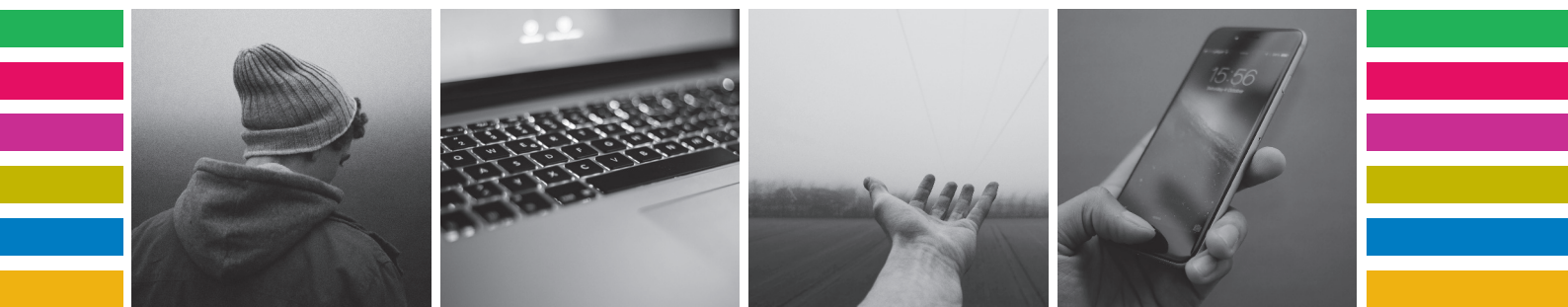


# SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

September 2017



Social Justice in the Digital Age  
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# About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantages and injustices every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

Since its inception, the CSJ has changed the landscape of our political discourse by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to a transformation in government thinking and policy. The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five 'pathways to poverty', first identified in our ground breaking 2007 report, Breakthrough Britain. These are: family breakdown; educational failure; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt. It is only by tackling these issues and reversing them that poverty can be tackled.

In March 2013, the CSJ report It Happens Here, shone a light on the horrific reality of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. As a direct result of this report, the Government passed the Modern Slavery Act (2015), one of the first pieces of legislation in the world to address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century.

The CSJ delivers empirical, practical, fully-funded policy solutions to address the scale of the social justice problems facing the UK. Our research is informed by expert working groups comprising prominent academics, practitioners, and policy-makers. Further, the CSJ Alliance is a unique group of charities, social enterprises, and other grass-roots organisations that have a proven track-record of reversing social breakdown across the UK. The 11 years since the CSJ was founded has brought with it much success. But the social justice challenges facing Britain remain serious. Our response, therefore, must be equally serious. In 2017 and beyond, we will continue to advance the cause of social justice in this nation.

With thanks to TalkTalk Group plc.

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# Executive summary

The internet is a powerful catalyst for change. It is a job creator, a wealth creator, and a driver of innovation, enterprise, and national productivity.

Today, more than eight out of ten adults are going online almost every day. The world is increasingly dependent on us all being 'digital citizens' who are confident navigating a digital world.

Personal, social and cultural benefits are directly linked to internet use. From social cohesion to political participation, health development to educational improvement, a full and meaningful digital engagement can fundamentally and vastly improve quality of life.

But, since the year 2000, the digital divide amongst the UK population has grown. An estimated 5.8 million of the adult population have never used the internet and a further 12.6 million people are lacking in basic digital skills. These are individuals commonly known as the 'digitally excluded'. They can be excluded from everyday life and unable to utilise the many benefits that the digital world offers. Despite warnings, the UK has failed to tackle this mounting issue.

This is a social justice issue. The ever-growing centrality of digital skills and knowledge to everyday life means that to be digitally excluded will often mean a person is socially and economically excluded, leaving them unable to fulfil their potential.

This report seeks to tackle digital exclusion by looking at how we can remove barriers from people's lives, increase access, and train up individuals in the skills and understanding that will enable them to lead a fully digitally enabled life.

Various sectors are attempting to tackle these profound issues through both prevention and cure. The Government has created different initiatives, such as the Digital Economy Bill and Digital Strategy which speak of widening opportunity for digital literacy.

The private sector further provides practical solutions to improve skills – Digital Champions offering training in public spaces such as banks, libraries and leisure centres are one such example gaining traction at the local level. Internet Service Providers have also endeavoured to provide technical guidance on personal safety and security.

But the problem is widespread and collaboration between local government, central government, industry and the third sector is often lacking. This report makes recommendations for effective collaboration, supported by coherent Government leadership, to address this.

This report addresses the issues of access, safety, security, leadership and infrastructure across the digital world. We worked with a selection of our alliance of 350 poverty fighting charities to find out what the needs and problems are for those at the margins of society. Based on this, we suggest a range of political and social measures that could be taken to ensure that those living in our most deprived communities are not there due to exclusion from the digital community.

Key among our recommendations are the following:

1. Local authorities and central government agencies should direct people to the Good Things Foundation's digital services, as job centres and some charities do already, to meet immediate need. Over the long term all government agencies and departments, as well as local authorities, should continue designing apps for services that are readily available and allow users to complete the full range of actions via mobile and smart phones, ensuring they do not limit the users' ability to receive or provide information they would on a computer or laptop.
2. The Government should create a UK Council for Vulnerable Adult Internet Safety, similar to the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, made up of digital sector experts, academics, law enforcement agencies, charities and government. The Council would collate internet safety research, conduct its own consultations, give advice to industry providers and produce a code of practice.
3. Teacher training should include digital safety skills so that those leading in education can pass this onto their pupils.
4. Businesses should take a lead on letting their customers know what is available by raising awareness and educating users. Comparable guidelines could also be considered for nuisance calls at a network level.
5. Every local authority should assign a Local Digital Leader to champion digital transformation within their local area. Some local authorities have one already and the Department for Communities and Local Government should support local authorities to make the provision universal.
6. Core digital skills should be built into every new apprenticeship standard, even for job roles that do not specifically require them. This should be an important element of 'T-levels' as the Government rolls out its plans for technical and vocational education.
7. Programmes to address digital exclusion should be properly evaluated, potentially by the proposed Council for Digital Inclusion. Charities would benefit from being made aware of the Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework, with training provided and opportunities to report on its effectiveness.

The recommendations in this report are not intended to discredit the good work already done to promote digital inclusion. Rather they are intended to build on this work, delivering a more coordinated approach. There is no longer any excuse for inconsistent, ad-hoc training and a poor profile of what makes effective programmes. Public policy must be coherent and consistent.

Digital inclusion is a lifelong issue and our policy response must evolve to reflect this, providing support to children and adults across their life time. We must not aspire to just provide people with the basic level of digital skills and online safety guidance, but to fully equip them with sufficient skills and safeguarding measures to navigate the internet and reap all of the benefits the digital revolution has brought and will continue to bring.



# Introduction

Introduced only 25 years ago, the internet was once a foreign concept for many. However, by 2000 there was a rapid surge in demand. With one in four British homes getting online, it was predicted that the internet would soon be an integral part of everyday living.<sup>1</sup> At the time, there was also concern surrounding an emerging digital divide of the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ of internet access across the country – one that would only worsen if not tackled effectively. Location, age, and income were clear factors determining internet access and use. In 2000 the Government made a statement in response, ‘outlining [government] schemes to ensure that this ‘digital divide’ does not get any bigger.’<sup>2</sup>

The internet is a powerful catalyst for change. It has already made a significant contribution to British economic growth.<sup>3</sup> By 2015, our digital sector accounted for £118 billion, over 7% of the UK economy,<sup>4,5</sup> additionally creating huge spill-over effects. Jobs have been created, productivity enhanced and both innovation and enterprise invigorated.

Today, more than eight out of ten adults are going online almost every day.<sup>6</sup> The internet is revolutionising all aspects of how we live and everyday citizens are enjoying greater connectivity and new, innovative technologies. The world is increasingly dependent on us all being ‘digital citizens’ who are confident navigating the internet.

Personal, social and cultural benefits are also directly linked to internet use.<sup>7</sup> From social cohesion to political participation, health development to educational improvement, full and meaningful digital engagement can fundamentally and vastly improve quality of life.

However, since the year 2000, the digital divide amongst the UK population has grown. An estimated 5.8 million adults have never used the internet and a further 12.6 million people are lacking in basic digital skills.<sup>8</sup> These are individuals commonly known as the ‘digitally excluded’. They can be excluded from what, for most of us, has become everyday life and unable to utilise the many benefits that the internet offers. Despite the warning, the UK has failed to tackle this mounting issue.

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1 As written on BBC website ‘On This Day,’ *10th July, 2000: UK tidal wave of web users*, [accessed via [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/thisday/hi/dates/stories/july/10/newsid\\_2499000/2499333.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/thisday/hi/dates/stories/july/10/newsid_2499000/2499333.stm) (08/09/16)].

2 Ibid.

3 Bughin, J and Manyika, J, *Internet Matters: Essays in digital transformation*, Australia: McKinsey and Company, 2012.

4 The digital economy (that includes the digital sector and those working on digital in the non-digital sector) is defined by the Office for National Statistics as, ‘(1) e-commerce and e-business, (the trading of goods or services over computer networks such as the internet, (2) supporting infrastructure (that is hardware, software, telecoms).’

5 Office for National Statistics, *What Defines the Digital Sector?, London: 2015* [accessed via [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/what-defines-the-digital-sector](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/what-defines-the-digital-sector) (08/09/15)].

6 Office for National Statistics, *Internet access-households and individuals*, London: ONS, 2016.

7 Williams, C and Strusani, D, *Value of Connectivity: Economic and Social benefits of expanding internet access*, London: Deloitte, 2014.

8 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Digital skills crisis, Second Report of Session 2016–2017*, London: House of Commons, 2016.

The CSJ recognises that digital exclusion will be felt more by individuals who are experiencing multiple social disadvantages. It is widely known that an elderly person who is poor, disabled, and with little or no family contact is less likely to be digitally engaged than a mobile, elderly person with a higher income and strong family support. It is these vulnerable sorts of individuals – the most ‘digitally excluded’ – that this report addresses.

For this reason, digital exclusion becomes an issue of social justice. The ever-growing centrality of digital skills and knowledge to everyday life means that to be digitally excluded will often mean a person is socially and economically excluded, leaving them unable to fulfil their potential, find meaningful work and a full education.

## What is digital inclusion?

UK research has revealed many complex factors that impact why and how someone does or does not use the internet.<sup>9</sup> Over time, research has also helped shift our understanding away from using the term ‘digital divide’ towards the term ‘digital inclusion’ which takes into account a more complex picture.<sup>10</sup> It is also useful in drawing attention to the most hard to reach groups.

Defining digital inclusion is key in order to accurately break down the issue and identify specific and action-oriented solutions. This report defines digital inclusion as:

- Connectivity (access);
- Capability (skill);
- Content (type of engagement);
- Confidence (self-assurance); and
- Continuity (sustaining access and use).<sup>11</sup>

## Methodology

The Centre for Social Justice’s (CSJ) aim is to reveal the UK’s most serious social problems and find innovative solutions. As a pressing issue of today, this report looks at social justice in the digital age.

The report draws on existing literature, including previous CSJ research conducted over the past 12 years, and the experiences of the CSJ Alliance, a network of 350 poverty-fighting charities that work in some of the UK’s most disadvantage communities. Working on the frontline, these charities provide unique insight into the complex issues affecting digital exclusion. In turn, the CSJ believes they are a powerful enabler in solving the problem.

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<sup>9</sup> The University of Oxford, *The Internet in Britain, The Oxford Internet Survey (OxIS)*, Oxford:2005; Helsper, E., *Digital Inclusion: An Analysis of Social Disadvantage and the Information Society*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008; Longley, P, and Singleton, A., *Social Deprivation and Digital Exclusion in England*, London: UCL, 2008; Helsper, Ellen J. and Reisdorf, Bianca C., *The emergence of a “digital underclass” in Great Britain and Sweden: changing reasons for digital exclusion*. London: New Media and Society, 2016; Oxford Internet Survey 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Fresh Minds, *Digital Inclusion: A discussion of the Evidence Base*, London: Fresh Minds, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Helsper, E. J., *Digital Inclusion: An Analysis of Social Disadvantage and the Information Society*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008.

We have also discussed our findings with leaders in the industry and policy world to ensure they are both timely and practical.

Our report asks:

- What are the reasons for the most digitally excluded failing to have full and meaningful engagement with the internet?
- What are the perceived risks that may be a barrier to digital inclusion?
- How effective are current local solutions, where they exist, in enhancing digital inclusion, online safety and security for the most vulnerable?
- What practical steps can the state, private and voluntary sectors take to ensure the continuing digital revolution benefits the whole of the UK and doesn't exclude the most vulnerable?

Two phases of data collection informed the research over a two-month period. Initially, an online survey was sent to the CSJ Alliance that asked, of those in their care, reasons behind internet access and engagement, as well as the effectiveness of current solutions. Our survey also drew on the Doteveryone 'Basic Digital Skills Framework' that sets out key skills needed to navigate the web in a full and meaningful way.<sup>12</sup>

Fifty charity respondents completed the survey. Telephone interviews were then conducted with ten respondents to gain a more in-depth insight. The policy recommendations of the report were then reviewed by voluntary sector practitioners, digital representatives of the private sector, and relevant ministers to ensure they are pragmatic and realistic.

The report makes recommendations that can enhance the implementation of the new Digital Economy Bill of 2016–2017 and the recently launched Digital Strategy that was published on 1st March 2017. The Bill 'will put in place the foundations for the digital future' and raise our ambitions as a world leader.<sup>13</sup> In its current form it makes provisions for:

- Every household to have a legal right to request fast broadband connection;
- Stronger enforcement of direct marketing laws and civil penalties for online pornographers who do not verify the age of their customers;
- Important protections for citizens from spam email and nuisance calls.<sup>14</sup>

The Bill also brings clear opportunity to encourage universal commitment from all sectors on digital inclusion to address both the immediate and long term needs of the most digitally excluded. It further enables the Government to clarify lines of ownership and responsibility in driving this vision collectively.

<sup>12</sup> Doteveryone (formerly Go ON UK) is a charity with a Community Interest Company. Their aim is three-fold; improve digital skills, develop digital products and services and '5050 Tech', ensure gender equality in the UK's tech workforce.

<sup>13</sup> As written on GOV.UK website, DCMS, *Digital Economy Bill: Factsheet-Bill Overview 2016*, [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-economy-bill-overview](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-economy-bill-overview) (08.09.16)].

<sup>14</sup> Parliament, *Digital Economy Bill (HL Bill 80)*, [accessed via: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2016-2017/0080/lbill\\_2016-20170080\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2016-2017/0080/lbill_2016-20170080_en_1.htm) (08/02/2017)].

The Digital Strategy outlines the Government's ambitions for:

- Completing the rollout of 4G and superfast broadband by 2020;
- Implementing a Universal Service Obligation, giving very individual, business and public premise the right to affordable, high speed broadband;
- Undertaking a feasibility study this year on viability of sing commissioning frameworks, such a payment by results or social impact bonds;
- Developing the role of libraries in digital inclusion, as over half of UK residents have a library card, and 35% of people living in disadvantaged areas visits the library;
- Developing a Council for Digital Inclusion, which brings leaders from the private and charity sectors together with government to develop initiatives;
- Investing £1.1 million through the NHS on projects to support digital inclusion, helping the most excluded such as homeless, people with disabilities, mental health problems and prisoners, so they can use online tools to manage their health;
- Introducing computing into the national curriculum, funding a Computing at School Network of Teaching Excellence in Computer Science;
- Free Digital skill training for adults, mirroring the approach taken for adult literacy and numeracy training;
- Developing a Cyber Security Skills Strategy, with input from the industry and academic, including an extracurricular Cyber School, programme for 14–18 year olds to provide specialist cyber security education;
- Establishing a new Digital Skills Partnership, working with partners to close the digital skills gap and helping people access digitally focused jobs at a local level.

We also make recommendations concerning the promotion and provision of online safety, that can deliver clear solution based policies, relevant to the current political context and at the local level, to ensure no one is left behind in our rapidly changing digital world.

## chapter one

# The most digitally excluded: gaining a clearer profile

### 1.1 The issue at hand

Digital literacy, the set of competencies required for full participation in society, is vital in 2017. The internet offers far-reaching benefits, including the means to qualify for better jobs, easy access to information, the provision of remote access to essential services such as energy plans, banking, consumer purchases, and many other things.

Recent statistics show that in the UK:

- 82% of the adult population used the internet daily in 2016<sup>15</sup> – up from 35% in 2006;<sup>16</sup>
- Two thirds owned a smartphone by 2014;<sup>17</sup>
- In 2016 one in three tweens (8–11s), and eight in 10 older children (12–15s) now have their own smartphone;<sup>18</sup>
- In 2016, 77% of adults bought goods or services online, up from 53% in 2008.<sup>19</sup>

As the digital revolution progresses, internet use is becoming increasingly integral to our public, private and working lives. Everyone in society must now be provided with equal opportunity in all aspects of digital inclusion (connectivity, capability, content, confidence, and continuity) to ensure social and economic cohesion.

However, some groups are being left behind. A wide range of factors can lead to digital exclusion, such as access to the internet on a daily basis, affordability of devices,

15 Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Internet Access – Households and Individuals: 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2016)]; ONS, *Statistical Bulletin*, 2016, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016)].

16 Ibid.

17 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2015*, 2015 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/82112/2015\\_adults\\_media\\_use\\_and\\_attitudes\\_report.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/82112/2015_adults_media_use_and_attitudes_report.pdf)].

18 Children and parents: media use and attitudes report, 2016 [accessed via: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/children/children-parents-nov16>].

19 ONS, *Internet Access – Households and Individuals: 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2016>].

and computer literacy.<sup>20</sup> Failure to address this may lead to many increasingly finding themselves at a disadvantage: limited in participation at school or work, unable to access many public services, and failing to stay in touch with friends and family, leading to long lasting political, social and economic implications. Moreover, those most likely to be affected by these factors are often those who would benefit most from being digitally able, such as the disabled, isolated, or elderly.

## 1.2 Digital exclusion and the pathways to poverty

The CSJ focuses its work on the key pathways to poverty.<sup>21</sup> These are identified as serious personal debt, educational failure, addiction, family breakdown, and worklessness. They are closely inter-connected, with vulnerable people often finding themselves caught in the poverty cycle.

These pathways are extremely relevant to this report, as the data above illustrates. Digital exclusion is likely to be felt more by individuals who are experiencing one or more of these pathways, compared to others who make up the digitally excluded population. It is widely known that an elderly person who is poor, disabled, and with little or no family contact is less likely to be digitally engaged than a mobile, elderly person with a higher income and strong family support. However, this also applies to many other vulnerable individuals for example, an ex-offender with low literacy levels who is banned from using the internet because of online gambling convictions, or a young person who has been groomed online, leaving a damaging impression of the internet, are in danger of digital exclusion. These are the individuals that this report addresses.

Digital exclusion also perpetuates pathways to poverty. A large proportion of vulnerable people will depend on public services that are increasingly being converted online. Digital exclusion also affects how they access everyday basic goods and services such as banking and correspondence. Attempts to break the cycle of worklessness, serious debt and educational failure are profoundly stunted by failing to use the internet.

## 1.3 General trends

There is extensive data on the five factors affecting internet access and use, highlighting the disproportionate effect on diverse groups.

### Connectivity (access)

#### *Broadband connection*

- Despite near universal broadband coverage, in 2015, 14% of households had no internet connection. Of these:

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20 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2015*, 2015 [accessed via: [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/82112/2015\\_adults\\_media\\_use\\_and\\_attitudes\\_report.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/82112/2015_adults_media_use_and_attitudes_report.pdf)].

21 The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), *Breakdown Britain: Interim Report on the State of the Nation*, London: CSJ, 2006; CSJ, *Breakthrough Britain 2015: An Overview*, London: CSJ, 2006.

- 53% due to people feeling that they did not need it.<sup>22</sup>
- 31% claimed this was due to lack of skills;
- 14% due to equipment costs;
- 13% of adults in the UK are non-users of the internet;<sup>23</sup> 58% of all non-users are over the age of 65
- 12% due to ongoing provider costs being too high;
- 42% of non-users are in DE households;<sup>24, 25</sup> The South East has the highest proportion of internet users (90%). Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion (80%).<sup>26</sup>

### Non-users

- 11% of adults had never used the internet in 2015 and 14% had not used the internet in the three months prior to being surveyed;<sup>27</sup> 25% of disabled adults have never used the internet;<sup>28</sup>
- Around 4.1 million people living in social housing are offline.<sup>29</sup>
- The total proportion of offline adults has been near static at around 20% for the last three years.<sup>30</sup>

### Capability (skill)

- 23% of the UK adult population (an estimated 12.6 million) lack basic digital skills; the basic skills to send and receive email, use a search engine or browse the internet;<sup>31</sup>
- This jumps to 35% of C2DE households;<sup>32</sup>
- 57% of the 65+ age group lack basic digital skills compared to the national average of 23%;<sup>33</sup>
- Women are less likely than men to be competent across these basic digital skills.<sup>34</sup>

22 ONS, *Internet access-Households and individuals 2015 Statistical bulletin*, 2015 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2015-08-06](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2015-08-06)].

23 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf)].

24 There are different classifications of socio-economic status in the UK that are constructed on employment. The groups are A, B, C1, C2, D and E, with D and E being lowest levels of income earners.

25 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf)].

26 Royal Geographical Society (RGS), *Digital Divide in the UK*, 2016 [accessed via: <https://21stcenturychallenges.org/what-is-the-digital-divide/>].

27 Ibid.

28 ONS, *Statistical Bulletin, 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016)].

29 RGS, *Digital Divide in the UK*, 2016 [accessed via: <https://21stcenturychallenges.org/what-is-the-digital-divide/>].

30 Connected Nations, Ofcom, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/95876/CN-Report-2016.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0035/95876/CN-Report-2016.pdf)].

31 Ipsos Connect, *Basic Digital Skills, UK Report prepared for Go ON UK in association with Lloyds Banking Group, UK: 2015* [accessed via: [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/digitalbirmingham/resources/Basic-Digital-Skills\\_UK-Report-2015\\_131015\\_FINAL.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/digitalbirmingham/resources/Basic-Digital-Skills_UK-Report-2015_131015_FINAL.pdf)].

32 Ipsos Connect, *Basic Digital Skills, UK Report prepared for Go ON UK in association with Lloyds Banking Group, UK: 2015* [accessed via: [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/digitalbirmingham/resources/Basic-Digital-Skills\\_UK-Report-2015\\_131015\\_FINAL.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/digitalbirmingham/resources/Basic-Digital-Skills_UK-Report-2015_131015_FINAL.pdf)].

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

### Content (type of engagement)

- 42% of all adults say that they only use websites or apps that they have used before;<sup>35</sup>
- 50% of C2 and 42% of DE socio-economic groups are the most likely to say they only use websites or apps that they have used before;
- Use of a computer to go online has decreased since 2014, largely in favour of tablets and smartphones. This is most evident amongst C1, C2 and DE socio-economic groups.<sup>36</sup>

### Confidence (self-efficacy)

- Over 55s are the most likely to describe themselves as 'not confident' in their digital abilities, and within that group the over 75s were the least confident;<sup>37</sup>
- Over-55s are more likely than all internet users to describe themselves as 'not confident' (16% for 55–64s, 21% for 65–74s and 30% for over-75s, vs. 8% for all adults), as are DEs (13% vs. 8%);<sup>38</sup>
- 33% of non-users have asked someone else to use the internet on their behalf in the past 12 months.<sup>39</sup>

### Continuity (sustaining access and use)

22% of newer users (those who first went online less than five years ago) are in the DE socio-economic group meaning they are going online at a slower rate than ABC groups. This means that the gap between socio-economic groups is growing;<sup>40</sup>

The over 75s had the highest rate of lapsed internet users (4.8%).<sup>41</sup>

This data shows that the elderly are the least connected, capable and confident among age groups. Lower income households are also trailing behind their wealthier counterparts.

## 1.4 CSJ Alliance feedback

The CSJ Alliance survey asked respondents how digital exclusion contributes to poverty. All respondents agreed that digital exclusion is compound and the depth and breadth of the issue is far wider than is being accounted for by the Government.

In response to the question 'How do you think Digital Exclusion contributes to pathways to poverty?', Alliance members noted that:

- 'Digital inclusion is necessary for accessing public services, finding out about job openings, paying bills. Lack of access... marginalises, stigmatises and excludes them from everyday opportunities';
- '[Exclusion] isolates people in their communities';

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35 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/80828/2016-adults-media-use-and-attitudes.pdf)].

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 ONS, *Statistical Bulletin*, 2016, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016)].



- 'It can lead to seclusion from peer groups';
- '[Vulnerable groups] are digitally restricted in their own needs [such as access to] Jobcentre Plus, NHS booking, housing appointment bookings and communications;'
- 'They are restricted from any digital advantages [such as] supporting children with their homework, establishing best deals for financial products etc.';
- '[Exclusion] disconnects them even more, and makes them even less empowered';
- 'It means they don't have access to the same tools as others now use.'



## chapter two

# Internet usage of the most digitally excluded

Digital exclusion is rooted in a set of complex social problems. 12.6 million people – almost 20% of the UK population – lack the basic internet skills needed to send and receive email, use a search engine or browse the internet.<sup>42</sup> Research suggests that almost three quarters of these people are society's most vulnerable: those who are poor, disabled and elderly.<sup>43</sup>

These vulnerable people are the most digitally excluded because of the numerous social factors involved in getting and staying online. The various costs associated with using the internet strongly affect how frequently people use it. The ONS shows that in 2016, 70% of adults had used the internet 'on the go' using a mobile phone, portable computer or handheld device.<sup>44</sup> The poorest in society are often unable to pay monthly direct debits to mobile phone companies, forcing them into 'pay as you go' contracts which can charge internet data at a higher rate.<sup>45</sup>

The digital economy is growing rapidly across all sectors. Directly with Information and Communications Technology alone, the European Commission predicts the creation of around 120,000 new jobs in the sector each year, but there will be millions more demanding digital skills across completely unrelated industries.<sup>46</sup> Tackling digital exclusion is therefore imperative. It is vital we assist society's most digitally excluded so that they do not fall behind in the workplace.

Moreover, the CSJ Alliance survey found wide social divisions in how the most vulnerable access and use the internet from the type of device they use and the ways they engage online.

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42 Reed D. 'An Exploratory Literature Review in Support of an Inclusive Digital Economy', *Literature Review*, 3, 2009.

43 Ibid.

44 ONS, *Statistical Bulletin*, 2016, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016](http://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016)].

45 Still Addressing the Poverty Premium (2015), Citizens Advice Scotland by Cambium Advocacy [accessed via: [www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/final\\_formatted\\_copy.pdf](http://www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/final_formatted_copy.pdf)].

46 Ansip A. *Digital Skills, Jobs and the Need to get More Europeans Online*, European Commission, 2015 [accessed via: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/ansip/blog/digital-skills-jobs-and-need-get-more-europeans-online\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/ansip/blog/digital-skills-jobs-and-need-get-more-europeans-online_en)].

## 2.1 Finding a 'safe' entry point

Lack of knowledge of where and how to access to advice is often perceived as a barrier to getting online. There are an increasing number of devices made available in public spaces which tackle the issue to an extent. One programme rolled out by Good Things Foundation and funded by the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is the UK Online Centres Network (formally UK Online Centres). This brings computers into a communal venue that is most used by people in the town or city,<sup>47</sup> from libraries and leisure centres to places of worship, cafés, or pubs.

But open space access is still a social barrier for some. 56% of Alliance survey respondents said beneficiaries would only use the internet at charity drop-in centres, largely due to their vulnerability. A few charities explained how the idea of being in an open space without additional face-to-face support from a trusted intermediary is also too daunting. There are some individuals who are having to rebuild trust and learn how to use the internet again, for which open access was unsuitable. The idea of sharing personal contact details online was also a contributory factor to remaining offline or sporadic use.

## 2.2 Tackling the poverty premium

**When it comes down to it, what concerns most people is the cost... It's very expensive being poor. They know their data levels and are very tight in how they use [devices]... We had one girl get a job interview. They contacted her to change the interview but she'd run out of credit to reply. [As a result] she missed out again.**

CSJ Alliance member

As well as the lack of access points, a clear social division comes from the cost of being online. 80% of respondents noted how various associated costs of using the internet determine how frequently people use it. In some instances, it was cited as the key reason for non-use. Research from the Rowntree Foundation has found that cost is a decreasingly significant issue among the general public (from 4% in 2008 to 2% in 2015) but it persists, even if only in perception, among those we surveyed from the poorest groups.<sup>48</sup> Often the poor pay more for services, either because individuals are unable to pay direct debit, or they are unable to find the best deals through shopping around.

That said, the situation is also improving here, with Ofcom's *Access and Inclusion* report showing that 'people on lower incomes are more likely to shop around compared to those on higher incomes, suggesting that competition is working for those who want to save money.'<sup>49</sup>

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47 Good Things Foundation is a charity which supports digitally and socially excluded people to improve their lives through digital. They have developed the Online Centres Network, Learnmyway online platform and research on finding digital solutions.

48 [www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/digital-inclusion](http://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/digital-inclusion)

49 [www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/access-and-inclusion?utm\\_source=updates&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=access%2C%20inclusion%20and%20affordability.%20](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/access-and-inclusion?utm_source=updates&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=access%2C%20inclusion%20and%20affordability.%20)

Due to this ‘poverty premium’ – additional costs incurred by being poor that wealthier people do not face – mobile devices are the most common access point to the internet. 58% of CSJ Alliance charity beneficiaries use mobile phones and 32% use smart phones, compared to only 8% using desktop computers and 2% using laptops.

More than half of respondents interviewed explained that their beneficiaries are also largely financially excluded, leaving them with no choice other than to become pay-as-you-go customers. This, however, is highly restrictive because of the additional expense of data usage when a limit is reached.

## 2.3 Expanding digital devices

For many beneficiaries who use a mobile phone or smart phone, the social divide continues in their engagement with it. All charity respondents were concerned that mobile phone usage greatly limits online engagement because websites, although sometimes adapted to mobiles, often miss out certain information. Of those using public services, charity workers often found crucial personal data was missing because of issues with uploading or not properly accessing the website forms. In most cases, beneficiaries resorted instead to using their phone just for social engagement.

To address the issue, 50% of charity respondents said that their organisation provides IT equipment to help beneficiaries become familiar with using laptops and computers. The remaining percentage frequently signposted them to IT facilities.

### Case study 1. Thames Reach, Homeless charity

In partnership with Socialbox.biz – a social enterprise company that finds recycling solutions for business – Thames Reach have created the ‘Laptops for Homeless Initiative’, a scheme that provides homeless people in the capital with refurbished computers. The idea is that improved access to the internet will increase employment prospects for homeless people given the job market is largely digital. Eight people using the Thames Reach Spectrum Centre in Camden were the first to profit from the move, but there are ongoing efforts to increase this number to 1,000.

## 2.4 Widening internet engagement

Of the charities’ beneficiaries who are online, 60% have ‘poor’ engagement with the internet, meaning they only visit a few websites repeatedly. Whilst they often went online frequently, the way in which they engaged with the internet showed a clear social division.

To understand this more, the survey asked what they primarily use the internet for. The most popular usage (68%) was for social media platforms, the second interacting with immediate friends and family (66%). Just using the internet for social media means individuals do not develop other essential digital skills such as managing information, transacting or problem-solving skills, which enable greater digital capability. This in turn creates more social disadvantage. In evidence to the CSJ, one Alliance member working

with ex-offenders explained, 'they use text speak in formal communications'. Clearly this is a serious issue, and one that can limit employment as well as other opportunities. The Alliance survey therefore highlights the restrictive effect of a lack of digital skills, leaving the digitally illiterate at risk of losing out on benefits the rest of society has access to.

The Government has announced its intention to put digital skills on an equal statutory footing with Maths and English through the upcoming Digital Economy Bill and this is a hugely welcome development. Courses will be delivered by colleges and other adult education providers on request, and training will be funded from the existing Adult Education Budget. However, this will need to be implemented in earnest, and comprehensive measurement and assessment needed to ensure it fully addresses digital skills for everyone in the education system, particularly the most vulnerable.

## 2.5 Policy recommendations

It is clear the social context in which people live is as intrinsic as knowledge and skills to how people use the internet. For this reason, we need a shift in thinking from simple skills and tools towards a holistic enhancement of digital literacy.<sup>50</sup> It is a much needed change for the UK if we are to combat social injustice and advance as digital leaders.

The CSJ calls for a review of the 'poverty premium' by the Government and the digital tech sector on:

- **Fixed price contracts** – Prices should be guaranteed for 12 or 18 months, so that low income consumers have confidence in their financial planning. Currently, most of the industry reserves the right to increase prices mid contract, which makes it hard for vulnerable customers to have certainty;
- **Simplified switching** – Today's switching processes make it difficult for customers to move in search of better deals. The system also allows providers to hide their best deals for the savviest customer, whilst vulnerable customers pay higher prices. The elderly are particularly unlikely to call up and haggle for better deals, so end up paying higher rates. The Digital Economy Bill will make a welcome attempt to tackle this but we would also urge Ofcom to implement 'Gaining Provider Led' switching across quad-play bundles as quickly as possible.

Local authorities and central government agencies should direct people to Good Things Foundation's digital services, as Jobcentres and some charities do already, to meet immediate need. Over the long term all government agencies and departments, as well as local authorities, should continue designing apps for services that are readily available and allow users to complete the full range of action via mobile and smart phones, ensuring they do not limit the users' ability to receive or provide information they would on a computer or laptop.

The Government should campaign to increase awareness of the existing Online centres and investigate whether some of these could be work-based.

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<sup>50</sup> House of Lords, *Make or Break: The UK's Digital Future, Report of Session 2014–15*, London: The Authority of the House of Lords, 2015; ECORYS UK, *Digital Skills for the UK Economy*, UK: BIS and DCMS, 2016.

We welcome the Government's commitment to universal digital literacy in its Digital Economy Bill and Digital Strategy. To ensure delivery we recommend:

- The availability of free courses must be advertised and attendance encouraged. Provision alone does not guarantee attendance, particularly for hardest to reach groups;
- The Government should clarify what level of attainment is acceptable;
- The success of the provisions in the Digital Economy Bill must be evaluated in 2018 to ensure vulnerable adults are making use of the new provisions it allows for;
- The Government could earmark a portion of savings from its Digital by Default programme to pay for the cost of universal digital literacy, estimated by Good Things Foundation to be around £875 million.<sup>51</sup>

In assessing applications for new Apprenticeship Standards the Department for Education should look for the provision of basic digital skills training for all occupations,

Any training must be designed to improve take-up. For example, the most excluded groups are more likely to favour short, drop-in classes than yearlong courses.

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51 Tinder Foundation, *A Leading Digital Nation by 2020: Calculating the Cost of Delivering Online Skills for All*, 2014 [accessed via: [www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/a\\_leading\\_digital\\_nation\\_by\\_2020\\_0.pdf](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/a_leading_digital_nation_by_2020_0.pdf)].





## chapter three

# Working towards a safer internet

### 3.1 Introduction

For all the benefits it brings to society, some aspects of the internet can be a threat to safety. Occasionally, the personal safety of internet users can be jeopardised by contact with other users attempting inappropriate or illegal gain. The most typical threats range from the unpleasant or unkind to severe and illegal. They can include fraud, cyber-security, cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, online predation, obscene/offensive content, and abuse.

Exactly how often adults and children experience these issues (and to what extent) is difficult to measure, but recent research has shown that one in seven children has been sexually solicited online,<sup>52</sup> a further one in three have been victims of cyber-bullying,<sup>53</sup> and over half of all crime is now accounted for by cybercrime.<sup>54</sup> As the internet becomes ever more entrenched in our day to day lives, awareness of – and protection against – these dangers is increasingly important. This chapter outlines a strategy to improve digital literacy so that all of society, including those most digitally excluded, are equipped to face these challenges.

### 3.2 Whose safety is most in danger?

#### Children

Staying safe online should be of primary concern to all internet users. Certain groups, however, are more susceptible to online dangers. Children, for example, are particularly at risk because they are less equipped to judge the nature or appropriateness of contacts made online. Recent NSPCC research found:

- almost one in four young people have encountered racist or hate messages;
- one in four children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site;
- around one in seven young people have taken a semi naked/naked picture of themselves, and over half went on to share the picture with someone else.<sup>55</sup>

52 NOBullying, *Everything you Need to Know About Online Grooming* [accessed via: <https://nobullying.com/online-grooming/> (22/02/17)].

53 NSPCC *Online Safety*, [accessed via: [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/) (22/01/17)].

54 ONS, *Improving Crime statistics in England and Wales*, 2015, [accessed via: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-june-2015/sty-fraud.html>].

55 NSPCC, *Online Safety*, [accessed via: [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/) (22/02/17)].

These figures are alarming, and are likely to increase as the internet becomes ever more accessible to children while online platforms continue to multiply. Last year, the internet also overtook television as the top pastime for children in the UK.<sup>56</sup>

The collective psychological damage of this is reflected in the number of children receiving internet related counselling. In 2015, over 11,000 counselling sessions were conducted by ChildLine for children affected by online issues.<sup>57</sup> The financial cost to families for counselling related to online issues is also stark; given that private counselling sessions alone typically range between £10–£70.<sup>58</sup>

### Vulnerable groups

Other vulnerable groups, as well as children, are also at a high risk from online threats. These groups are targeted because they are less equipped to judge the nature and appropriateness of contact, in part due to low levels of digital literacy.

Drawing on various data sets, below is an overview of the current context across the UK on personal safety.

- Last year, the Revenge Porn Helpline received nearly 4,000 calls;<sup>59</sup>
- Out of 308 people who responded to a Greater London Authority (GLA) Conservative survey, 68% had encountered hate crime online;<sup>60</sup>
- A GLA report suggests that only 9% of online hate crimes receive proper investigation.<sup>61</sup>

However, whilst there is significant data that focuses on the impact of poor personal safety on children,<sup>62</sup> there is a gap in comprehensive research on the types of threats that impact adults online in the UK, particularly the most digitally excluded. It is thought that many adults are failing to report the abuse because it is seen as either too trivial or it is accepted to be an everyday occurrence. Some don't know how to report abuse, or are too embarrassed to do so. More research is needed to help identify what exactly is happening and identify specific preventative measures to enforce.

## 3.3 What is being done?

There are numerous organisations across the public, private and voluntary sector which raise awareness on internet safety. In July 2013, the then Prime Minister David Cameron gave a landmark speech at the NSPCC in which he set the Government's stall out to protect 'the most vulnerable in our society, protecting innocence, protecting childhood itself. That is

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56 Ofcom, Press Release, *Online Overtakes TV as Kids' Top Pastime*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/childrens-media-use](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/childrens-media-use)].

57 NSPCC, *Bullying and Cyberbullying: Facts and Statistics* [accessed via: [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/bullying-cyberbullying-statistics/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/bullying-cyberbullying-statistics/) (22/02/17)].

58 NHS, *Counselling* [accessed via: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/Counselling/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Counselling/Pages/Introduction.aspx) (22/02/17)].

59 Hansard, House of Commons Chamber Dialogue, 7th July 2016, [accessed via: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-07-07/debates/16070729000001/OnlineAbuse>].

60 GLA Conservatives, *#ReportHate*, London: GLA, 2015 [accessed via: <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/online-hate-crime.pdf>].

61 GLA Conservatives, *#ReportHate*, London: GLA, 2015 [accessed via: <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/online-hate-crime.pdf>].

62 Greater London Authority (GLA) Conservatives, *#ReportHate: Combating Online Hatred*, London: GLA, 2015 [accessed via: <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/online-hate-crime.pdf>].

what is at stake, and I will do whatever it takes to keep our children safe.<sup>63</sup> Since then we have seen a proliferation of parental filters and initiatives from providers and social media companies looking at child safety. These have made a huge difference to changing the landscape, empowering parents and ensuring the UK is a leader in online safety.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety, for example, is a collaborative network of over 200 organisations from across government, industry, law, academia and the charity sector that focuses on keeping children safe online.<sup>64</sup> The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre is a similar network. CEOP combines police powers with expertise from the business sector, government, specialist charities and other interested organisations to work both nationally and internationally to bring online child sex offenders, including those involved in the production, distribution and viewing of child abuse material, to the UK courts.

### Case study 2. Internet Matters

Internet Matters is a non-profit, independent e-safety organisation funded by industry. Using campaigns that raise awareness and encourage parental engagement, it educates parents about how their children can have an age appropriate and safe experience online. The site provides parents with practical advice and directs them towards resources and advice available from specialist providers of services. The organisation is supported by BT, Sky, TalkTalk, Virgin Media, Google, Dixons Carphone and the BBC.

However, in March 2017, The House of Lords Communications Committee also warned that self-regulation online was failing and recommended the appointment of a new internet tsar – the Children’s Digital Champion – to coordinate action across government.

While these organisations are effective, there is need for a similar council of organisations to the UK Council for Child Internet Safety to collaborate to identify the common threats to personal safety for vulnerable adults, as well as children, and what can be done to address these.

**Online safety is not a key aspect of our work... but in amongst that we have to respond to different issues that are affecting them ... We are often the first port of call for a lot of these issues.**

CSJ Alliance member

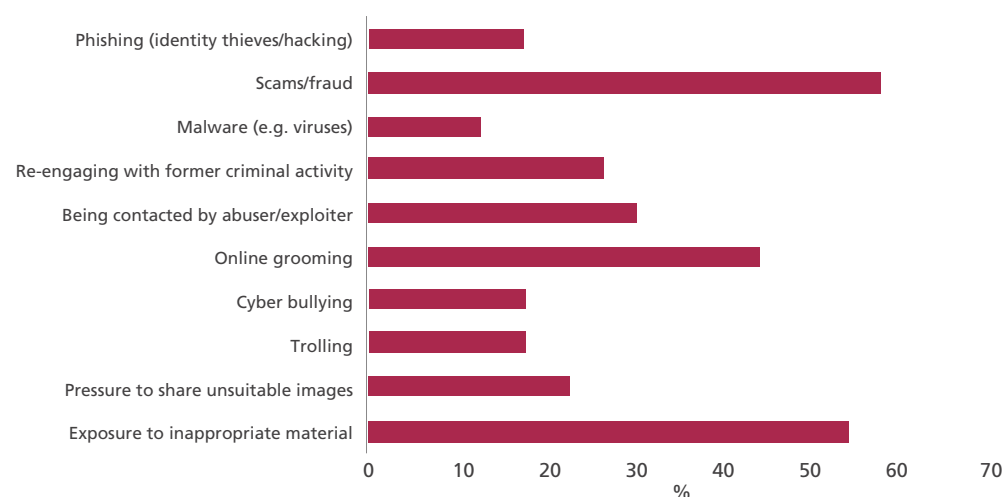
## 3.4 Staying safe: a grass-roots perspective

Our survey found that small charities are dealing with a range of safety and security issues commonly reported by the most digitally excluded. 86% of charity respondents had beneficiaries report on experiencing online risk when they used the internet and 60% of respondents believed this is a regular occurrence. The types of safety risks that beneficiaries are most exposed to are presented below:

<sup>63</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-internet-and-pornography-prime-minister-calls-for-action](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-internet-and-pornography-prime-minister-calls-for-action)

<sup>64</sup> UK Council for Child Internet Safety [accessed via [www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis) (08/09/16)].

**Figure 1. Which of these online risks are most commonly experienced?**



Of particular concern was the severity of the risks highlighted. Respondents were asked to provide more information and examples of what their beneficiaries would often report when describing different incidents. The emerging themes included:

- Being groomed online and asked to perform sexual acts;
- Verbal abuse from former exploiters on social media;
- Being stalked online;
- Advertised as sex worker by exploiter;
- Exploitation by unscrupulous employers/agencies and gang masters.

### 3.5 Using safeguarding strategies

The types of risks identified above are serious and some are legal security issues, but many are not and could still represent a serious harm to online safety. It is critical, therefore, for the most vulnerable to be aware of practical ways of staying safe online and report any incidents. However, many respondents commented that a lack of safeguarding – prevention from harm with appropriate measures – is commonly reported. Ofcom has also found this to be a common problem.<sup>65</sup> 70% of CSJ survey respondents felt their beneficiaries could not explain any specific safeguarding strategies to effectively mitigate safety issues. They highlighted a number of reasons, including:

- The individual feeling too guilty to report [the issue];
- Information being too difficult to find;
- The response being too slow;
- Attempts to deal with issues independently failing; and
- Safety measures requiring too much confidential information which people didn't trust.

<sup>65</sup> Ofcom, *Being Online: An Investigation of People's Habits and Attitudes*, UK: Ofcom, 2013; Ofcom, *Report on Internet Safety Measures: Strategies of Parental Protection for Children Online*, UK: Ofcom, 2015; Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes: Report 2016*, UK: Ofcom, 2016.

The survey finding highlights the need for a user needs safeguarding system and one that offers a more nuanced response to the variety of needs, rather than a blanket measure – a single safeguarding measure would be unlikely to tackle the variety of safety problems encountered.

Many respondents reported a disconnect between the different mechanisms dealing with online safety issues. One charity respondent working with young school leavers noted ‘... there are services out there and we have just had to learn where they are... we definitely have to help the individual and their intermediaries to be aware of who they can talk to.’

### 3.6 Safeguarding in schools

Given the risks of online safety and lack of safeguarding, teaching on the subject in schools is now critical to ensure the next generation is well equipped. The CSJ welcomed the recent Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools and colleges, which commenced in autumn 2016, entitled *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.<sup>66</sup> This includes clear teaching examples on how children can stay safe online and on safeguarding procedures. The system is coordinated between schools and social providers. There is a prime opportunity to grow partnerships between schools, charities, and Internet Service Providers as part of the safeguarding system. Further, this guidance should, where possible, provide opportunities for coordinated service delivery on online safety for teachers, children, and parents.

### 3.7 Breaking ‘bad habits’ on social media

Many charity respondents described how social media can create a ‘downward spiral’ as people start to engage online, where the most vulnerable quickly develop bad habits, which expose them to harmful behaviour.<sup>67</sup>

As one charity respondent explained, ‘[going on social media] offers a freedom for them. They write what they want to get a sense of control.’ However, in most instances, they realise that online freedom is only perceived and that in reality there are legal rules as in any other part of life as well as unwritten social rules and consequences and many find themselves in situations that they cannot tackle independently.

The regulatory framework for social networking websites is too broad to analyse in this report. There is, however, a compelling case for continuing to improve digital literacy in all age groups to allow citizens to access the full range of websites available to meet their needs with the appropriate skills base and knowledge. Furthermore, information on the risks of social networking websites, such as bullying and anonymity issues, must keep reaching the most vulnerable in their local community spaces. Conclusion

<sup>66</sup> DfE, *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges*, UK: DfE, 2016.

<sup>67</sup> LaRose R, Kim J, Peng, W. ‘Social Networking: Addictive, Compulsive, Problematic, or Just Another Media Habit?’, in Z. Papacharissi (Ed). *A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis (59–81).

The evidence above shows that online safety is a real problem for the most digitally excluded, especially the young and the elderly. Schools play a clear role but more could still be done, whilst the online safety of the elderly and other vulnerable groups is currently being neglected, largely because current measures do not reach adults effectively.

### 3.8 Policy recommendations

There is a clear need for more streamlined and better publicised safety guidelines and services. At the moment, there is too much duplication between separate groups and organisations and an obvious space for greater industry led collaboration in both provision and publicity. There must be room for DCMS to initiate this if it is to join government, industry and the third sector together but in the long term the leadership would be best handed to a single non-government body agreed by all parties involved.

Building on the work of the UK Safer Internet Centre that developed a Digital Literacy Curriculum to help pupils access the internet safely, a similar approach can be taken for adults, akin to Good Things Foundation's Learn My Way platform. Learn My Way already includes modules on online safety, including one addressing current issues. This type of framework could identify the key risks of being online and corresponding safeguarding strategies.

There is a need to develop a UK Council for Vulnerable Adult Internet Safety, similar to the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, made up of digital sector experts, academics, law enforcement agencies, charities and government. It would collate internet safety research, conduct its own consultations, give advice to industry providers and publish a code of practice. Its responsibilities should include:

- Coordinating existing statistics on general trends of threats to personal safety for specific vulnerable groups
- Conducting a rigorous review of current mechanisms and procedures recording and analysing online abuse and crime to find gaps in the system
- Develop an accredited standard of what constitutes a threat to personal safety for adults, particularly the most vulnerable, and corresponding support for victims.
- Support the implementation of the Digital Economy Bill, particularly in relation to those sections pertaining to safeguarding vulnerable adults including confidentiality of personal information and disclosure.

The Government is leading the way on age verification and new measures in the Digital Economy Bill around this should be welcomed. Internet Service Providers and the Government must work together to ensure that websites that do not adhere to the AV rules are dealt with in an effective and proportionate manner. As part of this, Ofcom must now have increased authority to gather data and report on children's access to age verified websites, and to produce information for the general public on online safety and security.

Teacher training must include digital safety skills to ensure that those leading in education remain ahead of those educated.

## chapter four

# Working towards a more secure and inclusive internet

### 4.1 Cybercrime and cybersecurity

Internet security – or ‘cybersecurity’ as it is commonly known – can generally be defined as user protection from theft of personal, confidential data by hackers. Data theft affects society at all levels, from the individual, through industry and up to state level, and is increasingly prevalent in UK society. Cyber criminals are known to especially target vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and children, as well as vulnerable computer systems by creating viruses or malware to ‘steal’ valuable data. Cybercrime is a leading cause of distrust of the internet, a trend which is common among those vulnerable groups mentioned. This further isolates citizens from an increasingly digital UK, restricting opportunities and community links that are to be found online.

Recent statistics show that in the UK:

- Around 5.8 million incidents of cybercrime were recorded in 2015–16;<sup>68</sup>
- Identity theft costs users a total of £1.7 billion annually, online scams and fraud costs £1.4 billion, and scareware costs £30 million – overall, a total of £3.1 billion a year;<sup>69</sup>
- Victims lose approximately £4,000 when they are scammed, whilst the most common scams cost the victim around £100;<sup>70</sup>
- As of March 2016, over 50 million website users have experienced some form of warning that websites visited were either trying to steal information or install malicious software;<sup>71</sup>
- 74% of small organisations reported a security breach in the last year;<sup>72</sup>
- 56% of all defrauded job seekers are based in London and 71% of job fraud scammers are suspected to be in London;<sup>73</sup>

68 The Guardian, *Cybercrime Figures Prompt Police Call for Awareness Campaign*, 21 July 2016 [accessed via: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/21/crime-rate-online-offences-cybercrime-ons-figures](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/21/crime-rate-online-offences-cybercrime-ons-figures) (08/02/2017)].

69 Ponemon Institute LLC, *2015 Cost of Cyber Crime Study: United Kingdom*, 2015, p.1.

70 Get Safe Online, *18–25 Year Olds are most Defrauded Job-seekers in Britain*, 2 February 2015 [accessed via: [www.getsafeonline.org/press/18-25-year-olds-are-most-defrauded-job-seekers-in-britain/](http://www.getsafeonline.org/press/18-25-year-olds-are-most-defrauded-job-seekers-in-britain/) (08/02/2017)].

71 Website Hacked Trend Report, *Internet Users in the UK*, 2016.

72 Info Security Europe, *2015 Information Security Breaches Survey*, 2015.

73 Ibid.

- Adults aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 1.9 million incidents of cyber related fraud in 2015, costing £1.7 billion;<sup>74</sup>
- Four in ten internet users say they tend to use the same passwords for most websites;<sup>75</sup>
- In 2015, 40% of consumers experienced a security incident (received a notice that their personal information had been compromised, had an account hacked or had a password stolen).<sup>76</sup>

Cybercrime is a significant and overlooked issue in the UK, particularly relating to fraud. Being a victim of such crimes incurs significant financial cost for individuals, businesses and the UK economy as a whole. Those vulnerable groups who lack the computer literacy or appropriate support to prevent cybercrime are at risk of falling through the cracks in the digital age. As Brexit, demographic data published by the BBC has recently shown, the elderly, those in remote regions and less educated citizens already feel isolated in modern society.<sup>77</sup> As the digital revolution advances and UK industry depends increasingly on computer systems, the gap between those who can use computers confidently and those who cannot will only continue to widen. Without urgent action, the UK is at risk of becoming a two-tier digital country, exacerbating the separation of cultural identities and weakening community structures. Promoting cybersecurity will serve to reduce cybercrime against the most vulnerable as well as the whole of society, and in turn promote productivity and inclusion in the UK.

## 4.2 Current approach to cybersecurity

The UK government has started to make moves on improving the general cybersecurity infrastructure of the country. The National Cybersecurity Strategy (NCSS) initiated in 2016 aims to make the UK 'secure and resilient' to cyber threats by 2021. This builds on its 2011 predecessor for which the government provided £860 million.<sup>78</sup> Provisions include:

- Integrating cybersecurity into the education system;
- Putting pressure on private employers to train their employees against cybercrime;
- Implementing a unified source of government advice for threat intelligence and information assurance for the public.<sup>79</sup>

If new strategies and initiatives such as these and those contained in the Digital Economy Bill are successful then it will become far easier to safeguard those most susceptible to individual cyber-crime by applying the law and harnessing public education. Still, the NCSS and DE must be actively applied, and specifically target the most isolated if they are to have any significant impact.

74 Ponemon Institute LLC, *2015 Cost of Cyber Crime Study: United Kingdom*, 2015, p.1.

75 Ofcom, *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes*, UK, 2016.

76 TeleSign, *TeleSign Consumer Account Security Report*, June 2015 [accessed via: [www.telesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TeleSign-Consumer-Account-Security-Report-2015-FINAL.pdf](http://www.telesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TeleSign-Consumer-Account-Security-Report-2015-FINAL.pdf) (08/02/2017)].

77 BBC News, *Local Voting Figures Shed New Light on EU Referendum*, 6 February 2017 [accessed via: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38762034](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38762034) (08.02.2017)].

78 Cabinet Office, *National Cybersecurity Strategy 2016-2021*, [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/567242/national\\_cyber\\_security\\_strategy\\_2016.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/567242/national_cyber_security_strategy_2016.pdf) (08.02.2017)], p.13.

79 Ibid.



Some recent steps made by the government that are outlined in the 2017 Digital Strategy are the National Cyber Security Centre, created to detect, analyse and manage national cyber security incidents and threats, acting as a new authority of expertise and offering advice to government departments and businesses.

The Government's Cyber Security Skills Strategy is also outlined in the Digital Strategy 2017 report, and will collect resources from both industry and academia, to ensure the UK has the skills required to keep secure. They aim to make cyberspace 'secure by default', through working in close partnership with industry to build security firmly into the next generation of internet related services. They also hope to do this through education by introducing a national, extracurricular school programme for 14–18 year olds to pinpoint and train the most promising students in cyber skills, establishing a range of higher and degree level cyber apprenticeships and a retraining programme for people moving to cyber security mid-career.<sup>80</sup>

### 4.3 Staying secure: a grassroots perspective

Whilst the Government and other organisations have set in motion promising nationwide strategies, there is real scope for grassroots action to promote cybersecurity amongst vulnerable groups at a local level. The collaboration between different organisations such as schools, charities and Internet Service Providers can help to spread awareness of simple safeguarding methods to promote widespread digital inclusion.<sup>81</sup> It is vitally important that individuals understand how to protect themselves online by knowing which sources they can trust and learning how to react in case of a security breach.<sup>82</sup> Individuals must also be made aware of common reporting procedures to eliminate crime as well as building a digital community that is capable and productive going forward.

CSJ Alliance research has established key gaps in people's relationship with the internet which can be tackled at the grassroots level: primarily, community breakdown in an increasingly digital society, distrust of the internet, and a lack of accessibility.

#### Community breakdown and mistrust

**There is community breakdown happening in their local environment that is basically happening in the digital space.**

CSJ Alliance member

One CSJ Alliance member provided an example of community breakdown in the local area was affecting the adult population getting online. Over half of charity respondents interviewed saw a strong correlation between hesitancy of beneficiaries getting online and harassment they faced in their own communities. With little 'physical' community dialogue happening and a lack of computer literacy, people who are not active online perceive the

80 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK Digital Strategy, March 2017 [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy-9/03/2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy-9/03/2017)].

81 Department for Communities and Local Government, *Digital Inclusion: An Analysis of Social Disadvantage and the Information Society*, London, 2008.

82 Royal Society, *Progress and Research in Cybersecurity: Supporting a Resilient and Trustworthy System for the UK*, 2016.

internet as a platform for radical or criminal members of their community, which acts as a deterrent. The charity found that in most instances, the parents then pass this fear or distrust of the internet on to their children.

Distrust of the internet is particularly prevalent among the elderly, who are already the demographic least likely to go online. Charity respondents with elderly in their care found that TV and local newspapers are often the primary sources of information relating to the internet for this group. The information on news outlets tends to focus on negative information such as fraud and the consumption of pornography, which makes the elderly wary of using the internet. As previously mentioned, they are also the most likely to be targeted when active online. The elderly are, therefore, the most significant group to target in future cybersecurity and internet inclusion policy.

**We need to be careful not to project this paternalistic idea on ‘protecting’ people online ... Let’s not neglect online safety but let’s keep a sense of proportion that does not stop them from getting online.**

CSJ Alliance member

Unfortunately, as one respondent argued, ‘...risk is still outweighing benefit.’ But driving out risk entirely is not possible or necessary. What is needed is visible and effective help in vulnerable communities to teach people about the benefits of internet use, as well as how to avoid potential pitfalls.

### Accessibility

There are flaws in paper based advice, one of the main tools used to teach cybersecurity. Two clear issues arise for the most digitally excluded on this: first, security and safety advice and reporting procedures are mainly online; and second, advice often assumes too much knowledge of technology, making it inaccessible for some groups. Furthermore, some surveyed charities also said online security and safety adverts usually target parents rather than wider audiences. We find ourselves in a situation where available information is already restricted to those who are least in need of cybersecurity advice and is excluding the elderly and children. Providing accessible and targeted information to these groups will go a long way towards strengthening cybersecurity in the UK, and in turn the UK economy.

## 4.4 Policy recommendations

As was the case with internet safety, our survey has provided strong support for the idea that online security is a real and increasingly prominent threat. Cybercrime is increasingly common and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in society. Fear of cybercrime is perpetuating digital illiteracy, which in turn exacerbates this vulnerability by discouraging people from accessing the internet in the first place. Even paper based information can rely on internet literacy, compounding the problem. There is more to be done in this area, and active outreach seems a promising route to try and ameliorate current problems.

Review the remit of Ofcom and decide whether they or another body should authorise the content of guidelines and ensure information is widely available at the local level. Creating universal guidelines for specific user groups on identifying online risks and corresponding safeguarding strategies would help develop a more joined up approach.

Collaborative efforts of UK online safety agencies (such as our proposed UK Council on Vulnerable Adult Internet Safety) and industry should build on existing guidelines, for specific user groups. These must become universally available in community spaces and specifically target Local Authorities and the small charity sector as a major dissemination channel.

Digital literacy training, provided by the Digital Economy Bill, must make consumers aware of reporting procedures for security and data breaches. The reporting of data breaches to the appropriate regulator will be made mandatory for industry by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will also be made mandatory to let the people who are personally affected know as well. Businesses should take a lead on letting their customers know by raising awareness and educating users. Comparable guidelines could also be considered for nuisance calls at a network level.

Industry should particularly look to work with and educate children and elderly people for whom fear can be a major driver, and for whom internet use is the least prevalent. Organisations such as Good Things Foundation already provide online networks that people can be signposted to. Internet Service Providers and others should be encouraged to signpost users towards these existing routes.



## chapter five

# Taking ownership of the digital agenda

Whilst the situation has improved in recent years, and the recent Digital Strategy continues to make inroads in this area, robust leadership and ownership of the digital agenda is lacking, particularly regarding digital inclusivity and online safety.<sup>83</sup> The need for improvement has partially been picked up by Government, who has implemented a range of initiatives to assist in the spread of these concepts.

Experts argue that a lack of ownership of the issue has been the primary cause of the delay in dealing with digital inclusion and online safety.<sup>84</sup> In recent years, however, awareness of the issue has increased and the public, private and voluntary sectors have shown greater acknowledgement of the seriousness of the issue.

### 5.1 Government ownership

The Government claimed in the 2014 'UK Digital Inclusion Charter' (DIC) that it would be able to reduce the number of people who are offline by 25% every two years.<sup>85</sup> ONS statistics show that the number of households with internet access has increased from 84% in 2014 to 89% in 2016 (a 31% drop in those without access), indicating that the claims made in the 2014 DIC may hold true.<sup>86</sup> Work carried out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) led by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture,<sup>87</sup> as well as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Internet Safety and Security,<sup>88</sup> such as Get Online Week and the Evaluate IT Toolkit, all point to proactivity at government level.<sup>89</sup>

Whilst this is promising, central government has historically taken a fragmented approach to the issue of digital inclusion. This approach has tended to focus on two issues: a push

83 Speech by Professor William H. Dutton et al, *Whose Responsibility is Digital Inclusion?*, 11th April 2005.

84 Ibid.

85 Government Digital Service, *UK Digital Inclusion Charter*, 2014 [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/uk-digital-inclusion-charter](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/uk-digital-inclusion-charter) (23/02/17)].

86 ONS, *Internet Access – Households and Individuals: 2016*, 2016 [accessed via: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2016#things-you-need-to-know](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2016#things-you-need-to-know) (23/02/17)].

87 As written on the GOV.UK website, Minister of State for Digital and Culture, [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-of-state--22](http://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-of-state--22) (23/02/17)].

88 As written on the GOV.UK website, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Internet Safety and Security [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/ministers/parliamentary-under-secretary-of-state--53](http://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/parliamentary-under-secretary-of-state--53) (23/02/17)].

89 <https://digitalinclusion.blog.gov.uk/>

towards government departments rolling out their services online (as part of the 'Digital by Default' scheme 2020),<sup>90</sup> and the advancement of the UK's digital tech industry.<sup>91</sup> For the everyday citizen though, political will to address digital exclusion has been lacking.

### Leadership on digital inclusion

The CSJ welcomes the joint work of the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, and the Minister of Safety and Security. It sends a strong message that Government intends to adopt a more consistent, joined up approach. With the Digital Engagement team sitting in DCMS, the strategic bridging of digital and culture also reinforces commitment to changing the UK's cultural perception on digital from a 'bolt-on' to an intrinsic part of modern day living and the UK's industrial strategy.<sup>92,93</sup> Ministers should also make sure they work across all relevant departments, including the DCLG and the DfE, as they have already started to do. Any action needs to be cross-departmental and cross-sectoral.

### Leadership on digital literacy and a lifelong learning approach

Our survey indicates that digital literacy, the set of competencies required for full participation in society, is key to achieving digital inclusion. As a starting point, the Government's newly implemented Computing Curriculum in schools from the DfE is a positive step.<sup>94</sup> But digital literacy is vital for every stage of life, particularly the current adult population. It must be treated as a requirement for everyday living, as important as literacy and numeracy.<sup>95</sup>

A key lead is needed to coordinate all Government policy with this focus. Considering a new type of qualification that accredits learning would also reinforce its value. Something could be offered similar to, or building on, the City & Guilds skills based qualifications which are offered on completion of courses on Good Things Foundation's 'Learn My Way', set out in chapter three.

### Rolling out Government digital services

The Government Digital Service (GDS), set up in 2011, is part of the Cabinet Office and aims to ensure 'digital transformation of government.'<sup>96</sup> The hope is that hundreds of public services provided by central government are to be converted to the GOV.UK website by 2020 or, 'Digital by Default'. The driving factor of this transformation is cost effectiveness.<sup>97</sup>

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90 Cabinet Office, *Government Direct, A Prospectus for the Electronic Delivery of Government Services*, London: Cabinet Office, 1996; Cabinet Office, *Citizens First, Modernising Government Annual Report 2000*, London: Cabinet Office, 2000; Cabinet Office, *Cabinet Office Structural Reform Plan*, London: Cabinet Office, 2010; Government Digital Service Blog, *GDS Mission: The Next Phase*, 2015 [accessed via: <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/s015/08/17/gds-mission-the-next-phase/> (08.09.16)].

91 BIS, DCMS, *Building Britain's Future, Digital Britain: Final Report, 2009*, London: TSO Ltd, 2009; House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, *The Digital Economy Second Report 2016–17*, London: House of Commons, 2017.

92 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Digital Skills Crisis: Second Report of Session 2016–2017*, London: House of Commons, 2016.

93 As written on the GOV.UK website, *Policy: Industrial Strategy* [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/policies/industrial-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/industrial-strategy) (23/02/17)].

94 DfE, *Computing Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2: National Curriculum in England*, London: DfE, 2013.

95 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Digital Skills Crisis, Second Report of Session 2016–2017*, London: House of Commons, 2016.

96 As written on the GOV.UK website, *Blog on Government Digital Service* [accessed via <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/about> (08/09/16)].

97 Government Digital Service, *Research and Analysis: Digital Efficiency Report*, 2012 [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report/digital-efficiency-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-efficiency-report/digital-efficiency-report) (08.09.16)].

Local government also plays a significant role in rolling out digital services. Coordination between GDS and the Department for Communities and Local Government on developing and integrating digital skills policy is improving. However, evidence suggests central support for Local Authorities is still ineffective across the UK.<sup>98</sup> Respondents to the Alliance survey saw the lack of a dedicated budget as a key factor, and raised questions on the sustainability of local services.

For the most vulnerable who rely on public services, GDS brings significant change. Just over 60% of survey respondents believe GDS is moving in a good direction. The GDS was awarded additional funding in the 2016 Spending Review, taking the budget to £450m from £58m in November 2015.<sup>99</sup>

### Wider representation in the UK Digital Inclusion Charter and Council for Digital Inclusion

The Government cannot tackle digital inclusion alone. The purpose of the UK Digital Inclusion Charter (Action 15) from the Cabinet Office and the GDS is to secure support from the public, private and voluntary sector to deliver action. The Charter, published in 2014, committed the Government to reducing the number of people who are offline by 25% by 2016, and to continue to do that every two years after that. It has a biennial ongoing commitment to do this. The Charter has had a huge uptake and is mobilising efforts. There is greater scope, though, for different organisations to take a more strategic approach to ensure that: responsibility is clear; resources are maximised; and duplication of programmes at local level does not occur.

However, there is a distinct lack of small charity sector signatories. According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, small charities represent an estimated 97% of the sector as a whole and their contribution would provide clarity and insight on the experiences of the most digitally excluded and how to reach the most isolated groups.<sup>100</sup> Aligned to the CSJ's ongoing work on behalf of the voluntary sector, this report calls for greater representation of small charities in the Digital Inclusion Charter.

### Local government ownership

Local government has a clear role in supporting the digitally excluded. Under the Digital by Default agenda the central government grant to local authorities is being 'significantly reduced'<sup>101</sup> by approximately 40%.<sup>102</sup> Digital transformation will prove beneficial in helping to drive down costs. The need to raise digital literacy is thus urgent to ensure that vulnerable citizens can access services that they depend on.

As laid out by the Local Government Association (LGA), there is considerable opportunity for local councils to act as the ring holders that join up local services helping to promote digital

98 Creese, J., *A Local Government Executive Briefing Paper: The Case for a Local GDS and Local GDS Standards*, Bath: Eduserv, 2016.

99 HM Treasury, *Policy Paper: Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015* [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-documents](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-documents) (08.09.16)].

100 Broomhead P, Walters S, Lam O., *Collaboration: More than the Sum of the Parts*, London: Foundation for Social Improvement; NCVO, The UK Civil Society Almanac, London: NCVO, 2016.

101 Broomhead P, Walters S, Lam O., *Collaboration: More than the Sum of the Parts*, London: Foundation for Social Improvement; NCVO, The UK Civil Society Almanac, London: NCVO, 2016.

102 LGA, *Under Pressure: How Councils are Planning for Future Cuts*, London: LGA, 2014.

inclusion.<sup>103</sup> They can: link up, re-evaluate and redesign programmes around user needs; disseminate data and information; and reduce duplication of programmes on the ground.

Councils need support from other partners to supply and upgrade digital devices, help them provide digital literacy training, and get a true representation of user needs in their locality. A locally owned, system-wide approach is needed and the Local Authority (LA) is well placed to deliver this.

#### Case study 4. Wirral Digital Strategy (WDS)

Wirral Council is leading a radical new Partnership approach to digital innovation. The private sector, community organisations and public services in Wirral have committed to transform the digital landscape to put the needs of Wirral residents and businesses first.

WDS 2016–2020 will enable residents to use digital technology to improve their lives. They are mapping digital equipment and services across their Partnership to better support access and inclusion. Working in local neighbourhoods, they are stimulating community learning with the help of ‘digital champions’, and reaching out to disadvantaged groups.

By 2020, the WDS’s vision is a digital Wirral with:

- Connected People: every resident having the ability and skills to use the latest technology to improve their lives;
- Connected Business: every business benefitting from market-leading infrastructure, opening up new markets and competing globally;
- Connected Services: every public service being joined up, integrated, available and accessible online.

## 5.2 Joint ownership: Taking a collective approach

### Who funds what? Supporting the voluntary sector

**Charity will always play a huge role in this area, but mainly because it has to. With a lack of funding from government, local authorities and big businesses, and a lack of leadership of those with the influence to affect change, it will be (and is) left to charities to attempt to fill the void.**

CSJ Alliance member

At a lower level, local government and charity work remains a vital piece of the puzzle. For example, initiatives like the Online Centres Network deliver campaigns such as ‘Get Online Week’, aimed at reaching out at a local level to people who otherwise would not be digitally active. The 2016 event utilised over 1,000 organisations and held over 5,000 events, reaching 85,000 new people.<sup>104</sup> As well as this, their linked organisation – Good Things Foundation – has partnered with a range of charities and businesses to bring

<sup>103</sup> LGA, *Transforming Local Services through Digital Local Government Association*, London: LGA, 2015; LGA, *Developing Local Digital Leadership Skills and Capacity*, London: LGA, 2015.

<sup>104</sup> Online Centres Network, *Campaigns: Get Online Week; Be Online* [accessed via: [www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/news-and-activity/campaigns](http://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/news-and-activity/campaigns) (23/02/17)].



digital inclusivity to disadvantaged groups such as the homeless.<sup>105</sup> These efforts highlight the benefit of combining a broad range of organisations to reach as many people as possible, and show why it is so important to continue the involvement of both charities and businesses as leaders in this area.

90% of survey respondents see the voluntary sector as having a strategic role in increasing digital inclusion. Many have developed their own programmes rather than depending on existing provision because of their ability to reach the most isolated, particularly in areas lacking local services.

The CSJ's work has consistently found that the short-term nature of funding for the voluntary sector significantly constrains what it can offer.<sup>106</sup> Public funding is one such area. A recent report from Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales (LBF) found that small to medium sized charities (with incomes of between £25,000 and £1 million) were hit hardest by public funding cuts. Their large charity counterparts, in comparison, received a 49% increase in central government funding and a 22% increase in local government funding between 2008 and 2015.<sup>107</sup>

Unsurprisingly, 84% of CSJ survey respondents identified funding as the biggest barrier to implementation of digital training.

Examples of specialist networks are found within the Online Centres Network such as the 'Digital Housing Hub', where 'social housing providers help their residents to embrace the web.'<sup>108</sup>

**It's so frustrating when we get funding, run a course and then the funding runs out. We see them make progress which is great. But then when [funding] stops, they try to go elsewhere but the course is just too different. We see their confidence go down and go right back to square one.**

CSJ Alliance member

### Brokering relationships with businesses

**Organisations like banks, which have a profit-related incentive to see people more able to use their online service, could play a really valuable role in increasing digital inclusion.**

CSJ Alliance member

Local businesses can also play a greater role in funding. There are various initiatives which do this already, such as Lloyds Banking Group's 'Helping Britain Prosper Plan', which provides digital training through local branches to help customers access banking

<sup>105</sup> Good Things Foundation, *Areas of Work* [accessed via: [www.goodthingsfoundation.org/areas-of-work](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/areas-of-work) (23/02/17)].

<sup>106</sup> CSJ, *Social Solutions: Enabling Grass-Roots Charities to Tackle Poverty*, London: CSJ, 2014.

<sup>107</sup> LBF, *Small and Medium-Sized Charities After the Crash: What Happened and Why It Matters*, 2015; NCVO, *Navigating Change: An Analysis of Financial Trends for Small and Medium-sized Charities*, 2015 [accessed via: [www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy\\_and\\_research/funding/financial-trends-for-small-and-medium-sized-charities-ncvo-lloyds-bank-foundation-2016.pdf](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/funding/financial-trends-for-small-and-medium-sized-charities-ncvo-lloyds-bank-foundation-2016.pdf) (23/02/17)].

<sup>108</sup> As written on the Online Centres Network, *Specialist Networks* [accessed via: [www.ukonlinecentres.com/specialist-networks](http://www.ukonlinecentres.com/specialist-networks) (23/02/17)].

services.<sup>109</sup> The 'Digital High Street' is also another collaboration of public, private and voluntary sector organisations that aims to digitise our high streets. Its key aims include ensuring all community residents become digitally capable and centralising digital tools, available through a community-based platform (the High Street Digital Lab) to support both digitally experienced and inexperienced members of the community.<sup>110</sup>

### Case study 5. LBG's 'Helping Britain Prosper Plan'

As part of the 'Helping Britain Prosper Plan', LBG has committed to deliver 20,000 'Digital Champions' by the end of 2017 to help support people, businesses, and charities improve their digital skills. This programme aims to help the large proportion of adults who lack the basic digital skills needed to benefit from having access to the internet. The programme is working towards ensuring that each of Lloyds' community bank branches will have at least one member of staff dedicated to helping customers improve their digital skills and financial capabilities.

### Enhancing the work of digital players

Digital providers are increasingly presented with an invaluable opportunity to lead on digital inclusion in the UK. There are a large number of Internet Service Providers such as TalkTalk, O2, BT and Sky that are committed to organising schemes to raise digital literacy and enhance online safety. Raising awareness of this through common community platforms is one way to help the small charity sector know what is available.

## 5.3 Policy recommendations

Now the Government's agenda on digital inclusion is emerging, action must match ambition. Action to promote digital inclusion is deliverable. Tightening partnerships with the private and voluntary sector is also essential to recognise their value in helping roll out GDS through local authorities and keep their delivery realistic and sensitive to user needs.

The collaborative effort of the Digital Inclusion Charter is a key initiative with broader scope for development. The digital technology sector holds a powerful role in leading the UK forward on digital inclusion. Equal representation of national and local stakeholders will better use the invaluable knowledge and expertise across the UK and particularly can draw from existing collaborative efforts such as 'The Digital High Street.' It is also going to take a combined effort to alleviate issues surrounding funding and unlock the potential of the charity sector.

### Policy Recommendations

Building on LBG's 'Helping Britain Prosper Plan', and a recommendation of the CSJ report *Social Solutions*, a community-based web platform could also allow members to post any 'offers' and 'wants' from both the business and charity sectors. This would be similar to

109 LBG, *Helping Britain Prosper Plan 2015*, 2015 (accessed via: [www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/our-group/responsible-business/helping-britain/hbpp-table-2015\\_final2.pdf](http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/our-group/responsible-business/helping-britain/hbpp-table-2015_final2.pdf) (08/09/16)).

110 Digital High Street Advisory Board, *Digital High Street 2020 Report*, 2015 [accessed via: [http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/Digital\\_High\\_Street\\_Report/The-Digital-High-Street-Report-2020.pdf](http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/Digital_High_Street_Report/The-Digital-High-Street-Report-2020.pdf) (23/02/17)].

the free-cycle model, in which groups gift goods and services to each other.<sup>111</sup> Targeting local digital tech businesses for greater engagement would be particularly beneficial to the success of the model, given the specific digital needs that many charities now have. Digital tech businesses could take a primary role in up-skilling charity staff and volunteers, provide ongoing expertise in programme development and delivery for beneficiaries or maintenance of IT equipment. It would also open doors to develop digital innovation that attracts talent and boosts productivity in a local community.

The Government should build on the DfE's computing curriculum to prioritise developing a common definition of digital literacy with clear learning outcomes for adult learners. This should be shared between key departments of the DfE, the Digital Engagement Team from the DCMS, and the Government Digital Service Working Group. As one option, the Government could also look at increasing Ofcom's powers to not only promote digital literacy but help coordinate the efforts of industry stakeholders. Responsibility for overseeing this should sit with the newly appointed Council for Digital Inclusion within DCMS.

The DfE should take up the new agenda on digital literacy, coordinating and building on the Doteveryone model of a digital skills framework as a statutory requirement of all education-based policy.

Outcome-based targets with specific deadlines and mapping should be required to track public spending across the public sector as part of the GDS.

The Government should expand the functions of the Digital Inclusion Charter, overseen by the Council for Digital Inclusion to include:

- Widening representation of different stakeholders from the private, public and voluntary sectors and identifying points of engagement for members and non-members with opportunities for tighter partnership;
- Collating evaluations on existing digital programmes at local and national levels to develop a clearer profile on which programmes have the greatest impact;
- Sharing and showcasing examples of best practice to scale up initiatives and ensuring all duplicate or ineffective programmes are cut.

The Digital Inclusion Charter must outline a clear strategy and review process setting out how stakeholders will support the implementation of the Digital Economy Bill and Digital Strategy biennially.

There should be an assigned Local Digital Leader from every LA to champion digital transformation within their local area. Some already exist but the Department for Communities and Local Government should push to make the provision universal. They could do so by:

- Mapping provision in their locality and disseminating well publicised information about services available using an effective digital platform and alternative paper based information, including for small and medium sized charities;

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<sup>111</sup> CSJ, *Social Solutions*, London: CSJ, 2014.

- Reviewing policy and strategy through a ‘digital inclusion’ lens that includes evaluating LA websites in terms of ease of use and translation options available for English for Speakers of Other Languages learners;
- Delaying sanctions when citizens fail to update their information for public services online, particularly people claiming benefits, and ensuring users know how to handle their digital accounts.

Our recommendation builds on similar approaches outlined by Nesta<sup>112</sup> and Citizens Online.<sup>113</sup>

The GLA is appointing a Head of Digital. We recommend this role includes not just promoting tech business in the city but also promoting digital inclusion, and that all new Metro Mayors adopt a similar role.

Create a holistic ‘hub’ of charities, including small as well as larger ones, to bid for user group specific funding. Assign a liaison with the LA to integrate collected data with the Digital Inclusion Outcome Framework. The hub would bring together local providers to enable them to bid together for funding under the rationale of delivering a programme for a specific user group. It would also help ensure longer term impact. Given the different resources and expertise available from each partner, the hub would take a holistic approach to meet the needs of the community.

Set up an online platform, based on the ‘Helping Britain Prosper Plan’ and the free-cycle model, to enhance connections between the business and charity sectors in providing services in local communities.

Guided by the Council for Digital Inclusion, the Government should now set out its budget, planned outcomes and lines of responsibility for achieving its ambitions, and force local collaboration where appropriate. Businesses must also work together for best outcomes rather than pursuing isolated PR projects.

Core digital skills should be built into every new apprenticeship standard, even for job roles that do not specifically require them. This should be an important element of ‘T-levels’ as the Government rolls out its plans for technical and vocational education.

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112 Benton M, Simon J., *Connected Councils: A Digital Vision of Local Government in 2025*, London: Nesta, 2016.

113 Citizens Online, *The Case for a Systematic Approach to Digital Skills, 2014* [accessed via: [www.citizensonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Online-Digital-Skills-Systemic-Approach-White-Paper.pdf](http://www.citizensonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Online-Digital-Skills-Systemic-Approach-White-Paper.pdf) (23/02/17)].

## chapter six

# Finding an effective approach

There are plenty of digital skills training opportunities offered across the UK, both online and face to face. However, given the variety of experience reported by CSJ Alliance members we can say that these vary in consistency and quality. This chapter draws largely on our in-depth interviews with CSJ Alliance members to understand a nuanced view on what more can be done.

### 6.1 Increasing information at the grassroots

The most common issue at grassroots is a lack of information detailing what is available. 38% of charities reported that nothing was implemented in their area, and 52% said they were not aware of available information. Because most charities offer training of some kind, it is vital that they know what is available in terms of support and collaborate opportunities. Information that would substantially benefit them and those in their care includes face to face services, funding opportunities and IT specialist help. In the Digital Strategy 2017, the Government outlines a new Digital Skills Partnership, working with businesses companies and charities to close the digital skills gap. It will allow for the sharing of best practice and improve the access to digital skills training. This will enable more to access the information they need to move into highly skilled digital jobs. The partnership will also be critical in improving access to digitally focused jobs at local level. Digital vacancies are hoped to be identified by area, to tackle digital skills shortages.<sup>114</sup> We welcome this.

### 6.2 Finding a more formal approach

Another grassroots issue is the tension between the preferred informal approach often taken in the delivery of digital skills training and whether it actually derives the most benefit. This type of approach is often favoured because it is seen to specifically target the most disengaged who are often unwilling to sign up for longer courses. But it was often seen as unsuitable for beneficiaries by our CSJ Alliance members for a number of reasons. Firstly, it limits effectiveness of programmes because individuals struggle to consolidate their skills and see their progress. Secondly, trainers are not able to easily distinguish the

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<sup>114</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK Digital Strategy, March 2017 [accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy-9/03/2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy-9/03/2017)].

difference between a learner simply acquiring a skill, and understanding how it may be differently used and applied. Lastly, as one CSJ Alliance member explained, 'it creates a fragmented delivery of courses on the ground that are largely disjointed.' Whatever approach is taken, it needs to be needs-based so it suits those that are excluded to ensure we are reaching and supporting people effectively.

### 6.3 Creating quality through standard measurement

**Digital inclusion projects are sometimes assessed too easily. It makes for a quick impact review and being able to say, 'job well done.' The long term [aspect] of the project is rarely considered, nor the actual user needs.**

CSJ Alliance member

The CSJ recognises recent efforts to enhance measurement such as the GDS's Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework, designed to be a single tool that helps evaluate all local level projects.<sup>115</sup> Local area and sub group-based segmentation is clearly highlighted to shift from 'volume-based to impact-based metrics.' But, as one respondent commented, 'there is still greater need to hone in on the subtleties of digital inclusion to guide us in redefining our idea of success.'

Some charities also raised concerns about the 'high output/low quality' of programmes that were not evaluated properly, often because of over-simplified measurements.

In consultation with the CSJ, a digital leader proposed the use of a 'digital passport' that assesses individual learning to feed into a broader measurement on digital inclusion activities. Capturing accurate data on learner profiles in addition to tracking digital inclusion activities would build better needs-specific provision and examples of best practice within their specific beneficiary networks. Essentially, it helps funders know what works.

The digital skills framework from Doteveryone sets out to unify an approach supported by key websites such as Learn My Way (created by Good Things Foundation) that help with programme development.<sup>116,117</sup> An increase in impact reviews of existing programmes would also create a clearer profile on effective strategies that reach the digitally excluded.

### 6.4 Empowering intermediaries

70% of survey respondents believed that beneficiaries are in positive contact with someone who could teach them how to use the internet and support them, including charity staff and volunteers. So-called 'intermediaries' are a powerful enabler in supporting an individual along their digital journey and their impact is well documented.<sup>118</sup> In this instance, charity respondents defined intermediaries as a core group of people who make up a beneficiary's

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115 Cabinet Office, *From Volumes to Value: An Outcomes Framework for Measuring the Benefits of Digital Inclusion*, London: Cabinet Office, 2015 [accessed via: [https://goon-local-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/resources/files/DI\\_OutcomesFramework\\_SUMMARY.pdf](https://goon-local-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/resources/files/DI_OutcomesFramework_SUMMARY.pdf) (08/09/16)].

116 As seen on the Doteveryone website [accessed via: <https://doteveryone.org.uk/> (23/02/17)].

117 As seen on the Learnmyway website [accessed via: [www.learnmyway.com/](http://www.learnmyway.com/) (23/02/17)].

118 Richardson R, Abbott A., *The Role of Social Intermediaries in Digital Inclusion: The Case of Social Housing*, Newcastle: Centre for Urban & Regional Development Studies, Newcastle University, 2013.

'circle of trust' to help strengthen confidence, motivation and resilience. However, not all family members are appropriate intermediaries. For example, children may not have the necessary skills and knowledge of internet safety to teach their parents.<sup>119</sup>

### Case study 6. Digital Champions Network

Digital Unite's 'Digital Champions Network' is a nationwide scheme that teaches formal or informal digital skills to adults. As of June 2015, the Network was made up of 20 members and had 800 Digital Champions. In 2016, the Partners aimed to collectively recruit, train and support 1,400 more Digital Champions. The comprehensive online courses – calling upon 44 downloadable resources and 400 online guides – are free and therefore ensure that each person can receive the essential teaching toolkit required for skill development. Digital Unite is also part of the 'One Digital' broader programme that is a collaboration of different organisations that aim to 'deliver sustainable digital skills to people right across society.' Among these organisations are 'Hyde Group', who supported 300 residents through their 65 Digital Champions, and Nottinghamshire County Council, who have recruited 60 Champions to assist dozens of users.

There are existing schemes that promote the use of digital champions such as Good Things Foundation and Digital Unite (See Case Study 6). Most charities stress that a consistent intermediary is the key to the success of any programme, with the need for beneficiaries to be supported at each stage. The voluntary sector is at an advantage over other providers because of its long-term interaction with the beneficiary.

## 6.5 Getting senior level buy-in

A final factor is the need to keep driving the digital need for charities. Most CSJ Alliance charities are actively involved with advancing the digital agenda with an assigned digital leader. However, further drive at a senior level across the charities and the sector would help advance the agenda and help charities address the problems facing citizens as a result of digital exclusion.

Getting senior-level buy in and supporting development must be a priority to create organisational change. Senior leaders must have a role in determining the types of programmes suitable for their beneficiaries as well as helping to co-ordinate funding with a digital focus.

## 6.6 Policy recommendations

Ensuring programmes are bespoke and user-centric is vital to developing best practice. Rather than creating new programmes, the Government, charities, and private sector organisations should build on what already exists by developing a more joined-up approach on the ground and facilitating greater information sharing on effective programmes.

<sup>119</sup> Eynon R, Helsper E., *Family Dynamics and Internet Use in Britain: What Role do Children Play in Adults' Engagement with the Internet?*, UK: Information, Communication & Society, 18(2), 2015.

Securing a more detailed digital literacy framework with clear learning outcomes and a learner-centric measurement tool that feeds into impact reviews will also help ensure quality training, and will build a clearer profile on digital inclusion activities.

### Policy recommendations

There is a role for government to ensure a more joined up, formalised approach in the types of programmes developed and delivered. And this requires clear leadership and accountability. Progress against clear targets – such as those included in the Digital Inclusion Charter – should be published and reported annually to Parliament. Progress in this area should be examined by the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in its annual session with the Secretary of State examining the Department’s overall responsibilities.

The Digital Inclusion Council should lead a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the opportunities and materials available to consumers and intermediaries to enhance digital skills, promote the social benefits of being online and provide confidence by pointing to legitimate sources of information and support.

A more detailed digital literacy framework is required. This could build on the Doteveryone digital skills and capabilities framework as a model. Clear learning outcomes that outline the various stages of an individual’s digital journey must also be integrated. The framework could then be used by any service provider.

It is important that programmes are properly evaluated, potentially by proposed the Council for Digital Inclusion. Charities would benefit from being made aware of the Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework, with training provided and opportunities to report on its effectiveness. Ensuring it is consistently used by programme providers would also help gain a clearer picture on what makes a successful programme for specific users and what does not.

A clear strategy on ‘Digital Intermediaries’ is needed, building on the Government’s ‘Digital Friends’ scheme as part of the Digital Strategy.<sup>120</sup> This strategy should recruit across government to share skills with friends, family and neighbours, helping them get online. It should also include a cross-sector mentorship scheme for senior-level charity members, supported by the digital tech sector, to enable resource sharing and learning from other local practices.

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<sup>120</sup> As written on the GOV.UK website, *Digital Friends Update Blog*, [accessed via <https://Digitalengagement.blog.gov.uk/2015/09/04/digital-friends-update/> (08.09.16)].



# Conclusion

There are still 12.6 million of the UK adult population lacking in basic digital skills, and 5.8 million failing to get online. The effects of digital exclusion are being felt by the hardest to reach individuals. And, as the digital world continues to grow at unprecedented speed, great damage to both our society and our economy can be expected if these challenges are not urgently met.

The complexity of need of the most vulnerable is apparent throughout this report. Political will of Government and joint efforts between the private and voluntary sector are fundamental to helping those hardest to reach.

The recommendations in this report are not about discrediting the good work already been done to promote digital inclusion. But they do stress that a more coordinated approach is vital for success. This is crucially about joining up efforts in the frameworks we use: whether in digital skills, measurements and type of content; the delivery of programmes at the local level; or in funding. There is no longer any excuse for inconsistent, ad-hoc training and a poor profile of what makes effective programmes. Public policy must be coherent and consistent.

But our recommendations also go further. Digital inclusion is lifelong. We need a shift towards digital literacy in our policies to support children and adults over their life time. We must not aspire to just provide people with the basic level of digital skills and online safety guidance, but aspire to fully equip them with sufficient safeguarding measures to navigate the internet and manage risk well.

As one charity respondent explains, 'digital inclusion is [now] about getting into the psychology of people's situations.' We have set out key principles in our report to meet individuals' needs.

Our report recognises that a more needs-led approach in enhancing digital skills is required – and within a realistic time frame. At the same time, we must react even more quickly to prevent the exponential growth of online risk as individuals increasingly embrace everything digital.



# Recommendations in full

## Access

1. The CSJ calls for a review of the ‘poverty premium’ by the Government and the digital tech sector on:
  - **Fixed price contracts** – Prices should be guaranteed for 12 or 18 months, so that low income consumers have confidence in their financial planning. Currently, most of the industry reserves the right to increase prices mid contract, which makes it hard for vulnerable customers to have certainty;
  - **Simplified switching** – Today’s switching processes make it difficult for customers to move in search of better deals. The system also allows providers to hide their best deals for the savviest customer, whilst vulnerable customers pay higher prices. The elderly are particularly unlikely to call up and haggle for better deals, so end up paying higher rates. The Digital Economy Bill will make a welcome attempt to tackle this but we would also urge Ofcom to implement ‘Gaining Provider Led’ switching across quad-play bundles as quickly as possible.
2. Local authorities and central government agencies should direct people to Good Things Foundation’s digital services, as Jobcentres and some charities do already, to meet immediate need. Over the long term all government agencies and departments, as well as local authorities, should continue designing apps for services that are readily available and allow users to complete the full range of action via mobile and smart phones, ensuring they do not limit the users’ ability to receive or provide information they would on a computer or laptop.
3. The Government should campaign to increase awareness of the existing Online centres and investigate whether some of these could be work-based.
4. We welcome the Government’s commitment to universal digital literacy in its Digital Economy Bill and Digital Strategy. To ensure delivery we recommend:
  - The availability of free courses must be advertised and attendance encouraged. Provision alone does not guarantee attendance, particularly for hardest to reach groups;
  - The Government should clarify what level of attainment is acceptable;
  - The success of the provisions in the Digital Economy Bill must be evaluated in 2018 to ensure vulnerable adults are making use of the new provisions it allows for;

- The Government could earmark a portion of savings from its Digital by Default programme to pay for the cost of universal digital literacy, estimated by Good Things Foundation to be around £875 million;<sup>121</sup>
- In assessing applications for new Apprenticeship Standards the Department for Education should look for the provision of basic digital skills training for all occupations. This should be an important element of ‘T-levels’ as the Government rolls out its plans for technical and vocational education;
- Any training must be designed to improve take-up. For example, the most excluded groups are more likely to favour short, drop-in classes than yearlong courses.
- The Government should build on the DfE’s computing curriculum to prioritise developing a common definition of digital literacy with clear learning outcomes for adult learners.

## Safety and security

1. There is a clear need for more streamlined and better publicised safety guidelines and services. At the moment, there is too much duplication between separate groups and organisations and an obvious space for greater industry led collaboration in both provision and publicity. There must be room for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to initiate this if it is to join government, industry and the third sector together but in the long term the leadership would be best handed to a single non-government body agreed by all parties involved.
2. Build on the work of the UK Safer Internet Centre that developed a Digital Literacy Curriculum to help pupils access the internet safely, a similar approach can be taken for adults, akin to Good Things Foundation’s Learn My Way platform. Learn My Way already includes modules on online safety, including one addressing current issues. This type of framework could identify the key risks of being online and corresponding safeguarding strategies.
3. There is a need to develop a UK Council for Vulnerable Adult Internet Safety, similar to the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, made up of digital sector experts, academics, law enforcement agencies, charities and government. It would collate internet safety research, conduct its own consultations, give advice to industry providers and publish a code of practice. Its responsibilities should include:
  - Coordinating existing statistics on general trends of threats to personal safety for specific vulnerable groups
  - Conducting a rigorous review of current mechanisms and procedures recording and analysing online abuse and crime to find gaps in the system
  - Develop an accredited standard of what constitutes a threat to personal safety for adults, particularly the most vulnerable, and corresponding support for victims.
  - Support the implementation of the Digital Economy Bill, particularly in relation to those sections pertaining to safeguarding vulnerable adults including confidentiality of personal information and disclosure.

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<sup>121</sup> Tinder Foundation, *A Leading Digital Nation by 2020: Calculating the Cost of Delivering Online Skills for All*, 2014 [accessed via: [www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/a\\_leading\\_digital\\_nation\\_by\\_2020\\_0.pdf](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/a_leading_digital_nation_by_2020_0.pdf)].

4. The Government is leading the way on age verification and new measures in the Digital Economy Bill around this should be welcomed. Internet Service Providers and the Government must work together to ensure that websites that do not adhere to the AV rules are dealt with in an effective and proportionate manner. As part of this, Ofcom must now have increased authority to gather data and report on children's access to age verified websites, and to produce information for the general public on online safety and security.
5. Teacher training must include digital safety skills to ensure that those leading in education remain ahead of those educated.
6. Review the remit of Ofcom and decide whether they or another body should authorise the content of guidelines and ensure information is widely available at the local level. Creating universal guidelines for specific user groups on identifying online risks and corresponding safeguarding strategies would help develop a more joined up approach.
7. Digital literacy training, provided by the Digital Economy Bill, must make consumers aware of reporting procedures for security and data breaches. The reporting of data breaches to the appropriate regulator will be made mandatory for industry by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will also be made mandatory to let the people who are personally affected know as well. Businesses should take a lead on letting their customers know by raising awareness and educating users. Comparable guidelines could also be considered for nuisance calls at a network level.

## Leadership

1. Building on LBG's 'Helping Britain Prosper Plan', and a recommendation of the CSJ report *Social Solutions*, a community-based web platform could also allow members to post any 'offers' and 'wants' from both the business and charity sectors. This would be similar to the free-cycle model, in which groups gift goods and services to each other.<sup>122</sup> Targeting local digital tech businesses for greater engagement would be particularly beneficial to the success of the model, given the specific digital needs that many charities now have. Digital tech businesses could take a primary role in up-skilling charity staff and volunteers, provide ongoing expertise in programme development and delivery for beneficiaries or maintenance of IT equipment. It would also open doors to develop digital innovation that attracts talent and boosts productivity in a local community.
2. Outcome-based targets with specific deadlines and mapping should be required to track public spending across the public sector as part of the GDS.
3. The Government should expand the functions of the Digital Inclusion Charter, overseen by the Council for Digital Inclusion to include:
4. Widening representation of different stakeholders from the private, public and voluntary sectors and identifying points of engagement for members and non-members with opportunities for tighter partnership;

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<sup>122</sup> CSJ, *Social Solutions*, London: CSJ, 2014.

5. The Digital Inclusion Charter must outline a clear strategy and review process setting out how stakeholders will support the implementation of the Digital Economy Bill and Digital Strategy biennially.
6. There should be an assigned Local Digital Leader from every LA to champion digital transformation within their local area. Some already exist but the Department for Communities and Local Government should push to make the provision universal. They could do so by:
  - Mapping provision in their locality and disseminating well publicised information about services available using an effective digital platform and alternative paper based information, including for small and medium sized charities;
  - Reviewing policy and strategy through a ‘digital inclusion’ lens that includes evaluating LA websites in terms of ease of use and translation options available for English for Speakers of Other Languages learners;
  - Delaying sanctions when citizens fail to update their information for public services online, particularly people claiming benefits, and ensuring users know how to handle their digital accounts.
  - Our recommendations build on similar approaches outlined by Nesta<sup>123</sup> and Citizens Online.<sup>124</sup>
7. Create a holistic ‘hub’ of charities, including small as well as larger ones, to bid for user group specific funding. Assign a liaison with the LA to integrate collected data with the Digital Inclusion Outcome Framework. The hub would bring together local providers to enable them to bid together for funding under the rationale of delivering a programme for a specific user group. It would also help ensure longer term impact. Given the different resources and expertise available from each partner, the hub would take a holistic approach to meet the needs of the community
8. Set up an online platform, based on the ‘Helping Britain Prosper Plan’ and the free-cycle model, to enhance connections between the business and charity sectors in providing services in local communities.
9. Guided by the Council for Digital Inclusion, the Government should now set out its budget, planned outcomes and lines of responsibility for achieving its ambitions, and force local collaboration where appropriate. Businesses must also work together for best outcomes rather than pursuing isolated PR projects.

## Infrastructure

1. The Digital Inclusion Council should lead a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the opportunities and materials available to consumers and intermediaries to enhance digital, skills, promote the social benefits of being online and provide confidence by pointing to legitimate sources of information and support.

123 Benton M, Simon J., *Connected Councils: A Digital Vision of Local Government in 2025*, London: Nesta, 2016.

124 Citizens Online, *The Case for a Systematic Approach to Digital Skills*, 2014 [accessed via: [www.citizenonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Online-Digital-Skills-Systemic-Approach-White-Paper.pdf](http://www.citizenonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Online-Digital-Skills-Systemic-Approach-White-Paper.pdf) (23/02/17)].

2. It is important that programmes are properly evaluated, potentially by proposed the Council for Digital Inclusion. Charities would benefit from being made aware of the Digital Inclusion Outcomes Framework, with training provided and opportunities to report on its effectiveness. Ensuring it is consistently used by programme providers would also help gain a clearer picture on what makes a successful programme for specific users and what does not.
3. A clear strategy on 'Digital Intermediaries' is needed, building on the Government's 'Digital Friends' scheme as part of the Digital Strategy.<sup>125</sup> This strategy should recruit across government to share skills with friends, family and neighbours, helping them get online. It should also include a cross-sector mentorship scheme for senior-level charity members, supported by the digital tech sector, to enable resource sharing and learning from other local practices.

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<sup>125</sup> As written on the GOV.UK website, *Digital Friends Update Blog*, [accessed via <https://Digitalengagement.blog.gov.uk/2015/09/04/digital-friends-update/> (08.09.16)].





# Annex

## Survey questions

### 1. Your organisation

- a. Please enter the name of your organization.
- b. UK Region.

### 2. Who is in your care?

- a. Age group
- b. Sex
- c. Disability status
- d. Income Status
- e. Education

### 3. Digital exclusion and 'Pathways to Poverty'

- a. Of the CSJ's five pathways to poverty, which does your charity deal with most?
  - Educational failure
  - Struggling with addiction
  - Serious personal debt
  - Family breakdown
- b. Please comment on how you think digital exclusion contributes to pathways to poverty.
- c. Please describe any other underlying social issues that you feel are specific to why people in your care are not having full and meaningful engagement with the internet (e.g. online gambling, risk of being contacted by abuser).

### 4. Finding practical solutions

- a. To what extent does your organization engage with improving digital skills of those in your care? (whether directly or through other organisations)? Why? Why not?
- b. What do you think are some of the main barriers to implementation of digital skills training and raising awareness at the local level?
  - Lack of funding
  - Lack of public information on supporting specific user needs
  - Lack of expertise internally
  - Other barriers (please explain)

- c. Which of the following solutions are being implemented in your local area?
- Free one to one tuition (including private visits)
  - Free digital skills training in public places (i.e. banks, libraries, leisure centres)
  - Private night classes/Ad hoc classes
  - Training for charity sector workers and volunteers to become 'Digital Champions'
  - Digital skills curriculum for children in schools/college
- d. Please list any other local solutions that you may know of:
- e. Which of the following bodies would be most effective in delivering digital skills training and staying safe online? Please rate where 1 is least effective and 10 is most effective:
- Internet Service Providers
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Large businesses
  - Charity sector
  - Local authorities
  - Libraries
  - Banks/building societies
  - Media (TV, radio)
  - Educational institutions
  - Local businesses
- f. What role do you think the charity sector should play in increasing digital inclusion?
- g. What could best help the charity sector improve digital inclusion and online safety for the UK's most vulnerable? Please tick only one:
- Talking to similar organisations for ideas and examples of practice
  - Information to help signpost carers, guardians, parents to further support
  - Getting specialist advice (from a digital skills charity, Internet Service Provider) for us internally to train others
  - More information on any schemes being offered in the local area and nationally
  - Opportunities to access funding for training and IT equipment
- h. Please share with us any other ideas for practical solutions or examples of practice that you may be doing.
- i. What is your opinion on the UK Government's plan of getting all public services online by 2020 and its implications on those in your care?

#### 5. Internet non-users

- a. What proportion of those in your care do not use the internet?
- Less than half do not use the internet
  - About half do not use the internet
  - More than half do not use the internet
- b. What are the most common reasons why they do not use the internet? Please tick the most relevant:
- Internet is not affordable
  - Internet is not accessible
  - Don't know how to use a computer or phone properly to go online

- Worry about online safety of personal data
- Had negative experience before
- Limited moto skills
- Don't know where to go to get advice on accessing and using the internet
- Poor literacy skills
- Doesn't see the benefit
- Job doesn't need it
- Other reasons (please specify)

## 6. Internet users

- a. Which of the following devices would they most use to connect to the internet?
  - Laptop
  - Tablet
  - Smart phone
  - Desktop computer
  - Mobile phone
  
- b. Where would they most use the internet? (e.g. at school, at home, at Job Centre Plus, Citizen's advice bureau, internet café, library, sports centre, religious place, on the go).
  
- c. How often do they use the internet?
  - Every day
  - A few times a week
  - Couple of times a month
  - Rarely
  
- d. Are they most likely or less likely to use the internet alone?
  - Most likely
  - Less likely
  
- e. If they use the internet with someone, who is most likely to teach them how to use the internet (whether for positive or negative engagement)?
  
- f. Of those who have positive contact with someone in your care (e.g. client group/ relatives/carers), how likely is it that they could teach them to use the internet? Please explain why.
  - If likely, why? (e.g. They are confident of their own skills to help)
  - If unlikely, why? (e.g. They can't use the internet either, not their role)
  
- g. Please rate in order from 1–5 the types of skills that they are most likely to use; 1 being most likely; 5 being least likely.
  - Managing information
  - Communicating
  - Transacting
  - Creating
  - Problem solving
  
- h. What would they mostly use the internet for? Please tick as relevant:
  - Finding ways to engage in community (e.g. voluntary work)
  - Interacting with immediate community (e.g. friends and family)

- Entertainment (music/movies etc.)
  - Looking for job opportunities
  - Accessing Government services (e.g. housing, council tax, school)
  - Reading news
  - Training for work or educational qualification
  - Doing a school/college-based task
  - Making transactions (e.g. food shopping/banking/holidays)
  - Interacting with social media
  - Training to improve digital skills
  - Finding information for self-help and support groups (such as addiction, bullying, domestic abuse)
  - Other (please specify)
- i. How would you describe their type of engagement when online?
- High engagement (e.g. uses many websites, can regularly find new ones)
  - Average level of engagement (e.g. uses most commonly known websites, sometimes finds others)
  - Poor engagement (e.g. limited in using only a few websites, cannot name any others)
- j. For those with poor to average engagement, what are the reasons they would give for this? Please tick as many that are relevant:
- No reason given
  - Don't know which websites to use
  - Too difficult to navigate different websites
  - Worried about online safety
  - No or limited training at school
  - No or limited training at work
  - Happy with how they already use the internet/don't see the need to use other websites
  - Other reasons (please specify)
- k. Which skills from question g would they most benefit from learning in order to get full use of the internet? Please rank – 1 being least useful skill to learn and 5 being most useful skill to learn.
- l. Could they explain any benefits of using the internet?
- Yes
  - No
- If Yes, what are the top benefits they would give?

## 7. Online safety and cyber security

- a. Have those in your care reported any negative experiences of being online?
- Yes
  - No
  - If yes, please briefly explain what it was

b. Which of these online risks would they most commonly experience?

Please tick as relevant

- Exposure to inappropriate material (hateful/violent/sexual images)
- Pressure to share unsuitable images/videos
- Trolling
- Cyber bullying (harassment, cyber stalking, trickery, denigration)
- Online grooming
- Malware (e.g. viruses)
- Scams/fraud
- Phishing (identity thieves/hacking)
- Being contacted by abused/exploiter
- Re-engaging with former criminal activity
- Re-engaging with websites that stimulate addiction
- Other (please specify)

c. How often do they experience these risks when they go online?

- Every time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

d. What other risks do you feel those in your care are most vulnerable to?

e. Generally, how aware are most in your care about online risks?

- Very aware
- Aware
- Not aware

f. Could they explain any specific strategies to safeguard themselves? (whether telling someone, reporting the incident by using a self-help website, search engine filters etc)

- Yes
- No

g. If yes, please list some examples of what they might do

h. In your opinion, how effective are these safeguarding measures in protecting these individuals? Why/Why not?

## 8. Final thoughts

a. Please add any final thoughts on digital thoughts on digital inclusion, online safety and cyber security affecting the UK's most vulnerable that we may not have covered.





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