Update- Digital Inclusion Community Learning Services

One of our main focus areas is digital inclusion and we currently offer a variety of basic digital skills courses and digital drop in sessions for a wide group of learners across Argyll and Bute in particular the Helensburgh and Lomond area. Many of our learners are facing economic challenges and cannot afford Data and/or devices to allow them to connect digitally with the wider world. We support job seekers, elderly, families and a variety of groups including those seeking support for addictions and those struggling with mental health issues.

Device Bank and access to free Devices Laptops and iPad/tablets.

In Helensburgh - Adult Learning -Community Learning Services Live Argyll has been successful in two recent bids to the Good Things Foundation's network of Community Partners for both free Data Access through the Data Bank and for free Digital Devices through the Device Bank. We have received 25 Devices mixture of Laptops/IPads/free Wi-Fi access.

Over recent years we have seen the demand for devices from our learners increase as more access to welfare related benefits and advice has moved online and our learners simply cannot afford to purchase devices themselves. The recent cost of the living crisis has only compounded this further. The Device Bank will enable us to provide our learners with the appropriate equipment to connect and learn online. As you are aware we have a large rural community, and these devices will enable remote learners to work without the expense of traveling a long distance and Community Learning we will be able to work with them via MS Teams and Zoom. This will be highly beneficial and will help reduce the number of learners who stop attending due to distance and lack of devices.

Impact and assessment

We plan to distribute the devices in a number of ways. We will make our learners currently attending our digital sessions aware of the offer and invite them to make us aware of their requirements. This will be done in person during our group delivery sessions. Additionally we will contact our remote learners and make them aware of the offer. At this point we would have a discussion to ensure the learners meet the criteria of the Device Bank. Once the criteria is agreed we would meet with the individual learner, either in our own or partner organisation setting to hand over and set up the device. At this time we will explain all the relevant aspects of how the device and data will work. We will also sign the learner up for Learn my Way at this point, if they have not already done so. At this time we will arrange a programme of contact and support for each individual to ensure they have ongoing access to either a member of the Community Learning Team or one of our volunteers for at least 6 months, to ensure they are able to make the most of the device they have been gifted.

DATA Bank MIFIs and free data

In addition to the Devices and free data that goes with the Digital Devices we have also been successful in our application for up to 5 learners per month to receive through Helensburgh Adult Learning, Community Learning/LiveArgyll (subject to criteria) free data for Wifi access to the internet and in some cases free calls to. This will give learners free access with no end date restrictions and

they will receive free wifi access continuously. Learners receive vouchers or a sim if it is via data card or mifi.

Many learners have no access to data via WIFI or similar. We carry out the learning in a variety of environments, public library, community centres and other local provider's premises. We would like to be able to offer learners the opportunity to access the internet out with the learning sessions. For many of them the financial barriers prevent them from being able to do so.

Access to data has a profound impact on learners. For some it will enable them to successfully search for jobs and interact with Job Centre Plus fully as this is extremely difficult without access to the internet. For older learners access to this data will enable them to communicate with their families and also interact with local services and organisations. It will enable family learners to interact fully with their children's education and school. As an email is an essential item for most services today, access to the internet is the only way to fully interact with one. As we are all aware in a rural area such as Argyll and Bute more and more services have moved online and having no access to the internet causes major barriers to learners, especially for learners who have English as a second language or suffer from mental health issues. We will be distributing this data through the Community Learning sessions and through my partner organisations, who have more specific remits such as addiction recovery and mental health wellbeing.

Process and Links to become an Online Learning Centre and Application to the National Data Bank and National Device Bank

The Data Bank and Device Bank provides free Data and Devices to people in need via the Good Things Foundation's network of local Community Partners. Community organisations can apply to access both the Data Bank and the Device Bank enabling them to provide Digital access and devices to people in their communities who need them. You can apply to both the Data Bank and the Device Bank separately and funding bids need to be submitted to the Good Foundation Network.

The National Data and Device Banks are co-ordinated by the Good Things Foundation [Good Things Foundation - Improving lives through digital](#), a charity organisation, whose aim is to reduce the digital divide across the UK. They have a number of initiatives in place to work towards achieving this goal, including the Data and Device Banks.

National Data Bank

This initiative provide free data to those in need via the gifting of sim cards and vouchers which have been donated from Vodafone, O2 and 3 networks. These Sims and vouchers contain varying amounts of free data, texts and calls, for up to 12 months, for anyone who cannot access data elsewhere, and are facing data poverty, either through financial or other circumstances. This enables people to have access to online services and experiences they may otherwise be unable to connect with. The Data Bank is normally open for applications each month and once the funding has been granted, you are able to reapply for additional Sims and vouchers as and when you require them. Full details about the Data Bank can be found here [National Databank - Good Things Foundation](#)

National Device Bank

This initiative provides free refurbished devices, including laptops, tablets and smart phones, to people who are unable to access a device elsewhere, either through financial or other circumstances. Recipients must come from a low income household. The devise have been donated by a number of Good Things Foundation partners and professionally reset and refurbished. They are modern, up to date devices with the latest operating systems. They are gifted along with a mobile

Wi-Fi device and a sim card containing 12 months' worth of data. The Device Bank is open for applications at various time throughout the year and notification is made via the newsletter so it is important to sign up to receive these. Full details on the Device Bank can be found here [National Device Bank | Donate Unused Corporate IT equipment (goodthingsfoundation.org)](goodthingsfoundation.org)

In order to access these initiatives, it is essential that your organisation becomes an Online Learning Centre. Once registered as a centre you will have access to all of the funding and initiatives that Good Things Foundation offers, including the Data and Device banks. Registration is straightforward and full details of how to register can be found here Join the network | Online Centres Network

Update- Consultant's recommendations

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership will include the consultant's recommendations as part of their wider "digital skills" plan, with the aim of minimising barriers for those looking to develop their digital skills. The focus will be ensuring the CLD offering is accessible to those who experience various barriers.

Access to devices / Training	Consultant Recommendations
Access to devices	Have a digi-bank (like a foodbank but where devices can be distributed to referred people).
Access to connectivity	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.
Gaining and developing digital skills	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)	Stimulate peer to peer support and mentoring groups using young people undertaking social action. Digital Champions available.
Access to online support and services	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,)	Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs Disability specific devices
Language Barrier to support	Translated training programmes and guides Digital Champions and helpline specific to their needs