Delivering Digital Inclusion and Assisted Digital in Community Settings

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The Digital Inclusion Conference
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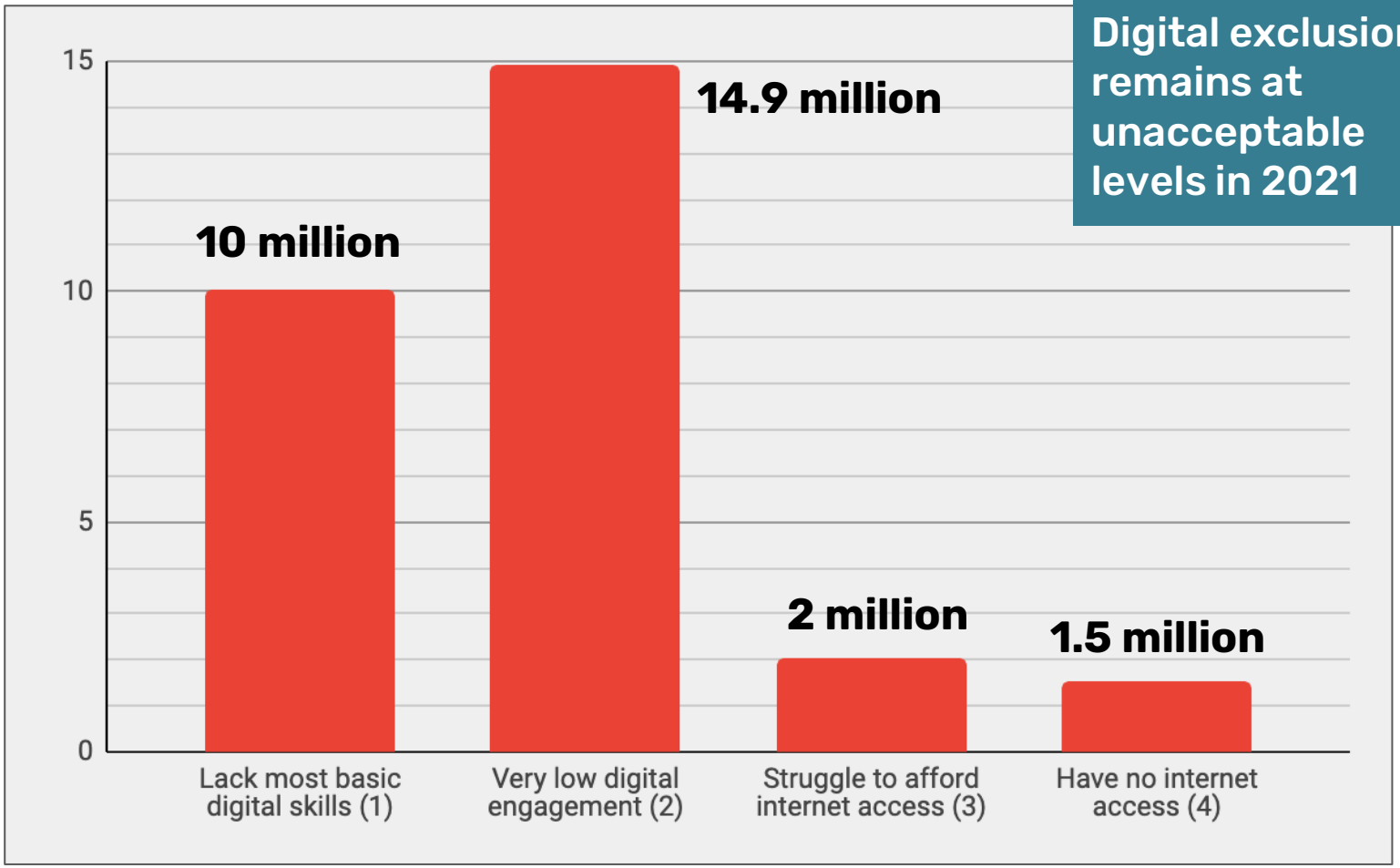
Good Things Foundation

We work with thousands of community partners to help people have better lives by being digitally included.

By embedding digital inclusion in local support for the most vulnerable.

Since 2010 we've helped over 4 million people benefit from the digital world.

Digital exclusion remains at unacceptable levels in 2021



Sources:

1. Essential Digital Skills report 2021, Lloyds Banking Group

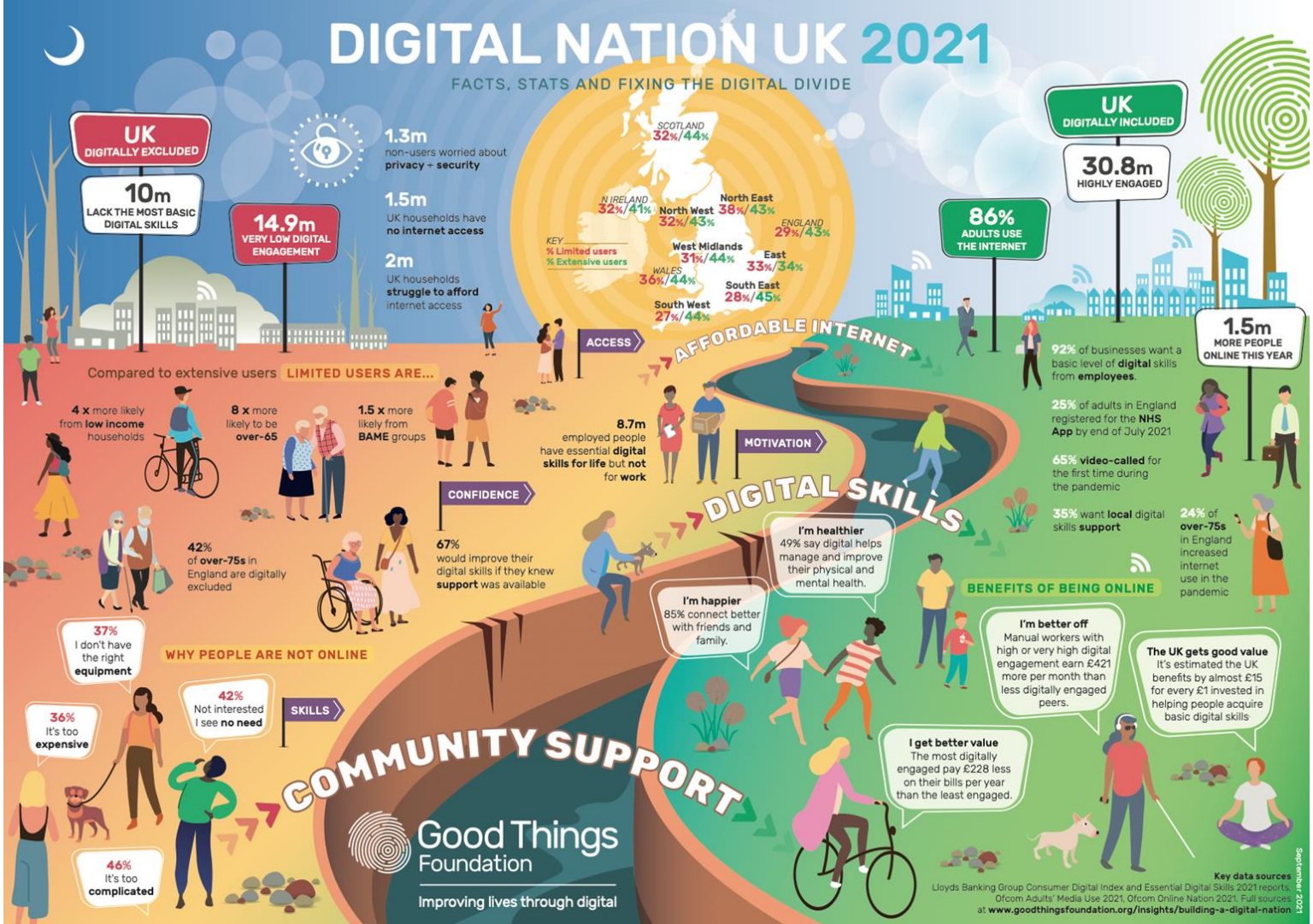
2. Consumer Digital Index 2021, Lloyds Banking Group

3. Affordability of communications services, Ofcom, 2021

4. Adults' Media Use and Attitudes, Ofcom, 2021

DIGITAL NATION UK 2021

FACTS, STATS AND FIXING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



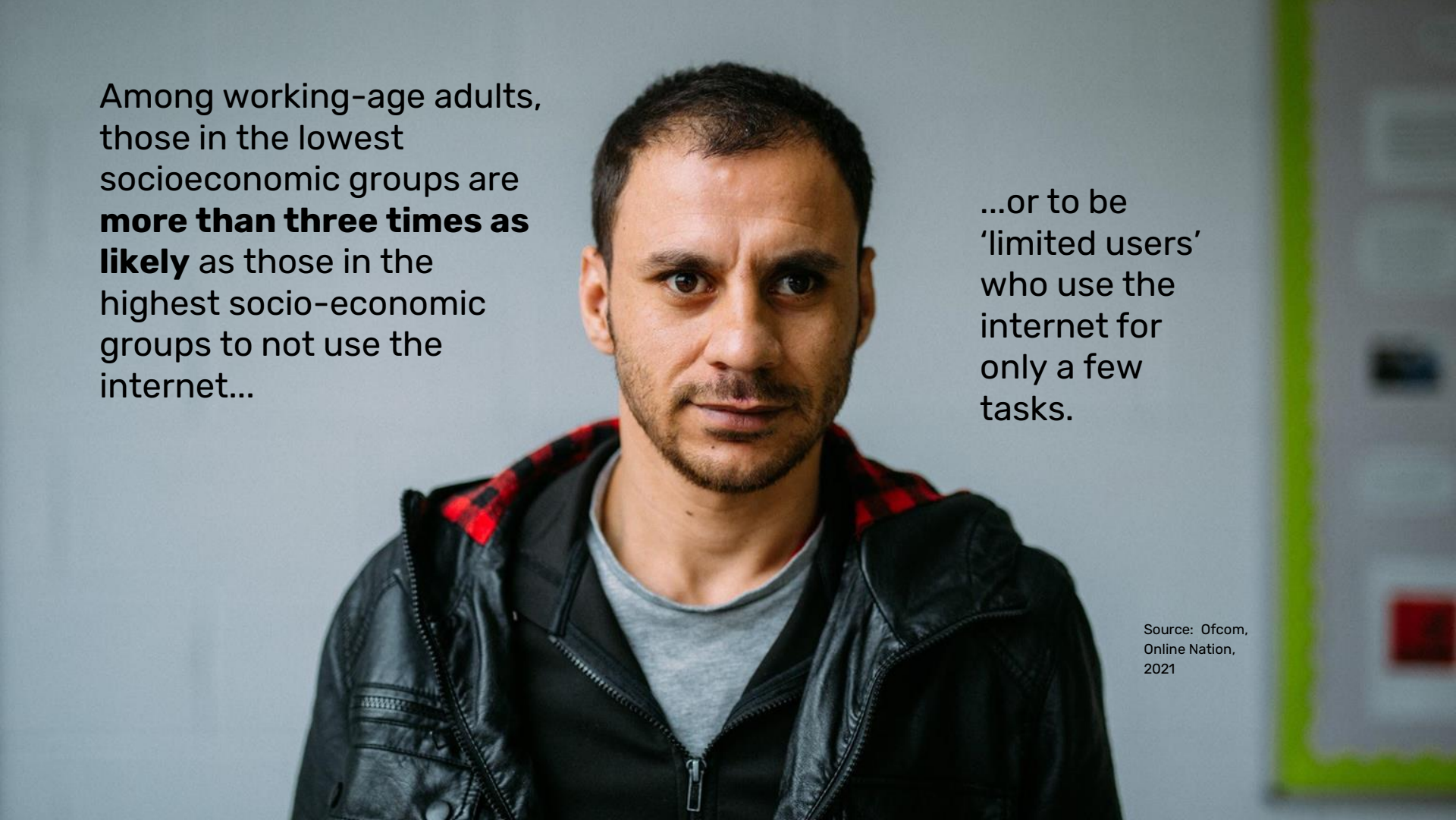
The digitally excluded are more likely to be...

Older - 87% of those offline are aged 50-69 and 39% are below 60.

Poorer - 40% of those offline earn less than £15,000 and 55% below £20,000.

Disengaged - 47% of those offline 'just aren't interested' and 51% worry about having their identity taken.

Source: Consumer Digital Index 2021, Lloyds Banking Group



Among working-age adults, those in the lowest socioeconomic groups are **more than three times as likely** as those in the highest socio-economic groups to not use the internet...

...or to be 'limited users' who use the internet for only a few tasks.

Source: Ofcom, Online Nation, 2021

"Every little bit of data helps", says Paul, "in helping me stay well and connected to the outside world."

Paul, National Databank voucher recipient

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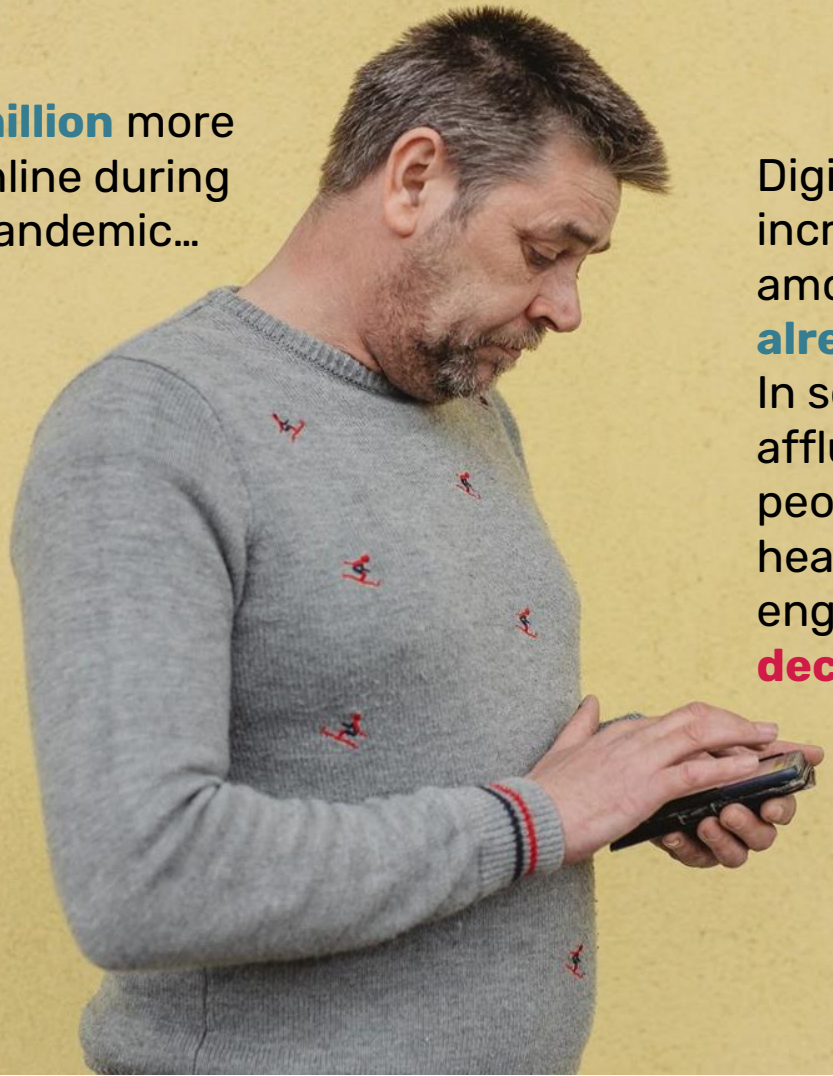
Although **1.5 million** more people went online during the Covid-19 pandemic…



Digital engagement increased most in lockdown among those who were **already digitally engaged**. In some groups – older, less affluent groups, including people with impairments or health conditions – engagement levels **declined** during lockdown.

Sources: Lloyds Consumer Digital Index, 2021; Age UK, analysis of the English Longitudinal Survey of Ageing, 2021

Digital exclusion reinforces inequality

Sources: Worldskills UK, 2021, Essential Digital Skills report 2021, Lloyds Banking Group, Consumer Digital Index 2021, Lloyds Banking Group

92%

of businesses say a basic level of digital skills is important for employees - yet

8.7 million

people lack essential digital skills required for work

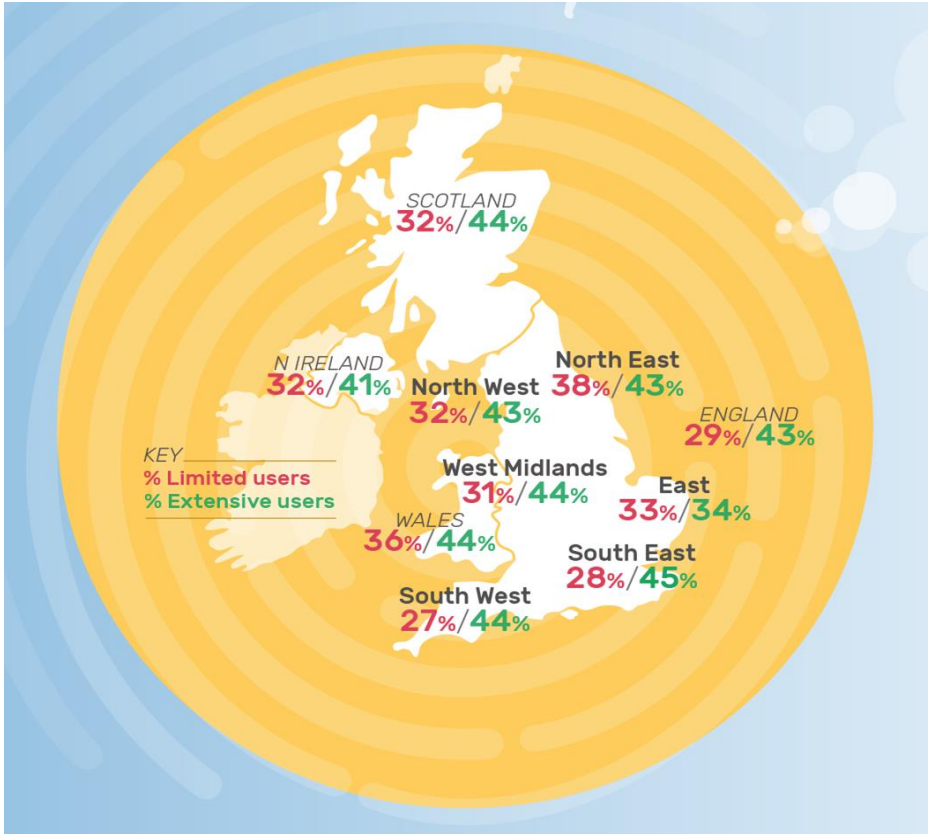
£421 more per month

earned by manual workers with high/very high digital engagement than the least digitally engaged people in the same roles

£228 per year

saved on important bills including utilities by people with the most digital engagement

There are significant regional differences



There is a **10 percentage point** difference in the proportion of 'limited users' between the North East and South East.

Some areas have developed **sub-regional** data indices of digital exclusion eg. Greater Manchester Digital Exclusion Risk Index.

Source: Analysis of Ofcom data, 2021, by Prof. Simeon Yates for Good Things Foundation

But there is a ‘digital exclusion paradox’

Because technology is largely taken for granted, digital exclusion can too often be ‘everyone’s problem but no-one’s problem’.

Without tackling digital exclusion, we won’t address inequality in our digital world - never more important after Covid-19.

So digital inclusion needs to be prioritised - this means:

- Recognising digital exclusion as a factor of vulnerability and inequality
- Building digital inclusion into all programmes that drive social inclusion and reduce inequality.

What are the benefits if we get this right?

Pre-Covid analysis shows a return of **£15 for every £1** invested in digital inclusion, and a ten year NPV **£22 billion** from a fully digitally included nation.

Source: The Economic Impact of Basic Digital Skills in the UK, CEBR, 2018, Graphic: Lloyds Consumer Digital Index, 2021

Digital exclusion is part of wider vulnerability, not something separate.

It needs to be addressed alongside other forms of exclusion, as part of helping people have better lives.

This requires:

- a holistic, ‘whole person’ approach
- a relational model of support based on trust
- relevance, reflecting the reality of people’s lives and the challenges they face.

The Community Sector

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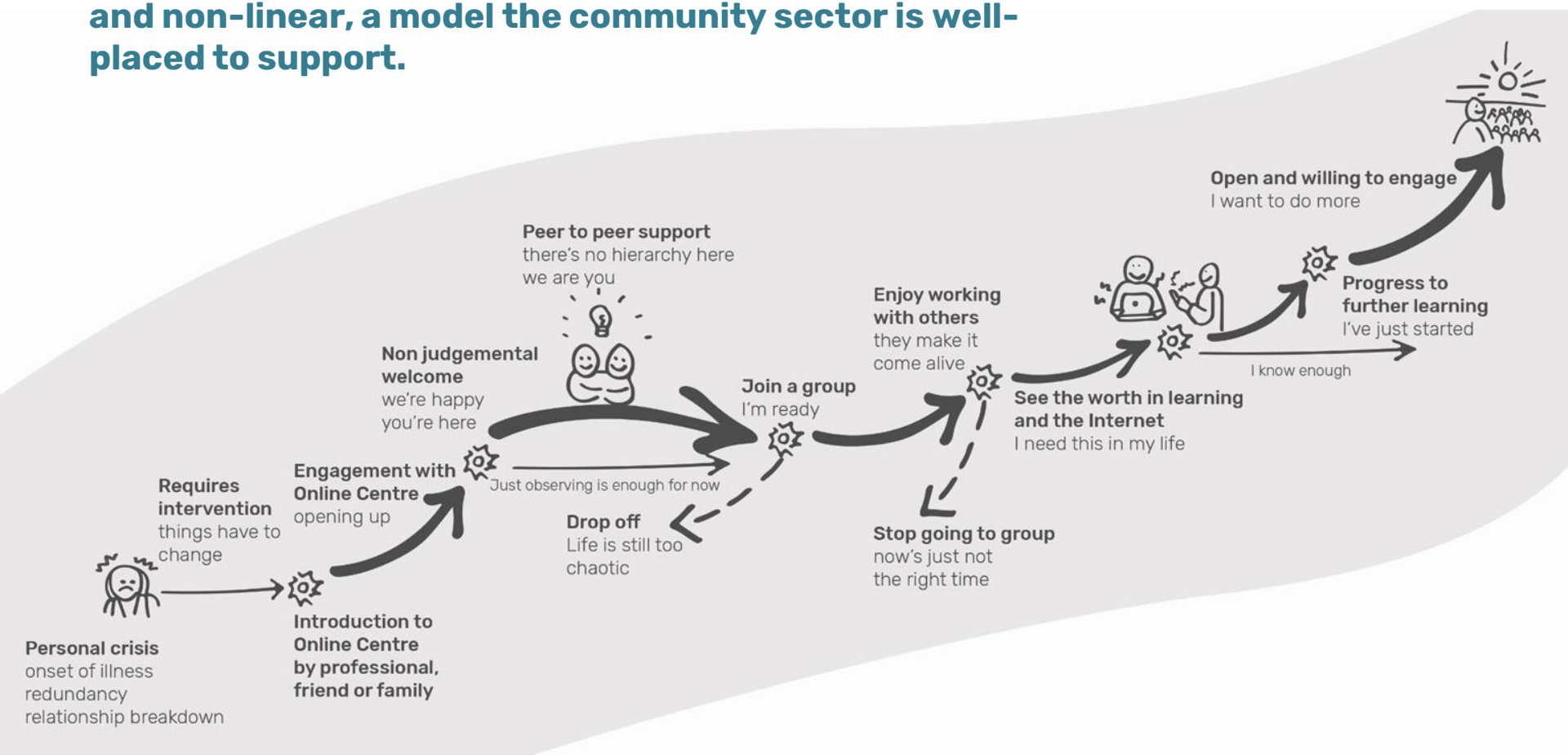
CCTV
Digital inclusion can be embedded into wider social support, provided in the community sector by trusted local organisations.

Digital inclusion/AD journeys are frequently extended and non-linear, a model the community sector is well-placed to support.



Working with the community sector on digital inclusion

Department for Education

Future Digital Inclusion
6 years
Grant-based delivery
Evaluation

NHS

Widening Digital Participation
5 years
Grant-based delivery followed by Service Design

Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport

Digital Lifeline
6 months - 2021
Devices, data and support
Adults with disabilities

Working with the community sector on Assisted Digital

HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Digital Support pilot
3 years
Service design
Implementation
Review

HM Revenue & Customs

Advice and Support
5 years
Grant-based delivery
Evaluation

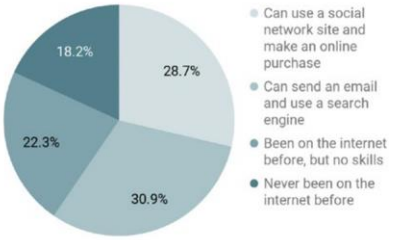
Office for National Statistics

Census 2021
Digital Support Service
England and Wales
Large scale, time-bound

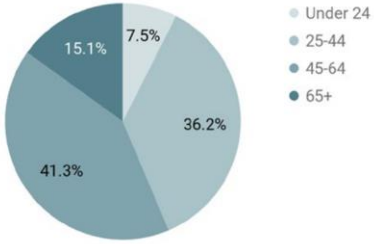
Future Digital Inclusion - with DfE

Data collected for the **Future Digital Inclusion** programme delivered by Good Things Foundation from 2014-2021, shows that:

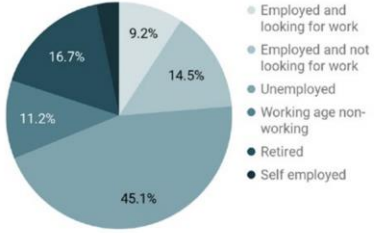
- More than **1.5 million people** were supported to learn basic digital skills, some with support and some learning independently
- **84%** progressed to further learning, and 36% progressed to accredited qualifications
- **80%** progressed to employment-related activity, with 20% entering full-time or part-time employment
- **77%** accessed online government services for the first time
- **77%** of those supported faced poverty, unemployment, low skills, disability, or homelessness



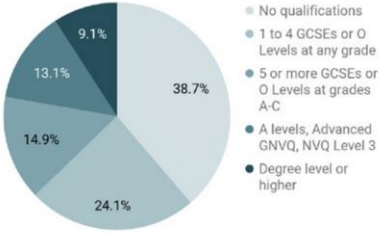
Digital skills at point of engagement



Age



Employment status



Educational attainment

Digital Support pilot - with HMCTS

A total of **1,274 DS appointments** have been attended since the start of the pilot

4	78	731	461
appointments were delivered in Phase 1	appointments were delivered in Phase 2	appointments were delivered in Phase 3	appointments were delivered in Phase 4

1,221 DS users have been supported as part of the pilot

1,147 online forms have been submitted in a DS appointment

Non-HMCTS referrals were the key route into the DS service

1,120 DS appointments were the result of a non-HMCTS referral (where DS user is identified and engaged directly by a centre or through a referral from within a centre's network)

154 appointments were the result of a HMCTS referral (via a referral from CTSC)

During Phase 4, most appointments were conducted over the phone

374 appointments were conducted over the phone

47 appointments were conducted via online software

40 appointments were conducted face-to-face

of the appointments delivered through the DS pilot have been Social Security and Child Support benefit (SSCS) appeals:

721 PIP appointments

141 Universal Credit appointments

76 ESA appointments

of the appointments delivered though the DS pilot have provided support for non-SSCS services:

169 Help With Fees appointments

37 Civil Money Claims appointments

75 Divorce appointments

51 Single Justice Service appointments

4 Probate appointments

The **average length** of a face-to-face DS appointment was **56 minutes**

On average, users of the face-to-face DS service **rated their experience...** **9.5/10**

(feedback scores were collected for 724 out of 782 appointments)

Widening Digital Participation - with NHS

23 locally-led pathfinders including digital health literacy, dementia, cancer, refugee health, social care

5 pathfinders and 22 mini pathfinders evolved a model of community-led local digital health hubs

21,178 people supported, including 824 people in co-design, and 1,350 digital champions

53,173 people improved their digital health literacy through 'Learn My Way'

166,162 people made aware of digital health through Good Things' network of community partners

£6 for every £1 Return on Investment for Phase 1 of Widening Digital Participation, which focused on building digital health literacy via community organisations

What does effective digital inclusion involve?

- Trust - the foundation for digital inclusion
- Resolution of an immediate issue/crisis, before digital inclusion begins
- The ‘hook’ - making it relevant, enabling a personal outcome
- An informal learning environment in which I feel safe and is ‘for me’

- One-to-one support, with regular, positive feedback
- Wrap around (holistic) support that recognises many/all of the barriers the individual faces - could relate to health, getting a job, saving money

- Blended learning, combining digital tools with in-person support
- ‘Help to do it myself’
- Quick wins

- Learning from someone with lived experience (digital champions, volunteers, staff)
- The right language - eg. avoiding the word ‘digital’
- As well as access - connectivity, a device, sufficient/affordable data

Implications for policy and design

The community sector is an effective model for delivering digital inclusion and Assisted Digital.

Effective digital inclusion and AD is person-centred, flexible, frequently open-ended, based on trust, and holistic.

Community-based digital inclusion and AD can be delivered cost-efficiently at scale, with the right model: reflecting specialisms, easy to use central resources/training, flexible design guidelines, grant not service based.

Implications for Government

HM Government

- **Digital inclusion should be a priority** because of its scale, because it is a critical part of levelling up, and because Digital by Default is continuing/ accelerating while digital exclusion continues to deepen.
- Those **most dependent on Government services** are those most likely to be digitally excluded.
- Government has a large number of service users, so there is a need for **cost-efficient models of AD** that can be **delivered at scale**.
- But working well with the community sector **needs a specific approach**.

A Model of Digital Inclusion/AD for Government

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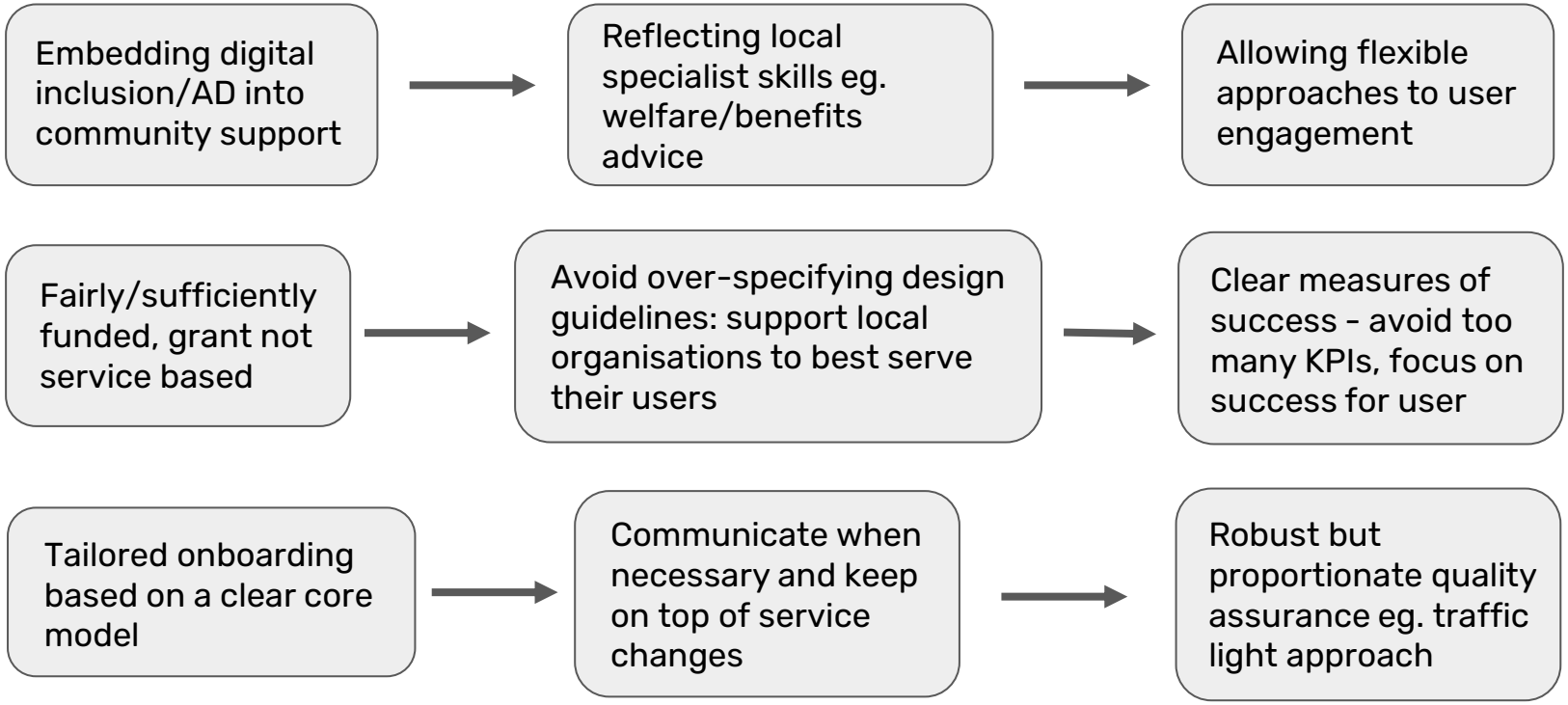

Community organisations:

Commitment to digital inclusion and Assisted Digital, overall and amongst staff

Experience using digital forms and service-specific expertise where relevant

Access to target audience, directly and through local networks

Effective triaging and case management, processes for gaining consent where relevant

Sufficient financial stability, governance and track record of delivery and impact

Action - what's next?

We're calling for:

- Government to **lead a national plan** to upskill the 10 million people without the very basic digital skills
- Digital inclusion to be **built into** all policies and initiatives that contribute to levelling up.

The community sector should play a vital role in fixing the digital divide.

But it will need funding and prioritisation - and the right models of support.

Thank you - any questions?

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Good Things Foundation