

Widening Digital Participation

A man with a grey beard, wearing glasses and a dark hat, is smiling slightly. He is holding a large, light-colored rectangular sign in front of him. The sign has the words "NEED", "WIFI", and "SIGNAL" written in purple marker, stacked vertically. To the right of the word "WIFI" is a purple Wi-Fi symbol consisting of three curved lines of decreasing size. The background is a cluttered outdoor area with various items and a wall with some graffiti.

NEED
WIFI 
SIGNAL

Digital inclusion
is good

It....

- Helps people to find information online, increasing their ability to manage their own health & care
- Reduces inequalities by opening up access to information and services to everyone
- Cuts healthcare costs by steering patients towards cheaper digital alternatives
- Helps people to find work and education opportunities as well as reducing loneliness and isolation

The challenge is...

- Over 11.5m people lack basic digital skills & 5m people have never been online
- Those not online tend to be regular users of NHS services & generally not health literate
- Close link between digital exclusion & health inequalities – pathfinder heatmap

The challenge is

- Barriers to digital inclusion are varied and complex – not just skills
- There is no one solution
- Finding sustainable solutions
- Progress has been slow

Where have we gone wrong?

- Made assumptions on needs – its not always about skills
- Not enough research and talking to patients and the people that know them
- Not designing in a user-centred way has led to poor user experiences

Where have we gone wrong?

- Lack of standards of digital health design
- Lack of awareness & motivation for people to use health tech
- Staff lacking the skills and training needed to promote and use digital health tech themselves
- Not scaling what works - no investment

Widening Digital Participation?

As more and more
information and
services move online
no one should get left
behind



How WDP is facing the challenge

- Investing in research on the needs of the furthest and hardest to reach
- Working partnership – going to where they go and working with the people they see everyday
- Developing and testing new approaches that are tailored to needs
- Promoting the benefits of digital health tools

How WDP is facing the challenge

- Developing a digital inclusion guide & toolkit to support digital health & care teams
- Promoting patient-centred design
- Working with teams across NHSD to develop a set of digital health design standards
- Developing a scaling and implementation plan
- Sharing everything

The good news

- Lots of great digital inclusion projects already out there
- We know lots more about needs
- Digital health service manual & standards coming soon
- Digital health products are much better
- People are starting to understand the value of investing in digital inclusion
- Cross-government collaboration & investment

Social prescribing at Bromley-by-Bow

Play video

More information

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More info

- Pathfinders - <https://digital-health-lab.org/>
- Blogs - <https://medium.com/nhs-widening-digital-participation>
- @goodthingsfdn
- @ngill10