

Enabling digital inclusion

Questions for public bodies

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

AUDITOR GENERAL 

Enabling digital inclusion means supporting people and designing services so that people can use digital technology and services in a way that benefits them.

There are key principles that public bodies can follow that can help make digital public services more accessible and easier to use.

These questions are based around the principles for digital inclusion set out in our [report on digital exclusion](#). They aim to help public bodies, their board members, and elected members scrutinise the progress they are making and make improvements that can help develop inclusive digital services.

We have provided examples and links to case studies and resources that can help illustrate the principles in practice.

Enabling digital inclusion is important as it:

- helps people to realise their human rights
- secures better outcomes for people who face disadvantage
- enables people to use digital technology and tools safely and securely
- allows people to access the services that they need in a straightforward way
- can help enable effective public sector reform.

Please see our [digital e-hub](#) for more resources on digital transformation.

[Go to questions](#)

Questions to consider**What do I know?****Do I need to ask any further questions?****How are we working to enable digital inclusion?**

1. Do we have a clear approach to tackling digital exclusion as part of strategies and plans?

- Is it clear what we plan to do and what we aim to achieve in [Enabling digital inclusion](#)?

2. How are we collaborating with our public sector partners, the third sector and private sector to enable digital inclusion?

- Do we have any joint plans or initiatives?
- Who are we working with?
 - Renfrewshire Council has taken a place-based approach to developing its strategy to tackle digital exclusion, collaborating with partners and communities ([Case study 3](#)).

Questions to consider**What do I know?****Do I need to ask any further questions?**

- 3.** Do our staff have the appropriate digital skills to support and build capacity among service users?
- Is there a route for staff to develop the relevant skills?
 - [Scotland's Digital Participation Charter](#) provides an Essential Digital Skills toolkit and checklist and offers support to develop digital champions.

- 4.** How do we involve people who use our services when designing new or reforming existing services?
- How are we making sure we take account of everyone's needs?
 - The [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#) and [Digital Scotland Service Standard](#) are tools that can help public bodies consider digital exclusion when designing services. These should be used in conjunction with equalities and human rights impact assessments.
 - the Local Government Digital Office's Local Government Service Design Group share learning on digital service design and promote use of the Scottish Approach to Service Design.

Questions to consider**What do I know?****Do I need to ask any further questions?**

5. How do we know that people who face disadvantage who use our services, are not digitally excluded?

- Do we gather and review data about both digital and non-digital routes that people use to access services, so we can understand how accessible these are to users?
 - Using the tools referenced in [Question 4](#) can help.

Putting things in place to enable digital inclusion

6. When carrying out equality and human rights impact assessments as part of service development and change, do we consider how different groups are affected by digital exclusion?

- What support are we putting in place?

7. How are we tailoring digital inclusion support to different groups?

- [Digital Lifelines](#) and the [Digital Inclusion programme for mental health and housing](#) offer examples of initiatives providing tailored support for people to access the services they need.

Questions to consider**What do I know?****Do I need to ask any further questions?**

8. What do we have in place to support affordable access to devices and data?

- How are we signposting people to social tariffs?
 - Stirling Council runs a free digital tablet lending service, with free connectivity supported by Connecting Scotland, along with providing skills support.

9. What digital skills programmes are available locally for service users and providers?

- How do they help people use digital tech safely and securely?
- How do they build confidence and motivation?
 - [Inverclyde Council libraries](#) developed a range of skills programmes including 'Make IT Real', aimed at adults with a mobile phone to develop digital life skills.

Questions to consider**What do I know?****Do I need to ask any further questions?**

10. Do we ensure that service users are supported to access digital services when needed?

- What is in place to help people to access services in a straightforward way?
 - Argyll and Bute Council offers different types of assistance to access digital services, including local customer service points, an automated phone service and a chatbot to support users on its website.

11. Do we ensure that there are clear routes to digital support and that information on the support available is provided to our communities?

- Perth and Kinross Council has developed a digital support service directory to help people find the support they need.