



Digital Poverty Alliance

# National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

June 2025

digital  
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alliance

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

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National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Towards a Fairer Digital Future**

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Technology has transformed nearly every aspect of daily life, yet digital exclusion remains a significant challenge for up to 19 million people across the UK.

The Digital Poverty Alliance is a national charity committed to ending digital poverty once and for all. We believe that digital access is a fundamental need – critical to learning, working, accessing healthcare, and participating fully in society. For millions, however, the lack of access to devices, data, and digital confidence is compounding existing inequalities and creating new forms of disadvantage. It is not just about being online – it is about being able to thrive in a digital world.

Our mission is to make digital inclusion a reality for everyone, not just a privilege for some. We work through two core approaches: advocacy and delivery.

Through our advocacy, we bring the realities of digital exclusion to the forefront of political and public debate. We influence policy, engage leaders across sectors, and build the case for urgent, coordinated national action. Our work is grounded in evidence and informed by those with lived experience of digital hardship, ensuring the voices of affected communities help shape the solutions.

Through our delivery work, we design and lead programmes that create real-world change – getting devices, connectivity, and digital skills to individuals and communities who need them most. Our delivery models focus on sustainable impact, addressing both immediate needs and long-term resilience. We test and refine what works, then scale it through partnerships to maximise reach and effectiveness.

We are a convenor, a catalyst, and a collaborator – but above all, we are committed to action. Our work connects government, business, civil society, and grassroots organisations to drive systemic solutions to digital poverty. By bringing sectors together, we help bridge the gap between intent and implementation.

We know that ending digital poverty is ambitious – but it is achievable. It demands a focused, collective effort across every part of society. The Digital Poverty Alliance is proud to lead that effort.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Foreword: A National Priority

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Technology has transformed how we learn, work, connect, and live. Yet digital exclusion remains a persistent and damaging barrier across the UK. Today, one in seven adults and one in five children lack the tools, skills, or connectivity required to thrive in a digital-first society. Meanwhile, over eight million households face difficulties affording essential communication services that many of us now rely on every day.

In response to this urgent challenge, the Digital Poverty Alliance has worked relentlessly over the past two years of the National Delivery and Advocacy Plan – building partnerships, delivering frontline support, and advocating for coordinated national action. Our efforts have helped secure a stronger political and public focus on digital exclusion, culminating in the Government’s Digital Inclusion Action Plan – the first coordinated strategy of its kind in over a decade.

Alongside our advocacy, we have expanded delivery on the ground. Programmes such as Tech4Youth, Tech4YoungCarers, and Tech4Families have provided devices, connectivity, and skills support to those previously left behind – ensuring that digital inclusion is not just a policy goal but a lived and lasting reality for many more people across the UK.

The National Delivery and Advocacy Plan is a living strategy, shaped by a shifting landscape of technology, policy, and need – grounded in research, lived experience, and the realities of those still excluded. The stakes are clear: digital access is now essential to education, employment, healthcare, and social connection. Exclusion from the digital world is exclusion from opportunity – and it continues to widen inequality in every corner of society.

A foundation for change is now in place. The challenge ahead is not to describe the problem, but to deliver at scale. Ending digital poverty will demand continued leadership, deeper collaboration, and a sustained focus on practical solutions that deliver real-world impact.

The Digital Poverty Alliance remains committed to this mission. We invite all those who share our vision to act with us – to deliver more widely, partner more closely, and help make digital inclusion the norm, not the exception.

**Niel McLean OBE** | Chair of Trustees, Digital Poverty Alliance

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **A Message from Our CEO**

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When we launched the first National Delivery and Advocacy Plan in 2023, we made a clear commitment: to move the conversation about digital poverty from awareness to action. That commitment defined Phase One, which concludes in June 2025 – and paves the way for Phase Two.

Two years on, that promise has delivered.

We have made tangible progress against the ambitions set out in the Plan. Our sustained advocacy helped secure the UK's first coordinated government strategy for digital access in over a decade: the Digital Inclusion Action Plan. Our delivery programmes – Tech4Families, Tech4YoungCarers and Tech4Youth – have extended digital access to thousands of people previously left behind, thanks to the vital support of corporate partners and funders. And our growing network of partners – from national charities to local authorities – is translating ambition into impact, community by community.

But this work is not theoretical. Behind every device distributed, every skill learned, and every barrier removed is a person: a child submitting homework, a jobseeker applying for work, a parent accessing healthcare, an older adult reconnecting with family. In the first two years of the Plan, we have supported approximately 5,000 households to get online and helped elevate digital inclusion on the national agenda to a level not seen in a generation.

The updated Plan sets out the next phase of that journey. It reflects a changing landscape – one where strategy now exists, but where delivery must be deepened, scaled, and measured. It recognises that digital access is no longer a 'nice to have' – it is essential to education, health, employment, and community life.

This is not a wish list. It is a call to action: to build on what has started, match ambition with delivery, and turn commitments into outcomes.

The Digital Poverty Alliance will continue to lead this national effort – and we invite you to join us.

**Elizabeth Anderson** | Chief Executive Officer, Digital Poverty Alliance

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

# The Digital Inclusion Action Plan

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On 26 February 2025, the UK Government published the *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* – the first coordinated national strategy on digital inclusion in more than a decade. The Digital Poverty Alliance is a key delivery partner in this work, piloting a first-of-its-kind device donation scheme in collaboration with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Department for Business and Trade. This pilot is detailed later in this document.

The Action Plan sets out four priority areas: building digital skills, addressing device and data poverty, breaking down barriers to access, and strengthening confidence through locally led delivery. It outlines a series of short-term commitments designed to drive action across government, shaped by the leadership of five Secretaries of State and grounded in cross-departmental collaboration. DSIT has established a new digital inclusion team and launched a national consultation to inform the development of a long-term strategy. The Digital Poverty Alliance responded to this call for evidence, submitting 38 specific recommendations. Many of these align closely with the priorities outlined in this Plan.

## **Our recommendations include:**

- Recognising the intersectional nature of digital poverty, and acknowledging that exclusion is experienced in different ways – through lack of access to devices, connectivity, digital skills, confidence, or services designed to meet diverse needs.
- Incentivising private sector engagement by embedding digital inclusion into social value frameworks and procurement policy, encouraging long-term investment and accountability.
- Addressing the impact of digital transformation on those who are not confident or comfortable online, and ensuring that future innovation empowers users rather than leaving them behind. This is particularly relevant in areas such as the sunsetting of 2G/3G networks and the ongoing digitalisation of healthcare services.
- Developing a comprehensive approach to digital inclusion in education, not only within schools but across all forms of lifelong learning. This includes embedding digital skills into the curriculum, supporting educators across all subjects, and addressing the current gaps in teacher training.

- Establishing standardised national metrics to measure digital poverty, enabling consistent benchmarking of digital exclusion and tracking of progress towards inclusion.

The publication of the Action Plan marks a significant moment for the digital inclusion agenda. For the first time, there is a shared national definition of digital inclusion, coupled with visible ministerial commitment and coordinated intent. It signals a shift from fragmented initiatives to a more unified approach, backed by government leadership across multiple departments. The Digital Poverty Alliance views this as an important foundation – one that must now be matched by sustained, measurable, and accountable delivery. Without this, the strategy risks remaining a statement of intent rather than a catalyst for impact.

If fully realised, the Action Plan has the potential to catalyse meaningful progress and deliver practical change for communities across every part of the UK. It can embed digital inclusion into the systems and services that shape people's daily lives – from schools and job centres to hospitals and housing associations. But the challenge now lies in implementation: turning commitments into outcomes, policies into practice, and ambition into access. The momentum is there. What matters now is delivery – equitable, coordinated, and enduring.



From Commitment to Impact

## Our Progress Since 2023

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### Delivery Projects

5,000+ lives reached through six targeted Tech4 programmes – delivering devices, skills, and essential connectivity.

### National Recognition

450+ features across UK media – strengthening national awareness, shaping discourse, and sharpening policy focus on digital inclusion.

### Broadcasting Change

30+ webinars convened – sharing lived experience, expert insight, and cross-sector collaboration to accelerate national action.

### In Parliament, On Record

5+ parliamentary mentions – cited in Hansard for contributions to digital inclusion through evidence and cross-sector partnerships.

### Social Capital, Real Reach

5,000+ followers across our defined social channels – connecting a purposeful network driving informed action on digital inclusion.

### A Growing Commitment

40+ signatories and counting – our *Charter for Digital Inclusion* reflects shared commitment to practical, joined-up action.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **The Case for a National Delivery and Advocacy Plan**

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Digital inclusion has moved from the margins to the mainstream of national policy. With the Government's *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* now in place, there is broad recognition across many sectors that digital access is essential to economic growth, public service delivery, and social participation. However, recognition alone does not deliver change.

As with many societal challenges, it is the responsibility of every part of society to help create change. Progress depends on a clear, coordinated approach – connecting national ambition with local delivery, aligning actions across sectors, and maintaining a consistent focus on outcomes and on the people who need support. The National Delivery and Advocacy Plan provides that structure. It sets out shared priorities, identifies where sustained effort is needed, and offers a framework for accountability – translating broad commitments into practical steps, and ensuring that success is measured not only by policy announcements but by lived experience.

It signals a shift from fragmented initiatives to a more unified approach, backed by government leadership across multiple departments.

The need for a national delivery approach is sharpened by a rapidly changing landscape: rising living costs are making connectivity unaffordable for many; essential services in healthcare, education, and employment are shifting online without universal provision; and major technological transitions – including the switch-off of legacy phone networks and the integration of AI tools – are creating new risks of exclusion.

Digital poverty is not only a technical challenge. It intersects with wider issues of affordability, trust, skills, and safety. It affects health outcomes, educational attainment, workforce participation, and social cohesion. Without sustained, coordinated intervention, the digital divide will not close – it will widen.

The National Delivery and Advocacy Plan is designed to prevent that outcome. It is a living framework: continuously updated, responsive to evidence, and grounded in the realities of digital exclusion. It sets out what must happen – and makes clear that delivery is a shared responsibility across government, industry, the third sector, and communities.

Ending digital poverty is a collective task. The National Delivery and Advocacy Plan ensures it remains coordinated, accountable, and urgent.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

# A Phased Approach to Delivery

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## Our phased approach is structured around three core principles:

- 1. Systematic progress:** Each phase builds on the achievements and learning of the last, moving from foundation work to scaling impact.
- 2. Responsive adaptation:** The Plan is updated annually to reflect changing social, technological, and policy contexts, ensuring it remains practical and relevant.
- 3. Shared accountability:** Actions are linked to clear areas of responsibility, with progress monitored, published, and openly reviewed.

## Structure of the Phased Approach

**Annual Editions:** Each phase of the National Delivery and Advocacy Plan spans two years. A high-level overview is published annually to review progress, refine priorities, and highlight areas requiring greater action. A full update and rewrite of the Plan is produced at the end of each phase – every two years – reflecting deeper learning, evolving context, and the next stage of national delivery.

**Transparency and Review:** An annual public Progress Review Report will track achievements, challenges, and changes to the Plan. This ensures transparency, maintains momentum, and identifies where additional collaboration or resources are needed.

## Why a Phased Approach Matters

Digital poverty is shaped by dynamic forces – from economic pressures to technological change. A phased, living delivery plan allows action to be coordinated and sustained, without locking into assumptions that may quickly become outdated. It recognises that ending digital poverty is not a single intervention, but a sustained collective effort. This document outlines each mission's purpose, the actions we committed to and undertook in **Phase 1 (2023–2025)**, and the actions planned for **Phase 2 (2025–2027)**, as well as for **Phases 3 and 4 (2027–2030)**. Each section also features a celebration of success and concludes with a series of Calls to Action for our network and audiences to consider. The Plan provides the roadmap; delivery at scale will define success.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Our Key Messages

The UK now has the beginnings of a national strategy, with the Government's *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* released in February 2025 setting a foundation for change. But strategy alone does not close gaps or transform lives. Delivering digital inclusion demands action – practical, accountable, and sustained.

The Digital Poverty Alliance's National Delivery and Advocacy Plan moves the agenda from commitment to implementation. It identifies what must happen, who must act, and how progress must be measured.

Three key messages shape everything we do – clear, urgent priorities for real change.

Key Message	Essential Action
<b>Delivery defines success</b>	The Government's <i>Digital Inclusion Action Plan</i> must translate into real-world progress – affordable access, digital skills, and practical support reaching those who need it most. Every actor – government, industry, and the third sector – must be accountable for outcomes.
<b>Digital access is a basic right</b>	In a digital society, access to devices, connectivity, and essential skills must be treated as a fundamental need, not an optional advantage. Embedding digital inclusion across education, employment, healthcare, and services is non-negotiable.
<b>Local action drives national change</b>	Sustainable progress depends on enabling local leadership to deliver more ambitious, inclusive solutions. Existing models – such as limited public access points that are poorly located or under-resourced – no longer meet the scale or urgency of need. National strategy must invest in and amplify community-based innovation that meets people where they are.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Our Six Missions

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The National Delivery and Advocacy Plan is structured around six missions – the key areas where sustained action is essential to ending digital poverty. Each mission identifies a major challenge, sets a direction for coordinated delivery, and defines what success will require across government, industry, the third sector, and local communities.

Together, these missions form a roadmap for real and lasting change.

### **1. Increase awareness among government, politicians, industry, and the public about the need for strategic and sustainable action to end digital poverty.**

This mission focuses on deepening political, industry, and public understanding of digital exclusion as a systemic issue that demands sustained national action. It involves strengthening advocacy to maintain momentum following the Government's *Digital Inclusion Action Plan*, making a compelling investment case across sectors, and ensuring that digital inclusion remains a central priority in public policy, funding, and service design.

### **2. Ensure affordable connectivity and guarantee full digital access for those in need.**

This mission addresses the economic barriers to digital participation. It focuses on expanding device donation and redistribution programmes, securing affordable and sustainable connectivity for low-income households, and advocating for structural reforms such as a national social tariff for broadband and mobile services. It also calls for practical investment mechanisms – for example, exploring the case for a digital inclusion levy – to ensure that access is not reliant on charity alone, but embedded within national infrastructure planning.

### **3. Improve standards of accessibility and inclusiveness across all digital products and services.**

This mission focuses on ensuring that digital spaces are usable and accessible for everyone. It addresses the need to embed inclusive design across public and private sector services, strengthen assisted digital support for those who need it, and improve enforcement of existing

accessibility standards. Inclusive, accessible digital design must become the norm – not the exception – across government services, healthcare, education, and industry.

#### **4. Expand essential digital and critical thinking skills across society to meet changing needs.**

This mission focuses on ensuring that everyone has the skills needed to navigate an increasingly digital world – from the basic use of hardware and software to the critical thinking required to assess content and build confidence and safety online. It involves scaling both formal and informal digital skills programmes, embedding digital learning throughout all stages of education, and promoting digital champion models in workplaces and communities. It also addresses the need for targeted research and review – identifying where skills investment will have the greatest impact on reducing inequality, and building a long-term, coordinated approach to digital skills development across the UK.

#### **5. Build the evidence base to deepen understanding of digital poverty.**

This mission focuses on strengthening the research, data, and lived experience evidence needed to drive action. It includes supporting the development of a universal definition of digital poverty, generating insights through proof-of-concept projects, and advocating for longitudinal studies to track the changing nature of digital exclusion over time. It also involves amplifying the voices and experiences of those affected by digital poverty – ensuring that policy and programme design are informed by real-world realities, not assumptions.

#### **6. Strengthen local capacity to deliver joined-up digital inclusion support.**

This mission focuses on enabling sustainable, locally driven change by strengthening the ability of local authorities, health services, housing providers, and community organisations to deliver coordinated, embedded digital inclusion support. It includes advocating for a designated digital inclusion lead in every local authority, improving local data on digital access, supporting the NHS and social care sectors to address digital barriers, and scaling joined-up, community-led interventions. Building local capacity is essential to ensuring that national ambitions translate into practical outcomes for individuals and communities.



Mission One

**Increase awareness among government, politicians, industry, and the public about the need for strategic and sustainable action to end digital poverty.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Mission One of the Plan**

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### **Increase awareness among government, politicians, industry, and the public about the need for strategic and sustainable action to end digital poverty.**

Ending digital poverty demands national leadership, sustained parliamentary commitment, and public understanding of the systemic barriers that exclude millions from digital society. Mission One centres on embedding digital inclusion into government priorities, industry strategies, and civil society action – treating it as fundamental to wider economic growth, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and social mobility.

Digital inclusion must be recognised as a core infrastructure issue, not a peripheral social project. Embedding it across national policy, service delivery, and corporate practice is essential to achieving equitable outcomes. Sustained political visibility and leadership are critical. Ending digital poverty will not be achieved through isolated initiatives; it requires coordinated, strategic action across all sectors, underpinned by long-term investment and clear accountability.

#### **Phase 1: Progress Achieved (2023–2024)**

##### **1.1 Establish the National Delivery Committee**

In 2023, the Digital Poverty Alliance established the National Delivery Committee to coordinate cross-sector action on digital inclusion. By 2025, the Committee evolved into the Community Circle – broadening its remit to mobilise a wider coalition of charities, community groups, and grassroots organisations. This transition reflects a deliberate shift toward inclusive, community-led advocacy, strengthening the collective voice driving systemic change across the UK.

##### **1.2 Develop a strategy for targeted advocacy to raise awareness**

The Digital Poverty Alliance has engaged systematically with Members of Parliament, members of the House of Lords, and parliamentary candidates to elevate digital inclusion as a political priority. This sustained engagement played a key role in shaping the national conversation,

directly contributing to the publication of the Government's *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* and the appointment of a minister with explicit responsibility for digital inclusion.

### **1.3 Produce a Charter for Digital Inclusion**

In 2024, recognising the need for clear and measurable organisational commitments, the Digital Poverty Alliance launched the *Charter for Digital Inclusion*. The Charter invites employers across all sectors to take practical, evidence-informed steps to reduce digital exclusion and demonstrate leadership in embedding digital inclusion across their operations, services, and communities.

### **1.4 Promote the Charter for Digital Inclusion across employing organisations to grow commitments**

Through sustained engagement and outreach, the *Charter for Digital Inclusion* has secured the support of over 40 signatory organisations across the public, private, and third sectors. It offers a practical and adaptable framework for embedding digital inclusion into workforce development, service delivery, and organisational governance.

### **1.5 Continue to grow and amplify the impact of End Digital Poverty Day**

Launched with national press coverage in September 2023, End Digital Poverty Day has rapidly become an annual focal point for national awareness-raising and sector-wide mobilisation, with broad support and events held up and down the country, culminating in a high-profile Gala Reception and supported by a growing range of partner organisations.

### **1.6 Produce a socio-economic impact case**

In collaboration with Deloitte, the Digital Poverty Alliance published a landmark report quantifying the economic and social costs of digital exclusion. The report strengthens the evidence base for investment, demonstrating the direct links between digital poverty and reduced economic productivity, public service inefficiencies, and social inequality. It provides a strategic framework for future policymaking and investment decisions.

## **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

### **1.7 Advocate for a UK-wide full digital inclusion strategy building on the Digital Inclusion Action Plan**

Maintain momentum by advocating for a comprehensive, cross-government strategy that embeds digital inclusion as a national priority.

### **1.8 Deliver a comprehensive business and investment case for digital inclusion**

Produce a clear investment proposition demonstrating the return on investment from tackling digital poverty for government, industry, and society.

### **1.9 Create a pan-UK forum to address digital inclusion across all sectors**

Establish a structured, regular forum bringing together government, industry leaders, and third sector organisations to coordinate digital inclusion efforts.

### **1.10 Advocate for digital inclusion to be embedded in UK government public procurement practices**

Influence procurement reforms to ensure digital inclusion standards are a core consideration in public sector commissioning and supply chains.

## **Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)**

### **1.11 Secure Annual Digital Inclusion Funding Settlements for the wider digital inclusion community**

Embed digital inclusion within national Budget processes as a sustained and recognised funding priority across departments and over time.

### **1.12 Launch a National Public Awareness Campaign with funding partners**

Coordinate a national campaign to raise understanding of digital poverty and support options.

### **1.13 Achieve Primary Legislation for Digital Access Rights**

Advocate for legislation securing rights to digital access, skills, and connection.

### **1.14 Institutionalise Social Value Procurement Standards**

Ensure digital inclusion is systematically supported through strengthened social value procurement requirements.

### **1.15 Transition to Sustainable Investment Models**

Build systemic funding mechanisms that move beyond reliance on voluntary or charitable funding.

## Spotlight

### UK Government Launches Digital Inclusion Action Plan (2025)

In 2025, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) published the UK Government's first *Digital Inclusion Action Plan*. This established a national framework for coordinated action on digital exclusion, with commitments spanning device access, skills, connectivity, and support services. The Plan includes a new Digital Inclusion and Skills Unit, a Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund, and a multi-department device donation pilot.

The Digital Poverty Alliance was selected to help deliver the pilot device distribution scheme, reflecting its credibility in large-scale donation programmes and its evidence-led advocacy since 2023. The Plan reflects policy areas the Digital Poverty Alliance has championed, including joined-up leadership, practical delivery, and multi-sector engagement – and provides a foundation for wider action to follow.

### Sustaining National Focus

Raising awareness of digital poverty is not a communications challenge – it is a delivery requirement. Without visibility, digital inclusion risks falling off the agenda, particularly as political attention shifts or economic priorities evolve. Awareness shapes institutional focus, public pressure, and resource allocation. It also creates the conditions under which sustained policy reform and cross-sector collaboration become possible.

As digital access becomes essential to healthcare, education, employment, and civic participation, it must be recognised as a public good. Structural exclusion will persist unless digital participation is embedded into how public services are designed and delivered. Maintaining national focus requires clear leadership, proactive messaging, and sustained engagement from government, industry, and civil society alike. With the right commitment, awareness becomes not just a precursor to change, but the mechanism that makes change happen.

## Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<b>Individuals</b>	By December 2025, lead or contribute to awareness-raising actions – such as attending an event, sharing resources, or supporting someone to access digital help.
<b>Third Sector</b>	By December 2025, integrate digital inclusion into at least one organisational strategy or service offer, actively participate in End Digital Poverty Day activities, and join the Digital Poverty Alliance’s Community Circle.
<b>Industry</b>	By December 2025, sign the Digital Poverty Alliance’s <i>Charter for Digital Inclusion</i> , and take at least one measurable action in support of digital inclusion – such as donating unused devices, supporting employee volunteering for digital skills training, offering free or subsidised connectivity, or partnering with a charity on a local digital access initiative.
<b>Government</b>	By December 2025, convene the first meeting of the Digital Inclusion Action Committee, operationalise the Digital Inclusion and Skills Unit.



Mission Two

**Ensure affordable connectivity and guarantee access to devices and connectivity for those in need.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Mission Two of the Plan

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### **Ensure affordable connectivity and guarantee access to devices and connectivity for those in need.**

Affordable and reliable internet access, alongside access to appropriate devices, is fundamental to participation in modern society. Mission Two centres on securing equitable access for all, recognising that without affordable connectivity and devices, individuals are excluded from opportunities in education, employment, healthcare, and civic life.

Digital inclusion underpins economic growth, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and social mobility. Embedding it across government policy, public service design, and industry practice is essential to achieving equitable outcomes. Sustained political visibility and leadership are critical to driving lasting change. Ending digital poverty will not be achieved through isolated projects but through sustained, systemic action across sectors.

### **Phase 1: Progress Achieved (2023–2024)**

#### **2.1 Raise awareness of ways for individuals and organisations to donate tech for reuse**

In accordance with our aim to promote sustainable technology practices and end digital poverty, the Digital Poverty Alliance has made strong progress in encouraging device donation as a practical and impactful form of support. More than 40 organisations have signed the *Charter for Digital Inclusion*, many of whom are actively exploring the role that tech reuse can play in widening access.

Central to this objective is the Digital Poverty Alliance's leadership role in the Government's *Digital Inclusion Action Plan*, delivering a national, multi-department initiative to enable the redistribution of surplus devices.

During Phase 1 of the National Delivery and Advocacy Plan, thousands of devices were received from companies, membership bodies, public sector organisations and individuals, then refurbished and provided to households currently excluded from digital access.

## **2.2 Improve signposting to available support schemes for devices and connectivity through traditional digital channels**

The Digital Poverty Alliance strengthened its signposting efforts through a coordinated strategy using digital platforms, traditional media, and partner networks. Practical guidance on available support schemes was widely promoted, including Tech4Families – delivered in partnership with Currys – which has supported more than 2,000 families, and Tech4Youth, which has funded over 350 devices for families in Leicestershire and Cumbria.

Beyond digital promotion, the Digital Poverty Alliance strategically leveraged its defined social media channels, traditional press coverage, and the reach of partners, collaborators, and project funders to maximise visibility. By embedding messages across multiple platforms and networks, awareness of device access, connectivity offers, and skills development opportunities has expanded significantly. This integrated communications approach has been critical in bridging the information gap, connecting individuals to practical support, and strengthening the pathways into full digital participation.

## **2.3 Promote awareness of support resources for local initiatives addressing data poverty and device poverty**

The Digital Poverty Alliance has made proactive engagement with local authorities a core part of its approach through the Local Authority Network, embedding local delivery as a critical element of reducing digital exclusion.

Building on this foundation, the Digital Poverty Alliance partnered with Ealing Council and PaybyPhone to launch a local device donation scheme, enabling residents to access refurbished technology and improve digital participation. Alongside this, a collaboration with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has supported a second local initiative, extending access to devices for communities with high levels of digital need.

These initiatives demonstrate the tangible impact of coordinated local action and provide scalable models for expansion. In Phase 2, the Digital Poverty Alliance will build on this foundation by launching two additional local device donation programmes, broadening support for individuals and communities at risk of digital exclusion.

## **2.4 Advocate for internet-only provision of services to be delayed until there is universal access to internet**

Throughout 2024, the Digital Poverty Alliance consistently advocated for delaying the transition to internet-only infrastructure for essential services until universal internet access is achieved. This position was underpinned by a published report highlighting the risks of removing terrestrial

television services. In addition, the Alliance championed stronger support for those affected by the shift to internet-only telephony, regularly using national media to call for greater attention to the needs of vulnerable people.

## **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

### **2.5 Advocate for local authorities to create open-roaming and mesh networks within areas of high levels of deprivation**

Support the expansion of low-cost, community-driven connectivity solutions, using open roaming and mesh network technologies in areas where digital exclusion is highest.

### **2.6 Advocate for the protection of all offline options for those unable or unwilling to access digital services**

Ensure that essential offline alternatives are protected across public services and private sector offerings to safeguard inclusion.

### **2.7 Advocate for zero rating of data to access public services, starting with services previously available through 0800 numbers**

Campaign for public service websites and apps to be accessible without incurring mobile data charges, starting with services traditionally offered through freephone numbers.

### **2.8 Develop proposals for all children and young people to have equal 1:1 access to devices through schools and colleges**

Work with education partners to secure universal access to learning-ready digital devices across all schools and colleges, so that no student is left at a digital disadvantage. Devices must be keyboard-equipped and designed for educational use – smartphones are not adequate.

## **Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)**

### **2.9 Advocate for universal infrastructure to provide strong, reliable, affordable internet connections across the whole of the UK**

Champion infrastructure investment to ensure consistent access to fast, affordable connectivity nationwide, including rural and hard-to-reach areas.

### **2.10 Advocate for broadband and mobile data VAT to be reduced to 5%, and the implementation of a digital inclusion levy**

Promote fiscal measures to make connectivity more affordable and to generate sustainable funding for digital inclusion initiatives.

### **2.11 Advocate for the removal of VAT on social tariffs**

Work to remove VAT from social tariffs to lower prices further for those most in need.

### **2.12 Scale up the provision of in-person centres for digital access and support**

Support the development and funding of community spaces providing digital access, skills support, and trusted guidance for those facing digital exclusion.

### **2.13 Advocate for a standard and co-funded industry-wide social tariff**

Push for the creation of a consistent, affordable broadband offer across providers, with co-funding mechanisms to support access for low-income households.

### **2.14 Advocate for entitlement to free connectivity, devices, and support for priority groups at highest risk of exclusion**

Develop and campaign for policies ensuring free digital access for key priority groups facing the greatest risk of exclusion.

## **Spotlight**

### **National Device Distribution Initiative**

In 2025, the UK Government launched a national device distribution initiative in partnership with the Digital Poverty Alliance. A total of 500 refurbished government laptops are being redistributed to digitally excluded individuals, providing practical access to essential technology. This marks a coordinated step by government departments to reduce device poverty, with the Digital Poverty Alliance providing delivery expertise. It is a replicable model demonstrating effective cross-sector collaboration at national scale.

## **Sustaining National Focus**

Affordable connectivity and access to appropriate devices remain foundational to digital inclusion. As more services move online, individuals without these essentials risk exclusion from education, employment, healthcare, and civic life.

Maintaining political and institutional attention on these issues is essential to securing long-term progress. Device access and connectivity must be recognised as basic enablers of participation – not optional extras. Coordinated delivery and accountability across government, regulators, and providers are critical.

Sustained attention must also address device obsolescence and repair. Millions of usable devices are discarded due to unsupported systems or misconceptions about security. Policies and public guidance that promote reuse, encourage repair, and support refurbishment will help extend device lifespans. Tools such as ChromeOS Flex show how older hardware can still be put to use – contributing to circular economy goals and ensuring affordable access.

### Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<b>Individuals</b>	By the end of 2025, donate at least one unused device through a recognised refurbishment and redistribution programme. The Digital Poverty Alliance offers a trusted and impactful option.
<b>Third Sector</b>	By December 2025, ensure ongoing promotion and visibility of at least one local or national device donation scheme. The Digital Poverty Alliance offers a trusted and impactful option.
<b>Industry</b>	By December 2025, sign the Digital Poverty Alliance’s <i>Charter for Digital Inclusion</i> and commit to an annual device donation and reuse programme.
<b>Government</b>	By December 2025, extend the device redistribution scheme and cover additional departments to achieve expanded device donation targets.



Mission Three

**Improve standards of accessibility and inclusiveness across all digital services.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Mission Three of the Plan**

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### **Improve standards of accessibility and inclusiveness across all digital services.**

Accessible digital services are essential for full participation in modern life. Mission Three centres on ensuring digital platforms and products are designed to be usable by everyone – regardless of disability, digital skill level, or access needs. Progress requires regulatory reform, strong accountability measures, and a shift in how inclusion is embedded from the start of digital service design.

Digital inclusion underpins economic growth, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and social mobility. Embedding accessibility across public policy, service design, and industry practice is critical to achieving fairer outcomes. This mission works to close the persistent gaps in accessibility – particularly within non-public services – and to ensure that digital infrastructure supports, rather than excludes, diverse communities.

#### **Phase 1: Progress Achieved (2023–2024)**

##### **3.1 Develop and run policy campaign highlighting the need for accessibility to be built into all digital services at the design stage**

Despite growing awareness of digital accessibility, the specific needs of neurodivergent users remain poorly understood and frequently overlooked in service design. To address this gap, the Digital Poverty Alliance initiated a focused research programme to explore the lived experiences of neurodivergent individuals navigating digital platforms. Drawing on targeted surveys and qualitative insight, the research has surfaced critical design and usability issues that limit access, autonomy, and inclusion. These findings are informing our policy recommendations and shaping a forthcoming report – scheduled for publication at the start of Phase 2 – which will advocate for accessibility to be integrated from the earliest stages of digital service development. The report will provide clear, actionable guidance to support the creation of inclusive digital environments that meet the needs of all users.

### **3.2 Advocate for GDS requirements for accessibility of public service websites to extend to schools**

Throughout 2024/25, the Digital Poverty Alliance advanced efforts to extend Government Digital Service (GDS) accessibility standards to all school websites. We convened a national roundtable with accessibility experts to examine the barriers that students and families face when navigating poorly designed educational platforms. The insights gathered informed a detailed policy brief, which called for clear, enforceable requirements to ensure accessibility – particularly in schools that receive public funding. The brief also emphasised the need for dedicated training and support for schools, and reinforced the responsibility of developers to meet recognised accessibility standards. Digital accessibility in education must be treated as a core obligation of public service delivery – not a discretionary add-on.

### **3.3 Continue to encourage Digital Poverty Alliance partners to strive for WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility**

In 2024, the Digital Poverty Alliance led a communications campaign to encourage partners to meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA accessibility standards. As part of this effort, we published a thought leadership article, three supporting blogs, and a policy brief that outlined practical recommendations for embedding inclusive design across digital platforms.

This multi-channel campaign aimed not only to raise awareness, but to shift practice—supporting organisations in aligning their digital operations with recognised accessibility benchmarks and reinforcing the principle that digital spaces must work for everyone. By framing accessibility as both a moral and operational imperative, the campaign helped catalyse more intentional conversations across sectors and laid the groundwork for more inclusive digital practices at scale.

## **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

### **3.4 Advocate for the protection of all offline options for those unable or unwilling to access digital services**

Ensure inclusive service delivery by maintaining essential offline alternatives in both public and private sectors.

### **3.5 Advocate for digital services and products to be tested by people with diverse disabilities and varying levels of digital skill.**

Promote inclusive design practices by embedding user testing with a range of access needs during product development.

### **3.6 Advocate for the development of legislation to enforce accessibility regulations across all digital services**

Work toward legal reforms that extend enforceable accessibility requirements to all services operating in the UK.

## Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)

### 3.7 Create kitemark for best practice in accessibility service design

Develop a national kitemark scheme to identify and reward services that meet or exceed accessibility standards.

### 3.8 Advocate for a UK-wide review of existing support in relation to assistive technology

Conduct a comprehensive review of assistive technology provision to identify gaps in support and inform future funding.

### 3.9 Advocate for all major CMS platforms to adopt accessibility as a default standard

Push for commonly used content management systems (CMS) to include built-in accessibility features and guidance.

## Spotlight

### Policy Brief on School Website Accessibility

In 2025, the Digital Poverty Alliance published a policy brief drawing national attention to the widespread inaccessibility of school websites. It recommended the adoption of WCAG 2.2 standards, increased accountability for developers funded by public money, and dedicated resources to help schools improve their platforms. The brief played a central role in elevating the accessibility agenda across the education sector.

## Sustaining National Focus

Digital accessibility remains unevenly applied across public and private digital services. Without consistent standards and enforcement, individuals with disabilities or limited digital skills continue to face unnecessary barriers.

Maintaining long-term progress requires accessibility to be treated as a baseline, not an optional enhancement. This includes ensuring broader adoption of WCAG 2.2, stronger regulation and enforcement, and support for developers to embed inclusive design from the outset. Providers must be held accountable for poor accessibility, especially where public funding is involved.

Sustained national focus will also depend on building a culture of continuous improvement – one that values feedback, invests in user testing, and promotes solutions that meet the needs of all users.

## Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<b>Individuals</b>	By December 2026, provide feedback on the accessibility of at least one online service used regularly, encouraging service providers to address barriers and improve usability.
<b>Third Sector</b>	By December 2026, update organisational websites to meet WCAG 2.2 Level AA, and embed accessibility within broader digital service and advocacy work.
<b>Industry</b>	By December 2026, adopt inclusive design practices across at least one major digital product or service, with evidence of testing involving users with a variety of access needs.
<b>Government</b>	By December 2026, initiate a review of accessibility standards compliance in schools and set a clear timeline for alignment with WCAG 2.2 across all education platforms.



Mission Four

**Expand essential digital and critical thinking skills across society to meet changing needs.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Mission Four of the Plan

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### **Expand essential digital and critical thinking skills across society to meet changing needs.**

The ability to navigate, question, and use digital technologies with confidence is now a baseline requirement for full participation in society. Mission Four focuses on equipping everyone – from school-aged learners to public service professionals – with the essential digital and critical thinking skills needed to thrive in an ever-evolving digital world. This includes both technical (hard) skills and interpersonal or evaluative (soft) skills.

Yet today, around eleven million people in the UK still lack foundational digital capabilities. The term *media literacy* is often used as a catch-all for softer skills such as critical thinking, recognising misinformation and AI-generated content, and staying safe online – including areas such as well-being, fraud prevention, and cybersecurity. These skills must be recognised as integral to a comprehensive definition of digital literacy.

Digital inclusion underpins economic growth, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and social mobility. Ensuring access to lifelong digital learning – across education, the workplace, and everyday services – is vital to closing the digital divide and enabling people to adapt as technologies, platforms, and risks continue to evolve.

### **Phase I: Progress Achieved (2024–2025)**

#### **4.1 Advocate for government to prioritise action on essential digital skills**

The Digital Poverty Alliance contributed to the Department for Education’s Curriculum and Assessment Review, advocating for stronger digital literacy and device access in schools. We also submitted recommendations to the Government’s consultation on narrowing the digital divide in education and built direct partnerships to influence future policy development.

#### **4.2 Raise public awareness of the importance of digital skills and media literacy, as well as available support**

The Digital Poverty Alliance promoted digital skills through a combination of events, media engagement, and programme delivery. A key highlight

was our ALL Digital Weeks webinar – a solutions-focused session showcasing effective strategies for partnering with industry leaders and community stakeholders. The webinar featured practical examples of how collaborative delivery can expand digital access and build sustainable support systems. Alongside this, we embedded digital skills offers across our programmes and related initiatives, ensuring that skill development remains central to our mission of building a more digitally inclusive society.

#### **4.3 Encourage employers to deploy digital champions programmes to support staff**

In partnership with Digital Unite, the Digital Poverty Alliance actively promoted their Digital Champions and Inspire programmes and ensured that all staff were trained as Digital Champions through these initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to digital inclusion both internally and across our wider work.

#### **4.4 Work with higher education institutions to embed support for device access, connectivity, and essential digital skills.**

The Digital Poverty Alliance collaborated with the University of Oxford to investigate the digital experiences of students and recipients of the Tech4Families programme. The resulting report highlighted the need for stronger training in both digital and AI-related skills, greater institutional support from universities, and more equitable access to essential digital tools and resources.

#### **4.5 Advocate for media literacy to be taught as standard in schools, colleges, and digital literacy programmes**

The Digital Poverty Alliance will release a policy report later in 2025 emphasising the importance of integrating media literacy education as a standard component of school curricula and broader digital literacy programmes. The report underscores the need for a coordinated approach to equip learners with the critical thinking skills required to navigate an increasingly complex digital information landscape.

### **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

#### **4.6 Explore options to create a pan-UK insight-sharing forum in relation to essential digital skills**

Build collaboration between regional and national actors to share good practice and data around digital skills provision.

#### **4.7 Undertake initial scoping review of high priority areas where digital skills training can help reduce social inequalities**

Identify opportunities to target digital skills delivery at issues such as unemployment, poor health, or educational disadvantage.

#### **4.8 Advocate for the integration of requirements aimed at boosting essential digital skills into local skills improvement plans**

Ensure local skills strategies include a focus on digital upskilling for excluded groups.

#### **4.9 Enhance signposting for employers to resources on embedding digital inclusion across the workforce**

Make it easier for businesses to find and apply tools for improving workplace digital skills.

### **Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)**

#### **4.10 Advocate for a review of the essential digital skills landscape for adults across the UK**

Ensure national policy and funding reflect current gaps and needs in adult digital skills.

#### **4.11 Advocate for teacher training to include development and evidence of digital and media literacy**

Call for digital competency to be built into teacher qualification and professional development standards.

#### **4.12 Advocate for programmes that build the digital skills of frontline public service staff, civil servants, and third sector staff**

Strengthen the digital skills of the public-facing workforce.

#### **4.13 Build on work to facilitate greater levels of algorithmic transparency**

Support greater understanding of automated decision-making tools and their societal impacts.

#### **4.14 Advocate for a tech ambassadors programme within schools and FE colleges**

Promote peer-led learning and leadership in digital skills.

#### **4.15 Advocate for support to help schools and colleges embed digital, including 1:1 devices and digital skills training for children**

Support universal digital access and learning environments across the education system.

#### **4.16 Advocate to expand media literacy to include online safety, AI awareness, cybersecurity, and anti-fraud strategies**

Ensure digital literacy evolves in line with emerging risks and technologies.

## Spotlight

### **Digital Inequality and Higher Education Report (2025)**

This research explored how digital access and skills affect academic success and university participation. It highlighted the impact of digital exclusion on confidence and application rates and found a growing divide in the use of generative artificial intelligence tools among students from different backgrounds. The report called for national guidance on AI, consistent digital and AI literacy training, and increased institutional support for digitally excluded students.

### **Sustaining National Focus**

Millions of UK adults still lack essential digital skills, and foundational confidence in using online tools remains unevenly distributed across regions and demographics. As public services, education, and employment increasingly move online, these digital skill gaps risk entrenching existing inequalities and creating new ones.

Sustained, long-term investment in digital skills – across all ages and life stages – must now be treated as a national priority. This includes embedding digital learning within national curricula, integrating it into teacher training, and aligning it with lifelong workplace development strategies. Media literacy and online safety must be recognised as core life competencies, taught with the same rigour as literacy and numeracy.

To truly future-proof digital inclusion, policy must be agile and responsive to ongoing technological change. That means enabling continuous learning in areas such as data protection, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity – not as optional extras, but as foundational skills for full participation in a digital society. Government, employers, and civil society each have a critical role to play in delivering this cultural and structural shift.

## Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<p><b>Individuals</b></p>	<p>By December 2025, complete at least one digital or media literacy learning, and share information about local digital skills opportunities within your community. Consider signing up for iDEA's micro-qualifications as a starting point.</p>
<p><b>Third Sector</b></p>	<p>By December 2025, integrate digital skills support into service delivery models, and collaborate with local partners to ensure underserved groups are prioritised.</p>
<p><b>Industry</b></p>	<p>By December 2025, audit your organisation's digital capability and launch a plan to upskill your workforce, prioritising those with low digital confidence.</p>
<p><b>Government</b></p>	<p>By December 2026, reinstate national teacher training requirements for digital and media literacy, and publish a framework for measuring digital poverty by age and region.</p>



Mission Five

**Enhance understanding of digital poverty through robust research, shared evidence, and consistent benchmarks.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Mission Five of the Plan**

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### **Enhance understanding of digital poverty through robust research, shared evidence, and consistent benchmarks.**

A robust evidence base is essential for building informed, sustainable solutions to digital poverty. Mission Five centres on expanding insight into who is affected, how digital exclusion intersects with broader inequalities, and what works in response. Through deeper research, standardised data collection, and better mechanisms for sharing insights across sectors, we can collectively improve outcomes and ensure resources are targeted effectively.

Digital inclusion underpins economic growth, educational opportunity, healthcare access, and social mobility. Yet, without a shared understanding of how digital poverty manifests and evolves, long-term progress will remain out of reach. This mission works to close the evidence gap and drive practical improvements in how we define, measure, and address digital exclusion.

#### **Phase I: Progress Achieved (2024–2025)**

##### **5.1 Advocate for the adoption of the minimum digital living standard across government and other organisations**

The Digital Poverty Alliance initiated the development of a standard of minimum device specifications, grounded in both survey data and the lived experiences of diverse demographic groups. Initial sessions were conducted in Manchester and complemented by a nationally distributed online survey. Once established, the standard will serve as a foundational tool to shape future delivery, inform advocacy, and support consistent measurement of digital inclusion across the UK.

##### **5.2 Continue with proof-of-concept work to evaluate the benefits of technology among specific groups**

In January 2024, the Digital Poverty Alliance released the Tech4Teachers white paper in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton. The report evaluated a programme supplying laptops and CPD training to teachers in schools with high pupil premium numbers, highlighting improved classroom delivery and professional development.

In April 2024, we published the Tech4PrisonLeavers white paper, also in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton. This study examined the role of digital access in supporting reintegration and independence for people leaving prison.

In August 2024, the Tech4Families Evaluation Report was released in partnership with the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex. This research focused on the importance of young people having access to a keyboarded device and its impact on educational engagement and outcomes.

### **5.3 Build our library of case studies on the lived experience of digital poverty**

The Digital Poverty Alliance began compiling a national library of case studies, drawing on surveys, interviews, and data from delivery programmes. This growing collection will provide rich qualitative evidence of how digital exclusion is experienced across different groups and contexts, helping to inform more targeted and inclusive policy and practice.

### **5.4 Research the impact of artificial intelligence on the exclusion of those experiencing digital poverty**

In 2024, the Digital Poverty Alliance launched *Rethinking Education with Generative AI* at a Parliamentary event, drawing national attention to the widening disparities in access to emerging technologies across the education system. The report examined how unequal exposure to generative AI risks deepening existing inequalities in learning and opportunity, and set out a series of practical, evidence-based recommendations to ensure that its benefits are equitably realised in classrooms across the UK.

## **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

### **5.5 Create and develop mechanisms for research and information sharing in relation to digital poverty**

Support collaborative learning and evidence exchange by building national infrastructure for digital inclusion research.

### **5.6 Advocate for two questions on digital poverty in the 2031 Census**

Propose the inclusion of standardised questions on digital access and device use to support national benchmarking.

### **5.7 Advocate for a longitudinal study to measure changes in digital poverty over time**

Enable tracking of long-term digital inclusion trends and impact through a multi-year research programme.

### **5.8 Consult on and build cross-sector support for a definition of digital poverty**

Develop a consensus definition to drive consistent understanding and coordinated action.

### **5.9 Build the evidence base on the intersectional nature of digital poverty**

Undertake research that explores how digital exclusion compounds other structural inequalities.

### **5.10 Conduct a social return on investment analysis for investment in digital inclusion**

Demonstrate the economic and social value of digital inclusion initiatives through rigorous impact assessment.

### **5.11 Conduct a research project on the impact of digital exclusion on access to health services**

Address the evidence gap on how digital barriers impact healthcare access and outcomes.

### **5.12 Develop detailed personas to better understand how barriers to digital participation can be addressed**

Build user profiles to inform policy and service design.

### **5.13 Continue research on the intersection of emerging technologies and digital exclusion**

Explore how innovations such as generative artificial intelligence impact inclusion and what measures are needed to ensure equitable access.

## **Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)**

### **5.14 Create a national framework to assess the value of digital inclusion initiatives**

Establish common metrics to evaluate effectiveness, promote best practice, and support evidence-based investment.

### **5.15 Support central government to establish a coordinated digital inclusion data strategy**

Strengthen national capability to monitor, analyse, and respond to trends in digital access and exclusion.

## Spotlight

### Evaluation Reports Across Priority Sectors

The Digital Poverty Alliance published a suite of evaluation reports demonstrating the impact of digital access across education, community, and rehabilitation settings. These include Tech4Teachers, Tech4PrisonLeavers, and Tech4Families. Each report integrates lived experience with independent analysis to inform future service design and policy development. Collectively, they provide a robust and actionable evidence base for shaping effective, user-led approaches to digital inclusion.

### Sustaining National Focus

Understanding digital poverty demands more than short-term data snapshots. The lack of consistent benchmarks, fragmented reporting, and gaps in qualitative insight continue to obscure the true extent and impact of exclusion.

To drive progress, digital inclusion must be defined clearly, measured consistently, and embedded in national data strategies. The Government's working definition of digital inclusion is a welcome step, but it needs refinement and practical alignment with measurable indicators. Consistent metrics and longitudinal research will help ensure initiatives are targeted, scalable, and evidence-led.

Shared knowledge is also essential. Proof-of-concept reports, case studies, and evaluation tools must be accessible to all sectors, so learning is cumulative rather than isolated. This is particularly important given the evolving nature of digital technologies and their varying impacts across groups.

The development of a national data and research infrastructure – including stronger evaluation models, a cross-sector research forum, and a shared evidence base – will be critical to maintaining long-term visibility, investment, and momentum.

## Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<b>Individuals</b>	By December 2025, contribute to a research initiative or consultation on digital exclusion, sharing lived experience to improve understanding and influence future interventions.
<b>Third Sector</b>	By December 2025, collect and share qualitative and quantitative evidence from at least one digital inclusion initiative, contributing to wider evaluation and learning.
<b>Industry</b>	By December 2025, conduct internal assessments on digital skills and access among customers or staff and share anonymised findings and data sets with the Digital Poverty Alliance.
<b>Government</b>	By December 2025, initiate the design of a coordinated digital inclusion data collection framework and launch formal consultation on including digital access questions in the 2031 Census.



Mission Six

**Increase local capacity and strengthen the role of devolved nations in delivering joined-up digital inclusion support.**

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Mission Six of the Plan**

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### **Increase local capacity and strengthen the role of devolved nations in delivering joined-up digital inclusion support.**

Mission Six centres on building place-based infrastructure and local capacity to deliver digital inclusion support at scale. Across the UK, local government, housing associations, and community partners are uniquely positioned to design, deliver, and sustain tailored services that respond to local digital needs. Yet provision remains inconsistent – with variation between local authorities, and gaps in rural, remote, and under-resourced communities.

Digital inclusion underpins economic participation, access to services, and individual wellbeing. Strengthening local delivery and empowering devolved nations to build targeted solutions are key to achieving lasting change. This mission seeks to embed digital inclusion as a core function of local governance, backed by knowledge sharing, strategic leadership, and coordinated investment.

#### **Phase I: Progress Achieved (2023–2024)**

##### **6.1 Support local authorities across the UK to address digital poverty**

The Digital Poverty Alliance launched its Local Authority Network in summer 2023 to support place-based leadership on digital inclusion. Since its inception, the Network has convened regular meetings to share best practice, highlight local innovation, and build collective capacity.

Discussions have addressed critical issues such as the impact of digital exclusion on healthcare access and the challenges presented by the national telephony switchover.

##### **6.2 Develop a toolkit tailored for housing associations**

The Digital Poverty Alliance has developed a proposal for a dedicated housing association toolkit to support the design and delivery of digital

inclusion services for social housing residents. The toolkit will offer scalable, evidence-informed solutions to improve connectivity, expand access to devices, and build digital confidence and skills within housing communities.

To move this work forward, a cross-sector working group has been established and is actively exploring implementation pathways. Subject to funding, the toolkit will become a practical resource for housing providers aiming to integrate digital inclusion into their core services.

### **6.3 Pilot approaches to capture local digital support provision**

The Digital Poverty Alliance conducted an internal pilot survey to map digital support provision across eight local authorities, capturing data on available services, delivery models, and levels of public awareness. Insights from this pilot will inform the development of a wider national mapping project, designed to build a comprehensive UK-wide picture of digital inclusion infrastructure and identify gaps in provision.

## **Phase 2: Delivery Priorities (2025–2027)**

### **6.4 Advocate for mechanisms to build local capacity to embed digital inclusion**

Push for policy and funding structures that support digital inclusion as a sustained local government function.

### **6.5 Create consistent and transferable approaches for local digital inclusion data collection**

Develop tools and templates that enable local authorities to collect and share data on digital poverty, ensuring consistency across geographies.

### **6.6 Improve signposting within local government and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) services**

Work with local and national partners to streamline signposting for digital support across public-facing services.

### **6.7 Deepen engagement with the devolved nations**

Strengthen partnerships across Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to share learning, promote collaboration, and support localised delivery.

## **Phases 3 and 4: Future Delivery Milestones (2027–2030)**

### **6.8 Advocate for every local authority to have a digital inclusion lead**

Ensure dedicated capacity exists in every local authority to coordinate digital inclusion activity across services and partners.

### **6.9 Develop detailed personas to better understand local barriers**

Create a set of user personas that reflect diverse lived experiences to inform service design and remove barriers at the community level.

### **6.10 Expand digital inclusion partnerships with housing associations**

Promote coordinated efforts across housing providers to deliver digital access, skills support, and connectivity to social housing residents.

### **6.11 Monitor the impact of English devolution on digital inclusion delivery**

Assess the implementation of the English Devolution White Paper to ensure digital inclusion remains a strategic priority.

## **Spotlight**

### **Establishment of the Local Authority Network**

In 2023, the Digital Poverty Alliance launched its Local Authority Network – a space for councils to exchange best practice, explore shared challenges, and collaborate on digital inclusion solutions. Through regular engagement, the Network has surfaced valuable insight into the role of local authorities in improving digital access and inclusion, laying the foundation for long-term knowledge sharing and collective action.

### **Sustaining National Focus**

Local capacity remains uneven – with wide variation in digital inclusion delivery across and within local authority areas. Without structural support, the ability to scale proven models or embed lasting services is limited.

A national commitment to resourcing local digital inclusion leads in every local authority area, combined with devolved flexibility to tailor delivery, is essential. Coordinated funding, consistent data collection, and improved knowledge exchange will enable local authorities, housing associations, and partners to build more effective digital inclusion strategies.

Devolved nations and regions must be empowered to lead digital inclusion efforts in a way that reflects local contexts. With initiatives underway across Scotland and Wales – and growing momentum in Northern Ireland – stronger intergovernmental collaboration is needed to build joined-up action across the UK.

## Our Calls to Action for 2025

Stakeholder	Objective
<b>Individuals</b>	By the end of 2025, contact your local council or MP to request clear leadership and investment in digital inclusion at the local level.
<b>Third Sector</b>	By December 2025, partner with at least one local authority to co-deliver digital inclusion services and share good practice through cross-sector forums.
<b>Industry</b>	By December 2025, integrate digital inclusion into your organisation's social value strategy and commit to local partnerships that expand digital access.
<b>Government</b>	By December 2025, confirm long-term funding mechanisms for digital inclusion roles in every local authority and support cross-UK coordination through the <i>Digital Inclusion Action Plan</i> .

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Charting the Path Ahead**

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This National Delivery and Advocacy Plan sets a clear direction for the Digital Poverty Alliance – and extends a powerful invitation to you. Every action you take, no matter how small, contributes to the growing wave of change that is reshaping how we think about digital access in the UK. Even by speaking openly about digital poverty – by recognising that digital access is not a luxury, but a basic necessity of life in modern Britain – you are helping bring visibility, dignity, and opportunity to millions who have long gone unacknowledged.

Real change will be measured not in words but in lives – in communities that feel less isolated, in households that can finally connect, learn, work, and thrive. Whether you live in a city, town, village, or remote rural area – in England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland – the need is urgent and the moment is now. Progress will not come from isolated effort but from united, determined collaboration across sectors, systems, and society.

No matter your role or background, we hope you find inspiration in the missions set out in this Plan. If you are part of an organisation with two or more employees, sign the *Charter for Digital Inclusion*. If you want to go further – by donating old tech, training staff to recognise the signs of digital exclusion, or partnering with us to design sustainable solutions – we are ready to work with you.

Together, we can ensure that no one is left behind in a digital world. Let this Plan be the spark for action – because inclusion is not a side project. It is the future we must all build, together.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## Acknowledgements

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The Digital Poverty Alliance's work is built on the dedication, insight, and ambition of many. First, we thank our team, whose expertise and relentless focus continue to push the boundaries of what is possible:

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Each member plays a critical role in driving our advocacy, delivering our programmes, and ensuring our work stays grounded in real-world needs.

We are also grateful to our Board of Trustees, who bring depth, perspective, and leadership to every decision:

**Niel McLean OBE**, Chair of Trustees, **Stephen Bethel**, Trustee, **Ilona Brannen**, Trustee, **David Burrows**, Trustee, **Beverly Clarke MBE**, Trustee, **Tom Kane**, Trustee, and **Moira Thomas**, Trustee.

### With thanks to our Industry Forum partners

Our Industry Forum brings together private sector leaders committed to ending digital poverty through shared insight, strategic collaboration, and long-term action. Their support informs our work and strengthens our national impact.



We also acknowledge the vital contributions of our **Charter for Digital Inclusion signatories**, **Local Authority Network**, and **Community Circle**. Their commitment and collaboration help drive change at scale.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Glossary of Terms**

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### **Accessibility**

Ensuring that digital content, platforms, and devices can be used by people with a range of disabilities or access needs – including those with visual, hearing, cognitive, or physical impairments. Formal standards are set around this, such as WCAG 2.2.

### **Algorithmic Transparency**

Ensuring that people understand how automated systems (like those used in benefits, education, or recruitment) make decisions, especially when they affect individuals' rights or opportunities.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Technology that enables machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence – such as understanding language, recognising patterns, solving problems, or making decisions. AI is increasingly used in education, healthcare, and public services. (See also Generative AI)

### **Assisted Digital Support**

Practical help for people who are unable to use online services independently, often provided in-person or via trusted intermediaries.

### **Connectivity**

The ability to go online using broadband, mobile data, or Wi-Fi – essential for accessing services, information, education, and work.

### **Content Management System (CMS)**

Software used to build and update websites. Common examples include WordPress and Drupal. CMS platforms with built-in accessibility features can improve inclusion across the web.

### **Critical Thinking Skills**

The ability to question information, consider multiple viewpoints, and make informed decisions – increasingly important for navigating today's digital and media environment.

### **Digital Access**

Having reliable, affordable access to the internet, devices, and digital services – alongside the skills and confidence to use them.

### **Digital Champion**

A person trained to support others with digital skills, often volunteering in community centres, libraries, workplaces, or charities. This may be a formal or informal term in different contexts.

### **Digital Exclusion**

The experience of being unable to access or use digital tools, services, or opportunities due to barriers such as affordability, limited infrastructure, lack of skills, or inaccessible design.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Defined by the UK Government in its *Digital Inclusion Action Plan* as “ensuring that everyone has the access, skills, support and confidence to participate in and benefit from our modern digital society, whatever their circumstances.”

This means enabling people to engage meaningfully with the digital world – whether at home, in education, at work, or in public life – by addressing barriers such as a lack of connectivity, devices, digital skills, or trust in digital services.

### **Digital Literacy**

The broader ability to use digital technology thoughtfully, critically, and confidently – including understanding privacy, online etiquette, and how to avoid scams or misinformation.

### **Digital Poverty**

Defined by the Digital Poverty Alliance as “the inability to interact with the online world fully, when, where, and how an individual needs to.”

This may be due to a lack of access to devices, connectivity, digital skills, or support – and it prevents people from participating in key aspects of life in the UK, such as education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement.

### **Digital Service Design**

The process of designing digital services that are easy to use, accessible, and built around the needs of real people.

## **Digital Skills**

A wide-ranging term, which for the Digital Poverty Alliance refers to the practical skills required to use digital devices and services effectively – such as setting up a smartphone, using email, accessing government services online, and developing media and AI literacy.

## **Essential Digital Skills**

The UK Government's standard for the minimum digital skills people need in daily life and work – ranging from managing information to problem-solving and communicating safely online.

## **Generative AI**

A form of artificial intelligence that can create new content – such as written text, images, or music – based on patterns it has learned. Generative AI is increasingly used in education, media, and the workplace.

## **Inclusive Design**

Creating digital products and services that are usable by everyone, regardless of ability, age, background, or experience.

## **Media Literacy**

The ability to assess the credibility and intent of media content – including recognising bias, misinformation, and how digital platforms influence information sharing.

## **Mesh Network**

A community-based internet network that uses multiple local connection points to provide strong, reliable internet access – particularly in rural or underserved areas.

## **National Delivery and Advocacy Plan**

The Digital Poverty Alliance's roadmap for tackling digital poverty in the UK – linking national ambition with practical delivery and evidence-based policy.

## **Open Roaming**

A public Wi-Fi system where users can automatically and securely connect to any participating network without needing to log in each time.

### **Social Tariff**

A discounted broadband or mobile plan for people on low incomes or means-tested benefits, designed to make connectivity more affordable.

### **Social Value Procurement**

Buying goods or services in a way that considers wider benefits – like reducing inequality or supporting digital inclusion – alongside cost and quality.

### **Telephony Switchover**

The UK-wide transition from traditional landline (analogue) phone services to digital-only voice services using broadband.

### **WCAG 2.2**

The latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – an international standard for making websites and apps more accessible, especially for disabled users. The UK public sector is legally required to meet these standards.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **More About the Digital Poverty Alliance**

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The Digital Poverty Alliance is the new name for the Learning Foundation, which was founded in 2001. The Learning Foundation, Currys plc, and the Institution of Engineering and Technology first established an initiative called the Digital Poverty Alliance – run by the Learning Foundation team – to unite efforts and accelerate action against digital exclusion. In 2024, the Learning Foundation rebranded as the Digital Poverty Alliance, marking a pivotal evolution in its mission to address the urgent and growing challenges of digital inequality. This transformation signalled a renewed focus on creating lasting change and expanding its impact on communities across the UK.

Digital poverty remains a major barrier to opportunity, with millions of people still lacking the tools, connectivity, and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world. The Digital Poverty Alliance works across government, industry, and the third sector, aligning efforts to break down systemic barriers related to affordability, access, skills, motivation, and connectivity. By fostering collaboration and avoiding duplication, the Alliance ensures that every initiative contributes meaningfully to long-term, sustainable solutions.

Through advocacy, research, and delivery programmes, the Digital Poverty Alliance drives systemic change. Its evidence-led campaigns engage policymakers and inspire action at every level, while its innovative programmes offer practical support to individuals and households. By combining robust insights with real-world delivery, the Alliance is working to bridge the digital divide and empower communities nationwide.

The Digital Poverty Alliance represents a bold vision for a digitally inclusive society. By convening diverse voices, forging strong partnerships, and delivering tangible impact, we are building a national movement to eliminate digital poverty. With determination and collective effort, we are shaping a future in which everyone – regardless of circumstance – has the tools, confidence, and opportunity to thrive in a connected world.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

## **Join Us in Our Mission**

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Ending digital poverty requires more than ambition. It requires sustained, coordinated effort from individuals, organisations, and institutions across the UK. The Digital Poverty Alliance invites all those who share our vision of a digitally inclusive society to stand with us. Whether you represent a business, charity, local authority, or public body, there is a meaningful way to contribute to this national movement.

### **Become an Industry Forum Partner**

The Industry Forum is a national platform for organisations that are committed to tackling digital poverty at scale. Members of the Forum help shape the direction of the National Delivery and Advocacy Plan, collaborate with peers across sectors, and contribute to the development of coordinated, impactful solutions. Forum members have access to exclusive research, events, and policy discussions, and play an active role in advancing digital inclusion across the country. Joining the Forum is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on one of the defining social challenges of our time.

### **Sign our Charter for Digital Inclusion**

The *Charter for Digital Inclusion* offers a practical and visible way for organisations to commit to action. Signatories pledge to embed digital inclusion into their operations and culture – whether through raising awareness of digital poverty, improving accessibility, donating devices, supporting staff training, or partnering to deliver local solutions. Signing the Charter signals a clear commitment to building a society in which digital access is recognised as a basic need, not a luxury. There is no cost to sign the Charter, and it is open to all organisations with two or more employees.

### **Join our Local Authority Network**

The Local Authority Network brings together local authorities from all four nations of the UK to share best practice, deepen understanding of different policy environments across regions and nations, and identify how to increase support for councils – regardless of where they are on their digital inclusion journey. Membership is free and open to all UK local authorities, with up to two nominated representatives per authority. Quarterly meetings and additional network events offer a space to connect, learn, and shape approaches to digital inclusion together.

## **Join our Community Circle**

The Community Circle is a collaborative initiative designed to bring together charities, non-profit organisations, and community groups who are working to end digital exclusion on the ground. It is a space to share knowledge, influence policy, and develop local responses that are grounded in lived experience. By joining the Community Circle, your organisation becomes part of a collective effort to create systemic change – working in partnership to ensure that no community is left behind. Together, we can help make digital access a right for everyone in the UK. There is no cost for non-profit organisations to join the Community Circle.

## **Make a Donation**

Every donation – whether financial or in the form of devices – helps bridge the digital divide. Donated laptops, tablets, and smartphones are refurbished and provided to individuals and families who would otherwise remain excluded. Financial contributions help to scale delivery programmes and sustain our advocacy work across government and industry. However you choose to support this work, your contribution helps create a future in which everyone has the tools, skills, and confidence to thrive in a connected world.

National Delivery and Advocacy Plan

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