Hammersmith and Fulham

Draft Digital Inclusion Strategy

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Overview of Strategy

- **Introduction and Foreword from councillor** (Inc quote from resident) - to follow
- **Our Vision**
- **Our Strategy**
- **Our Principles**
- **Outcomes**
- **Underpinning Elements of our Strategy**
- **Delivery of Strategy Across Pillars**
- **Action Plan**

Our Strategy

We will deliver our digital inclusion vision for Hammersmith & Fulham by working collaboratively with residents, partners and services across the council, the borough and beyond to drive a coordinated and joined-up approach to digital inclusion that is informed by data.

Our vision

By 2025, Hammersmith & Fulham will be a more digitally inclusive borough; a place where residents have access to the digital skills, devices and support they need to achieve their aspirations.

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Our Principles

Resident led – Our strategy is led by what residents have told us they need

Holistic – We recognise barriers to digital inclusion in the wider social and economic context

Collaborative – We work together to break down barriers and deliver the best results

Insights – We use insights from data to make evidence-based decisions

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Underpinning elements of our strategy

Objectives of the Strategy

- All residents have the opportunity to gain the digital skills, knowledge and access to thrive in education, work or socially

- Everyone who needs and wants support has it

- Everyone knows where to go for the help that they want

- Residents are able to access digital services, independently or with support

- No one is disadvantaged by a lack of digital awareness, skills or access to equipment

- Residents have developed skills that enable them to use digital services and devices with confidence

- Residents feel safe and secure when online

- We've had a measurable impact on the level of digital exclusion in the borough

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Delivering our strategy

- Through this strategy we will deliver a Digital Inclusion Programme for Hammersmith and Fulham.

- We will also continue to engage residents to make sure that we understand the changing environment for residents, and respond appropriately to emerging technology which may impact our services and our residents.

- Our strategy will focus on providing support across the four pillars of digital inclusion
  o Devices
  o Connectivity
  o Advice & guidance
  o Skills

Delivering our strategy (ctd)

- Our Digital Inclusion Strategy will be delivered through a digital inclusion 'ecosystem' of council services and partners working together to deliver a coordinated programme of work

- The ecosystem will be supported by a digital inclusion platform that identifies all the partners and sources of support within this ecosystem

- Our work will be underpinned by data to help us identify who needs help, who provides it, what help is effective, and track and measure our progress

- As a result of our strategy, all H&F residents will be digitally confident and will feel safe and secure online.

Four pillars of digital inclusion

Devices	Connectivity	Advice & Guidance	Skills

Access	Adoption	Application

Digital inclusion ecosystem

Data

Residents feel digitally confident and safe

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Our digital inclusion ecosystem

➢ We know that we already have multiple council services, voluntary, community and other organisations providing support in this area but for the most part these services and organisations work alone and on specific areas

➢ This can mean that residents who need help often don't know where to turn, and the help they receive may not address all their needs

➢ We need to work together across services and organisations to maximise the use of our scarce resources and to make sure that there are no gaps or duplication in the delivery of digital inclusion services*

➢ We will deliver our strategy by developing a more joined up and coherent digital inclusion 'eco-system' – a coordinated group of partners across H&F, the WLA, London, Health, the voluntary sector and industry working together to support the GLA mission that by 2025 all London residents will have access to connectivity, devices and digital skills.

*Please see data gathered by Agilisys on the Voluntary and Community Sector in H&F in Appendix C

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Our digital inclusion platform

- Our residents highlighted the difficulty of trying to navigate through the maze of support providers to try and find the help that they needed.* Often, people didn't know where to start or where to go.

- Local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations expressed the same concerns, and wanted to be able to easily direct residents to the right support when they needed it.*

- Our digital inclusion ecosystem will be underpinned by an effective 'sign-posting' digital platform so that digital inclusion providers and what they provide are easily identifiable – where residents can confidently access and use the platform for themselves

- Advice and Guidance is also at the heart of our strategy, and we will take action to make our services inclusive by default.

*Please see Appendices A & B – feedback from Residents and VCS organisations obtained through our Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)

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Delivery across the four pillars of digital inclusion

Devices

- Our residents reminded us that digital accessibility isn't just about having a device, but it is also about considering the end-to-end support needs around digital inclusion, for example, a need for assistive technology or aids*

- The voluntary sector sees H&F as a powerful ally with the potential to engage industry as an active collaborator in our work to end digital exclusion in the borough*

- We will work collaboratively across our digital inclusion ecosystem to ensure that everyone who needs a device has access to a supported device that they know how to use and ensure that residents are signposted to additional sources of support for their wider needs

- *Please see Appendices A & B – feedback from Residents and VCS organisations obtained through our Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)

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Connectivity

- Our residents told us that existing so-called 'social tariffs' didn't currently offer the same standards of service as more commercial tariffs

- Our residents found the plethora of contracts confusing and difficult to navigate

- Concerns about how to stay safe online and who's advice to trust were a real barrier to digital confidence

- We will work with partners like LOTI the GLA, the WLA and telecoms providers to ensure that all residents have access to high-speed internet connectivity and great service at a price that they can afford.

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Skills

- We know that digital skills needs vary by age – a school leaver may need support to ensure that they bring sufficient digital skills to their employment; while the elderly may want support to connect with friends and family that are not otherwise accessible to them*

- A recurrent theme in feedback from our residents and VCS was that digital skills extend to feeling safe and secure online, and confidently navigating the different options that are available around devices and connectivity.**

  - We will work across our ecosystem – including education providers and employers – to develop targeted digital skills development programmes that meet the needs of excluded residents and enable them to be digitally confident and secure online

  - This will include ongoing support to upskill and reskill residents to enable their continued participation in an increasingly digital workplace

*Based on analysis of ONS H&F population and digital inclusion data conducted by Agilisys on behalf of H&F

**Please see Appendices A & B – feedback from Residents and VCS organisations obtained through our Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)

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Advice & guidance

- Our residents told us that many of them did not feel safe online

- They also didn't know who to trust for advice and guidance on digital matters, such as understanding social tariffs on offer from Internet Service Providers (ISPs), or know where to go for other sources of support

- We will work with digital inclusion ecosystem partners to signpost residents to trusted and accessible sources of advice and guidance

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Digital Inclusion Action Plan

This action plan outlines how we will deliver on our Digital Inclusion Strategy and coordinate our efforts across the Council and with wider partners.

The action plan is based on what residents told us were their priorities, these priorities were mapped against feasibility and existing council resources to put together an initial action plan which can be delivered utilising existing council capabilities.(See next slide)

The following action plans set out:

a) Immediate Action Plan (Planned or already in progress)

b) Future Action Plan (Requiring additional resource and/or investment)

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Immediate ACTION PLAN – Planned or already in progress

Pillar / Theme	No	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Cross Cutting	1	Set up LBHF Steering Group to oversee and monitor digital inclusion strategy and progress against action plan / or mandate the Digital Board?	Council	Governance
	2	Engage the public through the digital access group to enable us to understand resident views, priorities and concerns	Council Digital Access Group	Service Access
	3	"Tell us once" service design so that digital interactions with our Council remain easy to use and user friendly	Council – REAP programme	Service Access
	4	Make sure council services remain accessible to our ESOL residents	Council Digital Access Group	Service Access
	5	Embed digital inclusion into Council policies, strategies and projects	Council – Diversity & Inclusion/ Digital Access Group	Service Access
	6	Incorporate digital inclusion into service surveys and reports	Council – ASC, CHS	Data
	7	Increase collaboration with schools, care homes and businesses to provide greater support to residents	Ecosystem	Eco-system

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Pillar / Theme	No	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Advice and Guidance	13	Develop guidelines and promote inclusion to make services inclusive by default	Ecosystem	Digital Pilots
	14	Improve Council staff skills, knowledge and awareness in digital inclusion through carefully designed programmes	Council – Diversity & Inclusion board/ Digital Technology Adoption Team	Safety
	15	Improve the Council's information assets and service user pathways to work towards a single integrated front door	Council – ASC/ CHS/ REAP	Fulfilling Lives
	16	Build a digital inclusion application to refer potential service users to providers and voluntary networks	Council REAP	Data
Skills	17	Refresh our adult learning curriculum to provide extra focus on digital skills such as digital marketing and social media for small businesses	Council	Resilient Workforce
	18	Improve resident skills and use of technology in ways that matter most to them such as online shopping and personal use of healthcare apps	Ecosystem	Fulfilling Lives

Pillar / Theme	No	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Devices	8	Support up to 3000 elderly residents with access to hardware devices and help them to get online	Council, ASC and Pan London / LOTI	Internet and Hardware
	9	London hardware bank of recycled and refurbished devices that can be lent out or given to service users meeting criteria	Pan-London/ LOTI	Internet and Hardware
Connectivity	10	Implement smart home and assistive technologies that enable at risk residents to live independently	Council ASC/ CHS/ Housing	Connectivity
	11	Work with LOTI and pan-London organisations to find and promote cheaper affordable tariffs for households in bottom 10% income levels	Council Economy/ IT	Internet and Hardware
	12	Improve our libraries offer with faster broadband and greater support from staff	Council Libraries	Connectivity

Future ACTION PLAN – Subject to review at a future date

Pillar / Theme	No	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Cross Cutting	1	Review Council procurement policies, standards and social value guidelines to promote digital inclusion initiatives among our suppliers	Council - Procurement	Eco-system
	2	Resource a digital inclusion programme manager	Council -	Programme Delivery
	3	Develop a digital inclusion programme which delivers against the four pillars of the strategy	Council -	Programme Delivery
	4	Host a digital inclusion awards ceremony that recognises contributions from the community	Council	Eco-system
	5	Expand our capacity to support innovation in digital inclusion initiatives through funded posts	Economy	Digital Pilots
Devices	6	Expand our support for children to ensure that all of our 25,000+ children have access to appropriate tools for learning	Council - Economy, CHS, Pan London / LOTI	Internet and Hardware

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Pillar / Theme	No	Action	Lead	Outcomes
Connectivity	7	Make it easier for our at risk residents to access wi-fi and broadband when mobile across the borough	Economy - Shared prosperity fund	Connectivity
Advice and Guidance	8	Work with Council voluntary networks, VCSEs and residents to establish support and maintenance lines for residents needing support	Ecosystem	Safety
	9	Provide greater support to businesses with funding and planning applications including section 106	Council Economy, IT and West London Alliance/ Imperial	Digital Economies
Skills	10	Engage local businesses to understand their employee's digital needs and offers for apprenticeship schemes	Council- Economy	Digital Economies

Appendices

Feedback from our Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)*

*Feedback obtained from the DAG, which comprises of 12 residents and 8 council officers representing departments across the council. The following slide demonstrates the comments of DAG at a high level and have influenced this strategy.

Devices	Infrastructure	Connectivity	Skills	Jobs	Data
Guidance for using tech, developing skills and the knowledge needed. (safe use and risk)	Access for Blocks of flats other private properties – older connection speeds. Issues to improve speed with broadband providers. Not Spots – where there isn't great access in the borough (certain spots)	Cost for digital services living is high. Provide ways and advice of reducing and managing costs.	Digital Champions Network – lack of / need for more / across the borough at accessible points	Apprenticeships	Understanding residents needs and vulnerabilities.
Not everybody has access to personal computers while it's easier for a household to have at least a smartphone; It will be useful to make sure the online services offered are smartphone friendly without the need to use a computer. (Other organisations as Council is addressing)	Impartial advice for what the best solution, product, broadband package is.	Advice sheet on how to change your provider	Lack of self-help guides / online help videos, etc.	Lack of (More) mentoring (with schools, plus who else?)	Keep personal information secure and ensuring residents / businesses trust the process and system.
Matching the right device to the accessibility needs	Expense (starting and ongoing) for: Broadband Devices access. OR free Wi-Fi	Hostels, Supported Living accommodation. Experience varies place to place. Also, free / access to Wi-Fi in public spaces: / Only for safe Wi-Fi, some Wi-Fi you can have data stolen. So it has to be secure. Libraries Shared community centres / spaces Shared public areas (Lyric Square?)	Training - Adult education - Charities - 3rd Sector organisations	Length of time and complexity when applying	Systems working together (understanding relevant data so that front and back-end systems can integrate).
Device and software compatibility issues with assistive tech I imagine could be a real barrier.	5G compatible devices	Charging / powering devices – cost and access to this.	Knowing what is available online and what residents can get help with over the phone and what skills staff need to support residents.	Places to actually be interviewed, if using a public pace or the type of device used to access.	Having data in an accessible way (so can be shared with others)
Printing definitely an issue. I do have a scanner at home, but rarely use as I have a great free mobile app for scanning, which works remarkably well (even compared to a "proper" scanner)		Number of people connecting in a property, reduces the quality of broadband. (more modern packages, LOTI lean on big providers). Feasible and scalable we are referring for fibre optic installations	Understanding capabilities and needs of residents, knowing what groups need.	Understanding the application process, what documents needs (e.g. CV, having a god quality one, etc.)	Trust and confidence in accessing services online (number of scams – JP's earlier points of links to Trading Standards)
Licenses for software and the expense needs to be considered.			Possibly having too many resources listed, knowing where to get the right info.		More education on data - even people who is using internet for quite some time, don't know the risks.
			Run in office hours – some people may not be able to attend. Needs to be more flexible		
			Inclusion in classes across HF is hit and miss, absence due to sickness meaning you're removed		

Appendix B

Feedback from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)*

*Feedback obtained from workshop with 19 VCS organisations based in H&F held on 16 January 2023. Participants were asked to reflect on what residents in the DAG had identified as the barriers to digital inclusion.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop sought to :

1. Ensure VCS recognise the barriers identified and the priorities and understand if they think there are others.

2. Understand what the sector is currently doing to address the barriers and what support is available.

3. Identify where the gaps are and what we can do to address these.

4. Discuss how we work together to deliver the strategy across the borough and how we can measure outcomes as a result. This is a key building block to help us deliver our Digital inclusion eco-system.

Workshop Outcomes

The VCS agreed with what DAG have feedback (appendix A) and in addition added the following:

1. **Citizens Advice H&F**
   1. Advises residents or signposts to services that could help – advice that would improve digital accessibility is limited
2. **Age UK H&F**
   1. Provide 1-2-1 digital support and guidance for the elderly and relay available information to residents
   2. Need more reliable and relevant information to pass on to residents
3. **Fulham Good Neighbours**
   1. 1-2-1 and telephone support provided for the elderly to improve digital literacy
4. **Anti-Tribalism Movement**
   1. Organise campaigns and projects with the aim of reducing inequality
5. **Action On Disability**
   1. Employment support to people with disabilities
6. **The Bush Doctors**
   1. A GP Practice in Shepherds Bush
7. **AALS Macbeth Centre**
   1. Free access to computers and the internet when enrolled in an adult education class – laptop loans
   2. Courses on computing and programming available
8. **H&F Giving**
   1. Ready Tech Go to provide devices during the pandemic (ended)
9. **Urban Partnership Group**
   1. Offer classes to improve IT skills and employment support
10. **Place of our Sanctuary**
    1. Church in H&F
11. **Young H&F Foundation**
    11. Signpost to programmes for children and apply for funding
    12. A centralised guide/information point is important to signpost

11. **Sobus**
    11. Fee paying tech course and 1-2-1 support for businesses to establish/grow their business
12. **Foodbank**
    11. Vodafone scheme – free connectivity for someone living in digital poverty for up to a year
13. **H&F United Charities**
    11. Computer available at sheltered housing
    12. Support available for residents' basic digital needs
14. **Open Age**
    11. Device borrowing service, free Wi-Fi available, offer adult community learning courses
15. **Seapia**
    11. Free Wi-Fi available and tablets are available for use, although not enough
    12. Require a centralised point of information to be able to signpost more effectively (sometimes rely on anecdotal evidence)
16. **Rays Playhouse**
    11. Children's centre
17. **H&F Libraries**
    11. 144 public access computers free for the first hour and free Wi-Fi available,

Appendix C

Research Findings by Agilisys

Background

- **London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is a comparatively prosperous area**, with a relatively low median age and large number of working professionals living in the borough

- That said, there are **pockets of deprivation with longstanding issues of low income, housing challenges and resistant worklessness** indicating some LSOAs are likely to have residents at higher risk of digital exclusion

- The borough has an **excellent educational record** and is in the top 50 leading regions of the country for academic attainment, although this position is at risk due to disruption to schooling during the pandemic.

- In the **2021 Census 95% of residents completed their return online (**where they had been provided with the code) suggesting a high proportion of residents are experienced in using online services. This is the 40% highest percentage in the country.

- Connectivity and fast **broadband access is in the 90%+ range** across the region although there are still households with limited access to sufficient broadband connectivity

- Hammersmith & Fulham have an **advanced network of businesses and 3rd sector organisations** operating in the area who collaborate with the council to meet local needs and have deep understanding of vulnerable communities.
    - Some of these organisations are currently funded through the Council
    - There are businesses that have long standing partnership arrangements with the Council

- To bridge the digital inclusion divide, there are **pan-London and Council led initiatives already in development with West London Alliance and LOTI**

- However, to build borough wide resilience, progress economic growth and remain a compassionate Council, a borough specific digital inclusion strategy is required.

LOTI identified six priority groups most at risk of digital exclusion

Older people

Low-income families

Ethnic communities – *especially Bangladeshi families in low-income households*

Unemployed

People with disability or other vulnerabilities *(e.g. mental health issues)*

Small and micro businesses - *who may struggle to get their businesses online, or conversely in seeking and obtaining skilled workforce locally as they grow.*

Areas likely to experience high levels of exclusion

Askew and Ravenscourt Park

Avonmore & Brook Green

Palace Riverside
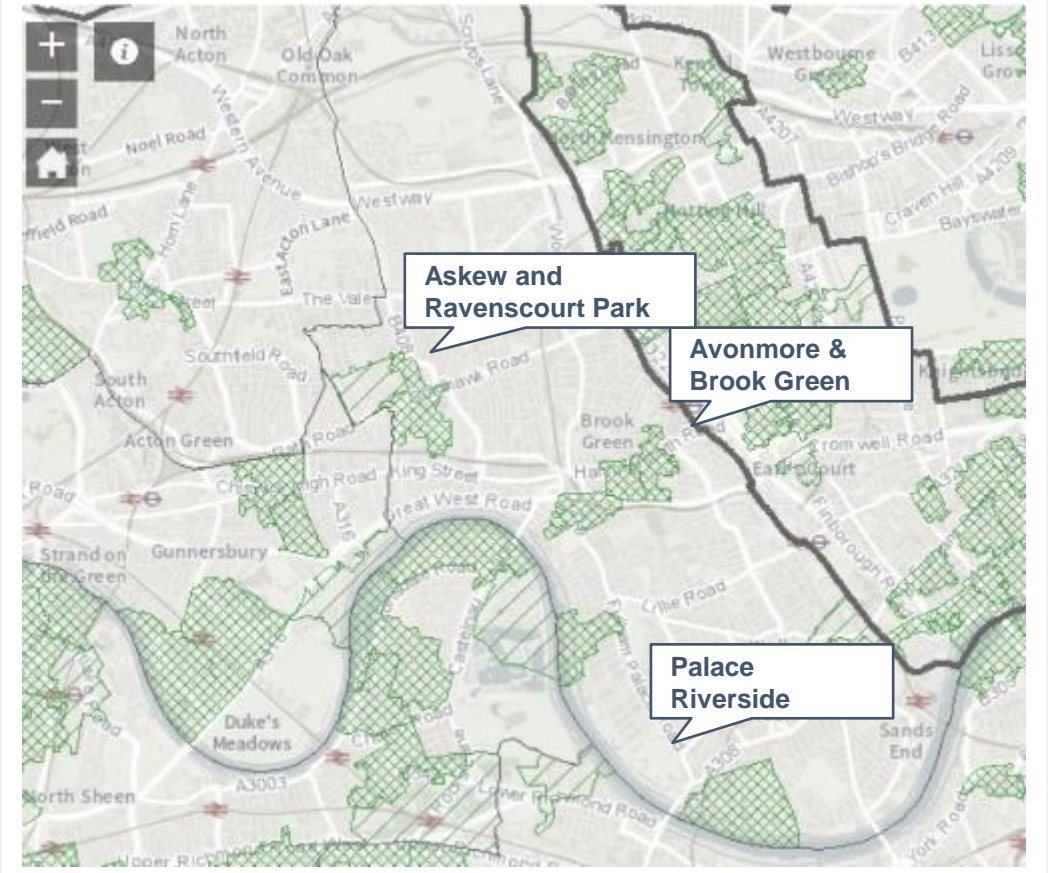
Indicators suggest high levels of exclusion

Current provision in the borough focusing on digital inclusion

Service provision

As well as understanding the wider ecosystem, we have researched current initiatives and services.
Through this we are able to recognise gaps and overlaps in digital inclusion schemes.

Key observations:
- Services dedicated to elderly communities may be overweight with duplicated activities
- Potential for other groups such as those with disabilities, BAME and over 55s to be disadvantaged due to lack of services in H&F for digital inclusion
- Device provision is fragmented of low volumes (i.e. organisations going out to buy 5 laptops for a few residents only)

Developing our ecosystem
- Age UK
- CAB
- Fulham Good Neighbours
- Baron's Court Project
- deafPlus
- H&F Volunteer Centre
- Sobus
- UnitedHF
- YoungH&F
- Health
- CCG
- BIDs
- Imperial
- Tech companies
- Telecoms companies
- Old Oak & Park Royal Development Corporation
- Libraries
- Community Organisers
- Resident Experience & Access Programme

Application
- Apprenticeships & Kickstart
- Employability support
- WorkZone
- Digital skills training (ALSS)
- Startup support for over 50's
- Recruitment services for businesses

Adoption
- Trialing accessibility equipment for tablet pilot (sensory impairment)
- Roll out of AT training to social care, health & 3rd sector
- Basic computer help sessions (Libraries)
- Help hubs on Council Community Halls
- Economy desk support for local businesses
- 1-2-1 support for homeless and those with mental health difficulties
- Digital champions (AgeUK)

Access
- Bid to GLA/WLA for Local Full Fibre Network/ Strategic Investment Pool (LFFN/SIP) funding
- TfL/GLA Connected London programme
- Smart City Development
- LOTI Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme (DIIP)
- BAI contract to provide mobile coverage on tube and tunnels used to provide full fibre connectivity across London
- Hyperoptic, Community Fibre & Virgin Media Partnership
- Free access in Libraries
- Ready Tech Go refurbishing recycled laptops
- Crowd-funding for laptops
- DfE laptop programme

Summary of workshop findings

Covid has accelerated the transition, but many are still behind
- Services have rapidly moved online during covid
- There has been a wide response from the ecosystem with a focus on digital skills and online services
- Training is provided online but residents don't have skills to sign-up/participate
- Some customers are hard to reach irrespective of channel – whether online, phone or white mail

Council led services
- Libraries are a well trusted access point for residents but have been largely closed during the pandemic
- Council do run apprenticeships and kick starters
- The industrial strategy is set to cover digital skills and inclusion
- Difficult to access poorly designed services online, including accessibility (speaking software friendly)

Unclear pathways for residents
- Residents find it difficult to navigate their way through the system
- No consolidated map of free wi-fi and access points

Access to devices remains a key issue
- Many residents still don't have access to appropriate devices
- No database to understand who has and hasn't had laptops provided to them
- Ongoing device maintenance and trouble-shooting isn't available
- Maintenance and support is a gap for those who need extra help
- Connectivity is an issue

There are a host of pan-London initiatives
- Confidence & trust issues persist, specifically reluctance to share data
- There are a lot of initiatives being led by LOTII, GLA and WLA
- LOTI are doing a lot on temporary accommodation and
- Data and insight could be better both within H&F and sharing across borough borders

Identified opportunities

- Focus on resident incentives to being digital – finance, health, shopping etc.
- Partner with schools and offer intergenerational learning
- Leverage corporate social responsibilities
- Expand libraries focus as an access point for digital services
- Co-locate physical and virtual spaces
- Improve signposting and referral pathways
- Co-produce services with residents and the digitally excluded cohorts
- Introduce digital champions
- Link organisations with recycled hardware

Service requirements from the digital inclusion strategy

Incorporating Council requests in

Whilst the Council is not the ecosystem, we have been cognizant of the mutual benefits digital inclusion brings to the Council as well as the residents and orgasnisations they serve.

Here is a list of requirements and priorities selected by services that should feature in any digital inclusion strategy

Social Care
- Reduce risk of social exclusion for elderly residents
- Increased choice in how residents access information and advice
- Increased social participation by connecting and communicating on-line
Specifically:
- Virtual day centres
- Care information exchange (CIE) access
- Access to Living Independently webpage

Economy Department
Connected London (GLA)
- To provide a London-wide context to support state-of-the-art connectivity.
- Ability to identify areas in the boroughs which suffer from poor quality digital connectivity and address cross-boundary issues.
LFFN – SIP Programme
- a scheme intended to increase fibre optic connectivity within West London
- faster connectivity for homes and businesses.
Smart City Development – GLA
- To ensure a common set of standards are adopted across all authorities in the area for future projects. G
- greater clarity and simplicity when working on cross-authority project
Smart City Development
- To have better data across London to mitigate economic recovery
- To promote and increase cooperation from a wide variety of stakeholders
- To highlight the benefits of big data and the potential improvements that can be achieved

Children's Services
- Support children and young people in H&F schools that are in digital need with the equipment (laptops and Wi-Fi connection) they need to support online learning
- Support children and young people in H&F schools that are in digital need with tools to catch-up on missed learning opportunities
- Support the continuity of education delivery and support for vulnerable children in the event of further disruption to classroom learning
- Support children and young people receiving support H&F children social care services with the digital tools to reduce isolation and support their wellbeing during lockdown

Other services
- Improved advertising of facilities that are open to the public for digital inclusion such as libraries
- Supporting residents with accessing services digitally to enable channel shift for Housing as part of their transformation programme
- Helping to provide hardware and connectivity for homeless and temporary accommodation
- Increased training, support and awareness for staff around digital inclusion
- Collaboration with the Industrial Strategy to support growth ad jobs