



Digital Poverty Alliance

No One Left Behind: Keeping Support Accessible
in a Digital World

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What is the Digital Poverty Alliance?

A registered charity, we have given out **over 5,000 laptops in the last three years**, and reached hundreds of thousands of people to raise awareness of digital poverty, and run key **advocacy and research** programmes including our flagship National Delivery & Advocacy Plan iterated annually.



UK Government

easyJet



MACQUARIE

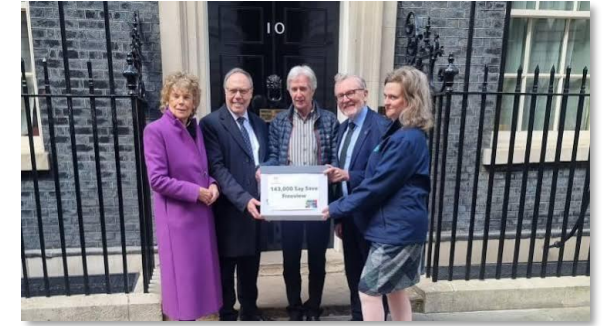
Atos



Barratt
Redrow



paybyphone



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What is Digital Poverty?

The inability to interact with the online world fully – when, where, and how an individual needs to.

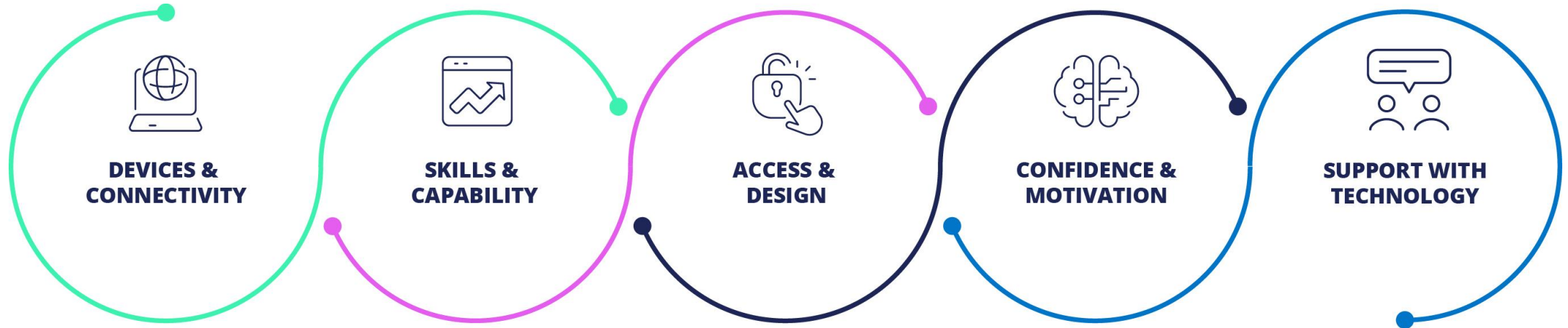
1 in 7 adults and 1 in 5 children in the UK live in digital poverty. **1 in 17 adults** lack devices, data and skills – the most severe form of digital poverty.

1 in 5 adults cannot use government services online without support, highlighting the role of VCSE and informal networks.



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The Five Determinants





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The Cost of Digital Poverty



We do not have the money to buy my son a laptop. He's in college, really smart, and has the chance to do well, but he needs a laptop.



Our family does not have access to a device, which is crucial for both learning and securing employment.

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Impact on Service Access

Presumption of access

Families are expected to complete lengthy online forms and engage with online chatbots, which are often difficult to navigate on mobile devices.

Digital-only advice

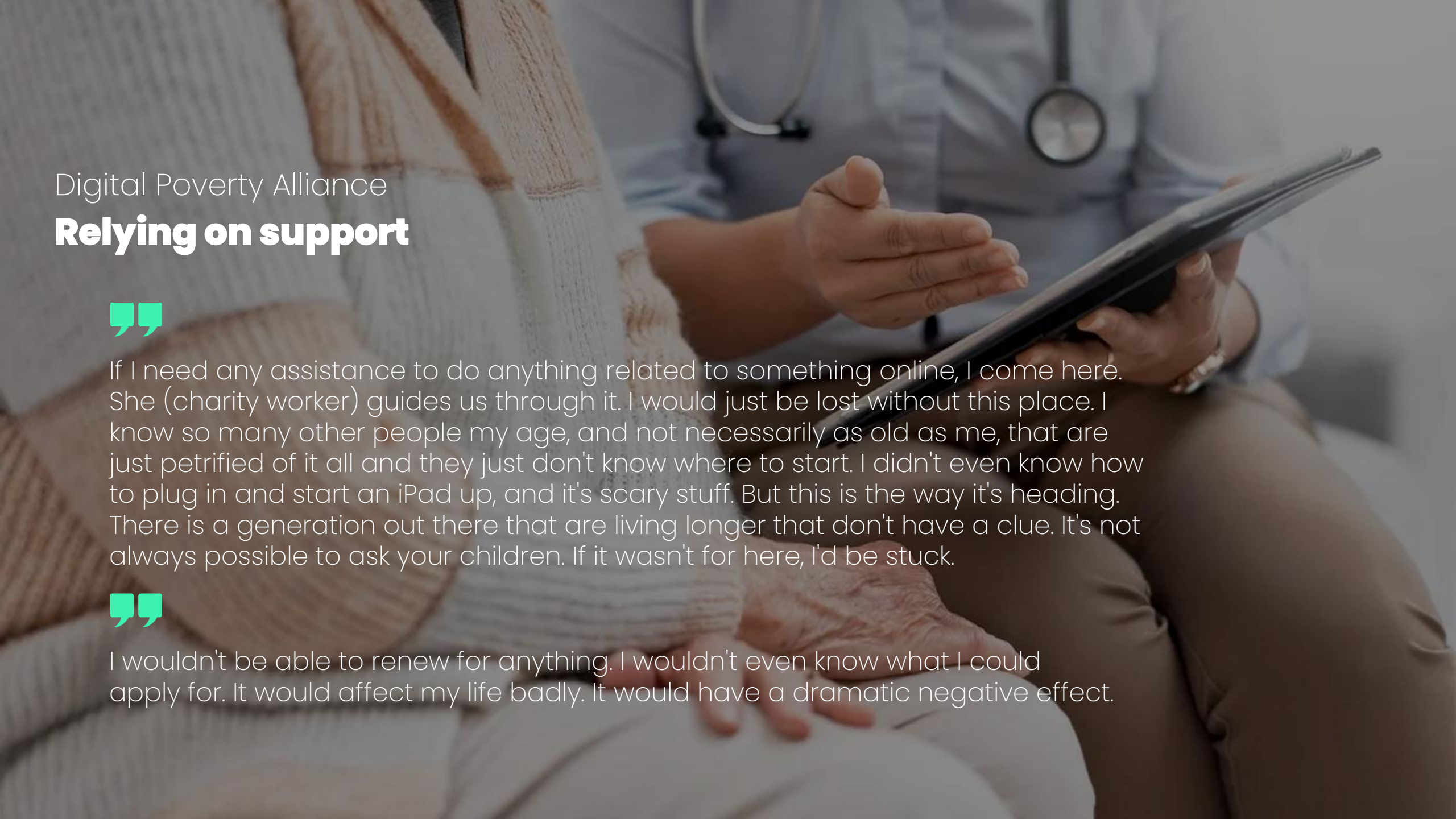
Many support services rely on online resources and self-guided support – growingly powered through AI, assuming all households can access them.

Lost voices

Individuals who are online may still struggle significantly to find adequate support, especially in isolated areas.

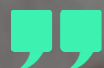
Barriers to connection

Reaching those without internet access, or those who distrust digital services, remains a significant challenge. Fears around AI and data feed into these barriers.

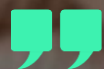


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Relying on support



If I need any assistance to do anything related to something online, I come here. She (charity worker) guides us through it. I would just be lost without this place. I know so many other people my age, and not necessarily as old as me, that are just petrified of it all and they just don't know where to start. I didn't even know how to plug in and start an iPad up, and it's scary stuff. But this is the way it's heading. There is a generation out there that are living longer that don't have a clue. It's not always possible to ask your children. If it wasn't for here, I'd be stuck.



I wouldn't be able to renew for anything. I wouldn't even know what I could apply for. It would affect my life badly. It would have a dramatic negative effect.



Accessibility of Government Services

Nationally representative study carried out by Censuswide (N = 2001)

- **More than a third** (37%) prefer a laptop or desktop computer.
- While **three quarters** (75%) of survey respondents describe digital government services as easy to use and feel like they are designed with them in mind, **nearly one in five** (18%) say they need support from other people to do access these services.
- **Access and skills:**
 - 11% do not have access to reliable internet at home
 - 12% say they do not have access to suitable devices at home
 - 15% report they do not feel confident using digital government services



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DSIT Digital Inclusion Action Plan

Skills

Ensuring that the Essential Digital Skills Frameworks are up to date, and that people can access the skills they need

Accessibility

Ensuring inclusivity in design and simple services that can be fully used by everyone

Device and data poverty

Tackling affordability as it hits both access to suitable devices and stable internet access

Confidence and local delivery

Tackling trust, confidence, and online safety – and the role of local providers

What next?

This series of short term steps was set out in 2025 – information on a longer term strategy, funding, and government leadership is awaited



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Case study: Tech4Young Carers

300 young carers provided with devices over two years, alongside connectivity, training and ongoing support. Brought together funder, local authorities, local charities and ourselves. Next step is new evaluation to advocate for laptops to be part of support for all young carers. Year 1 data showed...

1. Need is key

Of the young carers who benefited, only 9% had previous access to a laptop – often shared, out of home or broken

2. Young Carers have specific needs

This is a group living in challenging circumstances with far more responsibility than many children, and they need recognised as a distinct group

3. Digital skills require access

Skills are incredibly important – but access is vital to allow growth. Assumptions must not be made about young carers confidence

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Key actions to take away

There are so many ways that charities can drive digital inclusion – but these are just some:

Raise Awareness

Make sure all your staff know about digital poverty and resources, where to find support, how to recognise digital poverty, and where to signpost.

Understand the local picture

Use a tool such as DERA to understand digital poverty in your area – but remember digital exclusion can be hidden, too.

Strategic design

Ensure that services are built with the user in mind, are inclusive, and aren't driven purely by efficiency. Hard copy materials and marketing are still important.

Be part of other initiatives

Understand the local and national opportunities available, work with a charity such as us to signpost – and link up schools, community groups, and more.

Ensure accountability

Ensure you have responsible and accountable people whose job explicitly includes digital inclusion, and that they are empowered. This should be SLT or Trustee level involvement.

Check on your own teams

Do you understand digital poverty in your own workforce? Digital skills levels? Check this and provide support.



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