

# Digital Inclusion Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our overall aim is to create homes and neighbourhoods which we can all be proud of whilst delivering an efficient and well run business.

We live in a world where digital technology is re-shaping every aspect of our lives: how we work, travel, shop, access services, meet people, communicate and are entertained.

The Greater Manchester Digital Strategy 2018 - 2020 highlighted that, in terms of broader digital inclusion, major barriers remain. In Greater Manchester in 2017, 21-25% of residents lacked all five basic digital skills (communicating, creating, transacting, problem-solving and managing information). And 37% of those who are digitally excluded are social housing tenants.

We want to support our customers to be digitally included because:

- It is a key factor in job search and gaining employment (and subsequent progression);
- It is a key factor in supporting customers to access welfare benefits;
- It supports social inclusion, Anti-Poverty strategy, Health & Well being and Engagement
- It facilitates access to potentially cheaper and better services through online purchasing, online servicing and cost comparison.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Digital Inclusion Policy is to set out our approach to how we will support our customers to increase their digital skills, motivation and confidence and access digital services.

## 3. Scope

This policy considers our customers as the primary audience in scope, however, we would anticipate any actions arising from this policy to benefit our wider customer base, including non Bolton at Home customers, community and voluntary groups and others who access our services.

The policy does not have within scope the detail of IT infrastructure and digital self-service.

## **4. Policy**

We will:

1. Provide introductory IT skills training for customers;
2. Prioritise needs-led IT skills training to customers who are job seeking and /or required to claim Universal Credit online;
3. Provide information on our website (and other online forums) about free Wi-Fi/internet access points and IT training;
4. Identify referral pathways for customers who need to increase their general literacy skills to support their online activity;
5. Support community groups to deliver IT skills and training in their own communities, including support to access to digital inclusion community grants;
6. Offer internet access, via UCAN centres, to those who have no internet access at home;
7. Partner with organisations like AgeUK, Bolton college and others to optimise our resources and to provide joint skills and training services across Bolton
8. Explore opportunities for funding to support all of the above.

## **5. Equality analysis**

An equality analysis was completed and approved by the equality analysis panel on 20 November 2019.

## **6. Responsibility**

The policy actions will be delivered via a combination of:

- Employees
- The community with our support
- Our partners

Delivery will be supported by a working group to include:

- Head of IT (or representative)
- Head of Support & Safeguarding (or representative)
- UCAN Centre Manager
- Head of Revenue Services (or representative)
- Head of Older People's Services (or representative)
- Head of Community Investment (or representative)

## **7. Consultation**

In producing this policy, we engaged with customers and the information gathered was used to shape this policy. We also consulted with:

- Employment and Enterprise Team
- Community Investment Team
- UCAN centre employees
- Income Management Team
- Tenancy Support Services
- Home Finder Services
- IT Service
- Asset Management Team
- Customer Support Manager

- Older Persons Activities Co-ordinator
- Partnerships, Marketing and Communications Team
- Business Development Team
- ESOL Co-ordinator
- Starts With You Limited
- AgeUK

## **8. GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018**

We are compliant with the GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018

## **9. BH Related policies**

Data Breach Management Policy

Data Protection Policy

Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy

BH IT Communications Policy

Value for Money Strategy

Procurement

Asset Management

Risk Assessment

Creating Social Value

Community Engagement Strategy

## **10. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

Performance information will be provided by the Employment team quarterly. The policy will be reviewed 3 yearly.

<b>Date approved</b>	18 December 2019
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