Healthy Surrey

Health and Wellbeing Board

1. Reference Information

Paper tracking information	
Title:	Digital Inclusion Strategy 2021-22
Related Health and Wellbeing Priority:	System Capability - Digital
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Sponsor(s):	• Rob Moran, Chief Executive, Elmbridge Borough Council (Priority 3 Sponsor) • Dr Negin Sarafraz-Shekary (non-Board member)
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Related papers:	• Annex 1 - Digital Inclusion in Surrey Heartlands Strategy 2021/22

2. Executive summary

A citizen-centric approach to tackling the issue of Digital Inclusion across Surrey Heartlands. With an estimated 200,000 residents (just under 20%) excluded due to a lack of basic digital skills, as well as additional factors such as connectivity, affordability, and access to appropriate technology, there is an increasing need for improved support for residents and service providers to tackle this issue with citizens most at risk of falling behind due to lack of digital visibility.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board endorses:

1. Top-down change to project design approaches and assessment documents to ensure digital inclusion is a consideration from the beginning, both for service providers when working with a new client, or NHS/Government-led projects that impact citizens in any way.
2. A comprehensive hub of support and training available to all citizens, and also for service providers to refer clients for assistance in engaging with digital.
3. Improved engagement with all existing support available across Surrey Heartlands, from charities and key service providers to community-led initiatives and localised groups offering digital skills training.
4. A targeted improvement plan around connectivity, technology and digital skills training for care home staff <u>and</u> residents.
5. A comprehensive public-facing communications plan around available help, focused on appropriate channels for digitally excluded residents.
6. Quality assessments done on more traditional engagement platforms such as face to face time, telephone and postal communications to ensure those services are still offering the best level of service to those who wish to use them.

7. Ensuring that <u>choice</u> is the key message to citizens – making support tools easily accessible if they wish to make use of them, but equally respecting the individual's choice whether or not to engage with digital services.

4. Reason for Recommendations

It is key to improve communication between service providers and citizens on what is a deeply personal issue. From our citizen interviews, we hear that many residents are distrustful of programmes set out by official parties, so linking in citizen groups and local community hubs is key to ensuring maximum engagement with any support that is rolled out.

As we move into an ever more digital age, it is vitally important that service providers start looking at digital inclusion and digital poverty as key drivers in their service design, to ensure citizens who do not wish to engage digitally, or for any reason are unable to (for example, those in domestic abuse situations) are still able to access the full scope of help and support that they need.

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5. Detail

Please see the main report (Annex 1) for a comprehensive breakdown of the strategy.

6. Challenges

The key challenge with the project, as it sits over multiple workstreams and focuses on engagement with numerous service providers and community groups, is time management and working around everyone's availability and workloads.

Ensuring that we involve these groups from the beginning stages of support design and rollout will give us the best opportunity to build these allowances into our delivery plan and minimise delays.

7. Timescale and delivery plan

Please refer to pages 10-11 for a detailed breakdown of timescales and delivery

8. How is this being communicated?

Please see page 12 for a list of key reporting lines, regular Board updates and steering groups

9.   Next steps

Within the scope of this initial 12 month project, we have capacity to focus on adults and families at the highest risk of digital exclusion. There is a strong case for this to be extended for an additional 12 months to allow us to include digital accessibility work with under 18s, which would require additional funding and some additional staffing resource.

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