

Digital Inclusion in the context of health and care services

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Context

- Rapid digital development and adoption
- Worsening inequalities
- Those with the most complex health and care needs, most likely to be digitally excluded
- Health & Care literacy – even more important in digital interactions
- Increasing workforce pressures/capacity challenges
- Remote working/access to services
- Future hybrid working
- Evolving tech enabled care opportunities across the NHS and Social Care – predicated on people/organisations having digital access

Current state

- Struggling to measure/quantify the level of digital exclusion
(ONS 2018 - 5.3m internet non users; 12.1% of NE population)
- Significant growth in digital usage during C19 (necessity)
- Inequalities have risen again, & the gap has widened in NC&NE
- Recognise 4 main themes linked to exclusion
 - Devices
 - Skills
 - Connectivity
 - Accessibility
- Impacts on our population but also our organisations and workforce
- Digital by default won't work for all

Addressing Digital Exclusion

- No one single solution
- Examples of excellent digital inclusion innovation, but not universal – adopt and adapt
- Gateshead steering group (NHS, Social Care, VCSE)
- Focus on access to health and care, but conscious of the wider context
- Working with AHSN and tech sector
- ARC research bid
- VCSE Digital Support Programme

Discussion questions

- How can we better understand digital exclusion?
- Which other inequalities drive digital exclusion?
- How does digital inclusion address other inequalities?
- What does digital exclusion mean to you/your organisation/the people you support?
- What might motivate people to move to digital options?
- What benefits can an organisation realise by supporting more people digitally?

