

Supporting Digital Inclusion in Service Users

This guide covers sources of support for service users at risk of digital exclusion. People from excluded groups or living in deprived areas often lack the skills, ability and means to get online.

The following resources aim to support the access and use of digital health services and tools for service users. These resources are drawn from guidelines produced by [Refugee Action](#), No Accommodation Network ([NACCOM](#)) and Leeds Asylum Seeker's Network ([LASSN](#)). See the [Digital Inclusion Handbook](#) for more information.

Assessing digital exclusion

Given the limited resources of the charity sector, it is unlikely organisations will be able to meet all their client's needs, or at least not immediately, and so it may be necessary to prioritise people.

Below are ideas to help decide how to assess the needs of clients and create eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria will vary depending on your client group, funding and resources available:

- Being destitute or experiencing financial hardship;
- Experiencing loneliness;
- Insecure accommodation;
- Unable to engage with your organisation's activities;
- Struggling to keep in touch with people in their support network;
- Have lost or struggle to maintain contact with family members overseas;
- High vulnerabilities (eg around health or mental health) or safeguarding concerns that could be improved by connectivity;
- Children in the household (how many);
- Shielding or caring for shielding family members;
- Have Covid symptoms, are self-isolating or in hospital

If any of the above apply and you therefore consider your client to be at risk of digital exclusion with a need for prioritization, please go to the relevant sections for tailored information/resources.

Would you like support to access:

... a device (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop) to connect to the internet? → **Getting Devices**

... a reliable internet connection set up at home (e.g. WiFi or broadband)? → **Getting Connected**

... the skills and confidence to access remote therapy via the internet? → **Getting IT Support**

Getting Devices

For help with getting hold of Laptops, PCs, other devices.

Organization	Description
<p>Wavelength https://wavelength.org.uk/apply-for-help/groups/; info@wavelength.org.uk Tel: 01708 621101</p>	<p>WaveLength gives media technology to lonely people living in poverty. Support individual and group applications for e.g. tablets, radios, tvs.</p>
<p>Computer Aid International https://www.computeraid.org https://www.computeraid.org/get-computers/apply-computers</p>	<p>Provide refurbished IT equipment to NGO's and Charities at a cost of £85 for Laptops and £55 for desktops.</p>
<p>Solidaritech https://solidaritech.com/ hello@solidaritech.com</p>	<p>Community Interest Company that exists solely to help refugees and asylum seekers get access to technology. They have been inundated with requests for help with tech and I believe have limited if any stock currently available.</p>
<p>DevicesDotNow https://futuresdotnow.uk/devicesdotnow/</p>	<p>Phones, and other equipment with data, donated for free via Online Centres network https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/</p>
<p>SocialBox.biz https://www.socialbox.biz/</p>	<p>Refugee founded social enterprise. Free laptops (with Linux OS, not windows) refurbished, also refurb services.</p>
<p>Switch Aids https://switchaid.org/covid-19-charity-funding/</p>	<p>Funds available for charities seeking phone deals for sim-only, hardware only or a combination of sim and hardware.</p>
<p>GreenNet https://gn.apc.org</p>	<p>UK's oldest ISP! NFP https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GreenNet provide wired Broadband and consultancy</p>
<p>GetOnline@Home https://www.getonlineathome.org/help/eligibility.php; enquiries@computerrecyclersuk.com</p>	<p>Cheaper refurbished hardware deals provided by Computer Recyclers – recycled computers and tablets at affordable prices</p>
<p>Family Fund https://www.familyfund.org.uk/computers-and-tablets</p>	<p>Provide essential information and financial support to families on low incomes who are raising children with disabilities. They also provide training for the families who receive a technology grant.</p>
<p>Janga.la https://www.janga.la/</p>	<p>Provides wifi routers for individual households or e.g. housing associations. No contract; requires mobile data sim.</p>

Getting Connected

To combat digital exclusion organisations are topping up people's phones remotely, buying data-only sim cards and providing Wifi to those without.

Phone Mobile data

- LASSN / Leeds Migration Partnership have collated really practical essential information on using [Video Calls and Mobile Data](#) including 'Top Tips for Reducing Data Use' and 'How to Top Up Someone Else's Phone Credit'
- Barnet Refugee Service has put together these instructions [on topping up mobiles remotely](#). It includes topping up through the provider websites: Three, Vodafone, Lycamobile, GiffGaff, O2, EE, Lebara, Tesco; and purchasing electronic top up vouchers.
- To reduce time spent topping up people's phones through lots of different providers, use: [beCharge](#), [Recharge](#), [Ding](#) or [MobileTopUp](#) to top up any phone remotely
- Ordering new sim cards on data-only deals is the best value for money. E.g. [Smarty](#) 100gb for £15. You can set up an account without a contract, with minimal credit and then add data online, in shops or through PayPoint (1GB for £1) - so you don't end up with unused data. [Giffgaff](#) also have good deals. Both Smarty and Giffgaff sim cards can be inserted into any unlocked device (phone tablet or broadband/router dongle).
- [Solidaritech](#) is a Community Interest Company that exists solely to help refugees and those seeking asylum get access to technology. Solidaritech has negotiated a 5GB deal with O2 for £8 a month but for a minimum take up of 25 SIM cards. I believe that there is no tie into a monthly contract. Contact ben@solidaritech.com; Tel: 01274 288 910.
- Credit4Refugees distribute donated data through data top ups, founded during Calais crisis. <https://www.facebook.com/credit4refugees/>
- For more options on buying physical top up vouchers from the supermarket and sending these to people, or texting the code when required, see: <https://www.ragg.org.uk/destitution-payments/mobile-top-ups>

Home Wifi / Broadband

BT Basic + Broadband offers reduced cost telephone and broadband packages to people on income-based benefits. A package currently costs £10.05 a month. You must be getting one of these benefits and be the named account holder to apply:

- Income Support
- Pensions Credit (Guaranteed Credit)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income related)
- Universal Credit (and are on zero earnings)

Call 0800 800 864 or

<https://btplc.com/inclusion/ProductsAndServices/BTBasic/BTBasicBroadband/>

Mobile Broadband Wi-Fi Router/Dongles

If you are wanting to improve access to the internet but are not wanting your client to change the SIM card in their phone, then consider providing a Mobile Broadband WiFi Router/Dongle into which a new SIM card with data can be inserted (see Data Deals above). Mobile Broadband Wi-Fi Router/Dongles create a local Wi-Fi Hub and are not the same as USB Dongles that are plugged into a Laptop, PC or Tablet. Mobile Broadband Wi-Fi Router/Dongles take a SIM card (see above).

Getting IT Support

In addition to equipment and data, skills can be a very significant obstacle to internet access, especially when combined with lack of English. Initial support may be needed to learn how to use the internet, but also later if issues arise with equipment. This may be basic or advanced.

Below are a few resources that may help with providing basic IT support and opportunities for learning.

AbilityNet's ICanHelp volunteers provide free IT support to older people and people with disabilities of any age. Our volunteers can support people located anywhere in the UK. They are all DBT disclosure-checked and can help with all sorts of IT (information technology) challenges, from setting up new equipment, fixing technical issues, showing you how to stay connected to family and use online services. To request support:

- Use the '[Request our help](#)' form
- Call 0800 048 7462 (freephone and minicom)
- Email to enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk
- <https://abilitynet.org.uk/at-home/request-free-it-support-home>

Learn My Way is a website of free online courses for beginners, helping you develop digital skills to make the most of the online world, accessing health services and advice, keeping in touch with friends and family and shopping and banking online. Built by Good Things Foundation to help people develop their digital skills. Contains short videos on basics e.g/ how to use a mouse, how to stay in touch with family and friends online, internet safety. Accessible without registration. There are also lots of downloadable resources - which can be printed for those without internet access.

- <https://www.learnmyway.com/>;
- <https://www.learnmyway.com/choose-where-to-start>
- <https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/ournetwork/learning-tools>

Online Centres is a national network of hundreds of IT support providers of all shapes and sizes – check whether your local centre can provide useful training or support:

<https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/ournetwork/find-centre>

CitizensOnline provides information and advocacy for getting online.

<https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/first-steps-online/>

Digital Unite provides over 400+ how-to guides covering a whole host of digital topics. Written by subject matter experts and updated daily, the guides are perfect for supporting others with digital skills or improving your own knowledge. <https://www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides>

The Restart Project helps people learn how to repair their broken electronics, and rethink how they consume them in the first place. <https://therestartproject.org>

British Computer Association of the Blind. Provide helpful software for partially sighted or blind people to use computers, as with physical access obstacles, it really depends on the clients' IT skill levels and expectations . <https://www.bcab.org.uk/content/using-computer>