The Carnegie UK Trust is an independent, endowed charitable trust incorporated by Royal Charter. We seek to improve the lives and wellbeing of people throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland by influencing public policy and demonstrating innovative practice.

This report was compiled by Douglas White, Acting Head of Policy at the Carnegie UK Trust and Natasha Innocent, Demand Stimulation Lead at Broadband Delivery UK.

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- Go ON it’s Liverpool – Councillor Laura Robertson-Collins
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- Wiltshire Online – Jenny Wilcockson, Digital Inclusion Manager at Wiltshire Council
- Digital Fife – Sheena Watson, Digital Inclusion Manager, Digital Fife
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A New Opportunity

Why This Matters

Over the next five years the UK Government, devolved governments, local authorities and other public bodies will invest £1.7 billion to bring fast and reliable broadband to 95% of the UK. They have made this investment to bring the digital opportunities provided by better broadband to citizens and small businesses in those areas of the UK where there is limited commercial incentive for suppliers to invest.

The potential of high speed digital technology to deliver significant social and economic benefits is well established:

- For citizens and communities, access to the internet can be transformative. It can help people to access public services more easily, achieve higher levels of educational attainment, improve their employment prospects, source cheaper goods and products and find new sources of advice, information, communication and entertainment.

- For national and local economies, digital connectivity can help to deliver growth. It has been estimated that a 10% increase in broadband penetration generates a GDP increase of around 1%\(^1\), while SMEs which make considerable use of digital technology are more likely to grow than those which do not.\(^2\)

- For public service providers, high speed internet access can make it faster, easier and more cost-effective to deliver a wide range of complex services to citizens. Local government in the UK could save more than £420 million through digitising transactions with citizens\(^3\).

The new investment in the digital infrastructure therefore has the potential to create a digitally inclusive society where everyone can benefit from the many and varied opportunities opened up by better connectivity. But while the internet has great potential to help tackle social exclusion in the UK those who could benefit the most from being online are currently among the least likely to be connected. The true value of the investment in digital infrastructure will therefore only be realised if the most vulnerable and isolated people in society are supported to secure affordable access and to develop the skills and confidence necessary to take advantage of the new digital opportunity.

This is where our key challenge now lies.

The Scale of the Challenge: The Final Fifth

A fifth of UK households do not have even basic internet services in their home. This rises to more than a third of households in the lowest socioeconomic groups and to nearly 70% of households aged over 75. Significant geographical variations also exist. In Glasgow, for example, 4 in 10 households do not currently have internet access\(^4\).

In 2013, the Carnegie UK Trust published new research that helps to improve understanding about why people are digitally excluded. The Trust’s work focused on Glasgow, the city with one of the lowest levels of internet access in the UK. We gathered evidence from people in Glasgow about why they do not use the internet and what would help them to get online in future. The key findings from the research were that:

\(^{1}\) Ofcom, Communications Market Report, 2012
\(^{2}\) Ofcom, Communications Market Report, 2012
\(^{3}\) Ofcom, Communications Market Report, 2012
\(^{4}\) Ofcom, Communications Market Report, 2012
The main barriers to internet access can be grouped in three main categories:

- Cost
- Concerns about technology
- Comfort or preference doing things in person or by phone

But each individual experiences their own particular combination of barriers that must be tackled if they are to become digitally included.

The reasons why someone is not online vary according to age, gender, demographic group or geographical location.

In many cases, a primary motivation for people to go online is to find specific information that is of personal interest or relevance to them.

A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to supporting people who remain offline is unlikely to succeed.

A differentiated and personalised approach is required, working with individuals and finding the right ‘hooks’ to engage them and help them to gain access.

As well as being personalised, local activities to help people get online also need to be well co-ordinated to ensure that as many people as possible can be reached.

There is no single model for success but the role of public, voluntary and community organisations, which are in regular contact with those least likely to be online, is vital.

Libraries, GP surgeries, housing associations, local colleges, post offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux, social workers, health professionals, housing officers, care workers, community development workers, charity workers and volunteers all have a crucial role to play.

While additional resources to support digital participation efforts must be encouraged, a focus on embedding and making best use of existing capacity is also important.

Of course, simply supporting people to access the internet is not sufficient. Being digitally connected is not the same as being digitally included. Once people are online further help and support is required to enable them to sustain their interactions online, develop their skills, manage the risks and maximise the benefits that connectivity can offer.

The new digital infrastructure investment must not be seen as an end in itself. Rather, it presents a unique opportunity to take on this challenge and help everyone to get online. Action is essential, both nationally and locally, to ensure that this opportunity is fully exploited.

**Meeting The Challenge**

Citizens in ‘the final fifth’ are likely to experience multiple, varied and complex barriers to getting online and sustaining their engagement with the internet. We are still in the early stages of learning about how best to support this group. It is likely that the public interventions that have helped the majority of the UK population to get online will need to be adapted to support and sustain those who are not yet connected. Different ideas and models will be required to reach and support those who remain digitally excluded. We need to try out new methods, find out what works – and what doesn’t – and learn from those who are leading the way.

There is a lot of great work already taking place across the UK, led by local authorities, housing associations, libraries, community groups and digital experts such as Go On UK, Tinder Foundation and Citizens Online. At national policy level, the UK Government has recently published a ‘Checklist for Digital Inclusion’ which provides a very clear and useful starting point from all those wishing to engage with this agenda.
In this booklet we simply seek to add to the mix of resources available to those interested in digital participation. We do this by presenting six, short case studies of innovative digital inclusion projects from around the UK. These case studies focus on approaches that can be co-ordinated and delivered at local level, involving a range of partners and using a mixture of one-to-one and group support. They are not intended as models of how things ‘must be done’ – rather they are presented here to inspire other organisations to think about what more they can do to help tackle digital exclusion; provide new ideas for others to build on; and provoke discussion and debate about what works best.

We would welcome your feedback on the ideas and models presented here and on those that have been used elsewhere. We are keen to hear about those approaches that have been successful and those which haven’t worked so well – all learning is useful. Please get in touch on info@carnegieuk.org
The Seven Digital Participation Tests

Many local public service providers are currently considering how they should tackle digital exclusion in their area. To support this process we have used the findings from the six case studies – and our wider research in this area – to develop a set of seven ‘Digital Participation Tests’.

These seven Tests are designed to help local areas assess the likely effectiveness of their approach to tackling digital exclusion and identify opportunities for development or improvement. The Tests are not intended to be prescriptive but to recognise the organic nature of digital participation activity. A successful approach may not require a positive response against all of these Tests – but the more Tests that are successfully met, the more successful an approach is likely to be.

**TEST 1**

**Leadership**

Strategic leadership at a local level is critical to tackling digital exclusion. This ensures that it is given a priority status and receives the attention that it requires. Local authorities are well placed to provide this strategic leadership, using their authority, reach and status to set an overarching local vision; embed the focus in key policy statements; establish a direction of travel; and bring other partners on board.

**TEST 2**

**Co-operation**

Leadership is essential, but there are many different organisations with an important role to play in tackling digital exclusion locally. These include partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Housing associations, health services, colleges, charities, community services and businesses can all make significant contributions. Partners must be engaged and inspired to become involved in this agenda – to help establish the local vision and to play a key role in delivery. Within this overall vision each partner should be encouraged to identify what activity (or activities) they are best placed to contribute. This allows different partners to embed action to support digital inclusion within their mainstream work, making their contribution more sustainable. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work well for partnership arrangements in this space.
## TEST 3
### Implementation Plan
Following on from leadership and co-operation is the need for a clear and detailed implementation plan. This plan would set out exactly how a local area actually intends to make digital participation happen. A significant number of people remain offline and this population is diverse and widely dispersed, even within local areas. At the same time, an increasing number of organisations are working to tackle digital exclusion. Therefore, a coherent and co-ordinated plan to help more people get online is essential – otherwise people will continue to fall between the gaps. It’s also important that as part of this plan, people’s engagement with the internet is researched on an ongoing basis so that we can see how effective strategies are in the longer-term – are people still engaged one month, six months, one year after going online for the first time? Why? Why not?

## TEST 4
### Focus on Personal Hooks
Each partner is likely to deliver a range of activities as part of a local implementation plan. Within these activities there should be a clear focus on approaches that find the personal hooks which encourage people to go online. One of the main reasons why people first use the internet is to look up information that is of particular interest or relevance to them. Almost everyone has an identifiable hobby or interest, and there is content on the internet that can amplify or add to every hobby/interest. Discussions with people about why they might go online should not start with the technology or with the potential benefits of being connected, but should instead focus on them as people and their own, individual interests.

## TEST 5
### Address Multiple Barriers
Activities should also ensure that they address the multiple barriers that prevent people from getting connected. For most people who are not yet online there is no single barrier which is preventing them from doing so – there are usually a number of inter-related issues which must be recognised and addressed if they are to become internet users in the future. The help that people need includes access to equipment, help with connection costs, support in overcoming fears or concerns about technology and help to develop their digital skills. But if only some of this support is provided it may not be sufficient to help people participate.
| **TEST 6**  
**Involve People and Communities** | **TEST 7**  
**Be innovative and make it fun** |
---|---|
The internet is a social tool. It exists to connect people, so it makes sense for digital participation activities to use the social connections that already exist between people and listen to the ideas and expertise of local communities. This approach ensures that these activities actually meet the needs of those they are designed to help; it leverages significant support and commitment from local volunteers; and it creates a sense of community and purpose which can be highly beneficial. |
Finally, delivery activities should be innovative. We are still learning what works to help the ‘final fifth’ get connected. If it was easy, we would have done it already. It’s important that organisations working in this space don’t feel afraid to try different approaches and report on what works and what doesn’t. This is about social marketing, which offers opportunities to do things in different and exciting ways. There’s lots of great content on the internet that people can interact with, so it’s important to show people the visual, social and fun aspects of being online. |
CASE STUDY 1
Go ON it’s liverpool – a citywide digital inclusion campaign

The Challenge

‘Go ON it’s liverpool’ was set up in 2011 with the aim of significantly reducing the number of adults in the city who had never gone online. The City Council recognised the link between improving adult digital skills and regeneration. Liverpool had the lowest employment rate in the UK and below national and regional levels of adults with Level 2 and Level 4 qualifications.

Approximately 104,000 adults in Liverpool had never used the internet in June 2011, 29.1% of the adult population. Liverpool City Council partnered with Martha Lane Fox’s Race Online 2012 campaign to try to significantly reduce the digital divide in the City. This was seen as critical for skills and employment as well as being a social inclusion issue. The City Council set an ambitious target to reduce the number of adults who had never gone online by 25,000 by July 2012, a reduction of 25% in the offline population. The campaign was supported by all 90 local councillors.

The Solution

Liverpool City Council adopted a new, holistic model to achieve digital inclusion with three key ingredients:

- Strong political leadership, with buy-in from the highest political level
- A broad-based partnership, building on existing networks established by the Local Strategic Partnership and establishing a vibrant cross-sector steering group
- High profile, city-wide awareness and promotional campaign that focused on the benefits of going online

Liverpool had already identified that digital inclusion was fundamental to its Sustainable Communities Strategy and had already developed a Digital Inclusion Strategic Framework. The City Council integrated the ‘Go ON it’s liverpool’ campaign into the Liverpool Plan and provided a dedicated member of staff to co-ordinate the broad-based local campaign and encourage a wide range of local partners to embed support to get online throughout the city’s services and networks.

Liverpool adopted the ‘Digital Champion’ model developed by Race Online 2012, which encouraged as many local people as possible to become Digital Champions and recognise the role we can all play in sharing our online experiences and passions with others. Digital Champions do not need high levels of digital skills to support other people. Liverpool wanted to encourage as many local people and businesses as possible to join in and communicate the benefits the internet could offer the people they were in touch with across the city.

The broad-based approach adopted by Liverpool inspired the development of a multi-agency partnership that more than exceeded the ambitious target Liverpool set. The number of adults who had never gone online was reduced by 55% over the 18 month period of June 2011 to December 2012, with 58,000 adults supported to go online for the first time and over 1,500 Digital Champions recruited.
Lessons Learnt

The key lessons of the Go ON it’s liverpool campaign are:

1. The need for local authorities to consider the broader outcomes that digital inclusion will deliver and be much more strategic about how they join up digital inclusion with other key priorities and strategies.

2. The value of establishing an effective multi-agency partnership with the local authority playing a supporting rather than controlling role. The remarkable success of Go ON it’s liverpool has in large part been due to the open and supportive nature of the partnership that was established.

3. Allow each partner to recruit and manage their own Digital Champions rather than trying to control all the activity across a local area. Each partner will have their own strengths and motivation for supporting local people to build their digital skills. For example, Merseyside Police recruited community police officers as Digital Champions to support local people who were worried about their safety and security to see the value of going online to access services and applications that could help them feel safer in their own homes. Why not Skype your neighbour for support, for example, if you hear a noise and are worried about going out in the dark to investigate?

Over 80 local partners supported Go ON it’s liverpool. A number of strategic partners, including Liverpool Chamber of Commerce CIC, Merseytravel and Unionlearn, played a significant leadership role in establishing the campaign, but many others played a very active role, including the Adult Learning Service, the BBC, the Big Lottery, Business in the Community, Google UK, Jobcentre Plus, Liverpool Community and Voluntary Service, Liverpool Community College, Liverpool Universities, Liverpool Library and Information Service, Mecca Bingo, Mersey Fire and Rescue Service, Merseyside Police, the Post Office, all Registered Social Landlords, primary and secondary schools, UK Online Centres, including Granby Toxteth and Everton Development Centres and Weatherspoons. All of these partners recruited Digital Champions and encouraged them to show local people the many and varied digital opportunities the web opens up and to support them to build their skills so that they too could benefit.

Next steps

Liverpool has recognised that digital skills are essential for employability, economic growth, access to jobs and health and wellbeing. Primarily, though, this campaign has been about social justice and the idea that no-one should be left behind.

The vibrant cross-sector steering group that supported the development of Go ON it’s liverpool is still active and maintaining momentum two years after the launch of the campaign. This is impressive. The drivers for partners continuing to support those adults who are still not digitally included in the city include:

- Welfare reform and the drive to deliver services as ‘digital by default’. This is leading to an increase in support from Registered Social Landlords in particular. Liverpool City Council also wish to make efficiencies by delivering more services online.

- The implementation of the Mi Liverpool programme, a DALLAS (Delivering Assisted Living Lifestyles At Scale) programme funded by the NHS. Unionlearn have been commissioned to set up 50 digital hubs across the City by 2015 to support vulnerable people to improve their health and wellbeing and remain independent by accessing new digital services. The Mi Liverpool programme
is already exceeding this target with 54 new
digital hubs planned by the end of 2013,
demonstrating the level of interest and
demand now apparent across the city to
develop a digitally inclusive society.

- Funding for Merseyside from the UK
  Government broadband programme to
  improve access to better broadband across
  the Liverpool City Region. This is particularly
  important for economic development.
  Liverpool City Council recognises that
  connected firms grow more and wish to
  support local small and medium-sized
  enterprises (SMEs) to make better use of
  the web to grow and diversify. There is an
  aspiration to improve connectivity with greater
  access to free wifi across the city.

- New activities are continuing to be developed
to support progress on these drivers. For
  example, 400 refurbished PCs have now
  been recycled into the community from
  the local authority, reducing waste and
  supporting social inclusion. The Council has
  now extended applications for recycled kit to
  voluntary organisations across the city too,
  with priority given to community organisations
  which support local people to improve their
  employability. The city launched the ‘Go ON
  it’s Liverpool Award’ in February 2013.

Find out more:
https://www.facebook.com/GoONitsliverpool
The Challenge

Wheatley Group is Scotland’s leading housing, community regeneration and care group. The Group currently comprises three Registered Social Landlords and two commercial subsidiaries, including Scotland’s largest social landlord, Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), which provides services to around 45,000 tenants. Only 37% of GHA tenants use the internet frequently – well below UK, Scottish and Glasgow averages. Usage is particularly low amongst the most disadvantaged and older tenants. Research undertaken by Wheatley Group indicates that the key barriers to its social housing tenants getting online are a fear of the online world; a belief that the internet ‘is not for me’; lack of support and awareness; difficulties with literacy and numeracy; and the cost involved in getting online.

The Solution

Wheatley Group has developed a new, forward-thinking digital strategy to help all of its social housing tenants get digitally connected. The Group describes the internet as the fourth utility and it is committed to providing affordable internet access in every socially-rented home it manages. Affordable is defined as being ‘ideally free, but no more than £5 a month’.

The Group is undertaking two pilot projects to develop a model for achieving this ambition. The first study, which has been extended to a year-long project, provides the internet to 12 homes in low-rise properties. Different technology solutions are being tested and each household has been given a device (laptop/tablet) to access the internet, as well as help and support to get online.

The second pilot is a Digital Demonstrator project and is a joint initiative with the Scottish Government and BT. The aim of the study is to test the feasibility of developing a low-cost broadband solution in a multi-storey block. The chosen block includes 138 units and a range of customers, including single person households and temporary flats for homeless people. Over 50% of households have signed up to participate in the study. Key aspects of the project are as follows:

- The wifi technology being used involves routers being placed on alternate floors with individual access delivered to each flat, with tenants initially offered a 10Mbps service
- The system also has the capability to offer different service options in the future and the flexibility for the landlord to charge for premium level services above the basic offer (if, for example, the tenant wants a faster connection)
- A separate, secure network has been provided for housing officers to support their use of technology when they visit tenants
- Each participating household has been given a device to use during the study, but up to three other devices can be used per household at any one time. The type of devices eg smart phones, tablets, PCs being used is being monitored to establish demand
• Tenants are asked to sign an acceptable use policy and usage of the service can be monitored to ensure compliance with this policy and establish the service level needed.

• Management information gathered will be compared with the results of surveys with participants before, during and after the study to establish benefits of the study and changes in behaviour over time – e.g. increased internet use, wider internet site use, public service website use.

Together, these two pilot studies will help Wheatley Group plan for an effective delivery of internet connectivity to every home for social rent and to test the costing assumptions to deliver an affordable model for social housing.

Wheatley Group is also working with a local college to provide a learning centre offering tenants the opportunity to further advance their internet skills, prepare for jobs and potentially undertake certified courses. GHA tenant Davie Douglas used the computers every day to find employment. He quickly found a job he loves – at the centre itself. Davie said:

‘I didn’t have the internet at home so I was up at the centre every day using the computers looking for a job. I used to have my own building business, but the recession hit and I ended up losing my business and my home. I’m starting all over again. I don’t have internet at home so I used to travel into the Mitchell Library each day to get online. Now this is on my doorstep. I was here so often that I applied for a concierge job in the hall itself. Now I have a flat I love and a job I’m really enjoying. It’s great.’

Lessons Learnt

An evaluation of the first pilot project described above found that after three months, tenants who were previously concerned about online safety or the need for help and support felt that they no longer had such concerns or need. The majority
of participants felt more confident about using the internet and had acquired basic online skills. Those who had previously used the internet had increased their use and range of sites visited. More family members used the service than was originally anticipated.

The role of tenant engagement, principally driven by the local Housing Officer, was invaluable to the success of the study. The Housing Officer gained the trust of customers and helped them overcome their fears about participating in the study. They encouraged tenants to try out the devices and go online safely, often for the first time. Through this approach many tenants became more confident internet users and have willingly shared their stories with others. Maggie Ross, 23, from Pollok was one of the first tenants to benefit from the study of low-rise properties in Pollok. Maggie, who is studying for a nursing qualification at Cardonald College, said:

‘Having the use of a laptop and being able to get online at home will really help me with my studies. I previously had to use the library at the college which is hard when you have two young kids. It’s a really good scheme as I know there are a lot of people out there who can’t afford to pay for broadband. It will allow them to keep in touch with their friends and family. It’s also a cheaper way to pay your fuel bills and it will make it easier to use GHA’s services.’

One of the key learning points from the pilot projects to date has been the importance of communities and neighbours learning together. Indeed, some of the more formal training and support packages that have been offered as part of the pilots have actually not been used as extensively as had been anticipated – because the tenants participating in the project have helped each other. The ‘community’ element of digital participation has therefore been highly significant in this particular setting.

Next Steps

Wheatley Group is developing a business case to support the provision of the internet into every socially rented home. It is anticipated that the business case will be supported by the ‘Group Channel Shift strategy’ – moving repairs, payments, allocations and complaints online, while maintaining high quality face-to-face interactions with customers for complex and personal issues. The drive by many public bodies to deliver more services online will also contribute to the business case.

There will be significant advantage to a wide range of public agencies from a higher proportion of tenants in socially-rented homes having access to the internet and better digital skills. However, the potential social and economic benefits of the strategy for tenants are also clear – enhanced employability through better digital skills, and better lives through the opportunities offered by digital participation. Furthermore, having internet access at home will become increasingly important for the high proportion of tenants who are unemployed, allowing them to apply for Universal Credit and demonstrate that they are using the internet to look for work. Opportunities for increased participation are also likely to emerge in the future, as Wheatley Group plans to use the potential that digital connectivity offers to seek tenants’ views and opinions on a wide range of issues and engage with them more extensively than has been possible in the past.

Find out more:
http://www.wheatley-group.com/press-and-media/?_article=95
The Challenge

As internet use becomes an essential part of modern life, social landlords have an essential role to play in supporting those most excluded to engage on-line. A disproportionate number of the people who remain disconnected live in social housing and they are at risk of compounding their disadvantage by falling further behind the rest of society.

Significant momentum has been given to the drive to get more people online by cutbacks in services and the developing ‘digital by default’ culture, with more public service interactions expected to be delivered via the internet. It is widely understood by social landlords that the intention to manage Universal Credit online will have a significant impact on the most financially and sociably vulnerable within our society.

There are a wide range of factors that contribute to digital exclusion. Although by no means the only problem, cost is a significant barrier – in terms of the financial costs of connectivity and equipment, as well as issues such as a poor credit history. Other major barriers to digital participation include a fear of the unknown and a lack of confidence in accessing the available support.

All this suggests a key role for social landlords in supporting people to begin their journey to getting online and encouraging them to stay connected. This is a complex new role for social landlords, it involves developing infrastructure, providing facilities, offering support to get online and continuing to encourage people to develop their familiarity and skills with digital technologies.

The Solution

Leeds Federated Housing Association (LFHA) have developed HUGO (Helping U Get On-line), an exciting new digital inclusion programme that aims to find the right ‘hook’ for each digitally excluded individual and motivate them to recognise the benefits of being online.

HUGO will provide internet access and support in the heart of social housing communities across Leeds. It has been designed to inspire and engage communities, partners and staff to work together to connect and communicate online. The HUGO team will seek to find solutions for tenants who wish to go online but are prevented from doing so because they face access and equipment barriers.
The programme involves a number of different elements:

1 **The HUGO bus**

A bus, loaded with IT equipment, will bring an internet style cafe directly to tenants’ doorstep and provide free wifi across every neighbourhood it visits. The HUGO bus will visit each community where LFHA has a presence across the city with a team of digital champions to inspire and engage people of all ages to become confident and engaged online.

The digital champions, who are both staff and volunteers, will deliver training and signpost people to further support to help tackle individual barriers to getting online. LFHA will work with housing partners and service providers to maximise the potential reach within communities and have set an ambitious target to engage up to 10,000 people during the pilot programme, which runs until March 2014.

LFHA plan to sustain the HUGO programme by transforming it into a social enterprise in the longer term and enabling other housing partners to take HUGO into their own communities. Their vision is to ‘connect’ all social housing tenants in Leeds and beyond. To get the bus on the road, LFHA have developed a partnership with First Bus and other housing providers including Aire Valley Homes and Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) to provide support to communities in South Leeds. They will even have a ‘mini-HUGO’ bus, provided by Aire Valley Homes, to reach the narrowest cobbled streets.

2 **The HUGO family**

To bring the programme to life, the fictional Hugo family moved into the Leeds area in December 2013. The ‘Hugos’ have made a big impact on social media, blogging about their experiences online and off through Facebook, Twitter and other channels. Each member of the Hugo family has unique experiences, matched to their age and circumstances, and they discover an online world that enhances their day-to-day lives and supports them through all the family’s ups and downs. The programme even has some fun with ‘Google’ the family dog, who has his very own blog feed documenting his online adventures.

LFHA hope that the Hugos will inspire and engage their communities in a fun and accessible way and encourage them to take advantage of the help available through the Housing Association’s mobile services, digital hubs and training to connect to the internet and build their confidence online. They intend using a cascading approach, identifying residents on an ongoing basis who wish to be skilled up and kitted out to be digital champions, continuing their own online journey, but also seeking to inspire their friends and neighbours along the way.

HUGO has its own website connecting individuals to training, resources and information that will help them get the most out of being online. LFHA will also aim to remove the access barriers for some of their customers by providing broadband, equipment and wifi. They are working with Leeds City Credit Union to support this element of the programme.
3 Organisational shift
The Digital Deal funding has been a catalyst for Leeds Federated Housing Association to kick-start a cultural shift in their working practices and the way they engage and communicate with their customers. Frontline services have been restructured to allow a team of 14 Neighbourhood Officers to develop a more personalised customer service approach with responsibility for smaller patches of 250 properties, free exchange through social media and personalised Facebook pages and no limit to internet access to make it happen. Leeds Federated is also in the process of developing its own online services as well as a substantial redevelopment of its reception area to create a new customer service and resource centre which will include a digital hub. The digital hub, like the HUGO bus will be a UK Online Centre and provide access to any member of the public needing support to get on-line or internet access.

Lessons Learnt
One of the main learning points was around the purchase of a bus to deliver the mobile element of the programme. The process of buying a bus was challenging at times but brought with it the opportunity to partner with First Bus, who provided expert advice and support to help get the HUGO bus on the road.

Changing the Housing Association’s approach to how it communicates with its customers and underpinning this by providing equipment and training to their staff to feel confident themselves about engaging on-line has also been a real challenge.

The creation of the Hugos and the development of the creative blogging to underpin their stories is also a new approach to the way Leeds Federated have engaged communities in the past.

Next Steps
The HUGO programme is just beginning. The fictional family, the Hugos, have recently come to life on social media. The new digital resource centre opened in December. The HUGO website is in development and the HUGO bus hit the road in January.

Find out more:
http://thehugofamilyblog.wordpress.com/
CASE STUDY 4

Sunderland Community IT –
The community at the heart of the solution

The Challenge

People living in the North East have the lowest gross household income per head of all the English regions, the lowest working-age employment rate and highest rate of economic inactivity.

Sunderland City Council aims to take an innovative approach to the economic and social challenges facing the city, the region and its people by finding new ways to meet and overcome these challenges, including using ICT to deliver better services and increase opportunities for residents. However, this means that residents must have access, capability and the desire to use this technology – and some of those who are the most vulnerable and socially excluded are the most likely to miss out. The City Council has therefore developed a strategic approach to help people overcome the barriers they face to getting online.

The Solution

Sunderland City Council has developed a community-based, community-led approach to help people – especially so-called ‘hard to reach’ groups – access and use ICT to meet their individual needs. Building on the success and experience of leading the UK Government’s Digital Challenge in 2006 to find new ways of using technology to help people in their everyday lives, the City Council has worked with partners in the community, business and public sector to establish a network of community-based IT projects.

The Community IT Team delivers Sunderland City Council’s Community IT programme through a combination of engagement and technical officers who work in partnership with community organisations to overcome barriers of access, motivation and skills to deliver community priorities, including increasing employment and training opportunities, reducing social exclusion and promoting healthier lifestyles.

The ICT @ Home programme has demonstrated what people can achieve if they have access to technology, training and support in their home environment. The loan of a laptop and printer has helped many households transform their way of life. From the 25-year-old single mum who used them to study at home while caring for her baby and is now using the qualifications gained to re-enter the world of work, to Jean, a 75-year-old retired woman who can now use her PC to contact friends and family and shop online. ICT@ Home also helped end the social exclusion and improve the employment and life prospects of a young married couple who arrived as asylum seekers. Kodjo was not only able to prepare for his citizenship exam but also attained qualifications in literacy and numeracy and could go online to look for employment. Sabine is working towards an NVQ Level 2 in Childcare and their two children, aged six and four, have improved their IT capability. Kodjo says:

‘My family and I are lucky to benefit from ICT@ Home, it helps me build my skills for life, my confidence, improve my English, gain qualifications and job search - at a recent parents evening my four-year-old son’s teacher said that he was very good on the computer and at taking photos.’
People of all ages and abilities have used the loan of equipment and support and guidance to help improve their quality of life and even their health. The Wii fitness programme helped a woman overcome long-term weight and health problems to lose three and a half stone and gain confidence to support friends to follow her example. Michelle, who lives in the Coalfields area of Sunderland and is a Community IT e-Champion, says:

‘After being referred to Slimming World by my GP I had to up my exercise regime or ‘body magic’ as they call it. The thoughts of going to a public gym or swimming baths terrified me and I’ve always found exercising at home boring and hard work. On chatting with a member of the Community IT Team we got talking about the Wii and the loan scheme. I loaned the Wii from them and it was amazing. Not only was it fun, but I was able to go at my own pace in the privacy of my own home. This helped me lose weight and build my self-esteem, it didn’t feel like exercise at all as I was able to play the games with my friends and have a good workout without even realising it. To date, I have lost 3 ½ stone and walk over 20 miles a week, pain free.’

Community IT provide facilities and support in community venues where people feel comfortable and in control of their surroundings. Known locally as Electronic Village Halls, these digital hubs have been set up in a variety of venues including Adult Learning Centres, Village Halls, Youth Clubs, Faith Groups, Social Housing Organisations and Women’s Centres.

Working in partnership with Gentoo, a social housing provider, an Electronic Village Hall was set up in a high rise block at Lakeside Village. It has become very well-used with a residents’ group now setting up and leading classes for tenants on different themes. This success has led to 14 further centres being established with funding provided by Gentoo and technical support by Community IT.

Gerry a retired soldier now living at Lakeside Village is one of Sunderland’s 200+ Community e-Champions. He helps promote the IT facilities at Lakeside.

‘I use my digital camera to take photos for the residents’ association, police (Neighbourhood Watch) and the art club. I show people how to edit their pictures and search the Internet with key words but also introduce people to using computers, sometimes for the first time. I started with computers eight years ago when I didn’t have a clue how to use them. I went to Finchale College and started using the computer system in the greenhouse to control the temperature and feed the plants. I had to take a basic computing course before they would let me use the system in the greenhouse.’

The beginners IT classes at St David’s Pentecostal Church attracts socially excluded people, who feel comfortable visiting the church and are supported to gain new skills, qualifications and confidence. Lisa had lived in residential care from the 12, and had low educational attainment and self-esteem. Befriended by volunteers from St David’s, she began to attend the coffee mornings and eventually joined the beginners IT class where she flourished and realised she had an aptitude for IT and for helping others learn too.

‘I found this course was a great benefit to me. I was able to move on to the more advanced level and within a few months to help the teacher and support others. I am just about to finish a three-year diploma course in Theology. The Church has really helped me and supported me through everything and without it I don’t know where I would be now or what I would be doing.’
Community IT support community-based, community-owned ICT provision. The ethos of the programme is to engage local people and co-develop networks of IT centres in the heart of communities ‘where people go’ or ‘where people want them’.

Lessons Learnt
Community IT is both an enabler and a provider. It provides sustainable technical support to build capacity at local level and a free, short-term equipment loan scheme to enable community organisations to access a range of technology they would otherwise be unable to afford.

It also has developed an e-Champions network to support the hardest to reach groups, including adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, black and minority ethnic communities and carers.

There is a dedicated service to help communities build and maintain their own web presence. The most recent to be launched is the ‘Plenty to share’ website designed by adults with learning disabilities for adults with learning disabilities. www.plentytoshare.com is now ready for people with learning disabilities to access and get involved with.

The Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Robert Heron said:

‘We want to equip people with the skills they need to access computer technology and the guidance on how best to use it to meet their individual needs. The new website will help people with learning disabilities to describe experiences and share information. It will also provide a greater understanding of the challenges they face and how these can be overcome by working together.’

Rhys Bell who helped develop the website said:

‘I am really proud of being a reporter for the website I think it looks great’, while his colleague, Judith Straughan, added: ‘I really feel part of the group, I love seeing the films of what people do.’

Next Steps
ICT@Home, Electronic Village Halls and e-Champions will continue to be the mainstay of Community IT provision in Sunderland. New community groups are forming all the time. However, the Community IT Team has successfully increased the number of groups in Sunderland who are able to participate in the digital world. They continue to take the lead from the community on what further support they need to make the best use of the tools available to them, including the use of social media and how to integrate film and media into their online presence. Some of these community groups are seeking financial sustainability by establishing themselves as Community Interest Companies and Community IT will continue to support them and other small and medium enterprises to take advantage of the technology available to them.

Find out more: http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/CHandler.ashx?id=9601&p=0
The Challenge

Wiltshire Council is rolling out superfast broadband to a minimum of 91% of premises by 2016 as part of the UK Government broadband programme. The Council has matched the government investment in better broadband for three key reasons – to support local businesses to thrive and grow; to provide new opportunities for citizens to increase their health and wellbeing and to increase the take-up and use of online government services.

The Council estimate there are approximately 68,000 people in Wiltshire who have never been online and thousands more who lack the confidence to fully reap all the benefits opened up by the internet. They want to ensure everyone can benefit from the investment in better broadband so have developed the Wiltshire Online digital literacy programme to provide free support to adults across the county.

The Solution

Wiltshire Online is recruiting, training and managing a team of volunteers to provide a programme of free support for Wiltshire citizens. The support is delivered through a two-tier volunteering structure which consists of volunteer co-ordinators and Digital Champions. The Council has worked closely with their local Volunteer Centre to develop processes and procedures that ensure they have adopted best practice in recruiting and managing volunteers.

The volunteer co-ordinators manage the support service at a local level. They typically have a strong community focus and are excellent communicators. As well as establishing contacts and promoting the service in their local community they each manage their own team of Digital Champion volunteers. Volunteer co-ordinators play a vital role in matching up Digital Champions with people in their local community who require support. There are currently 14 volunteer co-ordinators in Wiltshire who are managing a total of 53 Digital Champions and this number is growing steadily.

The network of digital champions provides free, unlimited support to adults in their local community who want to learn the basics of computers and the web. Most of the champions provide one-to-one support, either in the comfort of the individual’s own home (all Wiltshire Digital Champions have Disclosure and Barring Service checks), or in a local venue such as a wifi enabled café, pub or community hall. Volunteers also use the public computers which are freely available in every Wiltshire library, removing any cost barriers. There is no set programme or course that Digital Champions follow, instead they offer a tailored service to help people learn what they want to at a speed and location which is convenient for them.

Lessons Learnt

Wiltshire Online’s digital literacy project is a partnership programme that seeks to complement, not compete, with existing activity to bring more opportunities for local people to get support to go online. An interactive map on the Wiltshire Online website signposts people to existing computer clubs and learning providers, and also signposts free wifi hotspots across the county where digital champions are welcome to support people online. The local organisations who sign up to offer free wifi are provided with a Wiltshire Online sticker to display in their window.
Partnerships are the key to success, as they not only enable Wiltshire Online to reach more of the people who need support, they also help to nurture sustainability. Key partners include Devizes School, who they work in partnership with to run an intergenerational computer club in Devizes library supervised by an adult digital champion but with support provided by a number of very talented sixth-form students. Participants enjoy a relaxed and lively atmosphere, with support taking place over a cup of tea and biscuit in a safe and reassuring environment. Other key partners include social housing providers, Calne Community Hub, Carer Support Wiltshire, Age UK, Community First’s Good Neighbour scheme and Wiltshire Library Service.

**Next Steps**

Wiltshire Online is piloting a unique partnership with Job Centre Plus. This project, which is due to kick off in November 2013, will see digital champions offering bespoke support to job seekers who lack confidence with computers. The assistance will be delivered in the Job Centre itself and in local communities, ensuring that jobseekers can access the support they need locally.

Wiltshire Online is also piloting a laptop refurbishment scheme. The laptops are refurbished Wiltshire Council laptops and come equipped with Windows 7, Libre Office and Skype as standard. They are currently available for £59.50 through two of Wiltshire Online’s partners: Age UK Salisbury District and Carer Support Wiltshire. Nikki, from Hilperton, in Wiltshire, recently bought one of these laptops. She explains how the laptop has:

‘done more for me than you can imagine and released so much pressure, I am truly thankful. It was over and above my expectations. I was speechless and overwhelmed.’

The most important thing to remember is that Wiltshire Online’s digital literacy programme is about people, not numbers. Success is not measured by the number of people supported, but by the difference the support has made to an individual. This success is captured through a series of different case studies. One such example is Roz, a 63-year-old from Warminster in Wiltshire. She is profoundly deaf but, with a motto of ‘impossible is nothing,’ she doesn’t let her disability define her. When she retired to Warminster, Roz felt very isolated, saying:

‘Nobody prepares you for the loneliness of retirement, especially when you’ve been used to seeing and talking to people every day.’

Roz’s hearing impairment means that she faces additional challenges. She felt she was becoming a burden to the few people she knew in the area, as she relied on them so heavily to help manage her personal affairs. Wiltshire Council’s Hearing and Vision team referred Roz to Wiltshire Online who arranged for her to meet Esther Allberry, a Digital Champion based in Trowbridge. Roz says:

‘Esther has been amazing – not only have I learnt a new set of skills but I have found a friend.’

Roz firmly believes her new digital skills have improved her life in a number of ways. She can now use email to change an appointment herself or query a bill and this has transformed her daily life. Digital Champion Esther has enjoyed the experience as much as Roz and says:

‘The reason I volunteer for Wiltshire Online is because of people like Roz, who not only appreciate you giving your time but use the skills you’ve taught them to change their lives.’

Find out more: www.wiltshireonline.org
CASE STUDY 6
Digital Fife – using community groups as a hook to get people engaged

The Challenge
In 2001 Fife Council and their partners wanted to use digital technology to engage widely with voluntary and community organisations across Fife to gather their views on the new local community planning arrangements. But they encountered a problem – much of the third sector in Fife was not online and couldn’t engage in this way. This was particularly true of the smallest, most local, community groups, such as residents’ groups or other groups focusing on a specialist interest or hobby.

The Solution
Fife Council recognised that digital exclusion amongst the community sector was not simply a short-term problem in relation to community planning. It recognised that if many community groups were not online then many citizens would also be lacking in digital skills. It adopted an approach to reach citizens through the community groups they were already involved in and used their involvement in these groups as a ‘hook’ to help them develop their digital skills.

Big Lottery funding was awarded so the community grid for learning, Digital Fife, could be developed. A couple of years later European funding was secured to further develop the features of the portal and establish an online learning platform. The project has focused particularly on the most deprived areas in Fife, as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), in recognition of the higher levels of digital exclusion in these areas.

The key ‘hook’ that Digital Fife has used to engage citizens through community groups is to offer support and training to help the group develop a website. Digital Fife provides training to at least one member of the group and this person is then responsible for training other members of the group to develop and use the site. Those groups who have been trained become Digital Fife members and individuals from the group are asked to be Digital Champions and ensure that other local groups are aware of the support available. Since Digital Fife was set up, approximately 500 community groups have been reached through this cascading approach, which uses people’s desire to do something useful – ie build a website – for the group they are involved in as the trigger to get them using the internet. There are currently around 25 active digital champions who provide training and support to Digital Fife members and identify other community groups without websites and encourage them to become involved.
Jim, who is blind and based in Fife, started the Scottish Disability Golf Partnership (SDGP) over 10 years ago. At that time neither he nor the group’s organising committee had any real ability or knowledge on website construction or how best to use the technology. Before the connection with Digital Fife the SDGP’s volunteers, who are the backbone of the group, spread the word over many years and helped organise competitions and training for the group. The SDGP did dabble with websites, but they relied on favours, by non-golfing and, low-tech volunteers. However, since meeting Willie from Digital Fife and Adrian, the local Digital Champion, Jim has created the SDGP website and made it totally accessible for anyone with any type of disability and/or basic digital skills. News of the site has spread to members and colleagues within the local and wider disabled communities and SGDP has now helped to create new groups in New Zealand, Norway, England and the latest project in North America.

Jim said:

‘After a couple of hours training with the guys from Digital Fife and several emails for pointers on specific ideas and queries, this has become a significant tool in our day to day communications with members, new golfers and potential players. We have news items, application and information sheets in all formats, profiles and press articles on our most recent events and our video and audio records are now everyday viewing for visitors. The website has also given us the opportunity to develop nationally and internationally and we have over nine hundred members involved with SDGP.’

In addition to its core activity, Digital Fife also offers citizens across Fife the opportunity to take part in up to 25 different online learning modules. Some of these modules focus on IT and digital skills, others relate to the management of community organisations, while others focus on issues such as job searches, health information or banking. Around 400-500 people each year undertake these modules, recruited through the local community groups involved in the Digital Fife project or through the Council’s community capacity building workers. Digital Fife has recently partnered with Digital Unite and now host Digital Unite’s ‘How to Guides’ to complement the existing online material. This is proving very successful with over 850 users in the first two months of this feature going live.

Lessons Learnt

After more than a decade of working in this field Digital Fife has learnt a lot about what works and what doesn’t. The face-to-face, ‘show and tell’ nature of the support provided through Digital Fife to help groups develop their websites has proved to be very popular and successful. People like to see the technology in action and have it explained to them in a clear and simple way. The informal digital champion element of the initiative has therefore been effective in helping people to learn in a comfortable, non-threatening way. The fact that Digital Champions are not digital experts, but are very similar in background and experience to the people they are training, has also been important in ensuring that people are not overwhelmed by overly-technical language and issues are explained to them in a way they can easily understand. Meanwhile, a netbook loan scheme has proved popular as a cheap and effective method of letting people try out equipment to see if they like it before making a commitment to purchasing their own.
Not everything Digital Fife has attempted has worked smoothly. At one stage, the project tried to set up online discussion forums to encourage community groups and citizens engaged with the project to share their learning and experience. However, they found that people were reluctant to engage in this way – they preferred to meet up and share learning face-to-face. Digital Fife have also found that it was important not to simply present community groups with a pre-designed model of what their new website should look like and then train them to use it. Instead, it was more effective to let the groups have input to what they wanted the technology to do for them.

Next Steps

As well as continuing their work through community groups, Digital Fife are keen to undertake more work directly with individuals who may not be involved in a local group. This is in order to contribute to the work that is happening across Fife to support more people to get online against the backdrop of more services becoming ‘digital by default’ and the demand this is generating, particularly in relation to the current welfare reforms. They are currently in the process of applying for funding to grow their digital champion network so that there are more champions, who can reach more people. The users of Digital Fife are taking more direct control of developing the initiative and the project’s ‘user group’ is becoming a constituted body.

Find out more
http://www.digitalfife.com
The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
KY12 8AW

Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445
Fax: +44 (0)1383 749799
Email: info@carnegieuk.org

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