**Wandsworth Digital**

**Summary Strategy 2021-2024**

**Aprril’21**

Wandsworth Digital is a new partnership of 90+ local organisations working together to make Wandsworth a truly digitally inclusive borough in London by 2024. It is made up of a wide range of charities, community organisations, schools and colleges, independent funders, businesses and Wandsworth Council. Together we are promoting digital opportunities for all.

1. **Wandsworth’s Digital Divide**

Covid-19 has laid bare the true extent of digital exclusion amongst local residents and communities across the borough. Surveys conducted by Wandsworth Digital partners, during the first lockdown, revealed a lack of devices, data, money, skills and confidence to fully access ‘virtual’ and vital community services, e.g., foodbanks, Covid food provision, Council services and GPs, pharmacies and other NHS support, as well as online banking and shopping.

Cut off from the plethora of online services and support local residents could have reached has led to a decline in health and wellbeing for many and an increase in mental health issues, isolation, loneliness and poverty. Without intervention, the digital divide will further widen the socio-economic gulf between those who are digitally engaged and those who are excluded and disconnected. It is estimated that **36,000 households in Wandsworth are digitally excluded** (about 28% of local households).

Digital inclusion is about ensuring the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are available to everyone. Getting online is usually life-enhancing and it can be life-changing.

Digging beneath the surface locally there is already a lot of digital work underway. Wandsworth Digital is connecting what is already happening locally. We plan to work together strategically and provide services that ensure Wandsworth residents can embrace, access and utilise digital opportunities, making sure that no-one is left behind, as we move to a post-Covid world.

1. **Vision**

Our vision is for Wandsworth to be a truly digitally inclusive borough by 2024. A place where residents can access digital opportunities to engage with services, stay connected, and enhance their lives.

1. **Priorities**

By 2024 we want our most excluded residents to:

**Priority 1. Devices: access, affordable devices for all**

1. 10,000 local school children on Free School Meals will receive new and/or refurbished laptops and devices, through local partnerships with businesses and community organisations.

Activities include:

* collaborating on donating/refurbishing devices with local businesses and schools.
* bulk buying devices.
* lending libraries.
* renewing and upgrading devices.

**Priority 2. Connectivity: accessible, affordable Wi-Fi for all**

1. All local residents will be aware of affordable, flexible ways to access data/Wi-Fi (5G, Community Fibre and other ISP).
2. £5-10m funding pots are identified to purchase subscriptions to data bundles and broadband, ensuring connectivity longevity for local residents.

Activities include:

* Bulk buying data e.g., sim-only/dongles/subscriptions to broadband.
* Developing targeted awareness-raising campaigns focused on affordable data/Wi-Fi options.
* Upskilling Digital Champions to disseminate knowledge in the community.

**Priority 3. Training & Support: incorporate ‘digital’ into everyday lives**

1. 500 trained and active Digital Champions (DC), who in turn will train 5,000-10,000 local residents to increase their confidence and digital skills in the community. People who’ve been trained are hopeful, not fearful of digital opportunities.
2. 3,000 young people trained and active as Digital Champions (40 DCs per school). A Peer-to-Peer training and support model will be developed.
3. A calendar of pop-up sessions, workshops and events will be held each year for local people to learn more about digital opportunities.

Activities include:

* Providing a range of ‘basic to advanced’ training courses. Making the training relevant and useful for residents tailored to a different age or special interest groups (focus on ‘carrots’ = emphasise the rewards of digital with beneficial incentives). In accessible locations throughout the borough e.g. libraries, community centres, schools, faith venues etc.
* Establishing a ‘digital buddy’ programme.
* Ensuring there are digital work placements for school pupils.
* Linking Social Prescribing and Talking Points.
* Sparking local interest in digital: promoting a curious and welcoming perspective on all things digital.
* Replicating/adapting digital services and ideas from across London and the UK that we could scale up or scale into for Wandsworth, e.g. partnership with NHS about using their services online.

1. **Milestones**

Partners in Wandsworth Digital will work hard to reach the following milestones:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **End-2021** | **End-2022** | **End-2023** | **End-2024** |
| **Devices** | 5,000 devices  3 lending libraries | 2,500 devices  5 lending libraries | 2,500 devices  10 lending libraries | 2,500 devices  10 lending libraries |
| **Connectivity** | Awareness campaign | Awareness campaign | Awareness campaign | Awareness campaign |
| **Training & Support** | 50 DC trained  500 young DCs  3 events | 100 DC  1,000 young DCs  12 events | 150 DC  1,000 young DCs  18 events | 175 DC  500 young DCs  24 events |

*Note*: This strategy will be reviewed and refined annually.

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