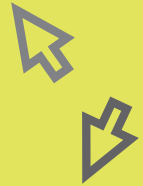




NORWICH
City Council



Digital inclusion strategy

Vision:

to support all our customers and citizens to access and use the internet.



We live in an increasingly digital world where many people are already benefiting from the internet, digital TV and mobile communications.



All of the above offer opportunities to learn, save money and keep in touch with friends and relatives. When individuals are digitally active it can improve the accessibility of services and support to people who find themselves physically and emotionally isolated.

However, there is growing evidence that shows there are a significant number of people who do not or cannot make use of these opportunities.

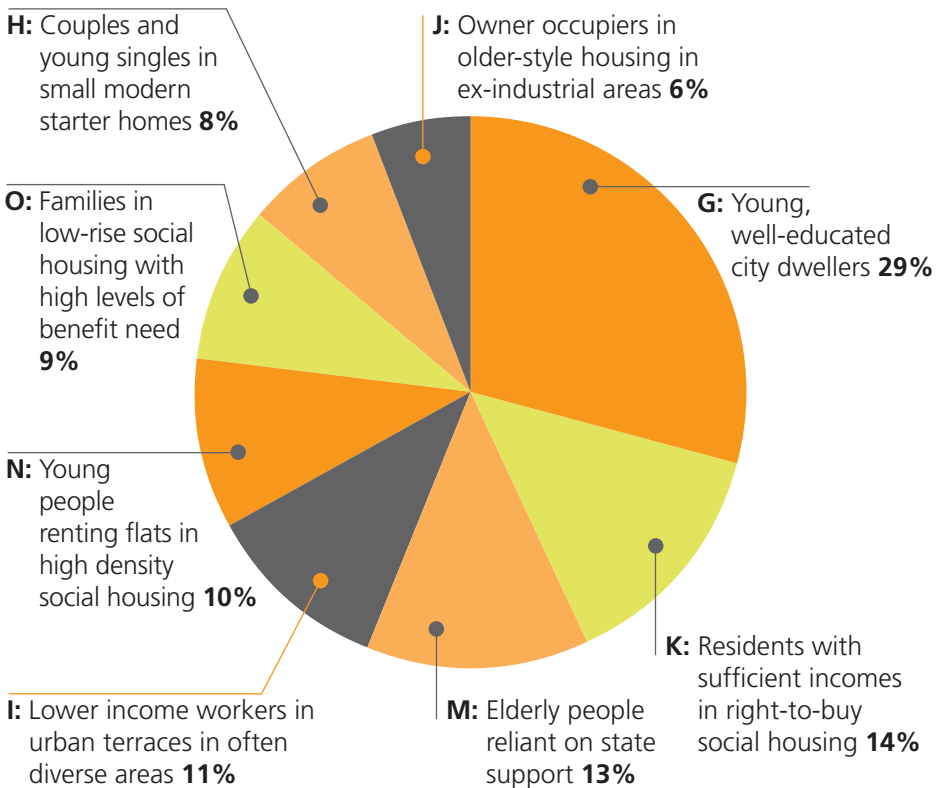


Public and private services are increasingly moving to a 'digital by default' delivery model to reduce cost and improve services. In this context, those who remain digitally inactive are excluded from the economic, social and financial benefits that the majority of citizens are accessing.



What we want to do is deliver good outcomes for our customers and citizens. To do this we need to promote self-service for those who are able, in order that we can focus our reduced resources on those who most need our help.

We have worked closely with the organisation Citizens Online to identify the groups of people who are likely to need high levels of support in order to use the internet. The Citizens Online final report showed that the Norwich population can be broken into the following groups.



Groups M, I, N and O all have a very low propensity to self-serve or access the internet.





The pie chart shows that around 40 per cent of households in Norwich fall into groups that are likely to be highly dependent on state support and have a low ability to access services online or self-serve (Citizens Online Sept 2014):



- Elderly people on state support.
- Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas.
- Young people renting flats in high density social housing.
- Families in low-rise council housing with high levels of benefit need.

With the forthcoming implementation of various aspects of welfare reform already affecting a large section of the community who are deemed to be vulnerable, the public sector will have to work hard to ensure these individuals, as well as other vulnerable people, do not slip further into isolation.



By making sure that opportunities exist to enhance peoples' skills and confidence in the use of technology we will be making great strides in keeping people in touch with their community and society in general.

The issue of digital exclusion is one that impacts the city council both as a service provider and community leader and its partner organisations. The scale of change required is beyond the scope of one organisation and needs to be tackled from a partnership approach.

This strategy will be delivered through a digital inclusion steering group made up of the council's key partners and stakeholders.





Digital inclusion priorities


- **Support and promote awareness of free digital access points across the city and available support and training.**

It is important that people have a single branded reference point for all available activities that support digital inclusion. This will make it easier for people to find the most relevant access and support for their needs.


- **Target digital access and support to the most vulnerable groups within the city.**

There is a need to develop specific information that is targeted to the more vulnerable groups within the city. This is becoming increasingly critical for those who need to claim benefits and for those with more chaotic lifestyles.

- **Identify potential funding opportunities that will further support the council's digital inclusion strategy.**

There are funding opportunities available that are specifically relevant to the digital agenda. This possible additional funding can be used to further resource the digital agenda. 

- **Enhance and improve the council's website and increase services available via the council web site.**

The council's website needs to be fit for purpose. An increasing number of council customers access the web using smart phones and tablets so the council's website needs to respond to whatever device is being used by customers. 

- **Provide opportunities for Norwich City Council staff and councillors to develop their wider digital skills and potential to become digital champions.**



We need to ensure staff are working in an efficient manner and can act as digital champions. To do this they need to be using the internet wherever possible. Councillors need to be able to engage with their communities in a variety of ways and the use of the internet, including social media, offers an effective communication channel.

- **Work closely with partners and key stakeholders to further promote and support the digital inclusion agenda.**

We need to further improve our relationship with and between partners so that we can provide a coordinated and cohesive approach to digital inclusion across the city.

Roles and responsibilities

Corporate leadership team

Corporate leadership team will take overall responsibility for the digital inclusion strategy



Channel shift board

Channel shift board will monitor progress of actions and will agree any escalation

Internal digital inclusion working group

The internal working group will help to form the strategy and will act as digital ambassadors within the council

External digital steering group

The external group will help to form and deliver the strategy within Norwich

Action plan

In collaboration with our partners we are developing an action plan that will help us to move forward with digital inclusion in Norwich. For example, some of the things we are in the process of delivering as part of our action plan are:

- Facilitating and supporting 'Get online Tuesdays' at The Forum. Working closely with Barclays digital eagles team and the library service we have set up a monthly digital all day drop-in session where people can go along and get help with any of their digital questions or problems. This could range from accessing genealogical sites to downloading photos or learning how to use social media.
- Collaborating with key partners to develop an 'inline for online card'. This will be used as a way of signposting our customers to the most appropriate support for their needs in terms of accessing online services. We are developing some shared protocols that participating organisations will sign up to once the protocols have been confirmed.
- We will be working with our partners to look at how we can deliver digital training to those groups within Norwich who are the most digitally excluded.

Monitoring

Progress against the action plan will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis and form part of the 'Corporate Plan' priorities. Actions will also be reviewed and amended to reflect changes in central government initiatives and guidance.





For more information, visit www.norwich.gov.uk



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