



Digital Inclusion Workshops Summary and Recommendations

28 and 30 September 2020

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Background and objectives

On Monday 28 and Wednesday 30 September, LOTI held two workshops which sought to explore a broader range of digital inclusion issues based on the need to access education, work, training, social connections etc. We also identified specific actions to support residents in accessing digital services, particularly cohorts who are hard to identify or reach.

Objectives

The format of the workshops was based on [LOTI's Outcome-based Methodology](#) which starts with the end in mind.

Workshop 1 objectives were to:

- Define the desired outcomes we wished to achieve and for whom and
- Explore problems and barriers preventing those outcomes

Workshop 2 objectives were to:

- Identify specific actions we could take to realise the desired outcomes and address problems and barriers and
- Agree which actions to take forward and who would be involved

Participants

The workshop was attended by colleagues from a number of London boroughs, including: Brent, Hackney, Hounslow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Havering, Islington, Kingston and Sutton, Lambeth, and Waltham Forest.

Full details of what was discussed in the workshop and raw notes can be viewed [here](#).

Workshop 1

Part 1: In the first part of the workshop, participants were invited to define what outcomes they'd like to enable and for whom. Participants first identified a number of personas who are or could become digitally excluded as a result of Covid, these included residents:

1. In care homes
2. Who are or may become socially and / or physically isolated
3. Who may have recently (due to Covid) become unemployed
4. Who may not have any recourse to public funds
5. Whose English is not their first language
6. Who are unemployed or on low income
7. Who may have accessibility needs

The following personas were also suggested as being the focus of any activities boroughs or LOTI undertakes:

8. School students
9. Local business owners

Participants were then invited to define specific outcomes they wish to realise for each persona. The main outcome that emerged from the discussion was:

Improved online / digital access, for:

- a. Connecting with family and friends
- b. Accessing health and wellbeing related services
- c. Accessing essential council services
- d. Employment and job searching
- e. Training and skills (or learning resources for students)
- f. Trading or connecting with customers (business owners)

Table 1 - Outcomes for different persons

1. Residents in care homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can now connect with family and friends ● My health and wellbeing needs are now met
2. Socially/physically isolated residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can now connect with family and friends ● My health and wellbeing needs are now met
3. Newly unemployed or low income residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can now access the job market ● I am now equipped with the skills for remote working/job searching
4. Residents with no recourse to public funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can now make the best of my current situation and benefit from all services available to me
5. Residents whose English is not first language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I now have access to online services ● I now have the language skills to access services

6. Unemployed or low income residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I now have access to online services • I now have access to training, new skills • I can now access the job market
7. Residents with accessibility needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can now access all online digital services
8. Schools Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can now access learning resources remotely
9. Local business owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can now trade online • I can use online channels to contact / advertise to customers

Part 2: In the second part of the workshop, participants were invited to explore the problems and barriers to realising these desired outcomes. The following were the key problems / barriers that emerged from the discussion:

- **Connectivity issues** - limited fibre connections in areas including business districts and limited bandwidth when multiple devices are used
- **Skills** - limited skills either of the personas or people supporting personas (e.g. care workers); lack of opportunity to practice new skills
- **Lack of appetite** for using digital services in general
- **Devices** - affordability and connectivity (data allowance issues)
- **Language** barriers for a number of personas
- **Limited knowledge** by boroughs about specific individuals in need in each persona group
- **Personas' limited awareness** of existing services
- **Fragmented partnership working** of boroughs with local organisations and central government departments

Here's a detailed summary of **problems and barriers** for each persona.

1. Residents in care homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited bandwidth availability - number of simultaneous devices that can be supported • Staff skill limits and time constraints • Residents would respond best to face to face training
2. Socially/physically isolated residents

- Affordability of connectivity and devices
- Language barrier for some in this cohort

3. Newly unemployed or low income residents

- No access to devices
- No opportunity to practice new skills for new working environment
- Councils should be better connected with existing support services e.g JCP

4. Residents with no recourse to public funds

- Councils can struggle to identify individuals through usual challenges, requires engaging with other support services such as food banks

5. Residents whose English is not first language

- No access to devices or data
- A hard to reach group for councils
- Additional challenges for training / service delivery
- Communities may not know services and information are available in their language

6. Unemployed or low income residents

- Lack of confidence in using technology
- Access to devices and data
- Interventions require trusted delivery partner, who should be consistent over a long term period
- Ongoing support required

7. Residents with accessibility needs

- Commercial sites/ social media not always accessible - using these sites is a gateway to building digital skills

8. Schools Students

- Access to devices and data
- Students may not know they are eligible for support / devices
- Councils not engaged adequately by central government
- Definitions for who is eligible are inconsistent

9. Local business owners

- Councils identifying which business owners are excluded
- Business owners unaware of tools or services that could support them
- Availability of connectivity in some high streets

Workshop 2

In workshop 2, we continued our conversation from workshop 1 and invited participants to reflect on the problems prioritised for each persona and then suggest potential solutions to those problems. When thinking about solutions, participants were encouraged to think about ones which are doable, impactful and which address the users' needs.

Here's a summary of suggested solutions for each persona.

1. Residents in care homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Partner with VCS organisation and private sectors orgs with expertise in training care home staff and residents in digital skills● Use borough social value leavers in procurement of services/products, e.g. leverage wayleave agreements to roll out fibre to care homes/housing estates, or to provide equipment and devices
2. Socially/physically isolated residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create a map of schemes/services already in place that can provide free or subsidised devices/support for specific cohorts and identify gaps● Use existing data to better identify those in need and understand where additional data is required● Use already available commercial/consumer translation tools● Create community/ local digital hubs to provide devices and deliver training tailored to specific groups/communities
3. Newly unemployed or low income residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Map available / existing services in order to deliver effective signposting● Use emerging funding avenues such as circular economy and Greening government: ICT and digital services strategy 2020-2025 to provide devices to individuals and employment services● Work with existing services and create digital hubs in communities.
4. Residents with no recourse to public funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use in person hubs to provide services and collect data anonymously that can be used in policy making, leverage relationships with VCS to enable this.
5. Residents whose English is not first language
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use existing data to identify this cohort, including working with schools● Work with adult education services to provide laptop/device loans● Work with community groups providing language support, provide these groups with devices.

6. Unemployed or low income residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide devices for free ● Signpost to available support and services
7. Residents with accessibility needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the VCS in building their skills capabilities ● Ensure accessibility needs of citizens are shared across the council (with consent) to improve the user experience and ensure the right services are offered ● Offer alternative channels - for example Alexa, Sign language app
8. Schools Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand need by engaging with schools, head teachers and VCS ● Signpost to support available
9. Local business owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enable community engagement teams to better capture data from businesses and provide a tool kit of support ● Target high streets with a funded full fibre roll out ● Collate information from teams engaged with small businesses to understand scale and nuances of needs ● Create generic materials aimed at business for each LA to tailor for their own channels ● Digital skills training

Actions

LOTI recommends the following specific actions to be taken in the immediate term:

- **LOTI** to support boroughs in understanding how best to use the social value provision of large contacts to directly support and help fund local digital inclusion initiatives. This will include:
 - Hosting webinar with [Social Value Exchange](#).
 - Publishing case study of Brent’s work on Social Value for digital inclusion.
- **LOTI and GLA** to support boroughs in developing directories of services available across London to signpost sources of support. This will include:
 - Promoting Hackney’s ‘[Find Support Services](#)’ open source map of digital inclusion support, and help boroughs implement.
 - Reviewing relevance of [MHCLG’s Open Standard for local services](#).
- **GLA** to support boroughs in developing a best practice data model for identifying needs in each of the persona groups.

- LOTI to connect GLA City Intelligence Unit with boroughs interested in developing a model.
- LOTI and GLA to review how to identify and support missing cohorts, e.g. supporting boroughs in building partnerships with schools, etc. through London Councils.
- **LOTI to raise awareness amongst boroughs of best practice examples of:**
 - Understanding and addressing local digital exclusion
 - Establishing and supporting local digital hubs able to deliver training and devices to local groups/communities.
 - Working in partnership with local community organisations to support personas identified in this workshop and other residents in need
- **GLA** to create guidance on how boroughs can use emerging opportunities through legislation e.g. [Greening government: ICT and digital services strategy 2020-2025](#), to fund devices, training etc. for residents.