Digital support

Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion means making sure everyone can understand and use the internet and digital devices like smartphones, tablets, or computers to do the things they want to do in life. It also means helping people:

- Get access to the internet
- Learn how to use digital tools
- Feel confident and safe online

People being digitally included is important because many everyday things—like booking a doctor's appointment, applying for jobs, or talking to friends—are now mostly done online.

Having good digital skills (also known as digital literacy) helps people:

- Stay connected with family and friends
- Access health and government services
- Learn new skills and find jobs
- Feel more confident in a digital world

Digital skills support in Newcastle

If you live in Newcastle and would like to learn how to use and make the most of the internet, improve your digital skills, using a computer, smartphone or other device there are local services that can support you:

Search for Getting Online organisations

Location:
Postcode:
Search

You can also find a A to Z list of digital support by organisation name here

Get online Newcastle offer telephone support and computer courses ranging from the basics to City and Guilds qualifications. Courses include: Online Basics, Intro to Microsoft Office, Techy tea

party where you can help with your device set up. These are run face to face at Cruddas Park Library and City Library.

Elders Council of Newcastle work in partnership with Northumbria Students Union on Project ICE which includes drop in IT classes. You can bring along your own equipment such as laptops, iPads or digital cameras to learn more about how to use your device or practice on one of their computers. They can help you to develop your skills and confidence in using computers and the internet. Weekly sessions run during term time, September to April.

Search run Tea and tech sessions and and other digital support for people aged 50 and over. Everyone is welcome, including complete beginners. The sessions are tailored to meet your interests. You just need to tell the tutor what you want to learn.

Friends Action North East run workshops on getting online tailored to the needs of people with autism or a learning disability

Action Foundation offer digital inclusion workshops to refugees and migrants

Newcastle Vision Support provide practical support for people with sight loss including: IT training on iPads, tablets, laptops, computers and accessibility options. They also offer support on specialist software, such as Supernova.

Workers Educational Association (WEA) offer a wide range of courses on topics as varied as writing and art to beginners and more advanced computer classes. They also offer the ESOL for employability courses. There is a fee for most courses. Courses may be online or face to face at a location in the North East.

Lifelong learning article on InformationNOW has more information on courses available in Newcastle.

First Step North East helps migrant women living in Newcastle's West End to take part in opportunities to learn and increase their confidence. They offer computer skills sessions. Creche available.

The Wise Group can help unemployed people aged 16 to 66 years old living in Newcastle and North Tyneside with digital and I.T. skills. This is part of their wellbeing and digital skills mentoring

West End Refugee Service (WERS) run weekly refugee and asylum seeker digital inclusion sessions.

Digital courses

We are Digital provide computer and internet training in the home.

Ability Net is a national network of volunteers who provide free computer support to disabled people. They can visit you in your own home, or in another location such as a care home or a day centre. The volunteers can solve hardware and software problems, such as installing new equipment, as well as helping you to gain confidence in using a computer. This could be by getting connected to the Internet and using email, or getting you started with standard packages

such as word processing.

The Millin Charity run occasional digital skills courses for women

CICT Open Learning centre run a series of classes and courses available at all levels and abilities.

Online courses

Learn My Way offer useful short online courses which you can work through online. You can learn the basics of computers and the internet and then you can start learn a little bit more. Whether you want to chat to family and friends on Facebook, share digital photographs, learn how to shop online, find out how to use online banking, or look for a job they have a short course to help you do it.

GCF LearnFree.org offers125 free online tutorials. This includes e mail, internet, Microsoft office, maths, reading, career planning and digital skills

Digital Unite has a huge range of free learning guides to help people with using computers, the internet, tablets and other mobile devices. The easy-to-follow guides cover the essential topics from getting started with a mouse and keyboard to web browsing, emailing, shopping online and internet safety.

Google Garage offer free digital skills support online and face to face. They offer digital courses, online webinars and face to face workshops.. Google also offer 1-to-1 mentoring for businesses and charities in the UK, register for a free session here.

Citizens Online run online events, provide a free digital support helpline and a trained team of digital champions who will call you back and offer friendly, patient support over the phone.

Media Savvy CIC run digital skills courses including, introduction to computers, Social Media, eSafety, Employability and Money Matters.

Good Things Foundation's AI Gateway is a free E-learning website to help you learn more about using artificial intelligence (AI).

Help to access services

The NHS App is the main digital way to access health services in the UK. They have a range of helpful pages and resources on how to make the most of using the app for your health care.

Newcastle GP Services run occasional sessions on how to use the NHS app for appointments, prescriptions and more

West End Refugee Service (WERS) digital inclusion sessions include help with:

- registering with a GP
- using the NHS app

- renewing your HC2
- creating an E-visa account on GOV.UK
- digital banking and bank accounts
- raising issues with migrant help online
- creating a council housing account and bidding for properties online
- shopping safely online

Data banks and devices

A partnership between Newcastle City Council and Purple to expand free Wi-Fi across council buildings, libraries, gyms, public spaces is starting from October 2025. As free Wi-Fi venues are announce we will add the mhere.

The National Databank by Good Things Foundation, is like a foodbank but provides free mobile data, texts and calls for people in need.

Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three regularly donate mobile data SIM cards to Good things foundation and local digital inclusion hubs across the UK. Organisations registered gift the free mobile data to people experiencing data poverty or living on a low income in their community.

The National Device Bank by Good Things Foundation provides refurbished laptops, mobile phones and tablets to individuals who may not have access to a device.

The device bank provides device to local digital inclusion hubs across the UK. Organisations registered gift the free devices to people experiencing data poverty or living on a low income in their community.

Private or public sector organisations can donate their used devices to the national device bank, so digitally excluded people can be supported. You can find out more on Good Things Foundations website here

Newcastle Libraries Chromebook loan scheme lets you borrow a Chromebook from Newcastle Libraries for free for up to 12 weeks. It can help if you are new to using a laptop, email and chat, you want to complete forms or apply for jobs

To borrow a Chromebook, you must:

- be 18 or older
- be a library member
- live in Newcastle

You can apply by completing the online form here, call 0191 278 7878 (ask for Libraries or speak to staff at your local library

Housing Plus at Newcastle City Council offer free wi-fi and data in their communal spaces at Housing Plus properties. Internet access is provided by portable Jangala Get Boxes from Virgin Media 02.

FurbdIT is a partnership working to reduce digital poverty. They collect unwanted devices and IT equipment, refurbish it and breathe new life into it for community benefit.

Get Kraken CIC can provide data for people who are struggling to afford internet access to get free mobile data connectivity. You can help refer eligible people using their form on their website here

Health Innovation North East and North Cumbria (HI NENC) gift digital devices to patients who are given support and training, to help them engage with health services and stay connected to care.

Supporting people who are offline

Some people do not use the internet or digital devices. They may not have a computer, smartphone, or Wi-Fi. Others may not feel confident using technology. People who are offline should still be informed and supported to access information, manage their affairs, and connect with other people.

- **Understand their barriers**. People may not use the internet for many reasons. Cost, lack of confidence in digital skills, access to working devices, fear of online safety and scams, lack of interest, disability or impairments.
- **Offer help with simple digital tasks.** There may only be some digital tasks that people want to do or must do. Offer to help with tasks such as setting up a tablet, showing how to send an email or search for information. Use easy understandable words instead of technical language, write the steps of the task down or be patient and show them the steps to complete the task several times until they are more confident.
- **Find local digital support.** Many organisations and services offer free digital support. Help them find a local class or drop-in session. Offer to go with them or suggest they go with a friend.
- **Connect Them to Local community support.** Find out about local face to face support such as libraries, community centres, charities and social groups.
- **Respect Choices** Some people do not want to go online even if they have the chance to improve their skills or are given access to a device and internet. Support them in ways that work for them, like helping with phone calls or paper forms.
- **Make online information offline.** Save, print, write down or read aloud online information to someone who is offline.

> InformationNOW articles are designed to be printable as a fact sheet or written article. You can print pages and share with people offline.
>
> InformationNOW has key information available as offline printed leaflets. They can be found in our About Us Section – Free Resources
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> They include:
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> - **‘Right Information at the right time’ leaflet** – Information on key community services and adult social care
> - **‘New to Newcastle’ leaflets** – Useful information in multiple languages for Refugee, asylum and new migrants
> - **‘Looking after someone’ leaflet** – Useful information for informal carers

Support for organisations

The National Digital Inclusion Network ran by Good Things Foundation is a network of charities, community interest companies, social enterprises, local authorities and NHS Trusts that support digital inclusion through their work and offer digital support services.Digital inclusion network organisations serve as local safe spaces where digitally excluded people can get free support to get connected.

Organisations that register get:

- Digital inclusion grant opportunities from their Fix The Digital Divide Fund
- Peer-to-peer networking with support from a Network Ambassador
- Regular online training sessions, co-delivered by experienced members
- Access to free digital inclusion services

Connected Voice run a local digital inclusion network. The group helps people in Newcastle and Gateshead learn about digital tools and services. They run free online sessions called **“Lunch and Learn”** every month.

Third Sector Lab offer training, support, mentorship and digital design services to charities and VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise)

Charity Digital offer digital inclusion advice and training to VCSE organisations. They have free resources, articles, podcasts, webinars, videos and online events.

Health Innovation North East and North Cumbria (HI NENC) run a digital inclusion forum bringing together partners from health, care, and the voluntary sector.

Digital Pathfinders helps SMEs, charities and social enterprises across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland become more successful and resilient by adopting digital technology.

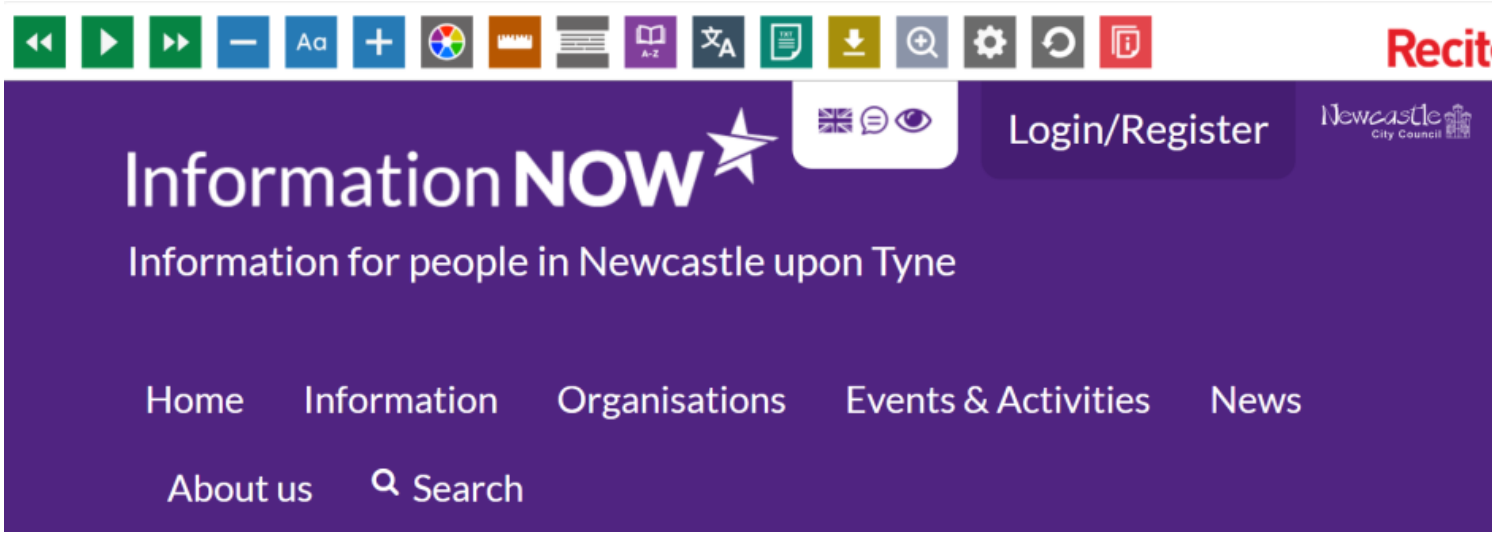
Digital accessibility

Digital accessibility means making sure that digital content and tools can be used by people of all abilities, including those who may use assistive technologies like screen readers or voice control. This includes websites, applications, documents, videos, media and other digital materials.

Read more on informationNOW about Accessible information

How to make InformationNOW more accessible

InformationNOW uses Accessibility software called Recite Me. You can use this software to change language, change text size, change text and background colour, read text aloud, use reading aids such a screen ruler, download MP3 audio of a page and more. You can open the accessibility software by clicking the white button with three icons(a flag, speech bubble and an eye) in the right hand corner of any page on the site.



You can read more about how to tailor InformationNOW to your access needs here

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Other Useful Information

- **Getting online and digital equipment** article on InformationNOW. Find out how you can access free or low cost equipment and internet
- **Finding reliable tradespeople** article on InformationNOW if you need help with installing phonelines or broadband
- **Making the most of the internet** – Age UK's guide

InfoNOW resources

Want to share useful information about digital support?

Adding our Information widget to your website means you can show your visitors a range of information pages on InformationNOW including digital inclusion support and staying safe online:

Please contact us if you would like to use this widget on your website.

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Useful Organisations

Newcastle Council Housing Services

Email: council.housing@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Newcastle City Council, NE7 7LX

Newcastle Libraries

Email: information@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Newcastle City Library, NE1 8AX

Elders Council of Newcastle (Older People's Forum)

Email: info@elderscouncil.org.uk

Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 208 2701

Address: The Elders Council of Newcastle, NE4 5PL

Digital Unite

Email: du@digitalunite.com

Website: www.digitalunite.com

Learn My Way

Email: hello@goodthingsfoundation.org

Website: www.learnmyway.com

BrowseAloud

Email: info@browsealoud.com

Website: www.browsealoud.com

Telephone: 028 9442 8105

Address: Lucas Exchange, BT41 2RU

AbilityNet

Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

Website: www.abilitynet.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 180 0028

Address: Acre House,, NW1 3ER

Walker Learning Hive at Christ Church

Email: hthirkell@northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Website: http://www.northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Address: Walker Parish Centre/Church, NE6 3BS

GCF LearnFree.org

Website: http://www.gcflearnfree.org/

Get Online Newcastle

Email: Getonline@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries/getting-help-digital-skills

Telephone: 0191 277 8842

Address: Newcastle City Library , NE1 8AX

FurbdIT

Email: ask@furbdit.org.uk

Website: https://furbdit.org.uk/

Telephone: 01642 232 220

Citizens Online

Email: info@citizensonline.org.uk

Website: https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/

Telephone: 0808 196 5883

Address: The Exchange , GL5 1DF

Media Savvy CIC

Email: info@mediasavvycic.co.uk

Website: https://www.mediasavvycic.co.uk

Telephone: 07873 176 145

Address: 27 Norfolk Street, SR1 1EE

Digital Pathfinders

Email: hello@digitalpathfinders.uk

Website: https://www.digitalpathfinders.uk/

Telephone: 0191 716 5085

Northern Learning Trust

Email: hthirkell@northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Website: www.northernlearningtrust.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 271 0131

Address: Cheviot House, NE3 2ER

Good Things Foundation

Email: hello@goodthingsfoundation.org

Website: https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/

Address: PO Box 6063 , S11 0GU

First Step North East

Email: sandramorland@hotmail.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 226 1213

Address: 435 Westgate Road, NE4 8RN

The Wise Group

Email: wisesteps@thewisegroup.co.uk

Website: http://thewisegroup.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 242 4898

Address: The Beacon, NE4 9PQ

Related Articles

Internet, WiFi and broadband

Getting online and using digital equipment

Staying safe online

What you can do online

Keeping in Touch Online

Social Networking

Making your computer or mobile device easier to use

Mobile phones