

Digital Inclusion in Surrey Heartlands Strategy 2021/22



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Background

The Government Digital Inclusion Strategy describes digital inclusion, or rather, reducing digital exclusion, as making sure that people have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them day to day.

Digital inclusion is often defined in terms of:

Digital skills - being able to use computers and the internet.

Connectivity - and access to the internet.

Accessibility - services should be designed to meet all users' needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.

Each of these definitions addresses a single specific barrier that some, but not all, people and organisations face. There is seldom just one reason why people are digitally excluded, and there is no single approach to solving it.

Technological change means that digital skills are increasingly important for connecting with others, accessing information and services and meeting the changing demands of the workplace and economy. This is leading to a digital divide between those who have access to information and communications technology and those who do not, giving rise to inequalities in access to opportunities, knowledge, services and goods. This divide has been particularly highlighted through the Covid pandemic, with social exclusion, loneliness and mental health issues becoming more prevalent as citizens were unable to physically interact with each other.

It is important to note that there is a clear distinction between internet usage and digital skills: users of the internet can still be digitally excluded because they lack the skills to be able to confidently and safely navigate the digital world even if they are online.

The Government has worked with industry partners to develop the Essential Digital Skills Framework which sets out the following five categories of essential digital skills for life and work:

Communicating – communicate, collaborate and share

Handling information and content – find, manage and store digital information and content securely

Transacting - register and apply for services, buy and sell goods and services, and administer and manage transactions online

Problem Solving - find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services

Being safe and legal online - stay safe, legal and confident online

These skills are underpinned by foundation skills, which all adults need. These include being able to turn on and control a device, make use of accessibility tools, interact with the home screen, access information and content via the internet, connect to safe and secure wi-fi, open a browser and use websites, understand the need for passwords and update and change them when prompted to do so.

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The number of adults who have either never used the internet or have not used it in the last three months, described as internet non-users (those who have never used the internet or last used it more than 3 months ago), has been declining over recent years. Since 2011, this number has almost halved, but in 2019 there were still 4.8 million adults in the UK, or 9.1% of the adult UK population, in this situation. This percentage is lower in the South East, at 7.0%, and was even lower in East (1.4%) and West (6.6%) Surrey*.

There is also regional variation in the proportion of adults with all five basic digital skills, and the proportion with zero basic skills. The UK average for adults with all five skills in 2018 was 79%, which rises to 86% in the South East; 5% of adults in the South East have zero basic digital skills.

There are noted barriers to digital inclusion. The Government strategy states that:

- 37%** of those who are digitally excluded are **social housing tenants**
- 17%** of **people earning less than £20,000** never use the internet, as opposed to 2% of people earning more than £40,000. 44% of people without basic digital skills are on lower wages or are unemployed
- 33%** of **people with registered disabilities** have never used the internet. This is 54% of the total number of people who have never used the internet
- 53%** of people who lack basic digital skills are **aged over 65**, and 69% are over 55
- 6%** of people who lack digital skills are between 15 and 24 years.
- 27%** of young people who are offline are in full-time employment

Among working age adults who are internet non-users, a higher proportion (25.6%) are **economically inactive** compared to other economic activity statuses

* Using 2016 NUTS level 3 boundaries. West Surrey covers Elmbridge, Guildford, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Woking; East Surrey covers Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge

Sources: Government Digital Inclusion Strategy; ONS Exploring the UK Digital Divide (see Appendix 5)

Key Identifiable Challenges

From our research gathered to date, we identify these as the main challenges we need to address in order to enable and empower residents across Surrey Heartlands to engage more in digital services, and ensure they have all the support, funding and technical assistance they need to do so.

From our engagement research, we can see that we must allow that there are likely to be many citizens who simply have no wish to engage more with digital services, and prefer to continue with face to face and/or telephone support. It is important that the quality of those services are not compromised in the push to digitise more services in the future, as many residents rely on face to face interaction to combat the risk of loneliness, social isolation and depression.

Progress has already been made in some areas, but there is more to be done to ensure all citizens have the ability to engage digitally if they wish to.

System Improvements

- Digital Inclusion added to client assessments and Equality Impact Assessments, and Digital Poverty to be a consideration for healthcare provision along with associated problems such as mental health issues, loneliness and isolation
- A support platform for stakeholders and charity partners, where they can find details on available local support for clients as well as ways to refer them for training and further assistance as required
- Improved links between all existing support available at local level across Surrey Heartlands

Connectivity

- Access to reasonable Broadband speeds (particularly an issue in rural areas), in line with the Government USO
- Affordable and/or free access to internet and WiFi provision for all residents

Technology

- Funding of equipment for residents in need
- Sourcing of suitable equipment for residents with disabilities or impairments that require specialist resources
- Access to, and public awareness of, options around voice activated technologies
- Support with installing and learning how to use technology

Digital Skills

- Access for all Surrey residents to a digital skills learning platform that can be self-taught or trainer-taught, at home or in an easily accessible community space, depending on the resident's individual needs
- A volunteer programme for individuals or companies to help teach digital skills to residents in need of help
- Increased support at ICS level for organisations already offering small pockets of support, particularly for residents with disabilities, impairments and other issues that require more particular support requirements

All of this should be supported by a robust communications plan to ensure all residents and stakeholders are aware of the support available and how to access it.

Solutions and Support

System Improvements

	Action	Outcome
1	Update Equality Impact Assessments at ICS level to include Digital Inclusion	A system-wide assurance that Digital Inclusion is a consideration at the forefront of all future projects
Page 224	Work with stakeholders to include Digital Inclusion in initial client assessments	Increased awareness of digital inclusion-related issues amongst clients, and identified actions to address
	3 Create a central hub of support information and place to refer residents for support	An easy resource for stakeholders to secure the right support and information to assist their client
	4 Include Digital Poverty in the Population Health Management tool for healthcare professionals	Ensures that GPs and social prescribers can see data relating to digital poverty, and use that to assign funding and services accordingly
	5 Formation of localised Digital Inclusion steering groups across all four PBPs (including citizen representation)	Ensuring the wider conversations about Digital Inclusion continue and that all parties are involved in the creation and distribution of support

Connectivity

	Action	Outcome
6	Ensure all identified problem postcodes with low broadband speeds are included in the Openreach 'Fast Fibre' programme	All Surrey Heartlands residents have broadband upload and download speeds that meet the Government USO of minimum 10mbp/s
7	Clear communication to all residents how/where they can report low speeds	No households are missed, particularly if broadband services have dropped in quality since temperature maps were created
8	Gather and communicate information on organisations and charities operational in Surrey that can assist with financial support for broadband or data packages	A directory of available support that is easy to navigate, that stakeholders would also have access to in order to assist residents who have no digital access at all
9	Create an easy to use mapping tool that shows all locations in Surrey Heartlands that offer free WiFi	A comprehensive map of locations that would be searchable by postcode to show all locations offering this service close to their home

Technology

	Action	Outcome
10	Compile a directory of support available for grants, funding and loan of technical equipment	Another addition to a comprehensive support library for stakeholders, also accessible by the public
11	Gather details of organisations and charities operational in Surrey that can assist with sourcing suitable technology for use by residents with additional/specific needs	Directory of services and support for stakeholders and residents, and use of the steering groups to align requests for help from clients with help available
12	Link in with companies offering voice activated technologies and plug-ins for existing tech, include details in public comms and stakeholder support	Raising awareness and accessibility of a newer tech form that could benefit many residents who struggle with conventional tech options
13	Source companies or self-employed professionals with experience of installing and activating tech and WiFi equipment	An easy to use database of professionals able to assist with teaching someone how to use a new piece of technology, or install new routers, available for stakeholders to refer clients for assistance but also accessible by the public

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Digital Skills

	Action	Outcome
14	Source or build a digital skills platform where basic digital skills can be learnt and practiced safely	A comprehensive free resource of training and learning materials for all residents of Surrey Heartlands
15	Source and promote a volunteer platform to enlist volunteers from the community and our stakeholder partners to assist citizens in learning these skills with one on one support at a local level	A database of volunteers, with teacher training and DBS checks where deemed necessary, on hand to partner with residents who require some one to one support in learning new skills relating to all things digital
16	Map and connect with all community groups, charities and third parties who have been doing this work in their local communities throughout Covid-19	An improved network of existing support live at a local level, with more connectivity and linking around funding opportunities for those running those groups
17	Identify community hubs and other venues around Surrey Heartlands who would be open to hosting training sessions	A database of venues able to host one to one or even groups learning sessions, as an option for residents who prefer to learn face to face

From the actions listed previously there are clear opportunities to link requirements into one central hub, as a 'one stop shop' of available support for both stakeholders and the public.

As this would be a resource primarily for our partner organisations and volunteer groups who already have a high level of digital literacy, a central website of information makes sense as an easy way to amalgamate and share knowledge. 'www.digital-surrey.co.uk' would provide stakeholders and volunteers with the following contents, regularly updated and improved as new services or funding became available:

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-  Online registration as a Digital Champion volunteer
-  Online referral of a resident for support with digital skills learning
-  Interactive map of available support and services
-  Directory of local businesses and partner organisations offering support
-  News and updates from partners and connected projects
-  Access to the Digital Skills training hub and additional learning materials

This resource will be an invaluable tool for stakeholders and service providers who work with us to develop their client assessments to ensure Digital Inclusion is covered in those initial conversations with Surrey Heartlands residents.

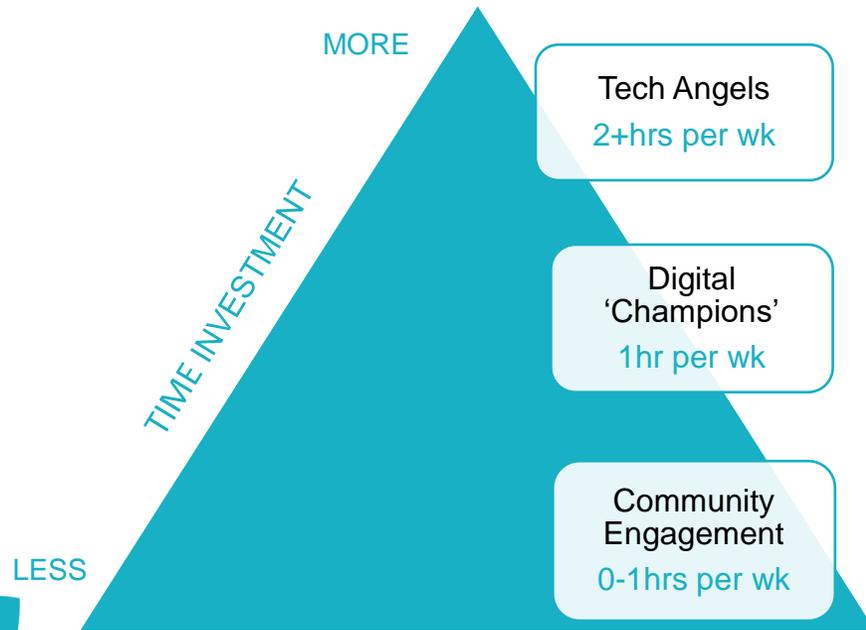
With these tools, a service could:

- Connect their client with a local organisation who provides equipment such as **laptops or tablets** for free on long term loan
- Book them funded **time with an IT professional** who can teach them how to use their new equipment
- Sign them up to receive **one to one teaching support** with learning basic digital skills, as well as further training materials to explore in areas that they are interested in for personal development
- Use their postcode to locate multiple locations near the resident's home that can **offer free WiFi**, such as a community hub space or a local library
- Link them in to larger **learning groups** as a way to increase social interaction and self-confidence
- Offer opportunities to **gain experience volunteering** themselves, which could consist of increased social engagement as a Digital Outreach Volunteer, or completion of a free accredited Digital Skills Teaching course to help others learn how to use digital services more efficiently
- Link up with **other services** offering support with digital skills such as Surrey Choices, who focus on digital skills for work such as CV building and job searching online

The volunteer programme gives us an opportunity to work closer with existing projects operating around Surrey Heartlands and nationwide, whilst also tailoring the content to the identified needs of our residents. Resources and funds can be combined to work together and create a more cohesive and comprehensive support offering to any citizen requiring support. Involvement can be tailored to fit a volunteer's availability and time, and can make the most of existing skillsets and interests they may have.

The Barclay's 'Digital Eagles' programme of digital skills training materials is a resource that we are delighted to be partnering with in this project. In addition to an extensive library of existing learning tools for self teaching or one to one volunteer-led learning, the Barclay's team are committing to supporting us with trained staff to deliver onsite training at designated community hubs across Surrey Heartlands, as well as access to their in-house accredited teacher training programme for our volunteers to benefit from.

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As a Community Engagement volunteer, we will encourage our volunteer to engage with the community at local meetups like coffee mornings and social groups to raise awareness of the support available to any residents who would like help with any aspect of digital exclusion.

Citizens Online already have a well established volunteer 'Digital Champions' programme in place, which we hope to partner with to grow their database of helpers whilst also ensuring maximum awareness of their scheme via our service providers and stakeholders, as well as public-facing comms.

The Tech Angels programme, run by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People, have done some incredible work in this area right through the Covid-19 pandemic, assisting some of our most vulnerable residents with engaging more digitally in order to gain independence and tackle social isolation and loneliness amongst those who were high risk and unable to see friends or relatives. Anyone volunteering to join their team of experts would require some additional DBS checks and training, as they often visit residents in their homes and work with limiting physical and learning disabilities.

Project Timeline

Below is a breakdown of the identified actions, and progress made against each area to date. Currently, the project runs to the end of August 2022.

Green: Completed

Blue: In Progress

Yellow: Upcoming Work

		2021									2022								
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Page 228	Interviews & Insight	Desk Research		Stakeholder Interviews			Citizen Interviews									Citizen Interviews Revisit (Impact)			
	Data Analytics	Initial Data Mapping						SODA analytics						Updating temp. maps with new Census data					
	Updated Assessment Criteria to include Digital Inclusion	CCG Equality Impact Assessments updated									Draft	Working with Service Providers at a local level to update their Initial Client Assessments							
	'Digital-Surrey.co.uk'						Supplier source and design phase		Build, first data load		Test	Release to Service Providers and ongoing development of content (mapping etc.)							
	Formation of PBP Steering Groups		All 4 groups now in operation, meeting every 6-8 weeks - membership growing																
	Broadband Speeds		Postcodes passed to Openreach									Public Comms to raise awareness of available help							

Green: Completed

Blue: In Progress

Yellow: Upcoming Work

	2021									2022							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Digital Skills Platform				Planning and Partnerships			Design and Build			Integration and Testing		Launch					
PT Professionals Database							Partnerships and Funding			Integration and Testing		Launch					
Partner venues for in-person training									Contacting Venues		System Loading and Mapping		Launch				
Voice activated technologies										Exploration & Partnerships		System Loading and Mapping		Launch			
Care Homes workstream					Partnerships			Design and Planning			Launch Support and Training						
Key Reports to Board																	
Public Comms										Design and Planning w/SCC Comms Team		Release					

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Stakeholders, Reporting and Resourcing

This project sits over multiple programmes, and as such has several different reporting lines.

Predominantly, there are scheduled updates every 2 months to:

- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Health & Inequalities Board

In addition, there are regular updates to:

- ICS Digital Board
- Adults Digital Programme Board
- Adults & Health Select Committee

As part of this project, we have also established 4 steering groups who receive an overview update at each meeting. These groups cover:

- Guildford & Waverley PBP
- East Surrey PBP
- Surrey Downs PBP
- North West Surrey PBP

Please see Appendix 8 for a full list of stakeholders.

From the project timeline we can see that good progress has been made in all areas, with a lot of back end work now completed ready to roll out across Surrey Heartlands in 2022.

Currently there has been only one team member running this project stream with support from the Surrey County Council Research & Insight Team, Surrey Office of Analytics (SODA) and external research partners Lighthouse Research & Consultancy. As we move this into the final design and delivery phases, there will be additional team members joining to assist with that work – primarily, administrative support and 3 months with a contracted Business Analyst.

Administrative support is being sourced through Surrey County Council's 'Kickstarter' programme, offering paid apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds looking for their first professional role. We believe that this project is an ideal starting point for a young adult entering the workplace, with a wide range of areas to get creatively involved in and offer real value to the development of all workstreams.

If this project were to extend past 12 months, with scope to expand the support platform to include under 18s as well as adults, there would be additional resourcing required in research, admin and service design capacities.

Outcomes and Impact Measuring

One challenge with this project is measurability – how do we ensure the support we are rolling out is reaching the right people, and at a reasonable speed? Unfortunately there is no easy answer, and though it would be ideal to be able to take a spreadsheet of 200,000 people who lack the basic digital skills and tick those numbers off as training reached them, that is simply not possible in this instance.

Thanks to the data analytics work that Surrey Office of Analytics (SODA) are undertaking, leading on from the stakeholder and citizen interviews, we hope that by the end of December 2021 we will be able to put approximate numbers and geographical ‘hotspots’ to the main high risk groups of residents who are most at risk of digital exclusion – that insight will allow us to focus our support rollout to citizens most in need first.

However, those numbers will not add up to the expected 200,000 number we saw from the Citizens Online research. As mentioned previously in this strategy, there will be a large proportion of citizens who are technically digitally excluded (in that they don’t have all of those 5 basic digital skills), but are economically comfortable, have no disabilities and have family members who assist them with anything they may need to do online – these residents will not be reachable through our stakeholder partners as they are not registered with them as clients, and may have no interest in learning further skills as they are perfectly happy with their current digital skill set.

We know from our research that there will also be a percentage of residents who simply do not wish to engage with digital services of any kind – this decision

should be absolutely respected and appreciated in terms of the continuation and quality of face to face and telephone services currently available across the County for healthcare and all other service provision.

With this in mind, it is believed that the best approach to measuring impact in this project’s instance is to ensure we hit a series of rollout markers, that will ensure maximum engagement and awareness of support that is available should residents wish to take advantage of it:

- All key service providers in Surrey Heartlands requested to work with us to develop their client assessments to include Digital Inclusion insight
- All service providers given access to the Digital-Surrey platform with all the support services accessible, including the interactive map of local training venues, WiFi spots, community hubs and more
- A robust public communications plan that focuses on digitally excluded comms County-wide, with a smaller percentage of online/social media coverage to raise awareness of the support available to friends and family of those in need of help
- Revisiting the citizen and stakeholder engagement work in Q2 of 2022 with our highest risk groups to ensure support is reaching those most in need and measuring impact on individuals
- A goal of 400 Digital Champions signed up in Surrey Heartlands to help their local community with learning digital skills by the end of August 2022
- A progress case study working with the SCC Adult Social Care team on impact and involvement of clients in the Programme

Project Summary

It is clear from our research that there is a significant problem with digital exclusion on a national scale. Looking at the local picture, Citizens Online's survey suggests that almost 20% of the Surrey Heartlands population are excluded due to lack of basic digital skills alone, and the Covid-19 pandemic has brought this issue to the forefront of peoples' awareness.

It is important to highlight that this is not just about getting more residents using digital services to access NHS services – social isolation and loneliness are hugely impacted by being excluded from digital , leading to issues with depression, anxiety and wider mental health problems. In addition, lack of digital skills and access to appropriate technology limits independence and options relating to personal development and employment.

Though there certainly are identifiable correlations between lack of digital engagement and socio-economic factors, we can see that the biggest challenge in Surrey Heartlands is around digital skill levels. We believe that the joint approach of changing service provider approaches to digital exclusion, the provision of support tools and the hub of available support through Digital-Surrey.co.uk, and the fusing of different skills training and support available across the County will make a significant impact in tackling this issue. The detailed analytics work due for completed by SODA in December 2021 will give us clear insight into the most at risk groups, including approximate numbers and best options to provide support in a way which will benefit them most.

The role of this project is not to invent new ways of tackling an existing problem – rather, is it to connect existing services into one easy to access hub, whilst also providing those services (both Government/charity-led and community-led) with a support network, opportunity to share best practice, and visibility to available funding to expand their reach.

There will be a percentage of residents who simply do not wish to engage with digital services, and that needs to be taken into account when looking at impact measures and public-facing communications. As long as we ensure there is clear and concise information that is easily publicly available to both digital and non-digital users to inform about the support available, how to access it, and reassurance around digital safety and security where possible, it is then the individual's **choice** whether to engage with the available support or not. It is also clear from citizen feedback that trust is a huge element to their confidence in asking for or accepting support in an area they are less skilled in – we believe working with service providers and community groups that they **trust**, we can maximise our engagement across Surrey Heartlands.

However, as we move into an ever more digital age, it is key that the more traditional services are not left behind in terms of service reach and quality for citizens who prefer to engage face to face or over the telephone. There is a significant danger of these services being left behind as more funding is geared to the development of digital tools, which runs the risk of excluding an even higher percentage of citizens nationwide from quality care and support across multiple areas. We have a responsibility to our residents to ensure that **personal choice** remains at the heart of all service provision, including the NHS.

Appendices

Appendix I: Digital Excluders in Surrey Heartlands

Taking the 3 previously identified key factors for enabling digital inclusion, we can look at Surrey Heartlands in particular and assess our citizens' requirements against the national picture.

Connectivity

Issues around connectivity can take the form of slow broadband speeds and affordability of broadband or data packages.

The Government's Universal Service Obligation (USO) for broadband is a UK-wide measure intended as a "safety net" to deliver broadband to those premises that do not have access to a decent and affordable connection. The Government have defined a decent connection as one that can deliver 10 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 1 Mbps upload speed (along with other defined quality parameters). That USO is to be delivered in the form of Fast Fibre or Fibre-to-Cabinet connection.

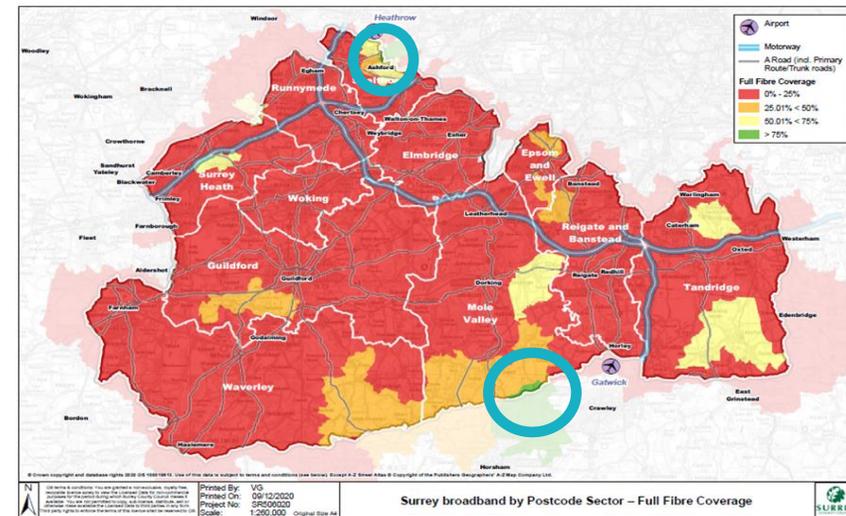
Currently, only 2 postcode sectors in Surrey Heartlands have 75+% of residents connected to Full Fibre – these are both sectors where the larger proportion of the area sits in another County, as both border Surrey Heartlands.

Working with Ofcom, the USO states that the maximum fee for broadband should be £45 per month, however this is financially still an excluder for many low income families and individuals across Surrey.

In general, connectivity is not a significant barrier to digital inclusion in Surrey. Nearly all areas have at least superfast broadband. Having said that, there are **18** postcode areas where at least **75%** of households are not able to receive speeds of 2 Mbit/s and **at least 5** care homes with no WiFi connection at all, all of which have clients with learning disabilities and/or autism.

21% of people are concerned to some degree about broadband or connectivity at home going forward.

23% of people think that improving access to faster and more reliable digital connections should be a key priority for Surrey's recovery.



Sources: SCC Research & Insight Data Analytics (see Appendix 6)

Access to Appropriate Technology

In 2019, Citizens Online were commissioned by Surrey County Council to conduct a study into digital inclusion issues in Surrey.

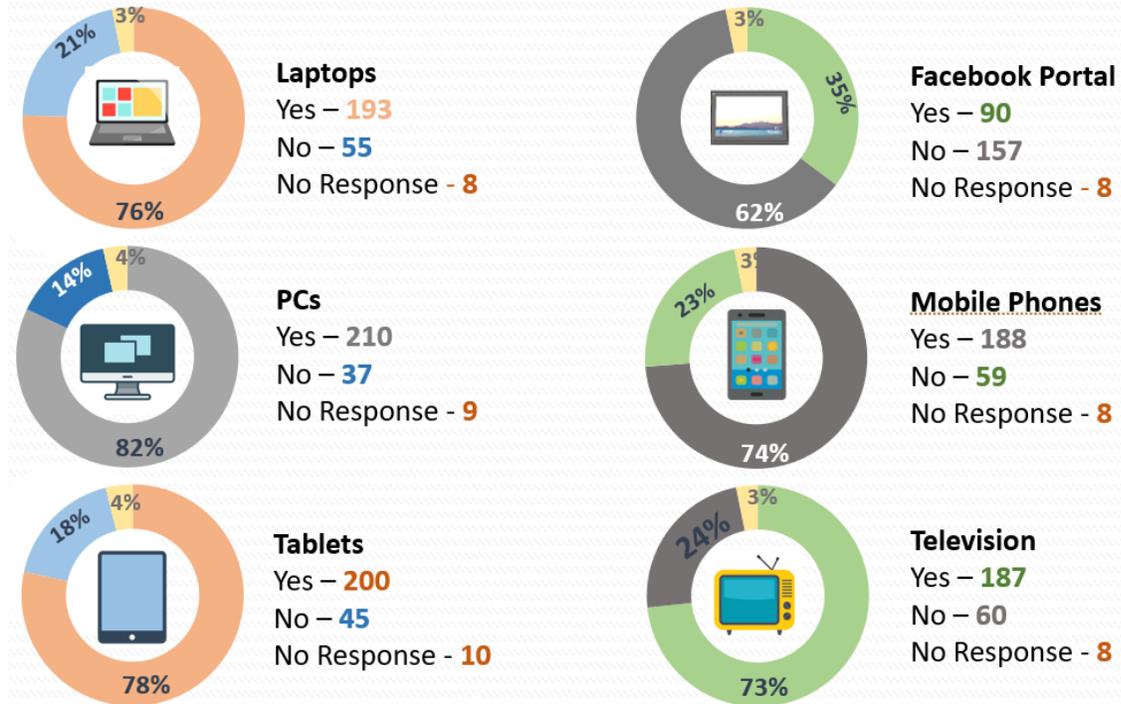
They found that the vast majority of the Surrey population owns a mobile phone (95%), but around **12.9%** (122,000) are estimated to not own a laptop, around one in four do not own a smartphone (236,000) or do not own a PC (235,000), around **39.6%** (377,000) do not own a Tablet or similar device, and **12.5%** (119,000) never use mobile internet.

In October 2020, an audit of technology in care homes across Surrey Heartlands was conducted, to establish what equipment was available to residents and where additional support may be required. Out of 400 care homes, 261 took part in the audit.

From these results we see a healthy number of PCs and laptops (though many are likely to be prioritised for staff use), but we can see that there is a definite lack of alternative tech for residents who may have sensory or physical impairments that some equipment (typing on a keyboard, for example) is not suitable to their needs.

Citizen engagement interviews taking place in November 2021 are getting similar feedback – that there is not enough access available to alternative tech to meet needs of many residents, particularly relating to voice activated technology which is coming across strongly as the best available tech for citizens with disabilities or impairments.

Sources: Citizens Online Study (see Appendix 5)



Audit of tech in Care Homes, completed Oct 2020

Digital Skills

Our research to date suggests that lack of digital skills is the main reason for digital exclusion in Surrey Heartlands.

The 5 basic digital skills identified as being the main excluders are:

- Owning and operating an email address
- Being able to do an online food shop
- Being able to navigate online banking
- Accessing basic NHS digital services, such as ordering a repeat prescription or attending a virtual consultation
- Being able to use social media sites or services such as Zoom or Whatsapp

The research carried out by Citizens Online in 2019 concluded that:

- At a best estimate, across Surrey approximately **84,000** people have no Basic Digital skills and **128,000** are without the full five basic digital skills
- Around **126,000** people in Surrey are estimated to be low volume internet users (13.2% of the adult population)
- Approximately **125,000** (13.2%) of people are estimated to avoid purchasing items on the internet

We can expect to see a more accurate estimation of numbers by April 2022 when the new Census data is available and can be incorporated into our data packs, however this is a good indicator to base initial development work on.

Sources: Citizens Online Study (see Appendix 5)

Though this is a difficult one to accurately measure, data available to us can contribute to creating a more detailed heatmap of likely problem areas based on measures such as socio-economic factors, age and registered disabilities. It is important to allow for the fact that there will be a large proportion of Surrey Heartlands citizens who are technically digitally excluded (in that they don't have all of those 5 basic digital skills), but are economically comfortable, have no disabilities and have family members who assist them with anything they may need to do online – these residents will not be reachable through our stakeholder partners as they are not registered with them as clients, and may have no interest in learning further skills as they are perfectly happy with their current digital skill set.

Many small community groups were formed during the Covid-19 pandemic to try and assist their local community with digital skills, particularly to ensure individuals could connect virtually with friends and family during a time when face to face meetings were not an option to most. The majority of these groups, ranging from organisations like Surrey Coalition for Disabled People right down to local church or WI groups, did this with little or no access to funding or any kind of support network of other groups doing similar work. Part of our approach should be to contact, link and support these groups into one network to provide opportunities to share best practice, challenges, and funding opportunities to continue or expand their wonderful efforts in their local communities around Surrey Heartlands.

Appendix 2: Who is at Risk?

Exploring the most vulnerable groups likely to be at risk of digital exclusion

Over 65s

One of the largest groups at risk of digital exclusion are the elderly. In 2017, 65.1% of nonusers of the internet were retired despite making up just 28.3% of the general population (Good Things Foundation, 2017). More recently in 2020, the elderly continue to be overrepresented in the digitally excluded, accounting for 77% of those with very low digital engagement (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020), and over 75s the least likely to use the virtual consultation service offered by the NHS during the pandemic (Surrey Heartlands, August 2020).

Whilst they continue to be one of the least digitally engaged groups, there have been improvements as a result of the pandemic. In April 2020 registrations for online banking among the over 70s were three times greater than at the same time the previous year (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020), although the sample size for this survey was very small. Since 2011, there has been a significant decline the proportion of over 65s who had never used the internet to 29%, and an increase in recent internet usage for retired adults to 67% in 2019 (ONS, 2019d). More recently, there has been a 7% increase in the number of single person households over 65 with internet access in 2020 (ONS, 2020b). Whilst there is potential for digital inclusion of this group, they continually rank as one of the least digitally engaged populations.

Women

Globally, there is a significant digital divide between men and women, with 58% of men and 48% of women worldwide using the internet in 2019 (ITU 2019 Bridging the Gender divide).

However, in the UK, the digital gender divide is not as significant and has improved over the years. In 2011, 82% of men were online, and just 77% of women, but in 2019, this had risen to 92% of men and 90% of women recently using the internet (ONS, 2019d). This not only shows an overall increase in internet use but also a narrowing of the gender divide.

Despite improvements, 8.7% of women still had never used the internet compared with 6.3% of men (ONS, 2019d), with women accounting for 58% (3.1 million) of total non-users (ONS, 2019b). This disparity is greatest for the elderly, as 54% of men but just 41% of women over 70 recently used the internet (ONS, 2019d). Clearly there are still improvements to be made in this area, especially amongst older age groups.

Sources: Desk Research commissioned by this project (see Appendix 7)

Domestic Violence Victims

Domestic violence victims are at risk of digital exclusion, as online technologies are increasingly used to control and perpetrate abuse. The number of recorded domestic abuse related offences have been steadily rising over the years, as there was a 7% increase during March – June 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019, however this could be due to improvements in recording offences, and also more willingness for victims to report them (ONS, 2020a). Social media, online communication, and search engines can be monitored, with 29% of victims reporting the use of GPS and spyware by their abusers (Women's Aid, 2017). However, the internet can provide vital social support to victims, and access to resources to help their situation. Understanding privacy and security online is therefore increasingly important to facilitate safe access to the internet for victims, including when living in domestic violence shelters. The barriers this group faces are unique and centre around building the digital skills required to stay safe online, protect their privacy, and understand how technologies can be exploited for harassment and stalking. With the correct digital safety skills, domestic violence victims would be better able to safely and privately access resources to search for housing, jobs, financial support, and healthcare (Jerry Finn et al., 2009).

Minority Ethnic Groups

Looking back in 2011, there was a significant digital divide between white ethnicities and ethnic minorities. For example, non-users made up 20.3% of the total UK population, but accounted for 31.4% of Bangladeshi adults, clearly showing overrepresentation in this minority. In 2018 there had been significant improvements, with only 8% of Bangladeshi adults considered non users, which was below the national average (10%) (ONS, 2019b). The digital gap between white ethnicities and ethnic minorities has significantly narrowed and in some cases reversed. In 2019, recent users accounted for 90% of Indian and White ethnic groups, and approximately 92-93% of other ethnicities, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black, however Chinese ethnicities were the most digitally active at 98.6%. In the South East of the UK in particular, white ethnicities were the least digitally active, with only 92.4% reporting recent internet use compared to 97-99%+ of all other ethnicities, suggesting that white ethnicities now lag behind in their digital engagement (ONS, 2019a). Once again, age is a compounding factor for digital engagement of BAME groups. Recent internet users accounted for 83.6% of Asian ethnicities aged 55-64, but 93-95% of all other ethnicities. Data becomes very scarce for elderly BAME groups, meaning population samples were too low to assess Black and Mixed populations aged 65+. For ages 65-74, only 64.8% of Asian ethnicity were recent internet users compared with 3.8% of white ethnicity, with the gap widening even further for over 75s (ONS, 2019a).

Sources: Desk Research commissioned by this project (see Appendix 7)

Low Formal Education

A lower level of formal education is a risk factor for digital exclusion that commonly but not exclusively co-exists with a number of other risk factors such as low income, or the elderly. Of those offline, 78.3% left school before the age of 16 but only 7.8% left school aged 19+ (Good Things Foundation, 2017). Due to its co-existence in other commonly excluded groups it could be overlooked when assessing risk of digital exclusion. It could also identify younger populations usually thought of as digital natives that are actually at risk of exclusion.

Travellers and the Homeless

Traveller and homeless communities face many inequalities, with lower life expectancies and higher illiteracy rates. As they are also most likely to be economically inactive, there are many factors involved that place them at a very high risk of digital exclusion. In 2018, it was estimated that 20% of the gypsy and traveller population had never used the internet, which was twice the national average and only 42% used it daily (approximately 50% less than the national average). Those who had never accessed the internet were all over 40 with very low literacy (Friends Families and Travellers, 2018).

Benefit Claimants and Low Income Households

The type of employment or social class of an individual are significant factors in determining risk of digital exclusion. In a 2017 survey, 49.5% of those offline were considered to be in the DE socio-economic class (Good Things Foundation, 2017), which is defined as manual workers, unemployed, or state pensioners (National Readership Survey, 2016). Of those offline, 63.2% had an annual household income <£17,500, and 44.5% had an income <£11,500 (Good Things Foundation, 2017). Further to this, the unemployed accounted for 19.2% of those offline, but only 16.6% of the total UK population (Good Things Foundation, 2017).

Benefit claimants (for disability, housing, income, job seekers etc) are also at risk of exclusion, with 40% of this group categorised as having very low digital engagement, as opposed to 33% of the total UK population (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020). Contrastingly, universal credit claimants have a higher level of digital engagement with 49% reporting a high level of digital engagement, and 21% with a very high level; significantly higher than the national average (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020). This could be due to the increased universal credit uptake at the start of the pandemic forcing claimants to move online for the application, subsequently exposing and motivating otherwise digitally inactive people to the online world and improving their digital skills.

Those with a Disability/Impairment

In 2017, 47.7% of the offline population had a disability, infirmity, or chronic illness (Good Things Foundation, 2017). In 2020, only 84% of those with a disability were recent internet users, compared to 91% of non-disabled people, and twice as many disabled people reported to have not used the internet in the last 3 months (8%) (ONS, 2020b).

Once again, this disparity is greater in the elderly, as although there is little difference between disabled and non-disabled adults aged 16-24, only 41% of disabled adults over 75 were recent users compared with 54% of non-disabled adults (ONS, 2019d). Of those with low levels of digital engagement, 42% are classified as having an impairment (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020).

It is important to remember that carers are also at high risk of digital exclusion, as many are unable to leave the house or the friend/relative they are caring for in order to explore options of further learning or personal development in regards to technology and digital skills.

Overlap Between High Risk Groups

When considering the risk factors for digital exclusion it is vital to consider the significant overlap between the different demographics, especially when considering the design of possible criteria to identify them. For example, only 37% of those impaired are in employment, compared to a 60% employment rate in the UK, and 38% are over 65. Of those offline, 55.1% are classified as both disabled and in the DE socio-economic class, whilst 44.5% are both over 75 and in the DE socio-economic class (Good Things Foundation, 2017). Those who are retired are more likely to lack any formal qualifications, have a low household income, and lack access to the internet or devices. Retirees are also highly likely to be of white ethnicity, single person households, and/or female (Lloyds Banking Group, 2020).

Out of the non-user population, 95% of those aged 65+ were either disabled, in the DE socio-economic class, and/or left education under the age of 16. When evaluating 'limited users' i.e. rarely use the internet or do very little on the internet, the same trends are observed and they are much more likely to have left education early, or have some kind of disability. Interestingly, social class becomes much less of a factor in the over 75s, with a much more equal proportion of limited users across social classes in this age group (Good Things Foundation, 2017).

Appendix 3: Citizen Opinions on Digital

Stakeholder and citizen interviews gathered over the last 4 months have provided us with some invaluable insight into Surrey residents' opinions and attitudes to digital services. Stakeholders were targeted according to the highest risk citizen groups identified in the temperature check data gathering, and represented:

- The elderly
- Those with a disability and specifically, those with a sensory impairment
- Those in temporary accommodation
- Those fleeing domestic violence
- Those suffering from poor mental health
- Those currently unemployed
- Carers

Citizens were then chosen to ensure no gaps in our data and understanding of requirements across different requirements groups. Feedback from these interviews has given us 8 clear resident 'personas' across the spectrum from least resistant to most resistant to using digital services. These are incredibly useful in ensuring that whatever support we design to tackle this issue will be meaningful and helpful to each of these key groups, and that it is delivered in the most effective way for each of them.

Most resistant

Anxiety

Apathy

Access

Ability

Least resistant

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Sources: Stakeholder Engagement commissioned by this project (see Appendix 7)

Segment 1: “Don't want to and don't make me have to go digital - I want choice”

- They do not feel they need to engage in some or all digital communication
- They are likely to be older and not 'grown up with technology'
- They may be fearful about fraud or feel at risk of being scammed (already had a bad exp. potentially an issue for older blind people)
- Affordability is not an issue
- Privacy could be an issue – want no one helping them (some may be fearful of any kind of assessment e.g. for dementia)
- Other channels more rewarding.
- Find some digital communication intrusive e.g. receiving messages at inappropriate times - no boundaries

Segment 2: “I don't want to use digital services for fear of being traced. I want to be anonymous”

- They don't want to feel they are being tracked
- There may be fears about engaging digitally with any government departments around sharing of information
- They may be from a community that likes to stay anonymous or they may feel at risk of being deported / their children being taken away or they are trying to remain hidden from an abuser

Segment 3: “I’ve tried and can’t get on with it – given up”

- Defer / rely on others if no non-digital alternative
- One bad experience can put them off e.g. forget password / takes too long
- Not that different to segment 1 but they are simply apathetic rather than feeling a strong rejection
- Digital is a low priority in their life – unlikely to understand the benefits
- Expert Reference Group resonated with this group and felt that this was a large segment

Any age

Likely to feel overwhelm easily – could have poor physical or mental health

Segment 4: “I don’t have the support to do what I want even if I wanted to”

- May be poorly physically or mentally and not wanting to engage with outside world
- Those aged 75+ with no younger influencers / family to help
- Language barrier that person does not want to address - esp. older
- Illiterate with no sign of wanting to address (NB they may not want their illiteracy exposed)
- Those with a sensory impairment and able to afford aids but struggle due to lower level of literacy

- A mental or physical disability that prevents from using without support (includes dexterity issues in their hands - arthritis, neuropathy, neurological problems)
- Support person lacks skill or enthusiasm

Segment 5: “My environment means that I can’t access what I want in the way that I want to”

- May lack privacy as reliant on inter-generational help or support person
- Some feel intimidated to ask family to help them (family will just do it rather than show or explain)
- Home has insufficient access and decision out of their hands e.g. care homes lacking in broadband or WiFi
- An abuser (domestic violence or modern slavery) is stopping or controlling digital behaviour
- Connection issues in rural areas - lots of GRT sites don’t have a broadband connection so reliant on 4G or 5G and that can be more costly

Most resistant

Anxiety

Apathy

Access

Ability

Least resistant



Sources: Stakeholder Engagement commissioned by this project (see Appendix 7)

Segment 6: “I am not able to engage at the moment due to affordability (devices, broadband, data)”

- Can be an issue at certain times e.g. end of the month
- Lots of people in household e.g. a big family and only one device to share
- Addiction problems and selling devices
- Signing up to broadband too big a commitment
- In debt
- Digital (broadband) perceived as a luxury rather than essential
- A perception that the cost of using digital will be high
- Cash poor (but may be property rich e.g. older)
- Those with a sensory impairment and unable to afford aids such as magnifying or Alexa (sight issues) or voice activation software
- Homeless, off grid or living in temp. accommodation

Segment 7: “I am just a bit behind - playing 'catch up.’”

- Just not needed till now - been living in a cash culture
- May have just moved to UK (refugees, asylum seekers)
- Digital not been a part of their working life – may have been in manual jobs and now need to engage digitally with services such as HMRC etc.
- Illiterate / language may be an issue but these people are happy to expose their difficulties and want to improve their level of literacy

- Expert Reference Group felt this was another fairly large segment but hard to identify – they often have a smartphone and a broadband connection and engage with some digital tasks such as using social media

Segment 8: “I enjoy using digital technology but may have some issues”

- May have a learning disability; have no fear but may need a lot of support
- May have early signs of dementia
- May not use tech enough for it to become ingrained and keep needing help and support to do the same things
- They may be comfortable with specific digital tasks (Zoom) but avoid others.
- Non-digital channels are their comfort blanket
- There may be safeguarding issues for some of those with a learning disability

These segments give us useful insight into attitudes to digital and using digital services. There is a clear feeling of distrust and anger among some residents, who feel they are being ‘pushed’ towards digital and that face to face services (particularly in relation to NHS online services vs in-person consultations) are being removed. There is also a large proportion who would like to learn more digital skills but do not currently know how to find that support.

Most resistant

Anxiety

Apathy

Access

Ability

Least resistant

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Sources: Stakeholder Engagement commissioned by this project (see Appendix 7)

Appendix 4: Care Homes in Surrey Heartlands

From our data and research phases we can see a larger scale problem with care homes in Surrey that includes connectivity issues, digital skill levels amongst both staff and residents, and quantities of appropriate technology that work for residents often more specific physical needs.

This issue is something that requires a focused collaborative approach with the Surrey Care Association, Primary Care and other related organisations to ensure we can offer not only appropriate support but also that it is offered in the right way, to a group of professionals who are already struggling with workload and time pressures. We need to ensure that what we can offer them is beneficial to them, and will not take up a large proportion of their time.

Though much of the groundwork of data gathering and research has been completed in this area and relationships built with many of the participating organisations and stakeholder partners, the service design and implementation phases of work in this area will take place in 2022 to allow time to perfect our approach in a way that will work best for care homes and all of their staff and residents in the most successful way possible.

It is worth noting that care homes in Surrey Heartlands total 400, and between them offer accommodation to just over 10,000 residents. Though many of these homes are provided for elderly and infirm citizens, many of whom may have additional needs in the form of a degenerative condition or similar, there are several who provide a home for younger adults with learning disabilities and autism.

As such, there are not yet definitive actions in this area however we know that the main areas that will need support are:

- Ensuring all care homes have WiFi access throughout the home, for access by both staff and residents
- Potential assistance with installing routers and teaching staff how to use new equipment
- Possible assistance with upgrading or refurbishing old or ageing equipment for staff to allow greater flexibility of use
- Sourcing/funding additional technology for resident use, particularly voice-activated or adapted equipment for residents with physical or learning disabilities
- A time and cost efficient solution for upskilling care home staff in digital skills
- Ensuring care homes are linked in to the digital skills volunteer programme, so that residents can benefit from additional training in digital skills
- Connecting care homes in with the raft of events and engagement activities taking place both online and in person, including virtual events such as tea dances, or Inter-generational Music Making's mixed media programme of events for residents to enjoy

Given additional pressures on care homes over the upcoming winter and the Government Covid vaccination initiative for all NHS staff which may lead to staff shortages, there needs to be a realistic discussion around what is feasible to achieve in this initial project scope up to the end of August 2022, and what would need to carry over into a new 12 month period.

Appendix 5: External Reference Sources

Government Digital Inclusion Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy>

Lloyds Banking – Key Digital Skills

<https://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index/essential-digital-skills.html>

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Government Essential Digital Skills Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738922/Essential_digital_skills_framework.pdf

People, Population & Community

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/articles/exploringtheuksdigitaldivide/2019-03-04>

Citizens Online Survey Summary – Surrey Heartlands

<..\Data - SCC\Citizens Online - Surrey Heartlands.pdf>

Appendix 6: Census, Ofcom and Public Health Data

A copy of the initial data gathering and temperature maps can be viewed here:

[..\Data - SCC\Initial Analysis Summary - March 2021.pptx](#)

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This includes:

- Key findings and recommendations, used to shape the development of the research work carried out on this project
 - Temperature maps showing key geographical areas likely to require support
 - Postcode areas identified as having the lowest broadband speeds
- Initial citizen mosaics used to shape the development of the stakeholder engagement work

This data is also now available to view on the Surrey Index online tool.

Appendix 7: Desk Research, Stakeholder & Citizen Interviews

The full desk research piece can be read here:

<..\Data - Desk Research\Digital Exclusion Desk Research 2021.pdf>

The summary of feedback from stakeholder interviews can be seen here:

<..\Data - Stakeholder Engagement\Stakeholder Engagement Summary Sept 2021.pptx>

Feedback from the citizen interviews and SODA data analysis will be added to this Appendix when completed in December 2021.

Appendix 8: Key Stakeholder List

Name	Organisation/Team
Dr Negin Safaraz-Shekary	Public Health, Surrey County Council
Paul Young	Social Care & Health Integration, Surrey County Council
Clare Burgess	Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
Neil Selby	Frailty & Integrated Care, Surrey Heartlands CCG
Ali Porteous	Surrey Care Association
Michelle Harcus	Locality Team, NHS Primary Care
Nina Crump	Digital First Primary Care
Mark Cossons	Barclays Digital Eagles
Ruth Hutchinson	Chairperson, Health & Inequalities Board
Jo Blount	Chairperson, Adults Digital Board

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Name	Organisation/Team
Richard Stockley	Research & Insight, Surrey County Council
Russ Bourner	Population Insight, Surrey County Council
Camilla Bertoincin	Surrey Office of Data Analytics
Lucy Evans	Lighthouse Research Consultancy
Non Hill	Healthwatch Surrey
Lucy Dixon	Research, Surrey County Council
James Milne	Information Governance (Digital), Surrey Heartlands CCG
Rik Jackson	Digital Accessibility, Surrey County Council
Jay Saggar	London Office of Technology & Innovation

In addition to this list of key stakeholders, we have steering groups across all 4 Place Based Partnerships in Surrey Heartlands who provide feedback and ideas around support tool design. Additional stakeholders will come onboard over the next 3-4 months, so this document will be updated accordingly.

Appendix 4: Key Stakeholder List

The following organisations took part in our stakeholder interviews as part of the research work, and we look forward to continuing our work with them to deliver support to the citizen groups most at risk of digital exclusion across Surrey Heartlands:

British Red Cross	Tandridge Voluntary Action
Age UK Surrey	Community Psychiatric Nursing Team
Surrey Choices	YMCA
Womens Refuge RWBA	Surrey Care Association
Mary Frances Trust	Surrey Community Action
Universal Credit Office	Surrey Choices
Surrey Coalition of Disabled People	Sight for Surrey
Maryanne's Cafe	Tech Angels Volunteer Programme

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