VONNE
voluntary organisations' network north east

Creating a collective voice

Digital Inclusion:

Are we all included?

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Deputy Chief Executive

VONNE understands digital exclusion to be:

- **Complex:** Different individuals and communities can have very different digital needs which can change dramatically over time.
- **Multifaceted:** Includes access to kit, connectivity, skills and 'care' (security and safeguarding) - accessibility cuts across all areas.
- **Linked to social justice**: Some communities have been excluded in multiple ways which pre-date the pandemic.
- **Not confined to individuals:** Many VCSE sector organisations (including their staff and volunteers) have also faced levels of digital exclusion.

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Extent of digital exclusion

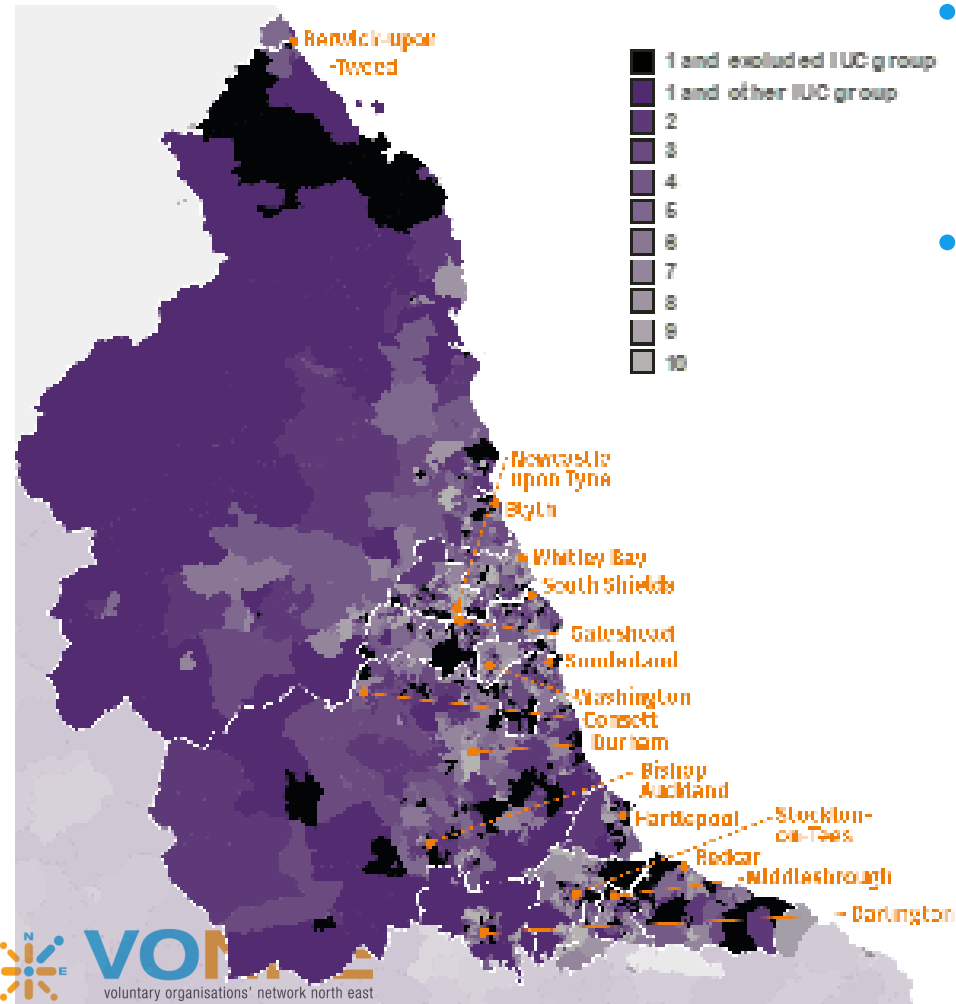The Good Things Foundation's report for 2020 uses data from Ofcom to highlight that in the North East:

- 18% of users are classified as 'extensive' internet users.
- 53% are classified as 'limited' or 'non-users'

In the North West:
- 31% of users are classified as 'extensive' internet users.
- 41% are classified as 'limited' or 'non-users'

IPPR North 'Addressing digital exclusion in NE England Sept 2021'

LSOAs in the North East by adapted Digital Exclusion Risk Index decile for England, where 1 is the decile most at risk of digital exclusion

Legend:
- 1 and excluded IUC group
- 1 and other IUC group
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Map labels: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Newcastle upon Tyne, Blyth, Whitley Bay, South Shields, Gateshead, Sunderland, Washington, Consett, Durham, Bishop Auckland, Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Redcar, Middlesbrough, Darlington

- IPPR North commissioned by Millfield House Strategic partners including VONNE
- Attempt to address data gap and formulate policy response

Source: Author's analysis of Alexiou and Singleton (2018), GMCA (2021), ONS (2011, 2020a, 2020b, 2021), Ofcom (2020), MHCLG (2019), and DWP (2021)

IPPR North 'Addressing digital exclusion in NE England Sept 2021'

- Broad definitions and lack of ownership of the agenda – regionally and nationally
- Need for a cross sector policy response
- Recommendations across six action areas:
  - Collaboration and integration
  - Guidance, support and informal learning
  - Minimum standards of access
  - Digital safety net
  - Inclusive service design
  - Embed digital skills across all subjects

Digital Inclusion: are we all included?

- VONNE appointed VCS Emergencies Partnership Digital Inclusion Liaison Lead for the North, in partnership with two other organisations

- Mapping activity through survey, interviews and collecting case studies of what good practice looks like

- Not exhaustive research but points to examples of good practice

- Full report on VONNE website

ICS Digital Inclusion Blueprint

- mHabitat and Humber Coast and Vale ICS, West Yorkshire and Harrogate ICS, South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS.
- Digital Inclusion Blueprint for Integrated Care Systems, Reducing the Digital Divide.
- Designed as a starting point for other ICSs to co-design their own programmes.

Are we all included recommendations

- Build on existing good practice
- Develop local digital system partnerships
- Invest in connectivity and equipment
- Equality of access and prioritisation
- Keep people safe

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Thank you

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