Digital Access & Inclusion
Annual update report July 2017

Background & Summary

The Council's digital inclusion project was established in 2015 which had the aim that everyone in the borough should be able to get online, do more on line and benefit from being online. Funding of £50,000 was allocated to the project to cover a period of 2 years.

The digital inclusion project is now well established:

- A part time digital inclusion officer has been in post since April 2016. Initially external training providers were used.

- All council managed community centres now have WiFi.

- 15 Training laptops and 8 android tablets have been purchased using the digital inclusion budget for use in community training.

- The digital inclusion officer travels to community venues across the borough to deliver free beginners training regularly and, where free provision is available, training is now delivered in conjunction with tutors from Lancashire Adult Learning or Preston's College. 233 learners have attended our digital inclusion training sessions as part of the project so far.

- Upgraded digital access terminals are in place at our offices at Union Street and weekly drop in sessions are offered to help more people to complete online tasks.

- The new customer and digital strategy extends the work further to incorporate projects such as setting up digital hubs in 4 of our community centres; establishing free town centre WiFi and creating a digital champions (public, private and VCF sector) partnership to work in a more coordinated way to improve digital access across the borough.

- A digital access page has been established on the council's website which is updated regularly with details of access points, training sessions and useful links to other providers
http://chorley.gov.uk/Pages/AtoZ/Digital-Access.aspx

Digital Training Delivery

The role of part time digital inclusion officer allows the Council to offer tailored digital training and support according the particular needs of individuals, groups or localities. This makes sure that older people, job seekers, people with disabilities, economically disadvantaged areas and rural areas don't get left behind. Group training sessions have been delivered in 18 community venues so far.

Our training is aimed at beginners who would like to get online for the first time or people who would like to gain more confidence online. Courses are normally 4 x 2 hour training sessions. We cover practical tasks like finding information or registering for prescriptions online. Most people also set up email and some want Facebook or Skype to stay in touch with friends or relatives around the world. Sometimes the training is targeted according to the needs or interest of particular groups.

Brothers of Charity needed an e-safety workshop for adults with Learning Disabilities and a closed Facebook group just for them.

A year on, the group regularly enjoy communicating online with each other in a safe way using the tools set up for them.

For Whittle Art Group doing more online meant sharing images and creative ideas with each other using tablets or ipads, and of course discovering inspiration and ideas on Pinterest.

For some job seekers who felt very worried about using the internet, quiet informal groups were needed so they could be given the help necessary to gain confidence to find jobs online.

Colleges can deliver free get online training for us if the groups are big enough so we are working with Preston's College and Lancashire Adult Learning to help them to reach more people in Chorley.

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In addition we have arranged for free functional skills qualification courses and ICT workshops to be offered in our community centers from September for people who would like to take their learning to the next level, improve their confidence or job prospects.

The Chorley digital inclusion delivery partnership has recently been established. Members include Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Adult Learning, LCC Library Services, Barclays and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The aim of the partnership is to work together to improve digital access and support for individuals throughout Chorley.

The partnership is facilitated digitally through the LGA Knowledge Hub. It enables partners to share information about their digital inclusion activities and where possible to work together to:

- Improve the places and times where individuals can gain public access to the internet
- Improve the digital support and training available to individuals; and
- Reach out to as many digitally excluded individuals as possible in Chorley.

Digital Access Points

Where appropriate, people are signposted onto further support in conjunction with a number of partners. We have produced a flyer showing places where people can access the internet or get digital support throughout the borough.

There are now 13 free access points and an additional six locations which provide regular support and training in our communities. This is an increase of 44% since the project started.

There are now more regular places where older people can get online in friendly social settings. Whittle Seniors Computer Club and Chorley Computer Club both started up some time ago, and following short courses delivered by our digital inclusion officer, AgeUK, Hoghton Village Hall and Pikestone Court Sheltered Housing Scheme went on to set up their own volunteer led surfers clubs.

Digital Support

In addition to group training we also offer drop in support each week at our Union Street offices to help people who would like to carry out tasks online or to answer questions about using laptops, phones or tablets. It gives the digital inclusion officer an opportunity to interact with our customers, encourage them to go digital and let people know about all of the digital support opportunities available. People are more likely to complete tasks online independently after they have been helped the first time. People are helped with tasks and queries such as:

Understand a broadband bill   Password Reset   SET UP EMAIL   Apply for universal credit

Find out about free access points   Set up a new tablet

Book sharps collections on iphone   SELECT MOVE   CONNECT & SERVE   Google Garage Training   JOB APPLICATION

MyAccount   GP Services   Find out about training courses

Get School Newsletters

One to one support has been provided in other locations too, for people needing individual assistance or adaptations to allow them to use their device. For example voice over or magnification help for people with sight loss.

The digital inclusion officer is also available to help local community groups or parish councils to do more online. All parishes were provided with a small questionnaire to establish availability of WiFi access and public buildings. Parishes were offered support in the form of funding for installation of a router if no WiFi access was available. Other examples of the kind of support that can be provided include:

- mentoring or arranging training for digital champion volunteers;
- arranging basic digital skills training for your area;
- help with online tasks such as using MyAccount, emailing etc for councillors or parish councils;
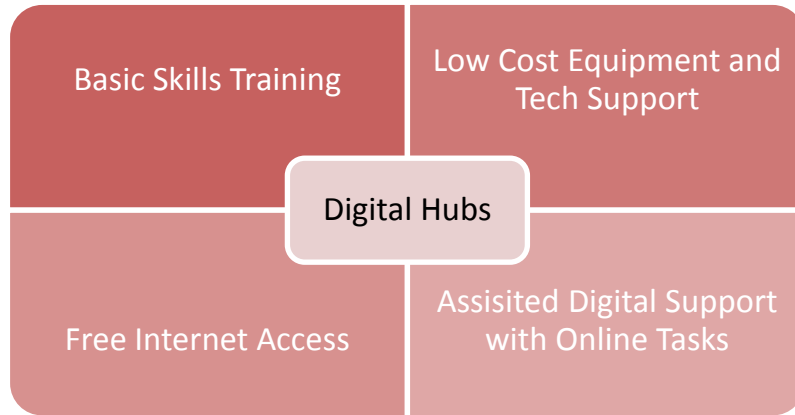- advice around grants, equipment, training or WiFi needs.

ESafety Workshop
Brothers of Charity – Whittle le Woods

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New Community Digital Hubs

Some of our residents need ongoing support so that they can make the most of the internet. To help them plans are underway to set up four new digital support and training hubs within our community centers from September 2017.

The hubs will provide places where people know they can drop in to for digital help. This could be technical support or access to low cost refurbished equipment. They may need help with form filling, job clubs or free basic skills training. The digital hubs will be delivered in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, local colleges, a tech recycling organisation and other partners. They will significantly extend the reach and capacity of the current digital inclusion work.

Basic Skills Training	Low Cost Equipment and Tech Support
	Digital Hubs	
Free Internet Access	Assisited Digital Support with Online Tasks

The Future

Our ambition is to ensure that every individual, community and business in Chorley is able to take full advantage of all of the opportunities the digital age brings.

Digital inclusion is one element of the Council's digital strategy (2017-2020), and will be essential to the success of the delivery of the whole strategy. The principles and projects for digital inclusion expand on and further develop the successful work and foundations which have been put in place over the last few years.

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Principles

Everybody should have access to technology and the opportunity to become confident users of technology.

- We should understand and join up digital support provision across the borough from public, private and VCFS sector and identify ways to add value through collaboration.
- We will develop training and ongoing support and access provision for those who need help getting online and remaining active online.
- We will raise awareness of the benefits of being online and the work the council is doing to improve digital access and inclusion in the borough.
- We will provide assisted digital support to those who genuinely need it.
- We will ensure that particular consideration is taken to increasing digital inclusion in rural areas of the borough, where residents and businesses may have lower broadband speeds, or due to their location have the potential to be socially isolated and therefore could really benefit from access to online services and communications tools.

Projects

The table below sets out the projects which will be delivered to support an increase in digital inclusion over the next three years.

Project/Action	Description
Review planning policy regarding the installation of broadband fiber as part of new developments	Consideration of whether planning policy could be amended to incorporate a requirement for developers to ensure that they work with broadband providers to install fibre to new developments in the future enabling business and residents to benefit from high speed broadband access.
Deliver digital hubs	This project will equip Council owned community centres (Tatton, Buttermere, Clayton Brook and Buckshaw) with ICT equipment to support the provision of basic skills training, free internet access points for the local community, access to assisted digital support and also low cost equipment and technical support.
Establish a digital delivery partnership to work in a more coordinated way to improve digital inclusion within the borough	To facilitate a partnership with other organisations such as libraries, training providers and charities who will work together to improve digital access and support for individuals throughout Chorley. The partnership will: - Ensure clear signposting of digital inclusion, education and access opportunities. - Boost basic online skills and promote the benefits on being online. - To provide assisted digital support to vulnerable or older people. - Ensure that everyone has access to technology.
Deliver basic online and digital skills training to digitally	Concentrating on hard to reach groups or rural parts of Chorley the training will be tailored depending on the needs of the group for example it could be focused on supporting unemployed people to find work, or

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| excluded groups | how to use the internet to find information or to keep in touch with friends and family.

Where appropriate training will also incorporate the use of council online services to people who need support. |
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| Develop a sustainable and growing community resource to increase the future provision of free digital training opportunities | We will support organisations to recruit and train digital champions who can provide basic skills training and digital support in the community. We will coordinate arrangements for initial volunteer training and to be an ongoing point of contact for digital champions who need practical help or advice around delivery. Individual organiations will remain responsible for selecting, screening and supervising their own volunteers.

We will facilitate and encourage digital training to be delivered locally wherever funding provision is available in association with local colleges and learning providers. |
Support the increase and promotion of digital access and support points across the borough	• Supporting existing organisations to set up new digital access points, which may include supporting funding bids or sourcing low cost equipment for not for profit groups. • Develop our own digital access points in council owned buildings and community centres.
Establish free town center WiFi	This will see the introduction of free WiFi in the town center which will benefit shoppers and businesses. It will provide internet access to people who could not otherwise afford it, help people navigate around the town center and hopefully stay longer and spend more.
Establish a laptop/tablet loan scheme	This service would be primarily targeted at people who don't have access to a device at home and who are unable to visit one of the boroughs free access points. The loan scheme would be run in conjunction with basic skills training which can involve making home visits to the most in need.
Deliver a digital event	This may be a hack event to encourage digital creativity and bring groups of people together to solve a particular problem, or an event to promote, encourage and enjoy using technology, such as a gaming event.