



July 2025

Partnership working to promote digital inclusion for health

Approaches to addressing
Digital Inclusion in your area

VCSE
health &
wellbeing
alliance ■



Good Things

Agenda

Time	Topic	Who
13:00	Welcome context - Good things role and the importance of this work	Katie Heard , Head of Research and Data Insights, Good things foundation
13:10	Context - reference to the 10 year plan	Ofra Koffman , Research and Evaluation Lead, Primary Care and Community Transformation Team, NHS England
13:20	Summary of the document: - Maturity model - Enablers of success - Skills continuum - Toolkit	Jen Harrison , Better Places CIC
13:35	Reflections regional/local representative: - Front line - Strategic	Maria Agiomyrgiannaki , Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Katie Dowson , Programme director for Digital Transformation, SYICB
13:45	Q&A	Jo Reynolds , Research and Evaluation Manager, Good things Foundation
13:50	Next steps and close	Katie Heard

Opening poll

To help us understand any difference the session makes, we invite you to complete an anonymous poll now, and at the end of the session. We'd love to know:

- What **sector** you work in
- Your level of **understanding** of how you can work in partnership at a local level to address digital inclusion
- Your level of **confidence** in taking action on digital inclusion at a local level in partnership with other organisations

About us



Good Things
Foundation

Our mission is to Fix the Digital Divide
– for Good.

We want everyone to:

Have the internet access they need

Feel able and safe in the online world

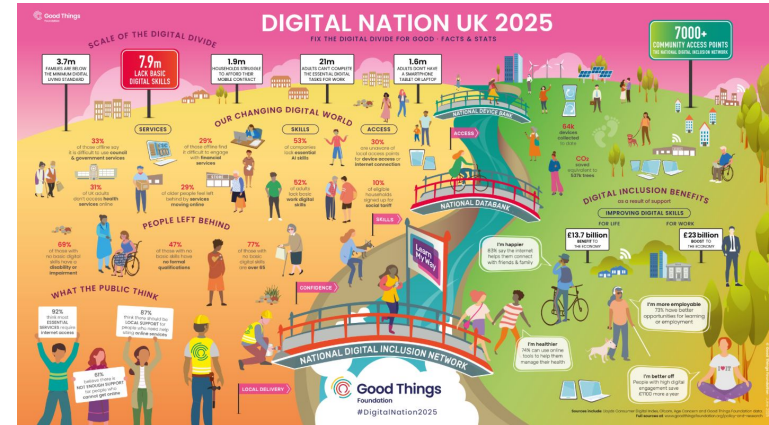
Have somewhere local they can go to
get help to use the internet



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Digital Inclusion in context

- 31% of UK adults don't access health services online
- Barriers to uptake include poverty/ affordability, skills, confidence and belief and trust barriers
- The NHS framework for action on digital inclusion highlights the importance of 'Leadership and partnerships so that digital inclusion efforts are coordinated and help to reduce health inequalities'
- Money and resources are tight. Customer groups are often the same, So it makes sense to pool those resources – to meet people where they are and ensure there is no wrong door to get help
- Our research and the accompanying report and toolkit explores how local primary care and local authorities can build connections and effective practices, especially in areas struggling to initiate such partnerships



Background

- The Primary Care and Community Transformation and Improvement team has been working with Good Things Foundation for a number of years, through the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care.
- The collaboration resulted in the NHS England publication **Supporting digital inclusion in general practice: 10 top tips**
- Drawing on learnings from earlier work, we recognised the potential and importance of partnership working between primary care organisations and local authorities to support digital inclusion
- The aim of this project was to identify barriers and enablers, challenges and opportunities, as well as insights and tips to support others in navigating their own partnership journey

Current context: 10 Year Health Plan

The 10 Year Health Plan for England has arguably made the findings from this work even more pertinent

- Shift from analogue to digital, emphasis on developing the NHS App as a front door
- Shift from hospital to community and the creation of a neighbourhood health service
- Commitment to work in closer partnership with local government and other local public services; ambition to streamline how local government and the NHS work together and make ICBs coterminous with strategic authorities by the end of the plan wherever feasibly possible
- The plan also states that *'The NHS will continue to contribute fully to the cross-government Digital Inclusion Action Plan, led by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), to improve access to and skills with technology among socially excluded groups'* (p.53)

The background is a solid magenta color. In the top-right and bottom-left corners, there are several thick, curved orange lines that sweep across the space, creating a dynamic, abstract pattern.

What the research revealed

Our approach

Interviews with digital inclusion leads and senior leaders from 16 local authorities in England to explore their experiences of engaging and working with primary care to promote digital inclusion for health.

At different stages of their journeys:

- 4 senior leaders
- 8 digital inclusion managers from local authorities with more established approaches to working with primary care,
- 6 at the very beginning of (or yet to start) their journey of working together.

The participating local authorities varied by:

- **Structure**; including unitary, metropolitan and county councils, and a London borough.
- **Geography**; including local authorities from different regions, and in both rural and urban areas.
- **Relationship** to NHS boundaries; including local authorities that have coterminous boundaries with their local integrated care system, and those that do not.

A maturity model for partnership working

	Emergent	Engaged	Established	Embedded
Activities	- Appetite for working together, but no projects currently delivered in partnership - There may be awareness of each other's work and communication about how to work together in future	One or more digital inclusion projects involving local authority and primary care partners	- Co-designed and delivered digital inclusion work programme(s) - Time-bound and targeted	Long-term approach, embedded across a variety of initiatives delivered by local authorities, primary care and other providers
Reach	LAs and primary care both reaching into the community via their own activities and networks, but no established approach to agreeing priority need	- A combination of universal and targeted provision - Balance of priorities and practicalities	- A combination of universal and targeted provision - Increased focus on at-risk groups	- Initiatives delivered across a broad geographical area - Community-based, informed by evidence and community knowledge
Governance	- Some informal, individual relationships in place and/or awareness of complementary roles - Principally focused on information-sharing rather than delivery	- Typically characterised by individual working relationships - Limited formal reporting arrangements	- Programme boards and working groups - Responsibility for digital inclusion owned by specific local authority and NHS teams - Reporting in context of programme priorities	- Proactive and visible system leadership, with clarity about who has overall responsibility and accountability - Responsibility for digital inclusion embedded across local authority and NHS teams - Reporting in context of wider local authority and NHS priorities
Funding	- No funding allocated for partnership working - Funding streams not yet identified	- Shorter-term, project-based funding - Strong reliance on external sources of funding (e.g. grants)	- Medium-term funding, often with a lead funder (either local authority or primary care) who has overall responsibility and accountability - Digital inclusion becoming business as usual	- Long-term, evidence-led funding - Pooled resources across local authorities and primary care - Digital inclusion established within business as usual
Impact	Individual approaches to measuring and understanding impact, but at varying degrees of maturity and not aligned as a partnership	- Emerging use of data to determine priorities - Often focused on measuring community reach	- Structured use of data to determine programme priorities and measure outcomes - Often focused on improving quality of provision	- Systematic, shared use of data to determine population priorities and measure outcomes - Often focused on improving quality of life and wider social outcomes
Stakeholders	Either limited VCSE or other stakeholder involvement, or LAs are working with VCSE and other stakeholders without the involvement of primary care	VCSE sector and other stakeholders help to raise awareness of provision	VCSE sector and other stakeholders help to identify at-risk groups and make referrals	VCSE sector and other stakeholders are partners in delivering digital inclusion provision

Enablers of success

**Proactive
leadership**



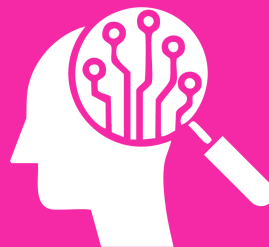
**Connectors
and
catalysers**



**Funding and
Resources**



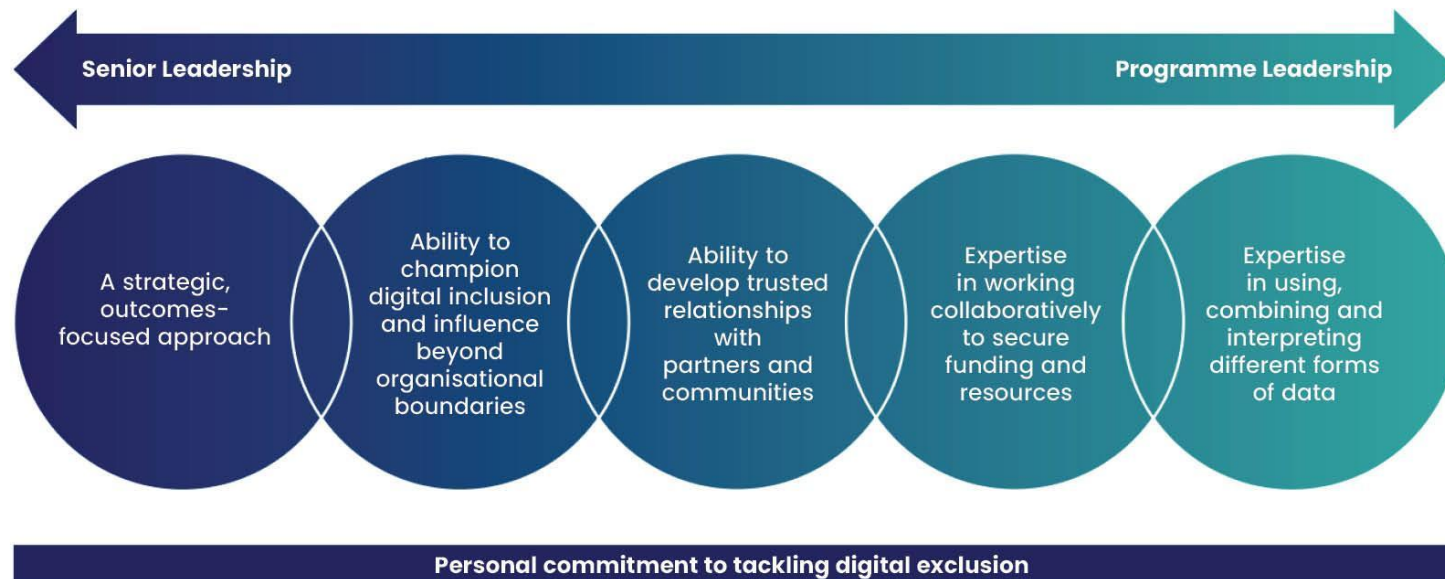
**Data and
learning**



**Combined
local
knowledge**



Skills, capabilities and attributes for successful partnership working



Toolkit for action

A maturity model for shared action on digital inclusion for health



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Activities

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Top Tips

- Getting started - Identify with** primary care teams do not need this is a dedicated position, or effective use of resources, not supported to deliver their day
- Making progress - Collaborate** and best practice, and gain it while ensuring that any new
- Leading with purpose - Connect** people who are passionate about roles, and at different levels of aspects of working in partner

Reach

Reach	Emergent	Engaged	Established	Embedded
	LAs and primary care both reaching into the community via their own activities and networks, but no established approach to agreeing priority need	- A combination of universal and targeted provision - Balance of priorities and practicalities	- A combination of universal and targeted provision - Increased focus on at-risk groups	- Initiatives delivered across a broad geographical area - Community-based, informed by evidence and community knowledge

Top Tips

- Getting started - Don't reinvent the wheel:** Go to what they need and what's already happening in your promote digital inclusion for health
- Making progress - Start with the person:** Consider their barriers when it comes to accessing support communities, and the specific challenges they face
- Leading with purpose - Use your learning to connect** with emerging partnerships, you won't have all the error, you can adapt and improve as you go



Leadership & governance

Governance	Emergent	Engaged	Established	Embedded
	- Some informal, individual relationships in place and/or awareness of complementary roles - Principally focused on information-sharing rather than delivery	- Typically characterised by individual working relationships - Limited formal reporting arrangements	- Programme boards and working groups - Responsibility for digital inclusion owned by specific local authority and NHS teams - Reporting in context of programme priorities	- Proactive and visible system leadership, with clarity about who has overall responsibility and accountability - Responsibility for digital inclusion embedded across local authority and NHS teams - Reporting in context of wider local authority and NHS priorities

Top Tips

- Getting started - Prioritise what matters most:** Partnerships take time to embed, and you don't have everything at once. Instead, identify the most important goals you'd like to achieve through working together, and use these priorities to focus your collaborative efforts
- Making progress - Find a senior leadership champion:** Local authorities and primary care networks designate a strategic leader to drive digital inclusion initiatives. Local authorities might choose an individual with strong relationships with primary care and other stakeholders, ensuring that digital inclusion aligns with their own or adult social care. Likewise, primary care partners may appoint a senior leader who can liaise with local authorities and advocate for integrating partnership initiatives within NHS priorities
- Leading with purpose - Establish a clear governance framework:** By integrating your partnership governance structure, you can ensure that the right stakeholders are involved and accountable for digital inclusion initiatives. This might be a group focused specifically on digital inclusion, or one that oversees all digital health initiatives. For example, within local authorities this might be the Health and Wellbeing Board, and for primary care it might be the Integrated care board. Consider what makes sense within your own local context and start from there



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Reflections: A local perspective

Maria Agiomyrgiannaki,
Digital Inclusion Strategy Delivery
Lead
Royal Borough of Kensington and
Chelsea

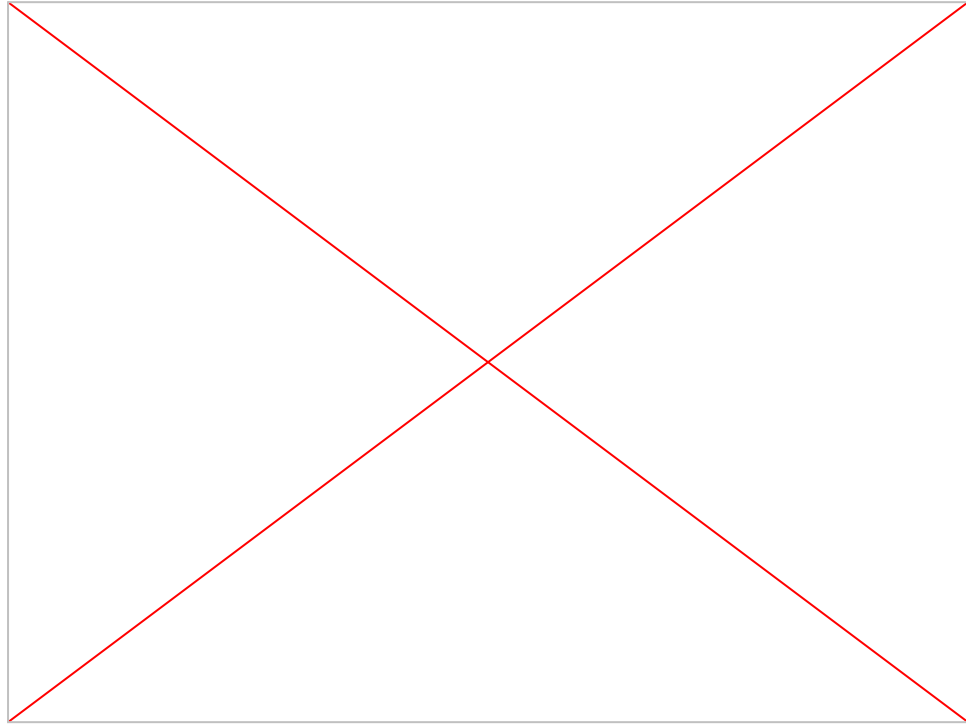


Reflections: How the learnings apply to a wider setting, An ICB perspective

Katie Dowson,
Programme director for Digital
Transformation,
SYICB



Reflections: How the learnings apply to a wider setting, An ICB perspective



Reflections, questions & discussion

Time for your comments and questions –
please add them to the chat panel.



Closing Poll

To help us understand the value of this session, please complete the follow-up poll questions:

- How much **understanding** you feel you **now** have on how you can work in partnership at a local level to address digital inclusion
- How much **confidence** you feel you **now** have to take action on digital inclusion at a local level in partnership with other organisations

Learn more good things

Contact us:

research@goodthingsfoundation.org



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