

Digital You

Digital skills and inclusion are fundamental for economic success and social justice



What is Digital You?

Digital You is Salford City Council's landmark digital inclusion project to help the city's most disadvantaged residents gain the confidence and capability to become independent users of the internet. It is taking the digital barriers down, brick by brick, and has set an ambitious target of getting almost 8,000 people online by 2020, 80% of whom must be facing social exclusion.

To achieve this, we are working with Good Things Foundation, the UK's leading digital and social inclusion charity which helps people to use and engage with digital to improve their lives. The project uses digital inclusion to support people to become digital citizens, driving a wide range of social and economic outcomes, making the biggest possible impact for Salford.

Why is Digital You important?

Digital You is a key part of Salford City Council's vision to create a better, fairer Salford and provide the best quality of life for the people of the city. Improving digital literacy helps us tackle issues such as social isolation which improves health and wellbeing and enables people access to learning

and job opportunities. Good Things Foundation described it as a "landmark investment from a council with vision, commitment and ambition."

Salford has a bold ambition to be a Digital City using digital transformation to ensure the Council's services are a great experience for everyone. We want to make sure no one is left behind as digital becomes the way to access services, communicate with organisations, and interact with friends and family. This isn't just about transforming a service, it's about transforming the lives of our residents.

What does Digital You involve?

Our partner, Good Things Foundation, is working with Salford based community organisations from libraries and housing providers to support and help residents engage with the digital world. Their approach reaches disadvantaged people in the places where they live, through familiar faces in trusted places. Residents can learn basic digital skills and build confidence in local community settings so they have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them day to day.

Digital You also involves the recruitment of Digital Champion volunteers who help learners find their way around email and the internet. They show people how to save money by finding better deals online, how to use technology to keep in touch with friends and family and how to find information to manage their health or learn new skills.

Good Things Foundation manages the Online Centres Network, a network of 5,000 community organisations across the UK - ranging from job clubs, food banks, mosques and more - working in

the heart of their communities to support the most vulnerable and socially excluded people to improve their lives through digital.

Good Things Foundation's online learning platform is designed to support people to gain basic digital skills, with courses covering: searching the internet, banking online, using public services online, staying healthy online, searching for a job online and more. Learn My Way is uniquely accessible, with a text to speak option, large text and images, and catering to auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles.

The Online Centres Network and Learn My Way are key ingredients of our Digital You model. This combines grassroots, informal, guided community learning with high quality, standardised content - to address at scale, social challenges such as health and wellbeing, employment and financial inclusion through digital.

How is Digital You creating a social movement?

Salford has successfully teamed up with both voluntary and private sector organisations to improve its digital services and skills. It has been creating a social movement for change by involving stakeholders from public, voluntary and private sector, to pledge their support.

Salford City Council was able to highlight where organisations, across sectors, can demonstrate their corporate social responsibility by supporting the movement to increase digital inclusion. Google supported our ambition with their Digital Garage Bus tour in Salford in 2018 with its free digital workshops for residents in places across the city including shopping centres. Another example is Talk Talk providing free kit as well as employees volunteering as digital champions at online centres.

Digital You is an award-winning programme

Our ambitions and achievements were recognised by Digital Leaders 100 which awarded us both Digital Council of the Year and Overall DL100 Winner 2018.

How is Digital You sustainable?

The programme has a strong focus on sustainability. We want community organisations to have the skills, capacity and resource to build digital inclusion into their day-to-day mission and to continue helping residents after the programme has ended. Digital You involves building up a network of community venues in the city that will support residents with face-to-face, informal support to boost local skills and ensure everyone continues to get the most of out of digital technology in future.

The future of Digital You

We want to ensure that no one is left behind as digital becomes the way to access services, communicate with organisations, and interact with friends and family. We don't want to stop at 8,000 residents and are committed to ensuring that all residents are confident and capable to participate in the digital world.

Our aim is for Digital You to continue past 2020 until all residents in Salford are confident online, and link this to a skills escalator to match residents with growth in the city. Investing in digital skills for Salford's residents is investing in the city's future prosperity and brings potential life-changing economic, wellbeing and social inclusion benefits to the residents involved.



Salford City Council