



# **Access to digital technologies**

**People's experiences of digital health and care options**

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May 2023

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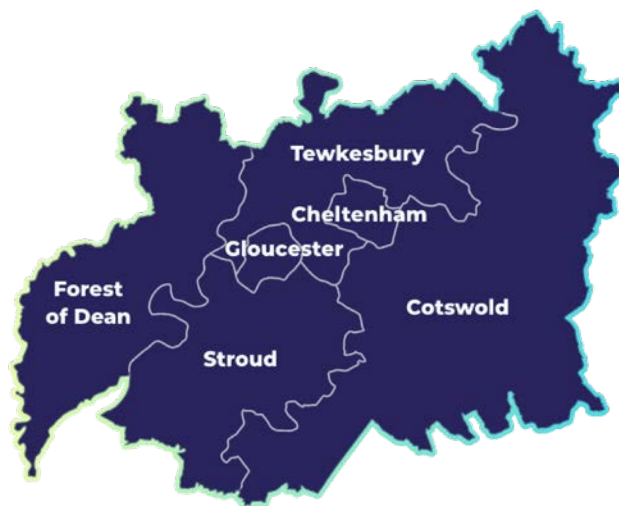
# About us

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion.

We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care. This report is an example of how your views are shared.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We cover the geographical area of Gloucestershire County Council, which includes the districts and boroughs of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud, and Tewkesbury.



## Introduction

### Background

The NHS and social care service providers are rapidly developing the use of digital technology to communicate with people to deliver care, information, advice and self-help. For example, patients can use online systems to book GP appointments, to order prescriptions, for video consultations, and to get information about health conditions and support services, including a range of self-help tools.

Digital technology should be used to make it easier, not harder, for people to get the care they need.

### Digital barriers

While digitisation does make it easier for many people to access healthcare and support, some people can't or don't want to use digital technology. This may be due to a lack of equipment, skills or confidence, or because they have communication needs and requirements that are not currently met by digital services, for example around language and disability.

Some groups of people are disproportionately disadvantaged, including disabled people, older people, those on low incomes, and people with mental health challenges.



## What Good Looks Like framework

The NHS England Transformation Directorate has set out the [What Good Looks Like framework](#) that includes:

- Citizens are at the centre of service design and have access to a standard set of digital services that suit all literacy and digital inclusion needs.
- To have a clear digital inclusion strategy, incorporating initiatives to ensure digitally disempowered communities are better able to access and take advantage of digital opportunities.
- Those who are digitally excluded risk missing out on the benefits to individuals of digital health.
- The health and care system will not save money and transform services unless it engages with the one in five of their population who are not online or lack digital skills – and are the heaviest users of health and care.

## What we wanted to find out

We wanted to understand the interactions and touchpoints between people and health and social care providers, focusing on two main areas.

### 1. The barriers to access

- Identify the high risk people experiencing barriers to access.
- Understand the key barriers people are facing.
- Explore the current existing community providers and their digital inclusion services that help reduce barriers to access.
- Understand what health and social care providers can do to support and signpost to community digital inclusion services.

### 2. The provision of user-friendly digital health and care options

- Understand what works and doesn't work for the user, focusing on the user-friendliness for people who have less digital confidence.
- Identify what can be done to build confidence to support people to use digital health and care options.

# What we did

## Digital Divides report

Firstly, we utilised Gloucestershire's [Digital Divides](#) report, to help with the following:

- Identify the high-risk groups of people who are digitally excluded and understand the barriers they experience.
- Focus on the key digital exclusion areas around Gloucestershire.
- Understand the right questions to ask people for our Digital Exclusion survey.

## Health and wellbeing community services

To help us understand the barriers and local support for people experiencing digital exclusion, we spoke to over 70 community service providers.

These included community and Digital Hubs, charities, voluntary services, social prescribers, community interest companies, local councils, libraries and the local police.



## Gloucestershire NHS Digital Transformation Strategy

We spoke with several Integrated Care Board (ICB) members and other NHS staff, to better understand Gloucestershire's current NHS Digital Transformation Strategy.

### Digital Exclusion survey

We created a survey to gather people's experiences and feedback. This was available online and we provided paper copies for people who were digitally excluded or not digitally confident. Over three months, between October to December 2022, the survey was completed by 93 people. A large proportion of the surveys (around 70%) were completed while speaking to people face-to-face.

### Face-to-face group meetings October to December 2022

By invitation, we attended five face-to-face group meetings. Two were run by Age UK in Brockworth Community Centre, two were at libraries in Cinderford and Bishops Cleeve and we also attended The Churn Project in Cirencester.

### 1-1 conversations

We gave people the opportunity to talk to us in person, on a 1-1 basis, at multiple venues:

- Digital Hubs: Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF), GLII Community Hub, The Keepers, Creative Sustainability, Community Building Collective and the DigiBus
- Podsmead Café, Gloucestershire libraries, Forest Sensory Services, Artspace
- Carers Rights Day, Churchdown
- Know Your Patch meeting, Stroud
- We also utilised the NHS Information Bus for the day at West Gate Street in Gloucester.

### Post and delivery

To help us cover Gloucestershire, we dropped in and posted hard copy surveys to libraries, community hubs, centres, voluntary and charity organisations.

To reach out to the more isolated groups, Gloucester Rural Community Council (GRCC), two social prescribers and three Care at Home nurses met with people in their homes to fill in the survey.

## Circulated online

We also worked with many other community providers, including charities and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, who circulated the online survey.

## Raising awareness

We raised awareness of the project and promoted the opportunities to get involved by:

- Social media activity, including posting survey questions on Facebook and Instagram during October to December.
- Sharing the surveys through our networks.

## Volunteer research

Our volunteers reviewed four NHS Gloucestershire websites to assess how user-friendly they are. They considered how easy it is to navigate around the websites and to find certain information, and whether the content is written in plain English and easy to understand.

# Key messages

- People may be digitally excluded in three main ways:
  - **Infrastructure** - no/poor broadband access
  - **Hardware** - no access to a computer, smart phone, or tablet
  - **Skills/confidence** - not knowing how to use available technology.
- Digital Divides mapping tools identified high risk areas for digital exclusion in every district of Gloucestershire.
- 'Digital by default' is not acceptable as some people in Gloucestershire have digital barriers, and for some, digital inclusion is not appropriate.
- GP text messages and emails are generally well received by people and found to be really useful.
- GP online prescriptions and the NHS App have multiple login issues and are inconsistent from practice to practice with the information they provide.
- Around two thirds of people use a smart phone as their main device for accessing digital options.
- Online connectivity around Gloucestershire varies and is generally poor in rural areas.
- For people on low incomes the devices and running costs may need to be provided for them.
- Websites and Apps need to be accessible for people with disabilities, such as sight and hearing impairment.
- The language used on websites needs to be simple and straightforward.
- Website search boxes on NHS sites should be easier to use and the sites more intuitive to navigate.
- Digital hub community partners are key to helping support and train people with digital skills and confidence barriers.

- Signposting and communication are vital to ensure people know where to go to access digital training.
- Around two thirds of people fear online crime and have a lack of trust in putting their personal information online.

## Recommendations

We believe health and care providers can best improve services by listening to and learning from people's experiences. We have analysed what people told us and what we found from our research, and we recommend the following actions and considerations to ensure digital technology makes it easier for everyone to access health and care in Gloucestershire

### Digital exclusion considerations

1. When deciding to use digital options for people to access health and social care services, service providers should firstly consider those who are digitally excluded. Think about the potential barriers they could face and how to make appropriate adjustments to remove or mitigate for those barriers to ensure their access to services is not negatively affected. These are some of the questions to consider:
  - Do people have accessibility needs where a screen reader, larger font, etc. could be included?
  - Do people have a disability where they will need extra support and equipment?
  - Is digital a suitable option and if not, do you have an alternative route for people to access your service such as face-to-face or telephone?
  - Do people live in a rural area with little or no connection and therefore may be unable to go online to access your service?
  - For those with limited connectivity, alternative methods should be provided to help people access information such as a printable document, downloading the information to take it offline or even an App?
  - Do people lack the digital skills, confidence or motivation to access digital tools?
  - Are there safety risks with people going online to access the service that could cause them harm and what precautions can be put in place to prevent this from happening?
  - Are people unable to afford the digital device or running costs to be online, and can these devices be provided or loaned to them?

### Digital Hub community partners and digital champions upskilling services

2. Provide support, resources and promotion to help sustain the vital services delivered by community organisations in Gloucestershire that equip people with the digital skills they need to access services.

Digital Hub community partners and digital champions, which includes FVAF, Age UK and the DigiBus, provide digital upskilling services in the areas of Gloucestershire where there are higher concentrations of people with digital barriers. Their reach is growing to more areas around Gloucestershire, even utilising Warm Space venues.

The community partners and digital champions are DBS checked, adult safeguarded and are key to helping support and train people with digital skills and confidence barriers. The service they provide is very much on a 1-1 need basis, where people can return regularly, and is preferred to the typical old style classroom set up.

## Joined-up approach to digital inclusion

3. Ensure there is good communication, awareness and understanding among local service leaders, providers and community and voluntary sector organisations (including social prescribers, link workers, and local directories), to help join up, promote, signpost and refer to Digital Hub providers and services.
4. Encourage Digital Hub community partners and digital champions to attend regular meetings of Gloucestershire's Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP), to discuss their local services and keep the ILP up-to-date with any changes.
5. The Digital Hub and community service staffing, volunteers and venues should regularly be on the agenda at the ILP meetings and funding needs to be made available, where possible, to ensure these services are sustainable.

## Website design considerations

6. When designing or updating websites, consider accessibility needs early on, and if possible, before the build stage.
7. Design the website with a mobile-first design so that the user does not need to scroll across the page to read the content.
8. Make sure commonly used words or phrases can be easily looked up in the search boxes.
9. Ensure the layouts are intuitive and easy to navigate.
10. For the content, use simple language with small words, that is straightforward and easy to understand to cover all users needs.

## General practice

11. General practices should continue to use text messages and emails for communication with their patients as this is working well.
12. Secure measures need to be in place to ensure text and email message content is for the intended recipient and has the correct information.
13. Links to websites need to be tested to ensure they work before sending out to people.
14. General practice online prescriptions and the NHS App need to provide simple and secure login processes, to prevent multiple calls made to practices to fix login issues and to help keep people motivated to use them.
15. Some people may not have an email address or photo ID, so consider providing straightforward usernames for login, that is unique, easy to remember and relatable to the person.

## Cost of living and financial support

16. Signpost people on low incomes to organisations who can supply devices, SIM cards and financial support so that they can use your digital services.

## Safety

17. Raise awareness among the public, service providers, and community organisations, that Digital Hubs community partners and digital champions can assist people with online safety concerns, such as helping create strong username and passwords, assessing for online safety risks, and checking anti-virus protection software installation and updates.
18. Raise awareness of the support available from Gloucestershire's police. They have an online and paper handbook titled *The Little Book of Big Scams*, which has useful step-by-step advice on how to keep safe online. In March 2023, they also ran in person an internet safety roadshow in Gloucester.





## What we found

### Digital Divides and who is digitally excluded

Digital Divides is a local collaboration between Barnwood Trust, Gloucestershire VCS Alliance, FVAF, Age UK Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) that is working to see a more joined-up, evidence-based approach to tackling digital inequity.

In their phase 1.0 project, the group mapped out Gloucestershire's communities to reveal digital divides with the purpose to find out who is missing out or getting left behind.

They specified that people may be digitally excluded in three main ways:

- **Infrastructure** - no/poor broadband access
- **Hardware** - no access to a computer, smart phone, or tablet
- **Skills/confidence** - not knowing how to use available technology.

In January 2022, they produced four reports, that identified geographical areas at high risk for digital exclusion throughout the county and specific groups of people who are disproportionately disadvantaged by the increasing turn to digital.

They found that between 30,000 and 40,000 adults in the county are effectively offline and a further 80,000 – 100,000 adults are online but are likely to be missing out on the full benefits of the internet.

#### Reports

- [Digital Divides Overview Report](#). The evidence-base for Gloucestershire.
- [Digital Exclusion Risk Mapping](#). This provides neighbourhood level insight into the places and people at highest risk of digital exclusion.
- [Community Asset Mapping](#). This maps the range of projects, community access and other assets supporting people to get online.
- [What do we know about what works](#). A report produced by University of Gloucestershire, detailing a range of examples of digital inclusion, initiatives and research into how digital exclusion can be tackled.



The **key groups** they identified were:

- Disabled people
- Older people
- Those on low incomes
- People with mental health challenges
- Those living in rural areas where internet connectivity is poor.

They also looked into the four **main reasons** why people may be digitally excluded, and the numbers of the UK adult population who are affected:

1. It's not for me (3.88million)
2. I lack support (1.62 million)
3. It's too complicated (1.41 million)
4. It's too expensive (940,000)

Through their mapping, they identified **high risk areas** for digital exclusion in every district.

- **Forest of Dean:** Cinderford, Newnham, Blakeney
- **Gloucester:** The centre, Westgate, Matson/Robinswood
- **Stroud:** Stroud town, Minchinhampton, Amberley
- **Tewkesbury:** Shurdington, Badgeworth
- **Cheltenham:** Pockets in Hesters Way, Arle, Oakley
- **Cotswold:** Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold and Cirencester

Digital Divides are currently in phase 1.5, with discussions to take place at their Open Space Network Day, around digital divides for the future, with a multi-sector approach of who will take this on and what's next.

## Digital Exclusion survey

### Who we spoke to

Over three months, between October to December the paper-based and online surveys were completed by 93 people.

The majority of the surveys were completed in person at five group sessions, Digital Hubs, DigiBus, multiple community hubs, libraries, charities and voluntary organisations. We also utilised the NHS Information Bus for one day at West Gate Street, Gloucester.

### Survey demographics

Survey respondents were a good range of female to male ratio, (56% female; 49 people), and predominantly White British (92%; 75 people). The main age range of respondents was between 56–75 years (66%).

Gloucestershire's respondents were from the key areas addressed on the Digital Divides report, with the majority in the Stroud, Forest of Dean and central Gloucester districts.

A large number of the respondents had disabilities and long-term health conditions, some with more than one, totalling 52 conditions (62%): sight and hearing impairment, type 2 diabetes, mobility conditions and mental health were the main health conditions.

Nine respondents added that travel was a barrier to accessing to health and social care services and 30% of 86 respondents were either living pay cheque to pay cheque, or struggling to make ends meet.

A full breakdown of survey demographics, including locations, can be found in Appendix A.

## Survey questions

### Have you used any digital tools within your health and social care services in the last six months?

72 people answered yes with a 7.06 (out of 10) average rating for how user-friendly they found it and 6.78 rating for impact that this had on them.

There was a variety of answers, but we found the majority of people used the GP websites and NHS App for booking prescriptions and making appointments. The responses were varied with some having very positive outcomes and others experiencing problems.

### Please tell us more about your experience

I've been using the website for prescriptions, appointments and viewing test results for several years now. The appointments section is not too good as there are never any available within 6-8 weeks.

NHS COVID App - had issues with using this, not much guidance on what to do if it goes wrong. E.g. enter test code - comes up red - code not recognised - press continue asks to try again. The App doesn't make logical sense.

My GP gave me an online username and password to access their website to order my prescriptions. When I input my details I could see someone else's prescription details, not my own.

The NHS App for COVID display of injections. What was really good, is that all my medical records are in there.

I order my repeat prescription online. It is generally quick and easy.

24% of respondents also had positive encounters from their GP surgeries sending them text messaging and emails.

I've received text messages about vaccinations and a health check. Both were useful.

Being able to communicate with my doctor by email is brilliant. But it took weeks to get surgery to email me and give me their email to send medical pics.



## Have you had any digital interaction with any other company that you thought was really outstanding?



60 responders answered yes with an average rating impact of 8.22, having an overall 31% positive increase over the question results above for use of digital tools within health and social care in the last six months.

There were many different examples given, with banking being the most frequent service mentioned as using digital technology well (27% of responders).





### Please tell us why your experience was so good

 NatWest banking App. Really easy to use. Has a face recognition where you blink/use finger print for setting up payments, transactions etc. Easy to log in. 

 Nationwide banking App is very good. Clear, common language, no jargon. 

 Barnwood Trust website - I found the website really easy to navigate and was visually accessible - white background, simplistic. I think most people would find it at a level to easily use. 

 I have also been using online supermarkets for many years, mainly Ocado. Again, well designed, user tested, and most importantly they listen to feedback from their end user, the customer. If the NHS treated patients like customers we would end up with much better services. 



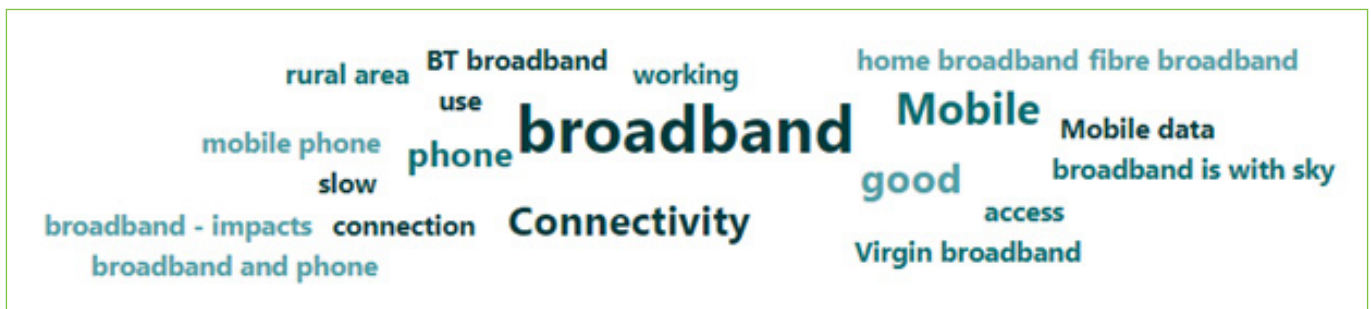
## What is your device preference for accessing online health and social care services?

The smartphone was the main device used (67%), followed by laptop (33%), tablet (28%) and other (10%).



## How do you run your device to access digital services?

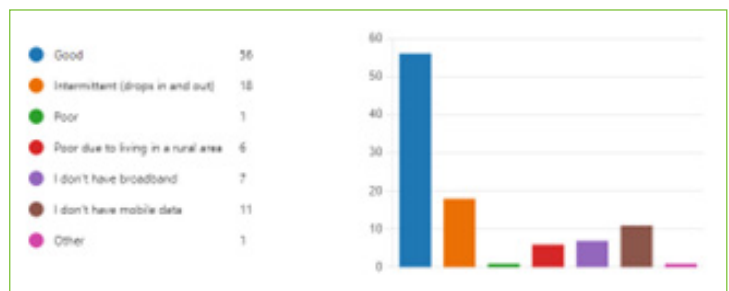
Both mobile data and broadband were the most popular answers (48%), followed by broadband (16%), mobile data (14%) and 'I don't access digital services' (12%).



## How good is your connectivity?

56% of people answered 'good' for this question. However 25% answered 'intermittent' and 'poor', with 6% 'poor due to living in a rural area.'

## How much does your connectivity impact you/those around you?



A large number of responders were negatively impacted by their connectivity with an average rating of 6.68, with 34% scoring five or less. They found their connectivity to be slow, unreliable particularly if living in a rural area.

## Please tell us more

With a poor connection everything is slower or you cannot access what you need when you need it.

I am on BT. I am not in an area where they have fibre optic, so my connection is slow.

I live in a rural area and connectivity is really bad.



Because I am in a rural area in a mainly rural county, I do not have adequate mobile coverage so there is no point in having a mobile phone.

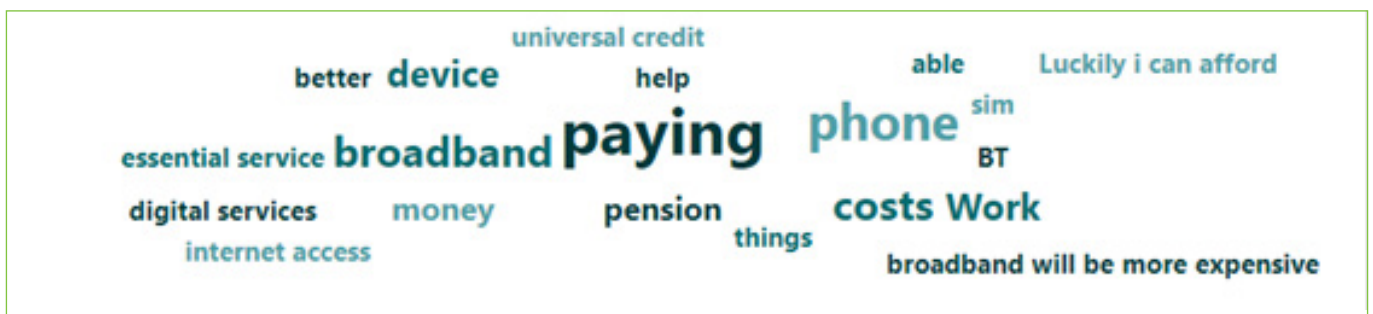


I can't get fibre broadband so I have had to resort to wireless broadband. This is far more expensive and because it is delivered through the mobile network it is also pretty poor at times.



### Can you afford a device to access digital services?

82% of our responders said they can afford a device and 79% can afford broadband and mobile data. However, 35% advised they were negatively impacted by affordability, with some people using cafes and libraries to get online or they had been loaned devices from community hubs and other services.



### If you want to, please tell us more about your affordability circumstances



I tend to go to mobile cafes due to not being able to afford to pay for my broadband at home.



Device and SIM provided by GL11 to help me access the website to apply for jobs.



BT benefits phone package is really good for £15 a month, but they don't advertise so people don't know about it.



I am claiming benefits. I use £10 a month SIM only, Wi-Fi at home. Contract is running out and will go up and this will be more difficult.



Fortunately I have company pensions in addition to my state pension, without these, I would struggle to afford internet services and devices.



I was given a laptop by Cheshire Society. Now that my universal credit has gone down I am struggling 'big time' to pay for any extras such as broadband.





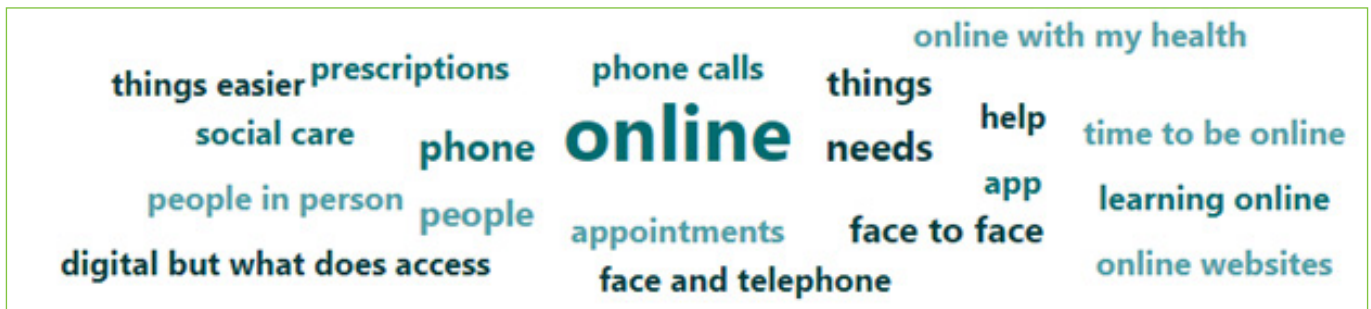
I met a lady Jenny at the cafe and we spoke about mobility. Jenny told me to speak to Alex from FVAF to help get funding through the Barnwood Trust to help me. They have been really helpful.



### How motivated are you to access health and social care digitally?

Motivation and confidence varied a great deal, with the average rating 5.99% (50%) scoring seven or more. The motivation did change a little to 6.27 average scoring (57%) when asked 'If you could have access to a device that you can afford to run with the relevant skills to use it'.

56% of people told us they were negatively impacted accessing their health and social care digitally with 25 people (27%) saying that face-to-face was their preference. However, 22 people were very happy being online and felt it was easier to access the services this way.



### Please tell us more about your motivation



I want to see people face-to-face. I don't want to go online; I don't understand how to do it.



I really want to do this with my GP surgery online. I don't know how. I have to walk up and down the steps at my flat. I have type 2 diabetes and bad knees, so I need things to be easier.



I think face-to-face is important. Things can be difficult to see online, I am sceptical with online being used in certain areas where face-to-face is needed.



I try to avoid contacting doctors or hospitals if I have the information to hand or digital access to services thus saving me time and money, that's what motivates me.



These devices are taking over our lives. Face-to-face is what I prefer for appointments with my GP. I am happy to do my prescriptions online.



I am a skilled user of IT, but do not want to access my GP via IT and prefer to either phone or visit due to my ongoing health requirements.





I am motivated. It's a huge time saver, particularly with a physical impairment. The downside is, I am more and more at home.



I really like to be online for health. I do a lot of things online. I can't be ordering prescriptions in the day time waiting ages on the phone that I don't have.



### How skilled are you to access online digital tools? (Choose multiple answers)

The responses were again mixed. 34 responses said they were highly skilled, however, 89 responses required different levels of further digital training/support. 37% of our responders also advised their lack of skill had a significant negative impact on them.

- Highly skilled needing little support – 34
- Somewhat skilled but would welcome further training/support – 35
- Need training on how to use my laptop/smartphone/tablet – 16
- Need training on how to connect to the internet – 12
- Need help navigating around websites – 16
- Need help to understand what's written on the websites – 10
- Other – 3

### What would improve your digital skills (if that would be helpful)?

The Digital Hubs, DigiBus, other community providers, friends and family were often mentioned for their help with digital training and support. Our responders also needed time when using digital services as they often found it difficult to remember how to do things.



I feel better when I come to FVAF as I trust them. I feel comfortable and know I won't be judged. I wouldn't have confidence to walk in the door of a group. I need one to one interaction more, like I get from Alex and his team.



I find technology difficult and can't remember where to click or what to look out for. My mind often goes blank.



A better understanding of the service and why it is necessary or important to work digitally. To know exactly what this will mean for patients and feel confident I have the skills or where there are gaps.



I am highly skilled but concerned for others who can't go onto the App.





Young members of the family help me with my digital problems, but often this is another problem as they have busy lives and I am reluctant to ask, but eventually I am forced to.

I came here to GL11 last week, I was really fired up to do things online and now I am finding it really difficult again this week.

I have a concern for those who do not have modern technology/internet access who are marginalised by the way that one is expected to communicate in the 21st century.

I don't need any support unless it 'break' breaks.

### How much do you trust the safety and security of your digital interactions?

Trust was a big issue, with 67% of people either 'concerned' or 'don't trust online services', scoring the low average impact rating 5.05, with 57% scoring five or below.

- I am very confident with digital online websites and Apps are safe to use - 24
- I am concerned with online crime and how safe my information is - 46
- I don't trust these online services at all and will avoid them - 21
- Other - 4



### How does your level of trust impact you/those around you?

There is too much crime online. People try to steal things from you.

Personal data and onward sharing of this is a concern. Lack of awareness of websites and what they do with our data and using it to track us is also a worry.

My daughter often checks if my email is a scam. I am very wary of this too.

Certainly have some concerns as health data is particularly sensitive, but broadly supportive with appropriate benefits to me to use digital solutions.

Too many scams I don't trust it.

I don't consider it as I have Norton anti-virus software on both devices.

Digital crime is on the increase so it is key to understand the impacts on security.

Scammers and all sorts. The NHS don't get hacked do they!

### Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

26 people said Yes, with 11 of those negatively impacted with an average score rating of 2.73.



### How could digital tools be made more accessible for you?

I had an accident when I was a child and don't have short term memory. It makes things very difficult for me to learn new things.

I have macular degeneration in both eyes - I have a device to help me read text on a screen. I find it difficult with fonts in grey colours. I need the letters to be crisp and clear to read.

My clumsy fingers type in too many errors and I get frustrated. A laptop would help with this problem and a talking App to replace typing.



I am partially deaf. I need to wear a headset to have a reasonable conversation - I have hearing aids, I use a full headset on the phone and Zoom calls etc.



The sites would probably need to be adapted for me. I would need some kind of 'human buddy' to cover all my digital problems which is probably a waste of time. I would need a better level of eye sight.



### Does the language used in health and social care digital tools make it difficult for you?



21 people answered yes to this question, adding that this had a very negative impact on them, scoring a low average rating of 3.7. Some people felt too much jargon and long words were often used and they couldn't understand the content.



## What would make it better for you?



 The words used on NHS websites are very long and I can't understand what they say. Some people understand what is written, but I can't. I have to look up words on Google and ask people to explain the words to me. 



 It's not difficult for me as I work in the NHS but the language needs to be far simpler with visuals where possible for people that need support with reading and/or English is a second language. 

 Jargon - use common terms or explain the technical terms. 

 Perhaps we all need a digital device which can be a device to interpret it all. 



 I am fed up to the back teeth of all the initials being used instead of words. Frequently so many initials are used with no explanation, that whole document can be meaningless. 



 I do find some of the social care websites use difficult language and not very consistent with their messaging and navigating around. I feel the NHS websites tend to be better at using simpler language and explaining things. 

 Digital is fine, apart from when there are options given and you don't quite fit the pigeon hole. You get into a loop where you get forced into giving an answer which isn't accurate. I then have to pick up the phone. 

## Please share any other comments

Face-to-face requests were most common comments from people again. Some added they couldn't gain access to online services due to having no photo ID. Signposting to support groups was also suggested.

 It was very difficult to register for digital services without photo ID, and a lot of people don't have this, making registration complex. 

 I would very much like to be able to visit my GP face-to-face. I don't go very often but it would be good to not be in one long queue. 



**More face-to-face, telephone and written communication should be encouraged. Sometimes this is not even considered – for example, a letter sent from a hospital without a phone number to contact, only an email address!**



**Just don't assume everyone has the infrastructure to use digital. Training is also needed for those of us who are older. The whole digital world has caused me to stop doing activities and has added stress to my life. There has to be alternatives for those of us who can't access the systems for whatever reason. I've tried but without a signal and poor connection I'm totally stuck.**



**Connectivity with other support groups and signposting is really needed. For example the NHS App is key with rheumatoid arthritis to locate local help/support group.**



## Volunteers' NHS website research

Four volunteers, three from Healthwatch and Guy Woodland, a specialist in website design for the visually impaired, reviewed four Gloucestershire NHS websites. They assessed how user-friendly the sites are, including how easy they are to navigate and how easy it is to find certain information. They also considered if the language used is plain English and easy to understand.

All four volunteers used a desktop computer for each website, and one person also used an iPhone for navigating the Trust websites.

The four NHS websites were:

- Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- One Gloucestershire
- NHS Gloucestershire

A full breakdown of the website research questions, can be found in Appendix B.

### **Website: Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust ([ghc.nhs.uk](http://ghc.nhs.uk))**

All our volunteers had issues with the search button on this site, and often found it didn't come up with any results from the search words they typed in.



**The search filter was not useful and didn't work in most cases. You almost have to have a play around the site to work out where you should be. It's not intuitive.**



The navigation was not straight forward, with multiple clicks needed to find information, with two of the volunteers not able to find some of the information at all.



**Gave up after eight clicks; would have thought it would be on the home page, maybe in the banner.**



With the layout of the website, one of our volunteers found the floating circles a distraction, and it was not clear that the NHS logo was in fact the home button.

On a more positive note, the volunteer on the iPhone found the layout and scroll good.

**On the iPhone, it's a nice layout and you don't need to scroll across to see the info.**



**Website: Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** ([gloshospitals.nhs.uk](https://gloshospitals.nhs.uk))

In contrast to the other Trust's website, our volunteers found the search engine and navigation much easier to access on this site.

**Search filter much easier to use than the other trust. There's a home button on drop down menu too, which is better.**

**This info was much easier to find as there are several routes to the information.**

**I typed 'main switchboard number' into the search box. Results included 'General Enquiries'. Clicking on this led to the phone number.**



The language used was difficult to understand in the Diabetes Consultants section.

**The information given varies from person to person, only some show contact details and clinic locations. They all list their interests and specialities, but use a lot of medical terms in the description.**



**Website: One Gloucestershire** ([onegloucestershire.net](https://onegloucestershire.net))

All our volunteers found this website the most difficult to navigate around, with too many clicks needed to find information and no obvious route.

**The least user-friendly website of the four being scrutinised in this project.**

**The home page is lacking useful links and has no search box. The whole site is hard to navigate and finding specific information takes far longer than on the other three websites.**



However, one of the volunteers did add that once they had found the information it was clear and easy to understand.

There was some confusion around the links on this website opening up in a new window to the NHS Gloucestershire website.

**I am assuming this site is simply a portal to post people to the other sites, if that is so it could be made a lot simpler.**



One of our volunteers did not like the layout and look of this site.

**Overall, photo banner does nothing for the site and the floating text is difficult to read.**



**Website: NHS Gloucestershire** ([nhsglos.nhs.uk](https://nhsglos.nhs.uk))

Our volunteers gave mixed feedback on this website, with some finding the information straightforward to find, whereas others had issues with the search box.

**Overall, clean site. Good accessibility guidance. Nice search filter. Good.**

**This website could do with some improvement. There are some issues with the search box.**



With regards to layout, one of our volunteers didn't like the sliding banner in the middle of the home page.

The content information and language was generally clear and easy to understand.

**Information is easy to find and the information is clear due to appropriate use of sub-headings and bold text as well as non-jargon language.**



## NHS Digital Transformation Strategy

[Our February 2021 report](#), on accessing GP services in Gloucestershire, highlighted the frustrations people can experience when using online services and practice websites. Some of the issues were around booking online appointments, GP practice messaging and wanting a choice of face-to-face, video or telephone appointments.

We felt it was important to hear from Gloucestershire's NHS Digital Transformation strategy team members about their ongoing digital strategy and the changes that are being made to address people's concerns about digital services.

We spoke to the ICB Digital Lead, NHS Primary Care Websites and Online Services Lead, Head of Digital Primary Care, the Clinical Chair for Gloucestershire Primary Care Training Hub and the Senior Management for Engagement and Inclusion. ICBs replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups in the NHS across England on 1 July 2022.

### Developing and improving GP websites

They told us that the main provider for Gloucestershire's GP websites is run by a company called Silicon Practice Limited, who provide an online patient contact system called Footfall.

Footfall is currently used in 63 out of 69 general practices in Gloucestershire, and the primary care team are working with practices to move them from an older version three to a new standardised version six. The ICB currently pays for this service.

They told us that user education around Footfall is needed for:

- 1-1 support for practices
- Navigation
- Lack of experience in practices on how to design an effective website
- Lack of editing rights within the system to be able to manage content
- Lack of skills within practices around social media
- Lack of communication and engagement skills to patients and peers.



They are also exploring options to improve:

- Practice websites to 'empower the person', making it easier to navigate, be more intuitive, accessible for people with disabilities such as larger text or screen readers, provide patient help information videos etc.

## Other digital services

Other digital strategy items and services being looked into are:

- A digital surgery/surgeries to help support those who are digitally excluded. Location, transport and gaining people's interest to attend are being considered.
- How to manage and improve issues around online repeat prescriptions where the user doesn't have a username and password and as a result can go no further.
- JUYI (Join up your information) to integrate and provide a shared care record, so that patient records could be viewed in primary care practices and community hospitals. Social care services will be added to this too.
- Electronic consultations. Although many surgeries have now turned off eConsult, some still use it and others use different technologies to deliver this. The ICB does not pay or provide this service to all practices and some independently pay for this themselves. However other software that the ICB do pay for in primary care provides this functionality.

The Clinical Chair for Gloucestershire Primary Care Training Hub also told us that the ICB is introducing a new role, Digital and Transformation Lead, into each Primary Care Network (PCN) in Gloucestershire. The PCNs are made up of a group of practices working together to focus on local patient care.

Some of the purposes of this role will be to support multiple priorities in primary care, increased access to care for patients and support around the uptake of new technology.

## NHS Accessible Information Standard Overview

We were told that improvements around accessibility are also being assessed, following the [NHS Accessible Information Standard](#). The Standard tells organisations how they should make sure that patients and service users, and their carers and parents, can access and understand the information they are given.

However, there is currently inconsistency in the way people receive their communication. We were given an example of a visually impaired person requesting their health information in large font via post, but only receiving one letter in large font and others in standard format.

## South West Website Project

To understand what other NHS localities are working on with their digital transformation strategy around their GP websites, we spoke with the South West Digital Transformation Project Manager, working on a GP website project pilot.

Some of the information shared with us was around concerns that GP websites are not consistent across practices, with pop-ups on screens, difficult to navigate, lack of accessibility standards and issues around confidentiality and hacking.

To help address these issues, they are looking to create a practice design template that is simple to use, navigate and is intuitive.

As part of their project, they will have a 'pilot phase' to work with 28 GP practices from the South West. Although Gloucestershire will not be taking part in this pilot, the local website provider, Silicon Practice, has its own offering in this area which the ICB are looking to support practices with.

The key part of the pilot will be to help pay for research, the template design, education around using the website and search engines, with dedicated support for each practice. The education planned for the individual practices, is proposed to help and support them take ownership of their websites when they don't have the skills.

As part of the project, they conducted a GP website survey, which was completed by 26 practices in the South West and around 2,770 people. Key points raised in the survey were:

- Layout and navigation difficulties
- Create a mobile-first approach for users to view on smaller mobile phone devices
- Patients were not aware of self-care offering and wanted to be signposted to the services and support available to them
- People want to be able to order prescriptions online and access personal details
- Design consistent language, layouts and formats: reduces variation in the patient experience by ensuring they can find information and complete tasks easily
- Serve different user accessibility needs and remove barriers for patients with disabilities, to ensure the websites are legally compliant.

It will be interesting to see the outcomes from this project in the coming months, as Gloucestershire's Digital Team may be able to incorporate some of the findings into local GP websites.

## **Digital Aspirant Programme Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

There are multiple digital changes taking place within the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Cheltenham General and Gloucester Royal). In March 2021, they were one of seven Trusts to receive up to £6m over three years to fund their digital transformation programmes.

[Paul Downie, CCIO at the trust](#), said: "Our two-year plan to deliver clinical functionality that would improve care for the majority of our patients included nursing documentation, electronic observations and order communications. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the first part of the project has delivered more than we could have imagined and has only increased demand for further digital improvements."

The following functions were stipulated in this current phase of their Digital Transformation:

- ePrescribing; going paper-lite across all outpatients
- utilising ED (emergency department) and maternity clinical functionality
- implementing RFID (radio-frequency identification)
- creating digital intelligence to improve quality
- outcome and research
- ensuring systems are interoperable to enable shared health and care records.

We asked for an update on where the trust are in their strategy to delivering these tasks, but we have not received a reply.



## Digital inclusion training and support services

One of the key findings from our Digital Exclusion survey, was the need for training and support.

**I still need some support myself, learning together in a safe environment is my preference.**



In order to provide suitable digital training several factors needed to be considered:

- The community sector lacks funding to help support digital training for those excluded.
- Gloucestershire is greatly rural in areas with poor online connectivity and transport issues.
- There are areas of poverty where people cannot afford devices or to run them or public transport.
- There is a high percentage of older people in our population compared to other areas in the UK.

### Funding and affordability

To help address some of the funding issues, Gloucestershire's organisations provide digital funding, loan or give out devices, supply SIM cards and data.

**I don't have a device and I would struggle to afford it.**

**I will struggle to afford this in the future, my broadband is expensive and when the contract ends will be three times the price.**

**Not everyone has money to buy new technology and pay for monthly bills associated with this.**

**GCC's Digital Innovation Fund** offered £200,000 to support digital community projects across the county in 2021. These grants went to community or voluntary groups and charity organisations to fund digital and technology-led initiatives.

In 2022 they paid out applications of up to £20,000 per project and in 2023 the funding continues. These funds have helped to support many community projects over the last two to three years.

**Barnwood Trust** acts as an agent of social change, working alongside disabled people and people with mental health conditions to create that change. Their goals are delivered through a programme of funding, listening and learning, and changing conditions.

Their digital funding is integral to help people and organisations make change in local areas for disabled people and people with mental health challenges.

In 2022, they ran a [Digital Inclusion Fund](#), one-off funding initiative, aimed at addressing digital exclusion experienced by disabled people and people with mental health challenges. 14 applications were received from across the county from organisations whose work was aimed at helping remove barriers for people who wanted to be a part of the digital world. A Lived and Learned Experience Funding Panel thoroughly reviewed these applications and from the 14 submissions, six were funded by Barnwood Trust Board awarding a total of £445,416.



**I work with disabled adults and youngsters. The adults struggled with technology during lockdown. Often because they had no support when on-line. A huge part of making things work is having that support in place.**



To help with affordability, a national charity, **Good Things Foundation** provide [The National Databank](#) which gives free mobile data to people who can't afford their internet connection.

[Their vision](#) is 'for a world where everyone benefits from digital, digitally able, equal and safe, to lead happier, healthier lives'.

They provide free online training [Learn My Way](#), that third party organisations can utilise to help set up their own training, networking opportunities. Additionally, their [Online Centres Network](#) is made up of thousands of grassroots organisations who work to deliver digital inclusion support to their local communities.

**IT Schools Africa**, Cheltenham based charity established in 2004, initially to refurbish used desk top computers for schools in Africa, and saved over 100,000 computers from landfill.

Since 2017, they have helped over 22,000 Gloucestershire learners with digital skills and supported more than 100 local charity and community-based organisations through donations of refurbished IT equipment and set up a successful local community programme, [TECH Connect Community](#).

Many of Gloucestershire's Community organisations, such as **GL11 Community Hub**, **Creative Sustainability**, **Age UK**, **The Churn Project** and **The Keepers**, support people who are living in poverty and loan or issue them with devices and/or SIM cards.



**I can't afford a laptop so have to use others; I go to places like GL11 to get online.**



**Age UK** loan Tablets for people to practice on in their own homes. They also run a [Digital Champions](#) project to motivate and inspire people to get online, offering support to engage safely and securely in the digital world.

The volunteer digital champions are based in community hubs around Gloucestershire, and offer in depth and bespoke one-to-one support to help people develop their digital skills and confidence. The volunteers are generally older themselves, where they are teaching similar people their own age with their digital confidence. This 'learn as you go approach', also helps their isolation, empathy and sense of purpose.

## Digital Hubs (Digi Hubs)

[The Digital Hubs project](#) was set up to support those living with digital barriers with the basics, like turning on a computer, learning the different functions of a keyboard, or getting set-up with an email account, to more advance skills such as using Apps, Microsoft Office or video calling.

The Project was funded by GCC's Digital Innovation Fund, led by FVAF, and involved working with partners across the districts and county, which started with a pilot in Spring 2021.

### **Digital Support Bream Pilot Spring 2021**

- Set-up in small communal space in Bream
- 12 week pilot, two-hour sessions running weekly
- Returning participants due to trusted relationships
- Emails, internet safety, device set-up, moving and backing up photos, connecting with family digitally
- Attendance: two to three people, grew to five to six people after first two weeks.

FVAF told us that due to the success of Bream pilot, additional funding via the Digital Innovation Fund 2.0 was secured for the further development of Digital Hubs across the district. From October 2021 hubs were trialled in 15 locations with six remaining currently. This has seen the following (statistics provided by FVAF):

- 483 hub engagements between 01/01/2022 – 17/01/2023
- Over 156 hub sessions facilitated across 2022
- Over 400 hours of capacity to provide digital support made available via hubs
- 50.4% of attendees return for more support
- 48.2% of engagements have required and received follow up contact.

### **Digital Hubs – connecting communities**

This ongoing, innovative approach funded by the ICB, was developed by FVAF and the Adult Transformation Team to tackle digital exclusion around Gloucestershire. The aim is to increase digital inclusion across all six districts, offering free, accessible, tailored support to individuals, via safe and trusted community hubs.

In order to achieve this, community builders and other resources need to be provided to support residents and groups to access technology and improve their digital literacy.

Each district will have a dedicated **community partner**, who is DBS checked and has carried out safeguarding training. They must be well connected within their community, have strong local knowledge, understand the barriers people face, and a drive and passion to demonstrate how life changing it can be in becoming digitally included and confident.

The current locations with Digital Hubs are matched with those identified in the Digital Divides report.



- Gloucester, GL Communities, Gloucester Community Building Collective, All Nations Club, Podsmead (digital project being set up)
- Stroud, Creative Sustainability, GL11, The Keepers
- Tewkesbury, Priors Park Neighbourhood Project
- Brockworth Link
- Cotswolds & Cheltenham Partners (to be selected from April 2023)
- Forest of Dean, Cinderford, Coleford, Mitcheldean, Newent, Lydney, Sedbury





As the Digital Hubs are run in local community venues, there is opportunity for more to be set up or even pop up on a monthly basis. The Warm Spaces are accessible to a lot of those with digital barriers who may not have the confidence, motivation or ability to travel to venues to access digital training.

An additional advantage is their flexibility, in a person-centred environment where the user can learn at their own pace. The traditional classroom set up, can be expensive to run, inflexible and off-putting to people who are digitally excluded but want to learn.



 **A lot of patience and time is needed from the trainer for me.** 

 **I get a lot of anxiety around digital use. Frustration around usability. concerns of potential misuse of online things.** 



 **I have don't have short term memory so find it very difficult to do things online.** 



FVAF shared Mary's story with us, whose life was transformed from the support she received at one of their local hubs. She previously had to travel by bus fortnightly to get digital help.



### Mary's Story



 I have been attending for about nine months now and it has helped me such a lot since I lost my husband nearly seven years come December. It has helped me build up my confidence a lot because I lost my confidence after I lost my husband and also when going through lockdown my confidence was at an all-time low. Seeing Alex & Illyana has helped me build up my confidence again and I am very grateful to them for that and I would like to thank Alex & Illyana for helping me by getting the funding to get this iPad for me and for teaching me how to use it. I also class them as a very good friends not just my IT teacher and I hope we will always be good friends and have a good laugh together. They are always willing to sit and listen to any problems that I have and if they can help me solve the problem they will, which I thank them for very much. 

When conducting our survey, we spoke with many participants from the Digital Hubs who shared their positive experiences with us.

 **Alex has really helped me from FVAF. I can now get out to see the team. They help me with what I need support with. They have even helped me with things such as my Smart meter at home, really practical help.** 

 **Gloucestershire Council education arranged a free course at The Keepers in Wotton for help with laptop skills. I have found this really helpful. Have the confidence to have a go and not be scared of it.** 

 **I get help at GLII for using my smart phone.** 



 **I have been coming to GLII since June last year for help to get online.** 



## DigiBus

The [DigiBus](#) is a refurbished double decker bus, with four trainers and two volunteers that are enhanced DBS checked and safeguarded. It is run by IT Schools Africa, with a mission to transform lives through access and improved use of digital technology. They are funded by GCC's Digital Innovation Fund, Barnwood Trust and other local funders.

The DigiBus travels the county to places like library car parks, doctors surgeries and supermarket car parks. They offer a wide range of knowledge and support for Android/Apple/Tablet/PC helping with issues such as printer problems, Wi-Fi, installing apps, transferring data from one device to another.



They told us that they are currently working in partnership with [Warm Spaces](#) and other community organisations to provide their digital training services. This has been more so during the colder months as people want to connect through activities provided by Warm Spaces and learn digital techniques whilst there, than visit the DigiBus. Through their engagement with the community sector, this has enabled them to grow their reach into Gloucestershire helping 2,600 individuals since October 2021.



 **I learn new things on the DigiBus - every day's a school day.** 

 **I used DigiBus for help with backups and processing pictures and looking at security settings to prevent online crime.** 

## Signposting

The Digital Hubs, DigiBus and other digital champions around Gloucestershire are helping to close the barriers for those who are digitally excluded. However, many people don't know about their local digital inclusion providers or where to go to find them.

 **Online services have become more prevalent, without much warning or preparation. Many older or digitally illiterate people are struggling and have been for a while. I welcome this information and training coming through health and social care and feel more should be done by the DWP.** 

 **Connectivity with other support groups and signposting is really needed. For example the NHS App is key for rheumatoid arthritis to locate local help/support group.** 

Therefore, communication is crucial within the Integrated Care System (ICS) partnerships and organisations to help with joining up the delivery of these services to ensure those who really need them, don't miss out.

We spoke with four social prescribers, a community wellbeing service agent, and a community wellbeing officer from GCC, to understand the how people could be signposted to the digital inclusion community services. They told us the role of their social prescribers and link workers, was to focus on the person's needs taking on a holistic approach to connect them to community groups and other services for practical and emotional support. They also support existing community groups to be accessible and sustainable, and help people to start new groups, working collaboratively with all local partners.



People can be referred to them from GPs, pharmacies, multi-disciplinary teams, job centres, social care services, housing associations, voluntary and community organisations. They can also be found through internet directories such as Gloucestershire's [Your Circle](#). However, the directories need to be updated on a regular basis to ensure the information is accurate as there is a danger people losing motivation if they find the service they require no longer exists.

They told us there are around 80 social prescribers around Gloucestershire, some based in doctor's surgeries, others in the community. It was suggested that having a full, up-to-date list of the social prescribers' roles, where they are based, and the areas they cover would be useful to help manage a better joined-up approach with regards to communication and signposting.

They added they attend, bi-monthly network meetings, which are held either online or in person, and are part of the Integrated Locality Partnership (ILP). The ILP help to deliver ICS, health and wellbeing, and local priorities, with one linked to each PCN in Gloucestershire which helps further with local district knowledge.

## Community service providers

As most of the digital inclusion services are predominantly delivered by community service providers, charities and VCSE organisations, we needed to understand their priorities and issues, particularly around capacity, funding and sustainability.

We spoke with over 70 different organisations to understand their circumstances. Two of the themes that came out, from multiple conversations, were the lack of funding to cover the extra costs and capacity issues with more people being referred to them or through word of mouth. With some also being used as Warm Spaces this was even more of a concern around their sustainability and staying open for the future.

Some of the smaller companies who weren't able to employ specialist full-time grant and fund writers, really struggle financially, with a lack of volunteers or paid staff to keep going.

We spoke to a member of Paganhill Community Group, who works with local people to put on a range of activities for all ages at The Octagon in Stroud and are part of the Digital Hub group. She said that they were finding it harder to keep going, with more people coming in on a daily basis.



**The numbers had tripled over a few months last year. 100 a week to over 300. That number increased to 330 last week. Paganhill Community Group fund raises and applies for grants for everything, from paying the rent on a dilapidated building and the extortionate amount of electricity costs; then every project we support, and events we organise, as well as staff we pay. Paid staff amounts to 55 hours while volunteer time is around 150 hours a week.**



She also added that in Stroud, there are a lack of community buildings, and that former churches and centres are used, but these too are often sold leaving no venue for community services to run from.



We additionally spoke with a Grants Manager, from Gloucestershire Community Foundation, who was specifically looking at the smaller companies and enterprises to help support to keep them open.



## Online safety



From our survey, 67% of people were concerned or didn't trust online services when asked about trust, safety and security of their digital interactions. 57% also felt negatively impacted by this.

We spoke with a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, to understand what resources are available to people who are concerned and need some advice.

He advised that [The Little Book of Big Scams](#) is available online and also in hard copy format handed out at events run by fraud officers. The key advice: **Stop** – take a moment to think before parting with your information or money; **Challenge** – Could it be fake – only criminals will try to rush you; **Protect** – contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen victim to a scam.

 I hear horror stories about people being scammed online and that worries me. 

 Scams. They are clever nowadays. I wonder if some of my emails are real or not. 

 Scammers and all sorts. The NHS don't get hacked do they! 

There was also a series of events run by the [South West Regional Organised Crime Unit](#). The Cyber Protect Roadshow for Gloucestershire was held on 14 March 2023 at Gloucester Rugby Club. It offered organisations an opportunity to take on a Cyber Escape Room, which “puts you in the shoes of a cyber detective who must solve a series of fun and interactive cyber security themed puzzles to help clear the name of a member of your unit!”



Using McAfee and Norton virus anti-virus software can also help to protect your data along with checking for the lock symbol on web browser's to ensure the connection is secure.

The Digital Hub's community partners are DBS checked and have received adult safeguarding training and can also provide advice to help keep people's information safe to prevent people falling victim to scams.

## Next steps

We are sharing our report and anonymised data with NHS Gloucestershire ICB and we will continue to monitor peoples experiences of accessing health and social care digitally.

## Stakeholder response

**NHS Gloucestershire/  
One Gloucestershire ICS**  
Caroline Smith, Senior Manager  
Engagement and Inclusion



“NHS Gloucestershire recognises that whilst digital technology can make it easier for some people to access healthcare, there are others who continue to find it challenging to take advantage of these digital options. We commissioned Healthwatch Gloucestershire to help us develop our understanding of what works well, the key barriers people are facing and what we can do in response to people’s communication needs. We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to provide feedback and contribute to this research. It is clear there is a lot of work already underway across the county and we welcome the opportunity to work with Healthwatch and other community partners to improve the reach of local digital health care solutions.”

## Thank you

Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us their feedback.

We would like to say a special thank you to Alex from FVAF, Audrey and Jo from GLII, Helen from Creative Sustainability, Cathy from The Keepers, Taff from the DigiBus, Chris and Jane from Age UK, Jim from Podsmead, Michelle from The Churn Project, Hannah and Rob from Artspace and Dave from NHS Information Bus, we couldn’t have done the survey without you.

Thanks also to our volunteers and Guy Woodland who gave their time to assist with the collation of website feedback, and to all the VCSE organisations and communities who spoke to us, shared the survey and helped raise awareness of the project, which was invaluable in increasing the number of participants.



# Appendices

## A. Survey demographics

The 12 responses we received through the online survey have been valuable as they have confirmed and reinforced the issues raised during the more in-depth one-to-one conversations, including the struggles to navigate the system, and waiting times.

### Are you happy to share your demographics?

Yes = 87

No = 6

### Postcodes (85 responses)

Numbers	Postcode	Area	Digital Champion/Hub
9	GL11	Cam, Dursley	GL11 community Digi Hub
8	GL16	Forest of Dean – Coleford	Digi Hub
8	GL1	Central Gloucester	
8	GL2	Gloucester	
7	GL14	Forest of Dean – Cinderford, Newham	
6	GL12	Wotton Under Edge, Wickwar	The Keepers Community Hub
6	GL3	Brockworth, Churchdown	Age UK/Digi Hub
5	GL5	Stroud, Minchinhampton, Amberley	Creative Sustainability
5	GL4	Matson	GL Communities Hub
4	GL15	Forest of Dean - Blakeney	
4	GL17	Forest of Dean – Mitcheldean	Digi Hub
4	GL13	Berkeley	
3	GL51	Cheltenham, Shurdington, Badgeworth	
2	GL54	Stow on the Wold	
1	GL56	Moreton in Marsh	
1	GL8	Tetbury	
1	GL10	Stonehouse	
1	GL19	Coombe	
1	GL20	Tewkesbury	
1	GL		

### How old are you?

(87 responses) Age range 29-92; aged 56+ = 58 (66%)

13-17 = 0

18-25 = 0

26-35 = 4

36-45 = 9

46-55 = 14

56-65 = 16

66-75 = 25

76-85 = 14

86+ = 3

Prefer not to say = 2

### **How do you describe your gender?**

(87 responses)

Female = 49 (56%)

Male = 35 (40%)

Prefer not to say = 3

### **Is your gender the same as recorded at birth?**

(84 responses)

Yes = 81 (96%)

No = 2

Other = 1

### **What is your sexual orientation?**

(80 responses)

Heterosexual/straight 66 (82%)

Bisexual = 2

Lesbian = 1

Pref not to say = 12

### **What is your marital or partnership status?**

(83 responses)

Married = 34 (40%)

Widowed = 10

Divorced = 7

Single = 12

Partner = 7

Separated = 3

Living together = 1

Cohabiting = 1

Prefer not to say = 8

### **What is your pregnancy or maternity status?**

(76 responses)

Not applicable = 50

Not pregnant or other = 26

### **What is your ethnic group?**

(81 responses)

White British/English/Caucasian = 75 (92%)

Indian = 2

Black/African = 1

White European = 1

Other = 2

### **What is your religion or belief?**

(74 responses)

Church of England = 26 (39%)

No religion = 26 (39%)

Atheists = 3

Humanist = 3

New age = 1

Humanist = 1

Catholic = 3

Free church = 1

Hindu = 1

Jewish = 1

Methodist = 1

Other = 7

**Do you consider yourself to be a carer?**

(81 responses)

No = 56 (69%)

Yes = 24 (30%)

Not applicable = 1

**Do you have a disability or long-term health condition? For example, physical or mobility, sensory, learning, mental health condition**

(84 responses)

None = 32 (38%)

With a condition = 52 (62%)

Yes = 5

Type 2 diabetes = 8

Epilepsy = 8

Mobility conditions = 10 (12%)

Cancer = 3

High blood pressure = 5

Eye/hearing/sensory impairment = 10 (12%)

Mental health related conditions = 9 (10%)

**Have you been diagnosed with any of the following? Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, ADHD/ADD, Tourette's**

(81 responses)

No (75%)

Dyslexia = 4

Dyscalculia = 2

ADD = 1

ADHD = 2

Dyspraxia = 1

**Is there anything about your lifestyle/personal situation that you feel is a barrier to you accessing health and care services? For example, LGBTQ+, homeless, ex-offender, refugee, sex worker**

(74 responses)

No = 55

Travel related (12%)

LGBTQ related = 2

Race related = 1

Anxiety = 1

Other = 7

**Which of the following best describes your current financial situation?**

(86 responses)

I am struggling to make ends meet = 12 (14%)

I am living paycheque to paycheque = 14 (16%)

I have a small amount of disposable income that I can save/spend on leisure = 39 (45%)

I have a fair amount of disposable income that I can save/spend on leisure = 21 (24%)

## B. Website research questions

The purpose of the exercise was for volunteers to explore health websites for their user-friendliness. In other words how easy and straightforward they were to navigate around and easy to understand using plain English. Four websites were reviewed.

**For each of the searches you undertake please can you record the following information:**

- **How did you find the information?**  
For example, clicked on 'your visit' tab at top of screen; clicked on a box with 'about us' on the screen; search bar; I wasn't able to find it.
- **Provide some brief information about how easy it was to find**  
For example, I typed in '.....' in the search bar and the information came up straightaway; I clicked on three links which took me to two different pages before I could find this; I clicked on the link and 'no page found' was there; I gave up.
- **When you found the information was it written in plain English (easy to understand)?**  
For example, the page with the information was easy to read with no acronyms; I found the information to be very long and wordy and I struggled to understand it; the layout was poor and I struggled to read the paragraphs.
- **What device did you use?** (feel free to try these searches on more than one type of device):
  - Smart phone: android/iPhone/other (please state)
  - Tablet: android/iPhone/other (please state)
  - Desktop computer
  - Laptop

**Websites to be researched & information required**

1. [Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust](#)
2. [Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#)

**For 1 & 2 above please can you find the following information:**

- Main Switchboard contact number
- Where to park and parking charges (there are several hospitals under Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust, so please pick one of the hospitals – you can do more than one if you would like to)
- Diabetes service information – for example, the name of a consultant/nurse, clinic times, contact information.
- Inpatient units for Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Wards and units list page for Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

3. [One Gloucestershire - ICS](#)

**For this website please can you find the following information:**

- *A Guide to Gloucestershire Integrated Care System* (short PDF)
- 'Go Volunteer Glos' campaign
- Under Healthy Communities find 'Tackling factors that impact on people's health and health outcomes'

4. [NHS Gloucestershire - ICB](#)

**For this website please can you find the following information:**

- Self Management
- Help with travel costs
- Joining up your information video (JUYI)

## C. Community partners

Organisation	Website
Ability Net	<a href="http://abilitynet.org.uk">abilitynet.org.uk</a>
Age UK Gloucestershire	<a href="http://ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire">ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire</a>
Art Space Cinderford	<a href="http://artspacecinderford.org">artspacecinderford.org</a>
Avon and Somerset Police	<a href="http://avonandsomerset.police.uk">avonandsomerset.police.uk</a>
Barnwood Trust	<a href="http://barnwoodtrust.org">barnwoodtrust.org</a>
Be Well Gloucestershire	<a href="http://bewellglos.org.uk/social-prescribing">bewellglos.org.uk/social-prescribing</a>
Bishops Cleeve Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/bishops-cleeve-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/bishops-cleeve-library</a>
Bourton-on-the-Water Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/bourton-on-the-water-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/bourton-on-the-water-library</a>
Bromford (Housing Association)	<a href="http://bromford.co.uk">bromford.co.uk</a>
Care at home	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adults-and-older-people/finding-the-right-information-and-support/care-at-home/">gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adults-and-older-people/finding-the-right-information-and-support/care-at-home/</a>
Chipping Camden Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/chipping-campden-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/chipping-campden-library</a>
Cinderford Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/cinderford-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/cinderford-library</a>
Community Connectors Forum	<a href="http://fvaf.org.uk/know-your-patch-ccf">fvaf.org.uk/know-your-patch-ccf</a>
Community Wellbeing Service (NHS)	<a href="http://nhsglos.nhs.uk/your-health-services/healthy-communities/community-wellbeing-service">nhsglos.nhs.uk/your-health-services/healthy-communities/community-wellbeing-service</a>
Cotswold Friends	<a href="http://cotswoldfriends.org">cotswoldfriends.org</a>
Creative Sustainability (Digital Inclusion)	<a href="http://cscic.org/programmes/digital-inclusion">cscic.org/programmes/digital-inclusion</a>
DAISI Project (Digital Accessibility, Inclusion, Support & Innovation)	<a href="http://grcc.org.uk/digital-inclusion-accessibility-/digital-inclusion-accessibility">grcc.org.uk/digital-inclusion-accessibility-/digital-inclusion-accessibility</a>
DigiBus	<a href="http://yourdigibus.com">yourdigibus.com</a>
Digital Divides	<a href="http://digitaldivides.co.uk">digitaldivides.co.uk</a>
Digital Hubs Project	<a href="http://gloucestershire-digital-hubs.co.uk">gloucestershire-digital-hubs.co.uk</a>
Digital Innovation Fund	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/business-property-and-economy/finance-funding-and-grants/gloucestershire-digital-innovation-fund">gloucestershire.gov.uk/business-property-and-economy/finance-funding-and-grants/gloucestershire-digital-innovation-fund</a>
Fairford Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/fairford-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/fairford-library</a>
Forest Sensory Services	<a href="http://forestsensoryservices.org">forestsensoryservices.org</a>
Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF)	<a href="http://fvaf.org.uk">fvaf.org.uk</a>
GCC - Finance, funding and grants	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/business-property-and-economy/finance-funding-and-grants">gloucestershire.gov.uk/business-property-and-economy/finance-funding-and-grants</a>

Organisation	Website
GEM Project (now closed)	<a href="http://gloggem.org">gloggem.org</a>
GL Communities	<a href="http://glcommunities.org.uk">glcommunities.org.uk</a>
GL11 Community Hub	<a href="http://gl11.org.uk">gl11.org.uk</a>
GL3 Community Hub	<a href="http://gl3communityhub.org.uk">gl3communityhub.org.uk</a>
Gloucester Community Building Collective	<a href="http://gloscommunitybuilding.co.uk">gloscommunitybuilding.co.uk</a>
Gloucester Health Access Centre	<a href="http://ghac.co.uk">ghac.co.uk</a>
Gloucestershire Carers Hub	<a href="http://gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk">gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk</a>
Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk">gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>
Gloucestershire Gateway Trust	<a href="http://gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk">gloucestershiregatewaytrust.org.uk</a>
Gloucester Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/gloucester-library-including-music-and-performing-arts">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/gloucester-library-including-music-and-performing-arts</a>
Gloucestershire Nightstop	<a href="http://gloucestershirenightstop.org.uk">gloucestershirenightstop.org.uk</a>
Gloucestershire Police	<a href="https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/">https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/</a>
Gloucestershire Primary Care Training Hub	<a href="https://glosprimarycare.co.uk/what-is-social-prescribing">https://glosprimarycare.co.uk/what-is-social-prescribing</a>
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	<a href="http://www.grcc.org.uk">www.grcc.org.uk</a>
Gloucestershire VCS Alliance	<a href="http://glosvcsalliance.org.uk">glosvcsalliance.org.uk</a>
GLOW Gloucestershire Wellbeing	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/glow-gloucestershire-wellbeing">gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/gloucestershire-health-and-wellbeing-board/glow-gloucestershire-wellbeing</a>
Good Things Foundation	<a href="http://goodthingsfoundation.org">goodthingsfoundation.org</a>
Home-Start Gloucestershire	<a href="http://home-startgloucestershire.org.uk">home-startgloucestershire.org.uk</a>
Hucclecote Community Association	<a href="http://hucclecote.org.uk">hucclecote.org.uk</a>
Hucclecote Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/hucclecote-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/hucclecote-library</a>
Inclusion Gloucestershire	<a href="http://inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/about">inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/about</a>
Integrated Locality Partnerships (ILP)	<a href="http://nhsglos.nhs.uk/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/integrated-locality-partnerships-ilps-and-primary-care-networks">nhsglos.nhs.uk/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/integrated-locality-partnerships-ilps-and-primary-care-networks</a>
IT Schools Africa	<a href="http://itschoolsafrica.org">itschoolsafrica.org</a>
Know Your Patch Networks	<a href="http://knowyourpatch.co.uk/networks">knowyourpatch.co.uk/networks</a>
Moreton-in-Marsh Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/moreton-in-marsh-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/moreton-in-marsh-library</a>
NHS Information Bus	<a href="http://nhsglos.nhs.uk/have-your-say/working-with-you/information-bus">nhsglos.nhs.uk/have-your-say/working-with-you/information-bus</a>
Paganhill Community Group	<a href="http://paganhill.org.uk">paganhill.org.uk</a>
Podsmead Big Local	<a href="https://facebook.com/PodsmeadBigLocal">facebook.com/PodsmeadBigLocal</a>
Post Covid Syndrome Service	<a href="http://ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/post-covid">ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/post-covid</a>

Shurdington Community Centre	<a href="http://shurdingtoncomcentre.net">shurdingtoncomcentre.net</a>
South West Regional Organised Crime Unit	<a href="http://swrocu.police.uk/about-us">swrocu.police.uk/about-us</a>
Stow-on-the-Wold Library	<a href="http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/stow-on-the-wold-library">gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-locations-and-opening-hours/stow-on-the-wold-library</a>
Stroke Association	<a href="http://stroke.org.uk">stroke.org.uk</a>
Stroud District Council	<a href="http://stroud.gov.uk">stroud.gov.uk</a>
Stroud District Foodbank	<a href="http://strouddistrict.foodbank.org.uk">strouddistrict.foodbank.org.uk</a>
Stroud District Know your Patch	<a href="http://stroud.gov.uk/community-health-and-wellbeing/stroud-district-know-your-patch">stroud.gov.uk/community-health-and-wellbeing/stroud-district-know-your-patch</a>
Stroud District Neighbourhood Wardens	<a href="http://stroud.gov.uk/community-and-living/community-safety-and-neighbourhood-wardens/neighbourhood-wardens">stroud.gov.uk/community-and-living/community-safety-and-neighbourhood-wardens/neighbourhood-wardens</a>
Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind	<a href="http://sgmind.org.uk">sgmind.org.uk</a>
The Churn Project	<a href="http://churnproject.org.uk">churnproject.org.uk</a>
The Keepers Wotton Area Community Hub	<a href="http://thekeepers.org.uk">thekeepers.org.uk</a>
Winchcombe Day Centre	<a href="http://winchcombedaycentre.co.uk">winchcombedaycentre.co.uk</a>
WyeDean Wellbeing	<a href="http://wyedeanwellbeing.co.uk">wyedeanwellbeing.co.uk</a>
Young Gloucestershire	<a href="http://youngglos.org.uk">youngglos.org.uk</a>

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