

Easy read summary

Tackling digital exclusion

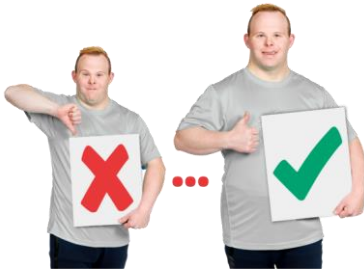


What is digital exclusion?



Digital technology means equipment that uses the internet, like a computer, tablet, laptop or smart phone.

Digital technology is a good thing for many people.



When it is used well, digital technology can:

- help to make public services better
- save time and effort
- make it easier to get services
- save money.





But as we need to use technology more, not everyone can get the services and support they need or should get.



Digital exclusion means not having access to or finding it difficult to use things like computers, smart phones, tablets and the internet.



Digital exclusion affects people who do not have or cannot afford:

- a digital device
- internet connection
- **phone data** – this is how you can use the internet on your phone if you are not connected to wi-fi.





Some people do not have the skills or confidence to use digital technology.



Around one in every 6 adults in Scotland does not have the digital skills needed for everyday life.



Nearly 1 in 10 of Scotland's households do not have an internet connection.



Public bodies often have their services online.



Public bodies are organisations funded by public money to provide a range of services like schools, hospitals, care services and libraries.

They often do not know that putting their services online has a bad effect on some people's lives.



This matters because it means people have less access to:

- services
- choices and chances
- quality of life.



It can also mean that people are less likely to trust government and public services.



The most vulnerable groups are often most affected, including:

- people in poverty
- older people
- disabled people



In the Covid pandemic, the Scottish Government worked well with councils and other organisations to provide an emergency response.



61 thousand people were supported through the Connecting Scotland programme.

It gave devices, an internet connection, and help to develop skills for people who are digitally excluded and who are on a **low income**.

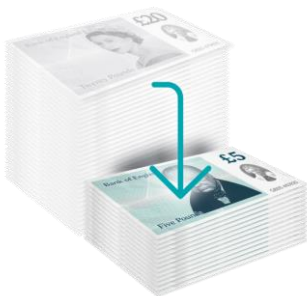


A **low income** means someone does not have a lot of money coming into their household from wages or benefits.



50 million pounds was spent on giving people devices, data and skills.

But this kind of work has slowed down since 2020.



There are a lot of things that the government needs to spend money on but there is not enough for everything.



The Scottish Government and councils are making difficult choices about where money is spent.

This means less money will be spent on dealing with digital exclusion.

We need to understand how this affects people.



The Scottish Government should update its national plan about digital exclusion so it is clear what work will be done.



When public bodies plan how services will be delivered in the future they must make sure that everyone can get services and information about them in the way that they need.



In our report we show what work public bodies need to do as they introduce new technology and deal with digital exclusion.

Public bodies must understand people's different needs when they design online services.