

Background Briefing: July 2009

Delivering social inclusion through technology

- [Delivering Digital Inclusion: Summary of Consultation Responses](#)
- [Communities and Local Government local authority support programme: tools, research and resources to help deliver social inclusion through technology](#)

1. Digital inclusion: delivering social inclusion through technology

The report HM Government *Delivering Digital Inclusion: Summary of Consultation Responses* was released on 27th April 2009 by Communities and Local Government (CLG). In January 2009 CLG commissioned Ipsos Mori Social Research Institute to analyse stakeholder feedback and responses to the cross-Government report *Delivering Digital Inclusion: An Action Plan for Consultation*. The key findings from the analysis can be found in the report. Launched in October 2008, the cross-Government *An Action Plan for Consultation* and new CLG tools and resources support the use of digital technology to benefit all members of society.

For some time we have recognised that technology boosts productivity and helps to drive the growth of the economy. CLG's new research now clearly shows the links between technology and the quality of life for the most disadvantaged communities and people.

Technology can help the most excluded people and communities become more self-sufficient and less dependent on the State, through improved services, skills development and community support, reducing the social costs of poverty and disadvantage. For example, 1.3m (2.5%) of the UK's 11.3m socially excluded people have particularly entrenched needs - and have a particularly high cost to the State with an estimated £57.9bn spent each year attempting to tackle and prevent the problems associated with this group.¹ CLG calls this positive use of technology 'digital inclusion' - where technology is used directly or indirectly to improve the lives and life chances of socially disadvantaged people and the places in which they live.

Inequality in the use and application of digital technologies is at risk of being a new driver of social exclusion in the 21st century; reinforcing existing social divides and creating new ones. The focus of the cross Government *Action Plan for Consultation* is not technology, but rather the social improvements that can be achieved. It addresses issues such as unemployment, social care, housing support, criminal justice, education, health and putting communities in control. Digital technology does not in itself provide a magic bullet, but can be a significant contributor to improving outcomes.

- *Delivering Digital Inclusion: An Action Plan for Consultation:*
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/deliveringdigitalinclusion>
- *Delivering Digital Inclusion: Summary of Consultation Responses*
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/digitalinclusionresponses>
- CLG's pages on digital inclusion: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/digitalinclusion/>

¹ Statistics taken from "The Digital Inclusion Landscape in England: Delivering social impact through information communication technology" Digital Inclusion Team 2007

2. Supporting local authorities to deliver social inclusion through technology

Local authorities are working towards fair, safe and equal societies. To achieve this goal they must help citizens tackle complex social problems; reaching out to people who are disadvantaged. Often these people are suffering from “social exclusion”; having three or more big problems in life such as no job, no home, no money, poor health, victim of crime, no public services and poor education and skills. CLG, through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) and the Digital Inclusion Team (described in more detail at the end of this document), is supporting work to increase local authorities’ ability to use technology to provide innovative and successful services, which tackle the more entrenched problems affecting disadvantaged communities and people. Delivering successful services - such as health care, housing, public safety, employment, community development and education to name but a few - are key to helping more vulnerable people overcome problems, gain self confidence and achieve the ability to take part in and contribute towards society. This work is called the *Digital Inclusion Capacity Building Programme*.

Technology can assist local authorities in delivering successful services and tackling social exclusion. For example, technology can help to; share and use information to make decisions on where services are needed most, increase staff effectiveness, help communicate with citizens, build skills for individuals and communities and engage vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded groups.

CLG’s programme has been developed in consultation with stakeholders, including public, private and third sectors. It has been tailored to support local authorities and their partners meet the objectives set out in the new local performance management framework and respond to the Comprehensive Area Assessment challenge. Tools, resources and research are available to help local authorities and their partners exploit technology to support the delivery of social inclusion. These include:

2.1 Research:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/digitalinclusion/research/>

- **Digital inclusion: an analysis of social disadvantage and the information society**
This study provides clear evidence of the links between digital disengagement and social disadvantage. This means that social policy goals, like tackling child poverty, will be difficult to realise as mainstream society continues to embrace the benefits of technology whilst those on the margins are left further behind – digitally, economically and socially. The conclusions from this research will help to inform digital inclusion policy and actions. This research was undertaken by the Oxford Internet Institute, in partnership with the Office for National Statistics and Office of Communications (Ofcom), and the findings are being considered.
- **Digital exclusion profiling of vulnerable groups**
This research addresses the knowledge ‘gaps’ concerning the links between people who do not use technology and social deprivation, focusing on some of the most excluded groups in society. Primary and secondary research has produced comprehensive and insightful profiles of four groups, covering:
 - Young adults not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
 - People with mental health problems
 - People with learning disabilities
 - Ex-offenders

The findings challenge assumptions of mainstream policy delivery and demonstrate the requirement for appropriate forms of ICT and training tailored to individual and group needs. The research helps local authorities and their partners to understand how technology can support the take-up of services by individuals within these excluded groups, as well as suggesting how to ensure that services are not designed to marginalise people further. The research was commissioned by CLG from Citizens Online and the National Centre for Social Research, and the findings are being considered.
- **The costs and benefits of personal data sharing at the partnership level**
Data security is a key issue and one which government has been working to ensure it is embedded in all aspects of working with citizens. In addition, appropriate data sharing can help local authorities and

their partners work together to tackle key social problems. Joined-up working focused on the needs of disadvantaged people can help front line workers provide better services and prevent people from 'falling through the net'. Examining how local strategic partnerships (LSPs) across England are sharing data, this research describes barriers to and benefits from data sharing. The findings from the study suggest that to make best use of data sharing, further action is needed and it makes recommendations to both LSPs and central government. The research was commissioned by CLG from the Office of Public Management, and the findings are being considered at present.

2.2 Tools and resources:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/digitalinclusion/resources/>

- **Digital Inclusion and Data Sharing Advisors**

A free advice service for LSPs, these advisors are part of the general pool of Local Improvement Advisors (LIA). Specifically, Digital Inclusion and Data Sharing Advisers support LSPs in using technology and data effectively to address local service delivery priorities and meet the challenges within the new performance management framework. Their role, as with all LIAs, is to provide face to face coaching, training and mentoring and build capacity within the partnership. LIAs are a development from the previous network of Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers. Funded by CLG and delivered via the RIEPs, the adviser scheme will be in place until 2010. Gov3 is supporting some of the digital and data sharing elements of the LIA process.

For further information contact Sharna Quirke, National Manager for Digital Inclusion and Data Sharing Advisors: sharna.quirke@cstransform.com

- **solutions4inclusion**

solutions4inclusion is an online tool providing local authorities and their partners with inspiring case studies of technology enabled services that improve the lives of disadvantaged people. It helps local partnerships share innovative ways to support their local communities and meet their local and national targets.

Users are able to search the site by various criteria (national indicators, excluded groups, exclusion problems or free text) to quickly find examples of these inspiring projects, including short descriptions and contact details for each project. It is easy to register with the site and get updates on relevant exclusion issues or national indicators direct to your inbox. solutions4inclusion acts as a forum for users to share and disseminate the many good ideas and projects that exist on the ground already but which have, to date, received low visibility.

solutions4inclusion currently provides examples of more than 1000 projects that use technology to drive social inclusion. Projects are derived from multiple sources including local authorities, third sector, the Digital Inclusion Team, ePractice.eu, esd-toolkit, DC10plus, Tech4i2 and eGovernment and other awards. It is a joint project between CLG, DeMontfort University, the Digital Inclusion Team and esd-toolkit and its development has been supported by DC10plus. solutions4inclusion can be found at: www.esd.org.uk/solutions4inclusion

Donna Hall, Chair of esd-toolkit Executive Board and Chief Executive of Chorley Council states:

"esd-toolkit is delighted to play a part in developing and disseminating solutions4inclusion as this initiative has great potential to help local authorities to share experience and find innovative ways to reach those who might otherwise be excluded. Working with communities and neighbourhood groups, this project is not about technology but about real people and will help local authorities to meet the challenges of Comprehensive Area Assessment and achieve real outcomes for local people which address their needs and priorities"

Testimonials for solutions4inclusion:

- Delma Dwight, Black Country Observatory Manager
“A really good information source”
 - Kai Rudat, Director, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
“Great idea and already a good number of useful projects”
 - Stephen Hands, Director of Content & Strategy, Learn Play Foundation
“To take so much data and be able to portray it in simple terms is no mean feat”
 - Tim Anderson, E-Service Officer, Norfolk County Council and DC10plus member
“it is wonderful...looks really exciting”
 - Ann Wulff Armistead, Hull City Council and DC10plus member
“This website is great, it’s fantastic”
 - Peter Goodwin, Director, Accelerate Nottingham and DC10plus member
“The site looks really good and I am a confirmed sceptic, I reckon this one actually works and is user friendly”
- **Community maps: digital and social geographies of Great Britain**
Placing data on a map in a clear visual format simplifies decision making about a local place. This web based interactive tool places digital (e.g. internet take-up), social (e.g. household income) and resource (e.g. UK Online Centres) data on a map at a community level. This will help local service providers tackling digital and social exclusion identify where services are needed most. Datasets have been provided by partners including Experian, Point Topic, University of Essex, Connection Services Ltd, UK Online Centres and Citizens Online. This is a pilot web site to test demand for this kind of data at a local authority level.
- To access the site visit <http://www.gps.communities.gov.uk/DigitalInclusion/>
For further information please email mapping@digiteam.org.uk
- **Think about it**
Think about it is a short film designed to raise awareness of the impact of technology on social exclusion. Full of useful facts and statistics, it challenges us to take the opportunity to use technology as a tool for improving lives and life chances or face the risk of increasing economic and social costs created by sustained inequality. This presentation has been developed by the Digital Inclusion Team under the creative commons license and is available for anyone to place on their website or use when needing to explain the benefits of technology in tackling social exclusion.
To watch the film visit <http://www.digiteam.org.uk>
To receive information on how to download the film or place it on your web site, please email movies@digiteam.org.uk
- **Digital Inclusion Beacon Checklist**
A digital inclusion Checklist is now available to help local authorities embed digital inclusion in the delivery of local services and realise the benefits that can be gained. An assessment framework was developed to evaluate the digital inclusion Beacon proposals, visits and presentations and identify the four Beacon authorities announced in March 2009. This framework has been developed into a tool which enables:
- local authorities to self-assess themselves against the same framework as the digital inclusion Beacons
 - Digital Inclusion Advisors to assess the local authorities that they visit
 - local authorities to compare themselves to the Beacons and to each other
 - access to the examples of good practice that enabled the digital inclusion Beacons to achieve Beacon status.

The Digital Inclusion Beacon Check List is available now to all local authorities and their partners as a stand alone tool in Excel format. It will be available as an online tool via the CLG web site and esd-toolkit later in 2009.

For the stand alone Digital Inclusion Beacon Checklist, please email checklist@digiteam.org.uk

3. Who will find the tools and research useful?

The outputs from CLG's *Digital Inclusion Capacity Building Programme* aim to deliver a range of benefits for multiple audiences and functions within local service delivery, including:

- Chief Executives, Councillors and Local Strategic Partnerships: practical solutions to meeting your Local Area Agreement targets and improving performance against the National Indicators. Capacity building support for delivering effective and efficient services tackling social exclusion within your local area.
- Performance Management and Policy Development: a repository of intelligence on delivering successful social inclusion services, which demonstrates the clear links between policy, performance management, services and delivery for citizens.
- Directors and Heads of Services: a set of information and tools that will assist in planning activities and support target achievement by illustrating ways to:
 - deliver services to hard to reach citizens who are disadvantaged, and support marginalised or socially excluded communities.
 - promote equality of access to services
 - improve value for money by using innovative techniques and new technology to extend services within a fixed budget
 - deliver efficient and effective outcomes mapped directly to the National Indicators
- Frontline Workers: new ways of reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged people, improving their lives and life chances and making it easier to provide quality services through the use of technology.
- Service Partners – including the private and third sector: a capacity building resource that will help partners understand the needs of Local Authorities and provide innovative ideas to assist Local Strategic Partnerships meet their Local Area Agreements.

4. Developing a national network of 'Digital Mentors' – now renamed 'Community Voices'

Media Trust has been appointed the CLG contract to develop a network of digital mentors.

In July 2008 CLG published *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power*. This contained a commitment to developing a network of "Digital Mentors" in deprived communities in England. This network would help engage and equip those citizens who feel 'unheard' or 'voiceless' to use social and community media to express and exchange views on issues of relevance to them. The network aims to:

- empower individuals and communities by giving citizens new tools, including skills development in using and creating websites, podcasts, digital photography, online publishing tools and local broadcast media, to express their views and collaborate on issues of relevance to them
- provide informal and formal learning opportunities and assist people into employment, particularly in the creative industries
- improve access to public and other services

Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

More information on Media Trust can be found at: <http://www.mediatrust.org/>

Community Voices: <http://www.mediatrust.org/communityvoices>

5. Digital Inclusion Beacons

Four local authorities were awarded Beacon status for their use of digital inclusion to tackle social exclusion and promote life chances at the Round 10 Beacon Awards in March 2009. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) makes these awards as part of its effort to promote best practice in local government. The digital inclusion category was sponsored this year by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency and led by CLG.

The digital inclusion Beacon councils are Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Stratford-On-Avon District Council and Sunderland City Council.

The Beacon Learning Exchange for *Digital Inclusion: tackling exclusion and promoting life chances* will be held on 16 September at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Birmingham. For more information please visit <http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=10185802> or contact Kathryn Kelly on Kathryn.kelly@idea.gov.uk or 0207 296 6626.

6. DC10plus; The network for change

DC10plus works to promote social inclusion through the use of technology. It is a collaborative network of local authorities and their partners dedicated to creating partnerships, sharing good practice and developing new initiatives. DC10plus' vision is to be a network for change; helping local authorities and their service delivery partners to empower people and connect communities through technology and innovation. Founded from ten local authority networks and their partners – all finalists in the 2007 government Digital Challenge competition - the DC10plus was awarded £2million in March 2007 to drive forward initiatives proposed in the Digital Challenge and work together as a unique and national exemplar. Seven key work streams have been developed reflecting the aims of DC10plus: next generation access, independent living, flexible working and worklessness, digital environment, digital switchover, communities building capacity and regional engagement. The DC10plus is now a leading authority on digital inclusion issues and how they impact on society. The network is open to all to join and participate in.

<http://www.dc10plus.net>

7. The Digital Inclusion Team

The Digital Inclusion Team is the policy delivery team funded by CLG and hosted by the City of London on behalf of local government to implement the Social Exclusion Unit report *Inclusion through Innovation: Tackling social exclusion through new technologies* published in 2005. Its focus is on how the innovative application of digital technologies, of any kind, can improve the lives and life chances of socially excluded people and deprived neighbourhoods. The Team directly supports Government goals set out in the 2006 Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* and the Social Exclusion Action Plan *Reaching Out*. <http://www.digitteam.org.uk>

8. esd-toolkit

esd-toolkit was set up in the year 2000 by local authorities in response to the challenge of e-government and is continuously evolving to support the needs of local government. There are now more than 18,000 users with whom to engage in the business of optimising customer insight to drive service transformation, realising efficiencies, targeting resources and sharing nationally to improve outcomes locally.

<http://www.esd-toolkit.org.uk>

9. The new performance management framework for local government

On 26 October 2006 the Department published a white paper called *Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper*. The paper set out a vision of revitalised local authorities, working with their partners, to reshape public services around the citizens and communities that use them and a new performance management framework to take this vision forward.

Key elements of the new framework included:

- a new set of 188 national performance indicators
- new local area agreements (LAAs), prioritising up to 35 indicators from the national set for every local area in England and establishing agreed performance targets for each
- local government sector-led challenge and support for improvement
- a new comprehensive area assessment to measure progress against LAAs and the national indicator set.

Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>

10. National indicators

The national indicator set underpins the new local performance and management framework for local government, as set out in the local government white paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*. It was announced on 11 October 2007 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The 188 indicators provide a measure by which to assess outcomes achieved by local strategic partnerships - local authorities and their service delivery partners (e.g. the police, NHS Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, CVS). LSPs operate in all 150 top-tier local authority areas in England. Every local area is assessed against the 188 national indicators, in addition to which they prioritise up to 35 of these indicators in their local area agreement and set targets for each with central government. Local area agreements are at the heart of delivering better services and an improved quality of life for local people.

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