NHS

South West London

SWL ICS Digital Inclusion Toolkit

Supporting Digital Inclusion in South West London

May 2024

Contents

Introduction

Digital inclusion ensures that everyone, regardless of their background, demographics, disability or circumstances, has equal access to and opportunity to benefit from digital technologies and the internet. This includes both our patients and staff.

In the context of health and social care, digital inclusion plays a significant role in supporting priorities such as self-care, managing long-term conditions, and promoting empowerment while reducing health inequalities.

South West London Integrated Care System (ICS) is committed to ensuring its population can understand, participate, and contribute to their own healthcare through the use of digital, and that staff have the right skills and capabilities to provide quality patient care. The ICS recognises that it must take initiative to tackle the issue of digital isolation across its six boroughs, with the aim to achieve digital equality and fully realise the benefits that digital can have on people's health and wellbeing.

In the UK, it is estimate that eleven million people (20% of the population) lack basic digital skills, or do not use digital technology at all. These people tend to be older, less educated and in poorer health than the rest of the population meaning that they are also some of the heaviest users of health and social care services. To help ensure digital health and social care services do not disadvantage the digitally excluded, care must be taken to implement interventions that help support digital inclusion, as well as ensuring non-digital alternatives are always available for those who can't, or do not wish to, access health and social care services digitally. A digitally inclusive SWL does not aim to replace in-person interactions with the NHS, but rather offer our patients the flexibility to access NHS services according to their individual preference.

In 2023, NHS England published a framework for NHS action on digital inclusion. The framework identified five domains where action is needed, outlined on this page. This toolkit has been produced to support digital inclusion across SWL ICS, and to provide those responsible for designing and delivering digital health and care services with the tools needed to improve access and support for those who are, or are at risk of becoming, digitally excluded.

Key terms

Digital Exclusion

Refers to the lack of access, skill and capabilities needed to engage with devices or digital services that help people participate in society.

Digital Inclusion

The approach for overcoming exclusion by addressing the barriers to digital, such as opportunity, access, knowledge, and skills; not only a matter of technological access; it is an essential component of efforts to address health inequalities and promote equitable healthcare access for all.

1
Access to devices and data so that everyone can access digital healthcare if they choose to

2
Accessibility and ease of using technology, so that digital content and products are co-designed

3
Skills and capability so that everyone has the skills to use digital approaches and health services

4
Beliefs and trust so that people understand and feel confident using digital health approaches

5
Leadership and partnerships so that digital inclusion efforts are co-ordinated to help reduce health inequalities

Understanding our Integrated Care System

South West London Integrated Care System (ICS) is a complex landscape in terms of the provision of health and care.

It involves the organisations illustrated, alongside care homes, pharmacists, optometrists, dentists, third sector organisations and other support services in the community. Our health and care services and care pathways cross boundaries between Places in the ICS and colleagues in other areas, such as within other ICS's in London and Surrey. This means that to ensure a digitally inclusive South West London, we must work collaboratively across organisations and care boundaries.

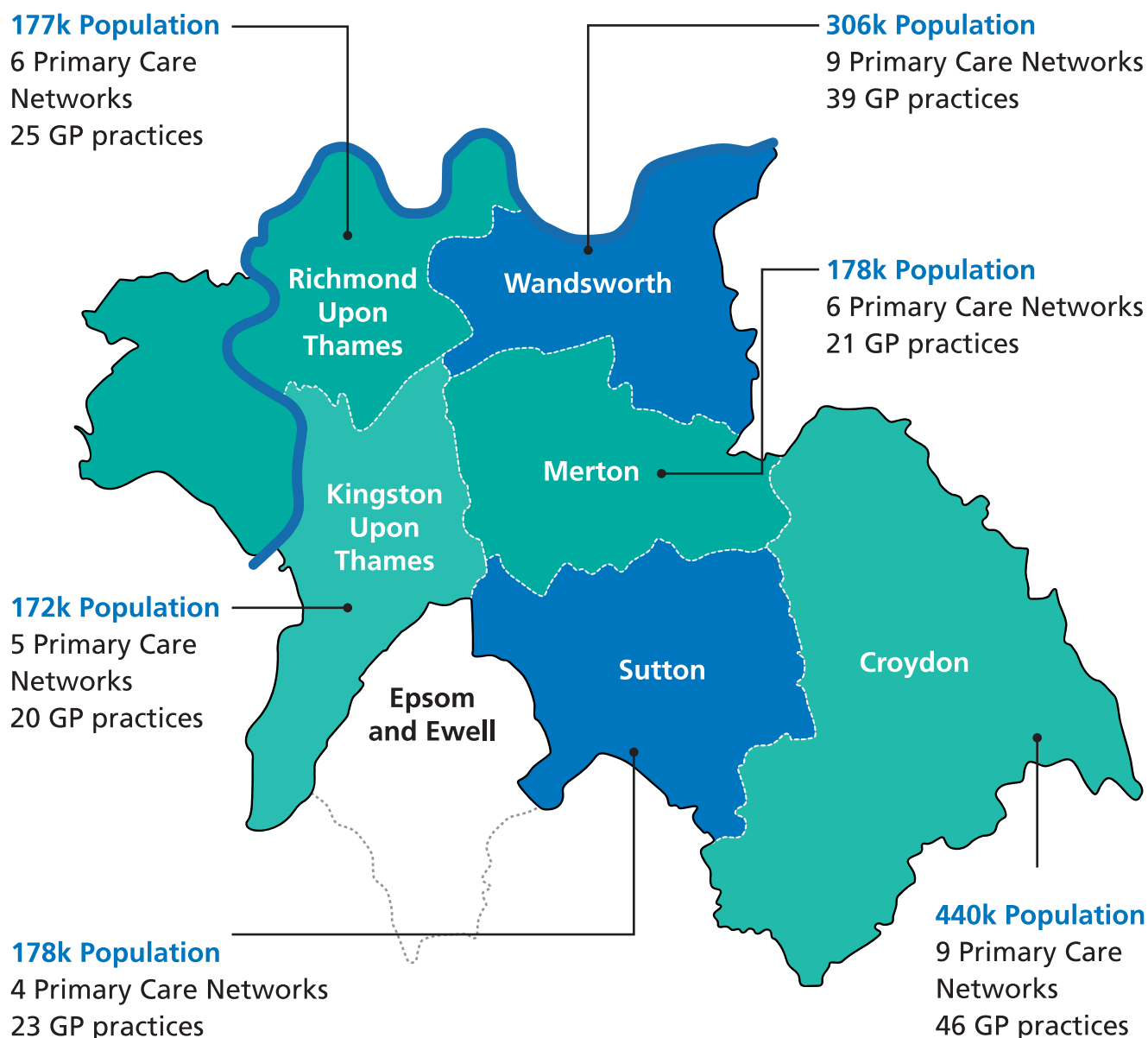## Research findings into the barriers to digital inclusion in SWL

Various groups across the South West London Integrated Care System (ICS) have undertaken exploratory research to investigate the barriers to digital inclusion, to help increase the adoption of digital health and care services as we evolve as a healthcare system.

Whilst developing our Joint Forward Plan (2023), extensive engagement was conducted to gather the insights of our community across a number of care settings and focus areas (including digital). In total, 341 people responded to the survey on digital and data services.

Key findings include:

- Our population were concerned with ensuring that the use of digital technology did not replace human interaction or limit face to face appointments

- There is a need to provide training and support for people who need help to use digital solutions

- There are concerns around poor IT security and data management leading to a loss of patient data and confidentiality

- 93% of respondents agreed that they worry about digital inclusion…

- …but 89% agreed that improved IT would provide better continuity of care and co-ordination between services.

177k Population
6 Primary Care
Networks
25 GP practices

306k Population
9 Primary Care Networks
39 GP practices

178k Population
6 Primary Care Networks
21 GP practices

172k Population
5 Primary Care
Networks
20 GP practices

178k Population
4 Primary Care Networks
23 GP practices

440k Population
9 Primary Care
Networks
46 GP practices

Richmond Upon Thames

Wandsworth

Merton

Kingston Upon Thames

Epsom and Ewell

Sutton

Croydon

1,455,000
Population

4
Acute Trusts NHS Hospital

1
Community NHS Trust Hospital

1
Mental Health NHS Trust Hospital

1
Specialist Centre

6
Local Authorities

174
GP Practices

39
Primary Care Networks

345+
Care homes

6
Healthwatch organisations

South West London have been working in collaboration with partners getUbetter to develop a self-management app that provides support to those managing long term conditions.

As part of this programme, a project team from the SWL Integrated Care Board undertook a research study looking at the drivers of digital exclusion from the perspectives of both patients and clinicians to understand why patients are choosing not to use the app, and why clinicians are not prescribing the app to their patients.

A questionnaire was developed to assess the acceptability of getUBetter for patients and clinicians. 256 patients and 16 general practitioners (GP's) responded to the surveys.

Headline Findings

The main drivers for not using the app included:

- Unclear understanding
- Ease of use
- Accessibility

Following this initial questioning, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 patients and 11 GP's to better understand the drivers for, and the barriers against, accessing and prescribing the South West London musculoskeletal self-management app. The main themes from these interviews are highlighted below:

Beliefs

"Apps are welcomed as a self-management tool, but they are not appropriate for complex cases"

Barriers

"Limited digital skills and fear of missing diagnosis through lack of examination discourages users"

Enablers

"Each of access and recommendation by clinicians encourages app usage"

Solutions

"The app is user friendly but increased awareness and prompts to use the app were encouraged"
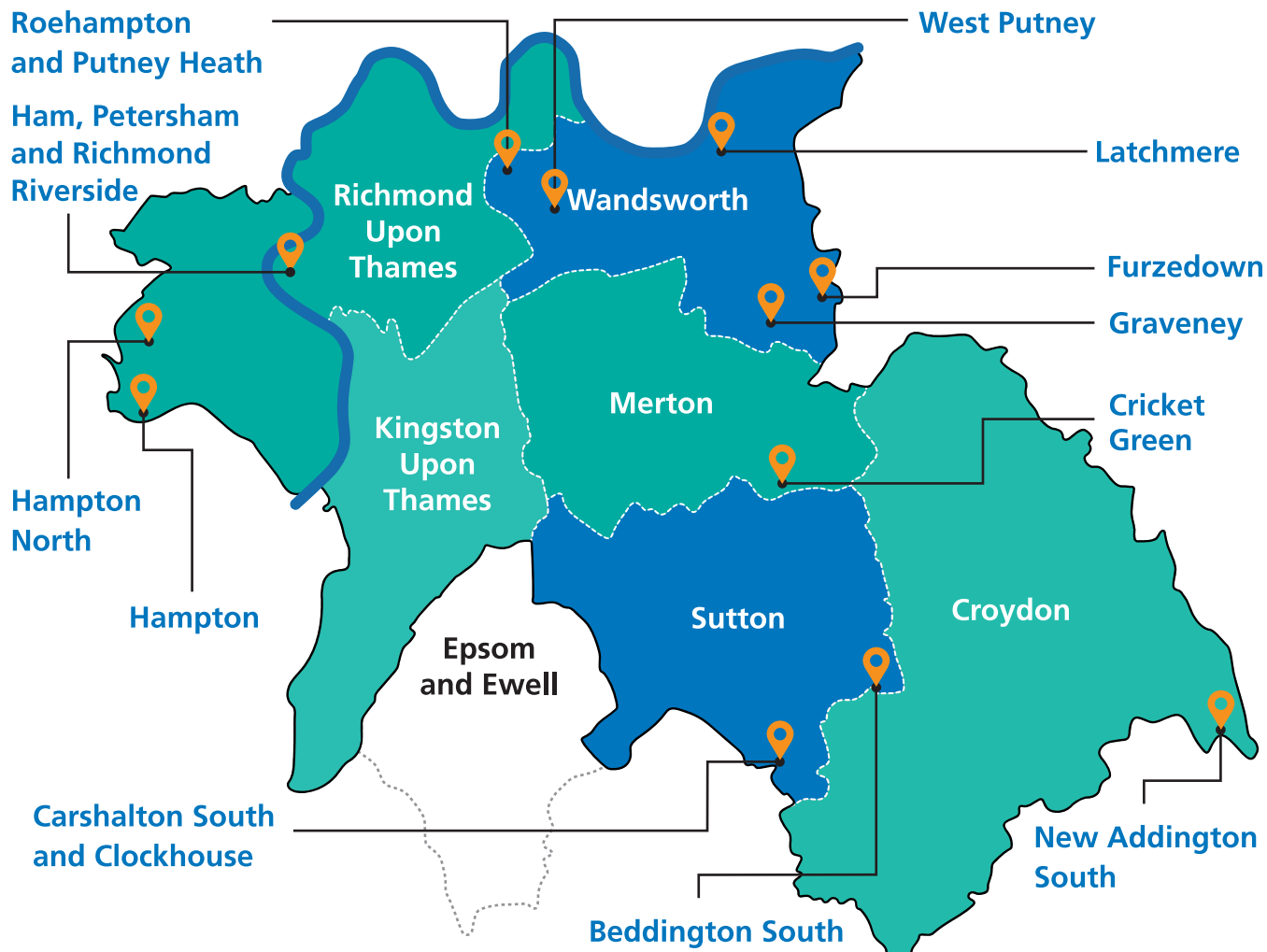
Digital Exclusion in South West London

To understand the risk of digital exclusion within South West London, the Digital Exclusion Risk Index (DERI) tool was used.

DERI looks at what is known of the demographic profile for each ward as well as the broadband network availability and the scale of deprivation within the area to establish the level of risk.

According to DERI mapping, specific wards within the boroughs are at an elevated risk of being digitally excluded, which must be considered in the ICS's response to the issue to inform targeted activity.

The South West London wards considered as high risk of digital exclusion have been highlighted on the map, to inform targeted activity.

Our Approach to Digital Inclusion

In South West London, we strive to be forward-thinking. To achieve this, we are committed to ensuring that digital health and care services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of our population, preventing any future 'digital divide.'

As part of our efforts to ensure a digitally inclusive South West London, we aim to **embed a set of five key principles within the existing practices** across our system, and in alignment with NHS England's guidance on inclusive digital healthcare.

Collaboration with our partners in Local Authorities and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations is essential to realising this goal. Together, we can work towards a digitally inclusive South West London.

This toolkit **outlines our approach and recommendations for supporting digital inclusion**. It serves as a resource for all our organisations to use to reduce digital exclusion in healthcare.

Our approach to Digital Inclusion, includes the following 5 components:

1 Inclusion in Digital Strategy

2 Inclusive Digital Projects

3 Communication and Publicity

4 Leverage Resources and Commercial Opportunities

5 Increase Visibility and Reporting

1. Inclusion in Digital Strategy

1. We will ensure **digital inclusion requirements** are **integrated** into our **organisation's digital strategy**
2. This will include considering the **needs of diverse user groups,** including those at risk of digital exclusion, in the **design and implementation of digital solutions**
3. We will **assess digital literacy amongst staff** in an effort to understand our **baseline position. Training will be made available** to staff with poor digital literacy
4. We will make **digital skills training an essential requirement for our workforce**
5. We will make **digital inclusion training mandatory** for all our workforce, to **ensure staff learn the risks of digital exclusion**

2. Inclusive Digital Projects

1. We will ensure all **business cases include plans for addressing digital inclusion**
2. We will ensure **funding bids referencing digital projects demonstrate a commitment to digital inclusion** and outline strategies for reaching underserved populations.
3. We will ensure **all new and existing digital projects complete a digital inclusion impact assessment,** which will form part of the Equality Impact Assessment.
4. We will ensure **digital inclusion** is considered and tracked as part of the **Benefits Realisation Plan** of all new digital projects.
5. We will ensure all new and existing projects and publications **prioritise inclusive design and accessibility standards** to ensure that they are accessible to all users

3. Communication and Publicity

1. We will **publicise and communicate the digital inclusion approach** across the system. This will include **raising awareness among staff members, stakeholders, and external partners**
2. We will clearly **communicate the requirements of digital inclusion** to project teams and stakeholders involved in digital initiatives within the system
3. We will **establish communication networks,** so our population know who to contact if they have a concern about digital exclusion
4. In accordance with our Data Strategic Plan, we will ensure that the public feels **confident about the NHS's responsible handling of their personal data**
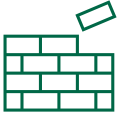
4. Leverage Resources and Commercial Opportunities

1. We will **ensure existing resources and commercial opportunities that support digital inclusion efforts** are identified, documented, and made accessible to project teams

2. We will **encourage collaboration with external partners,** including local government, VCSE and Healthwatch organisations, and businesses **to leverage available resources and expertise in promoting digital inclusion**

3. Where possible, we will ensure all **digital procurement** undertaken going forward will contribute to the **NHS Net Zero and Social Value Goals**

4. Where possible, we will create processes whereby **end-of-life IT equipment is repurposed and donated to our citizens** to enable them to access online services

5. Increase Visibility and Reporting

1. We will establish a **reporting mechanism to track** and report on efforts related to **digital inclusion**

2. Project teams will be required to provide **regular updates on their progress in addressing digital inclusion requirements**

3. An annual **DI report will be delivered to the Digital Board** to ensure **accountability and oversight** of digital inclusion initiatives, and to report on what our population are saying about digital inclusivity and their ability to access our services

Understanding the specific needs and concerns of those who are digitally excluded is crucial for tailoring our communications and support offerings. Research has identified five distinct groups that go beyond the simple classifications of 'digitally included' or 'digitally excluded.'

Digitally Activated – People who can use the Internet and online services confidently and see the benefits.

Digitally Uninspired – People who can use the Internet and online services but don't understand the benefits or lack the motivation.

Digitally Doubtful – People who have genuine concerns about the use of the Internet and online services, such as fears about information security, or lack of trust in the organisation or service itself.

Digitally Interested – People who are interested in the use of the internet and online services but do not know how to use it or need support

Digitally Unable – People who can't or do not wish to access the Internet or online services.

Our Recommendations

It is recommended that organisations identify the demographic groups that are at higher risk of digital exclusion, using insights from local joint strategic needs assessments and tools such as the Digital Exclusion Risk Index and the Core20PLUS5. Identifying these groups will allow us to implement the appropriate support mechanisms to enhance digital inclusion and provide non-digital alternatives to prevent health and care inequalities

In SWL, in response to our findings, there are some specific barriers to using digital services which we must address, including:

• Lack of trust due to concerns over data privacy and security
• Lack of digital skills or confidence
• Lack of training and information
• Lack of digital kit or connectivity to the Internet
• Unwillingness for digital to replace face-to-face interaction with the NHS

Inclusion in Digital Strategy

Develop and implement outreach initiatives tailored to specific communities, particularly those that are digitally excluded. These programs can include workshops, tutorials, and one-on-one support sessions to educate individuals on how to use digital tools and access healthcare services online. Partner with local organisations to reach diverse populations and address specific barriers to digital access.

Enhanced Digital Infrastructure and Access

Invest in improving digital infrastructure to ensure reliable internet access and provide affordable or subsidised devices to underserved communities. This can involve collaborating with local authorities and VCSE partners to expand internet coverage and reduce costs, ensuring that everyone has the necessary tools to access digital health services.

User-Friendly Support Services

Ensure that digital health tools and services are user-friendly and provide comprehensive customer support. This includes offering in person workshops, phone assistance, and easy-to-follow guides. Make sure that digital platforms are accessible to people with disabilities and available in multiple languages to cater to diverse user needs.

Promotion and Utilisation of the NHS App

NHS

Increase awareness and encourage the use of the NHS App by highlighting its benefits, such as easy appointment booking, access to medical records, and health tracking.

Launch targeted marketing campaigns, offer training sessions on how to use the app. Healthcare providers should recommend the app during consultations and assist patients in setting it up.
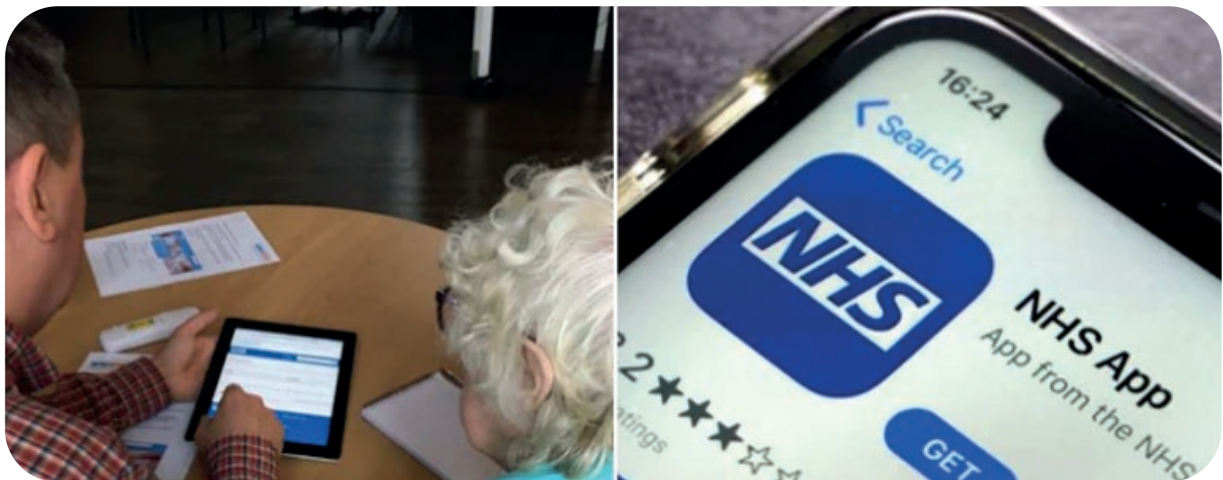
Case Studies

Croydon

ClearCommunityWeb
@ClearCommunity

Just over 2 weeks to go until our next TEA& TECH – Myatts Field, Lambeth
31 March 14.00-16.004 "Using Apps to access the NHS"
Come down & get your questions answered!
#lambeth @LambethTogether @HWLambeth @nhslambethccg
#digitalinclusion @digitalunite

buff.ly/3vXM7ca

Lambeth Together @LambethTogether – Dec 12, 2022
🚌 🎁 We've wrapped up loads of support on the #Health and #Wellbeing
Bus at @wnorwoodlibrary TODAY

✅ @CAMertonLambeth welfare and energy advice til 4pm
✅ Local **health** & care service info til 5 pm
✅ @ClearCommunity tech support 2pm-4pm

@TheNorwoodForum @westnorwoodnews #norwood

Kingston

Superhighways partners with other local VCSE organisations & social prescribers to provide basic digital skills support, Better Health Online awareness sessions, and access to devices and data.

"Just writing to express my appreciation for your help getting my client set up with online shopping yesterday.

We had struggled with it for two weeks and really needed a fresh pair of eyes. P was so patient and understanding of my client's vulnerability. My client is now able to get food and essentials despite her current agoraphobia."

Floating Support Worker, Mind in Kingston

72 Sim cards given out this year (accessed from the National Databank) to referred residents experiencing data poverty, including at the Cambridge Road Estate Health & Wellbeing event.

Merton

No Carer should miss out support because they don't have digital skills or access to the internet.

Examples support requests & outcomes:

"The GP surgery tells me I have to book appointments online – but it's all too confusing"

"My eyesight is very bad. It was great to have someone change the settings on my computer so I can see the text now"

"I am loving yoga online via zoom at home. It really helps me relax. I couldn't attend classes before as I can't leave the person I am caring for."
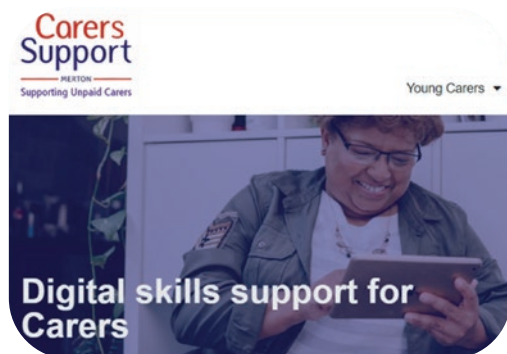
Richmond

Last Week

Last Tuesday Josh was looking at a practical way to show how our mobile phones connect and communicate.

Next Week

Next Tuesday James is going through the process of what we can do if we lose any of our devices

**Join us: Every Tuesday 1-3pm
@The Peter and Paul Centre, TW11 8PS**

- Connect To Tech programme started in April 2022
- Led by Richmond AID, Age UK Richmond & Mind Richmond

- Offers group or 1:1 training & support, SIM cards, device loans
- 1 year pilot now running to 2025 due to strong demand & high service user satisfaction

Sutton

Volunteer Centre Sutton Health Checks including support with the NHS App (Health Inequalities Fund project)

- **582** people reached since mid Feb
- **47** people helped to install & register
- **13** people helped to reset their password and start using again
- **128** raised awareness e.g. reminded, explained how to use again, made aware of linked profiles for their children or someone they care for etc

Wandsworth

Power to Connect @PWRtoConnect • 11Jul

It was amazing to have our first in person
#WandsworthDigital meeting last week 💫 💻
We had #DigitalSkills training from
@klsettlement + discussed our next steps to help
make #Wandsworth a truly digital inclusive borough
#DigitalChampions @wandbc

Thank you for helping us make a meaningful difference to our community.

For more information about digital inclusion in South West London, or about this toolkit and approach, please contact

swl-digitalteam@swlondon.nhs.uk