottish Government, local authorities and the third sector. The pandemic acted as a catalyst as it shone a spotlight on the digital divide, between those who are digitally enabled and those who are not. During COVID hundreds of people in Argyll and Bute who were shielding were provided with a digital device and a 2-year package of data. In 2021 Connecting Scotland provided 60,000 people with a device and involved them in choosing a device right for them and their needs. It also provided information on how to set up the device and the internet and how to use it safely and legally. It explains jargon and terms that may be daunting for people new to the internet and it gives step by step guidance on how to do things on the internet for example video calls, emailing, and accessing online content. Digital Champions provided personalised support, training and brief interventions to support digital confidence and skills.

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[10] https://www.futurelearn.com/info/press-releases/free-digital-learning-for-people-across-scotland
[11] https://connecting.scot/

The Outcome 3 group were made aware of Digital Connections evolving in Campbeltown developed by a partnership involving InspirAlba, Kintyre Youth Café and South Kintyre Community Resilience Group. They had recognised the need to respond quickly to the digital deficit and developed a model to access surplus devices in the community, reset them and distribute to families and individuals. Argyll and Bute Council Community Learning staff worked with Digital Connection partners to roll this model into the communities of Cowal, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead and Oban. The partnership was also successful in accessing funding to purchase refurbished devices.

Across Argyll and Bute many devices were distributed in two phases.

Phase 1: 134 devices (Chrome Books/iPad) from Connecting Scotland; 19 devices (iPad) from Argyll and Bute Council; 134 MiFi packs to provide access to the internet

Phase 2: targets households with children and care leavers up to the age of 26. The application process was completed early November and 207 devices and MiFi packs have been allocated to service providers in Argyll and Bute working directly with target groups.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to supply 10,000 devices across Argyll and Bute for school pupils. This would add to and bring more devices into homes that can be used by Family Learning (see later). There are some STEM hubs and in schools there is space and resources given to extracurricular tech clubs. So, this is something that could be expanded for older people.

Community Learning - Learning Hubs

The Learning HUBS are being set up in six different locations across Argyll with Oban, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead and Rothesay currently in operation with Helensburgh and Dunoon coming on board. The HUBS are for Adult Learners from age of 16+ (who have left school).

Adult Learning (Community Learning Services) set up and oversee them and have been working in Partnership with other services to collectively provide a holistic and safe space for members of the community.

Partners who are regularly or weekly involved alongside the community Learning worker/s are SDS (Skills Development Scotland) and DWP Job Centre plus (JCP) brings added value and additional support. As the HUBS evolve other Partners could be invited to participate through session slots to raise awareness of their services or to give guidance and support.

This is an effective way of building the EDS needed by people however the Hubs are not accessible to all as they are located in the more populous towns.

Argyll and Bute council has submitted a UKSPF bid for additional literacy and numeracy workers who could be trained to support people with digital inclusion

Learners can access the HUBS for support in:

— Life Skills for Work and Personal Development
— Basic Digital skills
— Employability support
— Accredited Learning Opportunities
— Study Skills
— Information and sign posting to services and other organisations
— Basic financial capability including budgeting

Delivery is adaptable to meet the needs of those attending and can provide one to one and group support:

— Online learning is available using Learn My Way and Goodwill Community foundation sites (not however useful to those with no Foundation Skills).
— Weekly provision lasting 2 hours per session.
— Core skills and route to SQA qualifications, and
— SCVO non-certificated courses.

Learners new to social media and Internet can learn how to how to use it to keep in touch with family/friends, online shopping, Banking, paying bills etc. The numbers of learners attending the HUBS are slowly increasing as Adult Learners start to return to "life after lockdown".

The average numbers of people attending weekly is a mixture of regular attenders and drop In/ attenders (who may only attend once or twice). The area wide total across all areas combined is on average 30 people per week. The numbers slowly growing with most people in Lochgilphead (13) but zero in other areas such as Dunoon and Helensburgh (January to June 2022).

Cyber security

Argyll and Bute Council ICT offer remote online seminar on how to keep data secure (not suitable for those with no skills) however this may be useful to community intermediaries supporting the learners.

Library delivery

Public Network computers are in use in the libraries highlighted, with 1 hour time slots that can be booked by phone, during opening hours. Ten libraries have public network computers available during their opening hours including Tarbert, Tiree (was closed for a short time due to staff illness but open again) and Tobermory. Rosneath remains closed and Islay mobile doesn't have this service.

Figure 5 Argyll and Bute libraries

Campbeltown	Cardross	Dunoon
Helensburgh	Islay (mobile) – no computers	Lochgilphead
Oban	Rothesay	Rosneath (closed)
Tarbert	Tobermory	Tiree

Family Learning

Argyll and Bute Education Service are responsible for ensuring that as much help as possible is provided to school pupils and their parents. This includes organising for devices to be made available during the school lockdown periods. In addition, as mentioned above, more devices are to be made available by the Scottish Government for all school children. When these devices go into the home the parents must have the confidence and the skills to support their child's school work.

DWP/Job Centre

DWP links with the Job Centres across all of the areas and can use their Dynamic Purchasing System to buy-in support needed to get people into employment. If they identify a structured training programme will move people into employment then this could be provided. An issue however is that providers won't travel to remote areas as it would be too expensive. DWP could use its own funds to purchase devices if needed for employability purposes. Support on devices is only provided to make a Universal Credit claim or to get into employment. People need to have some skills so they can maintain their job journals. They report that island and remote groups are blackspots being missed for support.

Volunteers

liveArgyll volunteer programme provides an opportunity to enhance and contribute to the health, fitness, personal development and well-being of the people who live, work and visit Argyll and Bute. (https://volunteer.liveargyll.co.uk/) There will be opportunities to recruit digital champion volunteers who can support people to develop their digital skills once we have a better understanding of the need. People located in the remote communities could have an important role to play in building skills in these areas.

Community intermediaries

Delivery organisations consulted said they had limited and anecdotal knowledge of what is available. Some have a relationship with the UHI Argyll college but are not fully aware of what others do and this makes it difficult to refer people to where the most appropriate help can be delivered. . They recognise that digital support is needed. The also realise how the geography of Argyll and Bute make delivery challenging. Online delivery is not always appropriate.

Resources are needed to deliver sessions away from the town that already have Community Learning Sub-Hubs, where several organisations can come together and offer different services like the Learning Hubs but at an even more local level. It was highlighted the benefits of digital inclusion must be promoted so people can better understand why they should be involved. This partnership work may be more difficult where confidentiality issues and privacy are higher.

Figure 6 Summary of delivery

SDS	Careers advice Future Learn - not suitable for all and SDS help with career advice.
Connecting Scotland and Digital Connections	Devices and MiFi packs distributed in two phases and a further 170 devices issued through Digital Connections
Community Learning – Learning Hubs	Drop-In services at 6 centres covering all aspects of basic IT.
Cyber security	Argyll and Bute Council ICT offering remote online seminar
Library delivery	Devices available for limited times and occasional basic digital courses in 10 libraries.
Family Learning	Aim to help home based school work for pupils
DWP/Job Centre	Access to devices and support but only for employability purposes
Volunteers	Using volunteers (digital mentors, provides the potential for inter-generational work). (https://volunteer.liveargyll.co.uk/) There is also potential for the digital mentors to support the implementation of Connecting Scotland.
Community intermediaries	Delivery support by Community Intermediaries such as Inspiralba, Gar Comm, Blue Triangle Housing, HELP, WeAreWithYou, Garelochead Station Trust (short courses) who alongside the specific support they provide also offer some level of EDS support.

There were 37 responses to the survey. Of these 20 (54%) deliver EDS training or support to adults. While this provided some additional data, with such a small sample, it is not possible to draw too many firm conclusions. The level of support and type of support provided is outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Support provided

Support provided	Number of organisations	To what level
Devices	7	A little to a lot
Access to broadband	9	A little to a lot
Training	9	A little to a lot
Ongoing support	9	A little to a lot
Helpline/IT support	7	A great deal to a little

Of this support, organisations provided mostly a little to some support. Most of the responding organisations provide Essential Digital Skills training with a few (5) offering Foundation level training and only two offering higher level training.

All respondents said they supported people in the 45+ age bracket or all age groups equally. When we asked where people delivered the support three said across all areas equally while most (6) delivered in Mid-Argyll, followed by Bute and Cowal (5), Helensburgh and Lomond (4) with two in Oban. Lorn and the Isles. This is outlined in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Locations

Q5 Where do you deliver support to adults across Argyll and Bute? (tick all that apply)
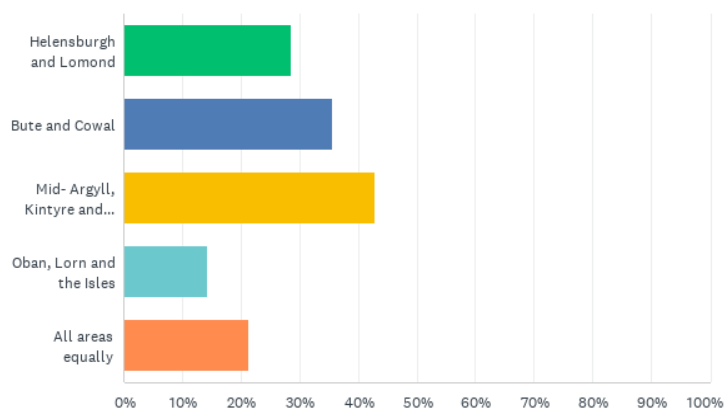
There was limited responses to identify any specific areas or places in Argyll and Bute where there is a significant gap in EDS support. Geographic gaps were reported by interviewees who regularly stated the islands and more remote communities as in need of additional targeted support.

Additional resources or support to improve delivery of EDS to adults across Argyll and Bute were identified in the survey as:

— improved facilities to train or support people
— better understanding of what is available locally, and
— a helpline/IT support.

Respondents reported::

— Some people are reticent to move to digital
— Connectivity is poor in some community halls and buildings
— Online engagement can be a challenge
— Confidence building is important
— Mentors and volunteer tutors are needed, and
— Software costs are a barrier to some.

These results emphasise the need to build peoples' confidence, promote the advantages to people of gaining more EDS, and give them the tools and access to do so.

Findings and resource mapping

As outlined earlier there is significant activity and resources already targeted on digital inclusion across Argyll and Bute. There was a lack of a strategic overview of what is happening, who is delivering support, who are they supporting, where, how and to what level. This made it difficult for community intermediary organisations, who identify people who need help, to signpost them to appropriate help.   No specific number can be placed on how many people need EDS support. Stakeholders however stated the priority was isolated people in remote areas, on islands and older people.

We wish to build on what already exists and take an asset -based approach. There is wealth of facilities and resources in the area where space, people and broadband access exists. The key is to take advantage of these rather than set up stand-alone facilities with new resources where they may not be needed and local relationships and trust would need to be built within communities.

As identified earlier there are people in digital poverty – they may have a basic device perhaps but without a data package or broadband access. They could go to a digi-base (a VCSE office where for specific times and days devices, Wi-Fi and space is available).   Ideally these spaces would have associated digi-support from volunteers who will help get people online to deal with work and life issues. There could be "digital banks" - places where people can be referred to, get a device and where they can be directed to support to use it. This support must be ongoing - like IT support companies have. If people are known to the system and already working with a community intermediary then there is help available but otherwise people can be outside or fall out the system. People who may be outside the system include:

— single men, unemployed, and not known to social services
— people who won't ask for help
— people who are retired with literary issues
— young disengaged, and
— those with addiction issues.

With people spread across the council area in pockets of low numbers support should be targeted at people including those who are already accessing support services due to them being financially challenged (Benefits programmes, Welfare Benefits, Food banks etc). Improving EDS will help people to participate (community engagement). Improving skills of voluntary sector trustees, committee members will help them do their work and help their service users and communicate better online however, this is not the priority but they can potentially support/mentor others.

Parents need the confidence and skills to help their children who may have devices brought into the home from school to help with their school work. For those parents who lack skills they need support.

One issue to consider if providing devices in the home that can be used by both adults and children is that of security/safeguarding, content filtering. Also if devices are to be distributed and there are damages (who pays when things are broken/lost).

Organisation staff or volunteers can assess or measure the competence of individuals by working with them to complete the SCVO Essential Digital Skills check-up. [12]This would allow support to be targeted on what is needed.

To improve delivery then clarity is needed and a dedicated co-ordinator to:

— facilitate stronger partnership working
— link people into support that can take them along a digital inclusion pathway
— improve signposting – inclusion of Essential Digital Skills support into the TSI directory under digital support services. (https://abcd.scot/)

To ensure a speedy response to provide support, a complicated referral and assessment process is not needed. In practice a system that uses referrals from partners already working with people that know the individual, have a good understanding of their situation and can support their access to a device or support.

Figure 9 outlines what existing assets can be used to support digital inclusion, what can be added or built on and who is well placed to provide these services.

Figure 9 Addressing gaps and barriers to digital inclusion

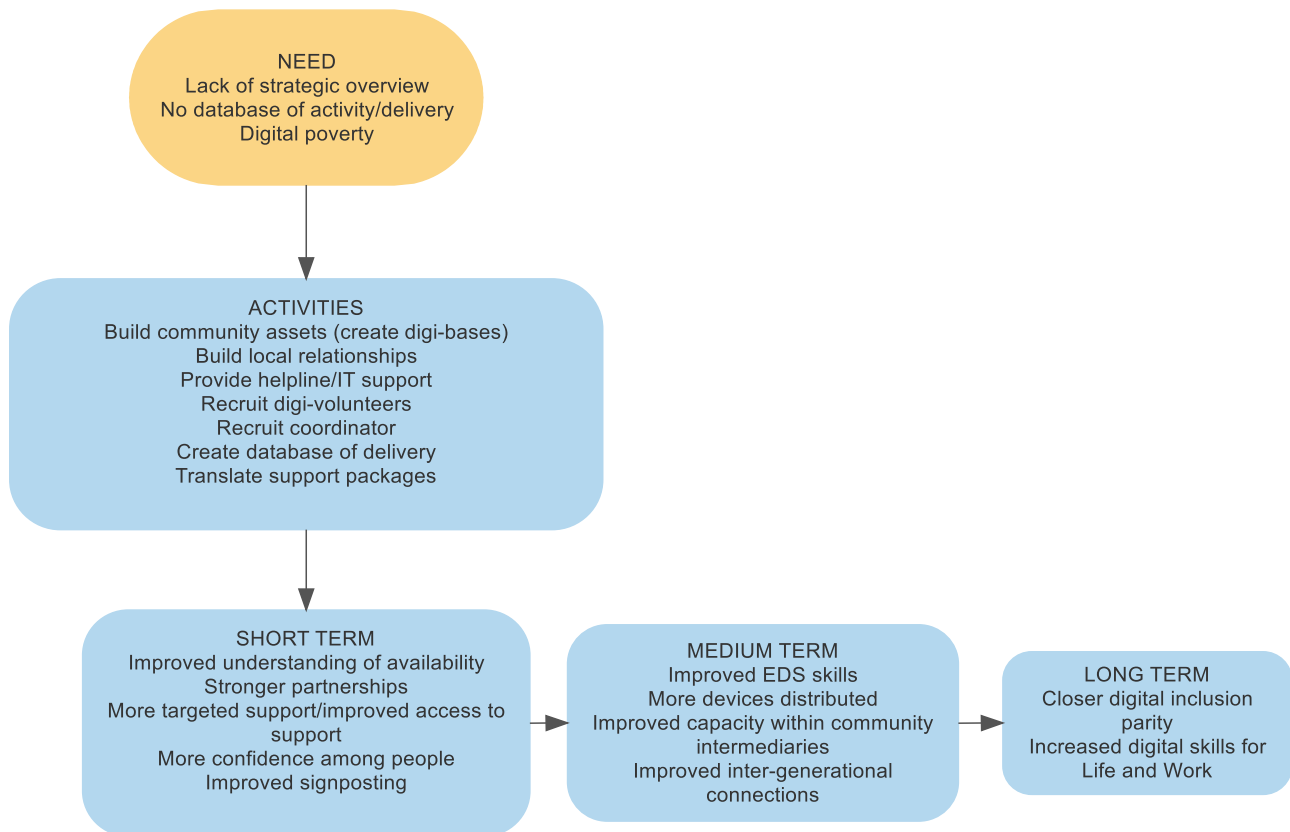| Barriers to digital inclusion	Existing assets	Build on assets or add support
Access to devices	Available through libraries, Job Centres (employability only) community centres, friends and family	Establish flexible support Fund to buy and distribute suitable devices. Have a digi-bank (like a foodbank but where devices can be distributed to referred people)
Access to connectivity	Space and facilities are available in Libraries, friends and family, public places	Provide mobile WiFi with 24 months unlimited data. Make more public spaces or schools more available at specific times. Inclusion of Essential Digital Skills support into the TSI directory under digital support services. (https://abcd.scot/)

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[12] https://skills.checkup.scot/

Gaining and developing digital skills	Deliver support groups, friends and family, libraries and community centres	Build skills and capacity of those in organisations including those who are in remote areas. Have peripatetic workers/volunteers to conduct initial training in remote or island communities. Use EDS check-up, guides and tools available through SCVO
Confidence and understanding (relevance)	Support groups, libraries, friends and family	Stimulate peer to peer support and mentoring groups using young people undertaking social action. Digital Champions and promote a helpline
Access to online support and services	Support groups, friends and families, libraries, community groups, support workers	Digital Champions and support/IT helpline Advice on how to be a digital champion is available through Connecting Scotland website. https://connecting.scot/digital-champions
Disabilities (Visually impaired, Dyslexia, ADHD etc.)	Community groups, support workers	Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs Disability specific devices
Prefer training and support in Gaelic or another language (incl. refugee support)	Community groups, support workers	Translated training programmes and guides Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs

Theory of Change

Figure 10 Theory of Change

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │          NEED            │
                    │ Lack of strategic overview│
                    │ No database of activity/delivery│
                    │      Digital poverty     │
                    └────────────┬─────────────┘
                                 ↓
    ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
    │                 ACTIVITIES                  │
    │  Build community assets (create digi-bases) │
    │          Build local relationships          │
    │          Provide helpline/IT support        │
    │           Recruit digi-volunteers           │
    │             Recruit coordinator             │
    │          Create database of delivery        │
    │           Translate support packages        │
    └────────────────────┬────────────────────────┘
                         ↓
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SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
Improved understanding of availability; Stronger partnerships; More targeted support/improved access to support; More confidence among people; Improved signposting	Improved EDS skills; More devices distributed; Improved capacity within community intermediaries; Improved inter-generational connections	Closer digital inclusion parity; Increased digital skills for Life and Work

What additional resources are needed?

The review was to focus on what was needed, what is being delivered and what additional activity or interventions can make a difference. The assets, support and additional support much of which was identified in Figure 9 include:

— inclusion of Essential Digital Skills support into the TSI directory under digital support services.
— a flexible fund to buy devices and pre-loaded SIMs
— broadband access
— Facilities to use devices and get support
— Peripatetic trainers who can visit remote communities
— Diagnostic to identify skill needs
— Volunteer digital inclusion mentors
— Translated training programmes (Gaelic, refugee languages)
— Drop-in digital clubs (linked to other sessions such as lunch clubs etc)

Appendix A - Case studies

During or research we came across a number of projects that can offer potential solutions to address the needs of the Argyll and Bute residents.

Kent County Council and Medway Council	Kent County Council and Medway Council are rolling out a service to provide secure digital devices to vulnerable citizens across the county. They are working with IT, HR and finance solutions provider Cantium Business Solutions, which is managing the devices, building and managing an online portal and providing connectivity and data, along with technical support and asset management.
	As part of the county's digital inclusion strategy, the devices are tailored to an individual user – identified by digital co-ordinators in the councils – with specific apps, website bookmarks and a data package. This all designed to help them with access to public health services such as health visiting and substance abuse services.
	The councils are now extending the service following a pilot launched in April of last year and expect to have it fully in place in 2023.
Middlesbrough Council	Middlesbrough Council has begun an initiative to reduce digital poverty among its residents. Its library service has teamed up with the FurbidIT partnership, which collects and refurbishes unwanted devices and IT equipment. Residents, organisations and businesses can drop off unwanted equipment at Middlesbrough Central Library, local libraries and community hubs for it to be cleaned, repaired, refurbished or scrapped in line with Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations, then distributed to people in need. This takes place through a network that currently involves 35 distribution partners. The council said the total number of donations is already nearing 1,000.
Carr Gomm	A leading Scottish social care and community development charity (SC033491 supporting about 2,000 people every day across Scotland to live their lives safely and well according to their choices, whilst making plans to achieve their hopes and dreams for tomorrow. Their support is person-centred and strongly reflects their values of choice, control, respect, interdependence, and openness and honesty, ensuring that people can lead full and positive lives as active citizens. They run an innovative Digital Inclusion Research Project – led by a dedicated Digital Inclusion Researcher - to explore the digital needs of the people they support as a strategic priority to ensure everyone has the choice to become safely and meaningfully connected in an increasingly digital world. This project will inform the embedding of digital support across Carr Gomm to reduce social isolation and improve health outcomes.

	They established a device loan system – comprised of tablets and MiFi connectivity - within four Home Care services across Argyll & Bute, allowing Digital Ambassadors to provide face-to-face digital inclusion support in the comfort of individual's own homes.
Digit All	Provided monthly drop-in Digital clubs in the 6 main settlements of Argyll & Bute. The clubs will advise and support people to use email accounts, social media, Skype, webchat and to browse the internet safely. An online resource will replicate this to reach remote areas. The project expected to provide learning opportunities as a gateway to developing skills, reduce isolation and help build social capital. People will have a support network and become more confident as a result.
Digital Energy Advice	ALIenergy is a facilitator, project manager and programme coordinator and they devise projects, educate, advise and improve access to knowledge and skills so communities build capacity to participate in renewable energy and energy saving activity. ALIenergy is at the interface between communities, economy and environment – ensuring that these three themes are integrated in all our projects and activities. Also, they provide the link between the strategic overview at European, national and regional levels and direct action locally. This fund will be used to enhance our existing energy advice service by introducing a digital element.
	A second phase takes the Digital drop-ins to the rural Highland areas, enabling access where current provision is not available. The drop-in clubs will be open to everyone but aimed primarily at older, disabled, or vulnerable individuals; those who do not have IT skills and who could benefit from learning a new skill. They also will have young volunteers (who are very IT savvy) to support older people thus facilitating an intergenerational exchange of support.
Home-Start Majik	Embedding awareness raising and skills development into regular working practices for everyone HomeStart Majik works with across the rural communities of Argyll and Bute. The project will focus on increasing people's confidence and motivation to use the internet and develop basic digital skills.
Islay and Jura Community Enterprises Ltd	Provides short weekly drop-in session at three of the main villages on Islay on a rotational basis to help break down transport barriers. These will include and link with existing lunch clubs which will provide a "ready-made" group of older people who can be referred and have the potential to benefit. Also, Chit Chat Support Hub for people with long term conditions another one of their targeted groups. The clubs will utilise the services of young people (to provide intergenerational exchange of support) volunteers and paid IT "digital champions" to support and advise people to use e mail accounts, social media, webchat, browse the internet safely and price comparison sites. Also, job searches, employability workshops and work experience on-line activities for

	people who are unemployed.
Croft IT	The Croft IT project aims to reach out to crofters and smallholders of all ages in crofting areas throughout the Highland and Islands to bring them up to speed in the use of IT for everyday life. Historically, uptake and willingness to use on line services has been poor within the crofting sector. The advent of the 2015 Scottish Rural Development Programme has necessitated an increased demand for IT and digital coaching to help crofters and smallholders access agriculture support schemes and other services.
Device refurbishment projects:	These projects will have limited capacity, but it may be worth checking them out to see if they are able to help. Although now there is no centre in Argyll and Bute that refurbishes devices.
charities.connected:	There is the potential for connectivity support from Vodafone for charities running digital inclusion projects. Charities can apply for free Vodafone SIMs, each loaded with 20GB data plus unlimited calls and texts to be used over 6 months A charity that needs support for digital inclusion programmes, can apply for free Vodafone SIMs, each loaded with 20GB data a month for six months, plus unlimited calls and texts. You can use these however you like - for example, to provide connectivity to service users or deliver training to people in need.
National Databank:	This is an initiative from Good Things Foundation that provides data through their **Online Centre's Network.** The Network is made up of thousands of organisations based at the heart of hyper-local communities, each aiming to help people use digital technology to become more included, access essential services and take advantage of the opportunities the internet provides. Now this is available at Dunoon and Cowal only. Community Learning Dunoon and Cowal, Address:189 Edward Street, Community Learning Centre, Dunoon, PA23 7PJ

Appendix B - Funding options

Youthlink	The Digital Inclusion Fund was a £250K Scottish Government programme established to support CLD organisations working with young adult learners. It is now closed
The Charter Fund	The was administered by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). It provides grants to organisations to help them tackle poverty, social isolation and inequalities by embedding EDS development work in their activities with service users, for example the family support and support for older people already mentioned. This is likely to be an effective way of reach people who may not actively seek out and engage with digital skills development programmes. Digital Participation Charter Fund. It is now closed.
Alliance Discover Digital	Up to £15,000 Up to 18 months A larger grant to support projects to tackle identified barriers, with the aim of supporting digital inclusion and adoption of digital health and care solutions amongst the targeted populations. https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Inclusion_and_participation_grants_WEB_updated.pdf
Scottish Government's Digital Inclusion Fund.	are supporting a number of digital making organisations and initiatives, including: • a Scottish Libraries and Information Council (SLIC) project to install publicly accessible 3D printers in libraries throughout Scotland, to which we've given £76,000 of funding • Digital Xtra is a fund to encourage young people to express themselves through digital technology while learning STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills. • CoderDojo Scotland, runs a network of volunteer-led Coding Clubs for teaching digitally creative skills to young people, particularly those in deprived areas.

Appendix C – Digital delivery in Argyll and Bute

Helensburgh and Lomond, Mid Argyll and Kintyre				
Project and Level	**Delivered By**	**Delivery Venue**	**Client Group**	**timescale**
The Hub-Community Learning & Employability- Drop-in service covering all aspects of basic IT. Adaptable to meet the needs of those attending and can provide one to one and group support. Online learning using Learn My Way and Goodwill Community foundation sites. Weekly provision lasting 2 hours per session	Linda Tough	Lochgilphead Community Centre	Available to all adult target groups in the community 16+. For example, unemployed, retired, socially isolated, mental health and learning challenges.	Currently Running
Cyber Security Awareness In partnership with Argyll and Bute council ICT department. Remote online seminar session lasting 2 hours covering aspects of cyber security.	All	Various across A and B	Unemployed individuals	July and August 2022
Get IT Started Basic digital course run over 4 sessions – approx. 2 hours per session	Caroline Whitson	Helensburgh Library	Available to all – target groups include unemployed, retired, socially isolated	Currently running
Digital Drop In Drop-in service covering all aspects of basic IT, monthly provision lasting 2 hours per session	Caroline Whitson	Drumfork Community Centre. MOD Funded community centre,	Available to all – target groups include unemployed, retired, socially isolated	Currently running

		Helensburgh		
Digital Drop In Drop-in service covering all aspects of basic IT, focusing on supported online learning using Learn My Way and Goodwill Community foundation sites. Fortnightly provision lasting 2 hours per session	Caroline Whitson	Jean's Bothy Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub, Helensburgh	Available to Jean's Bothy members. Target group individuals with mental health issues, socially isolated, unemployed	Currently running
Digital Drop In Drop-in service covering all aspects of basic IT, focusing on supported online learning using Learn My Way and Goodwill Community foundation sites. Fortnightly provision lasting 2 hours per session	Caroline Whitson	Welcome In Peer led Recovery Café, Helensburgh	Available to Welcome In members. Target group individuals with addiction issues, mental health issues, socially isolated, unemployed	Due to commence October 2022
Digital Boost. Weekly follow-on service for learners who have completed Get IT Started, focusing on supported online learning using Learn My Way and Goodwill Community foundation sites, as well as others	Caroline Whitson	Helensburgh Library	Available to learners who have completed Get IT Started	Due to commence November 2022
SQA ICT Award Level 3	Eileen Kay	Helensburgh Library	Job Centre Plus referrals focused on long term unemployed clients with low ITC skills and accredited qualifications	Completed August 2022

Digital Support for members of Garelochhead Station Trust.	Eileen Kay Thomas Guy-Conroy	Centre 81 Garelochhead	Consultation with Development worker and members of Garelochhead Station Trust highlighted the need for digital support for some members. A 4-week project was developed to support the individual needs of member who used their own devices to become familiar with applications and improve their digital skills. Available to Garelochhead Station Trust members.	Completed March 2022
Digital Skills. 6-week basic digital skills programme tailored to meet the needs of the group.	Dawn Park	Kintyre Community Centre	We are with You group	Currently Running
SQA ICT Level 3	Dawn Park	Kintyre Community Centre	Gordon Wilson	Completed February 2022
SQA ICT Level 4	Dawn Park	Kintyre Community Centre	Gordon Wilson	Completed July 2022

Appendix D – Interview schedule

Stakeholders organisations

Introduction to interviewee

Digital Skills for Life and Work are typically entry level digital skills that support an individual to access employment and undertake their job effectively. The UK Government describes these as Essential Digital Skills (EDS).[1]   Digital skills for life and work are an important part of the digital economy pipeline. But digital literacy is also increasingly essential for people in their life to manage their day-to-day responsibilities. Using these skills people engage with services, including essential health services, and access information. The SCVO Essential Digital Skills Framework organises the skills into five segments. The five segments cover:

- Communicating:
- Handling information and content:
- Transacting:
- Problem solving:
- Being safe and legal online:

Data protection - Our consultation will be undertaken in line with data protection requirements. Any information you provide will be destroyed at the end of the research in line with our document retention policy. The consultation leader is David Gourlay david.gourlay@hallaitken.co.uk. The main CLD contact is   Nicola Hackett (Nicola.Hackett@liveargyll.co.uk)

Consent and how this information will be used

Responses will be anonymised however by taking part in this interview you are agreeing for the data and text to be collected, reported and potentially used for policy development and the review of Essential Digital Skills in Argyll and Bute.

_____

Date:

Name:

Role:

Organisation:

      a.   What does your organisation do – generally and specifically for digital skills?

      b.   Organisation location(s) and geographical coverage (if relevant) e.g. local offices and community provision and what it does. Would it be helpful to contact these?

      c.   Sources of funding (if relevant)

A Provision (if you don't provide skills for life or work we can skip ahead to the next question)

    1.   What age groups do you focus on?

0-15	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+

    2.   Do you focus on demographic or geographical groups (if so, which)?

    3.   How many people do you support with EDS? (breakdown if possible)?

4. What EDS support do you provide (detail if possible)?
5. What are your priorities for improving digital skills?
   - Helping people access devices and high-speed broadband
   - Train people to get online (Foundation skills)
   - Offering people digital skills for life and work
   - Using digital to offer services to people
   - Other (specify)
6. What do you think a digital strategy for the CLD/TSI should aim to achieve? What would be the key outcomes?

B Networks

7. Key relationships –
   a. which other organisations do you work with?
   b. Please give us a contact name/email for those we don't have on our contact list
   c. Where are they delivering these skills?
   d. Who are they targeting?

0-15	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+	All

   e. Can you list any programmes operating across Argyll and Bute (Future Learn etc)?
   f. To what level are they delivering these skills? Foundation/EDS/Higher
   g. What benefits are there for you from working with these organisations (as specific as possible)?

C Need and demand

8. Skills –
   a. How much demand is there for improved/ new EDS skills?
   b. Do you have evidence for improved/ new EDS skills?
   c. Are you aware of any obvious gaps in provision?
9. Equipment and support - What is the demand for devices from different target groups (disadvantaged/young people/older people)? What evidence do you have for this?
10. Equipment and support - What is the demand for training and support from different target groups (disadvantaged/young people/older people)? What evidence do you have for this?
11. Equipment and support -
    a. What are the key barriers to accessing support/training/devices (e.g. money, people, buildings, organisational infrastructure)?
    b. What are the strengths that should be developed to help people access support/training or devices?
    c. What opportunities are there to expand provision of EDS support in A&B in the short to medium term?
    d. Can you identify specific examples of good practice in Argyll and Bute? (for case studies)
12. Are you aware of any target groups/areas not being supported sufficiently? If not then what is missing?
13. What support or resources are needed by you to meet need and demand?

14. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Thanks for your responses. If you think of anything else that you want to add in the next few days please email: david.gourlay@hallaitken.co.uk

Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and Bute TSI

Digital mapping
Report