

North East and North Cumbria ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy

We have been commissioned by North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) to support them in developing a Strategy and Strategic Plan to tackle Digital Exclusion.

Our goal

Our overall goal is to work together to ensure that health and care services with digital components are being delivered in ways that are inclusive and accessible for different people at different points in their health and care journey.

Some context

North East and North Cumbria ICS is the largest, geographically, in England serving communities in urban, rural and coastal areas on both sides of the country.

Health inequalities data in the region show there are significant disparities in health outcomes between different groups of people. For example:

- Overall life expectancy is lower than the national average.
- There are higher rates of certain diseases, including cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease compared to the national average.
- Mental health is a significant issue, with higher rates of common mental health issues and suicide compared to the national average.

There are also disparities in access to healthcare, with certain people, such as those living in rural areas, facing barriers to accessing healthcare services.

And we know how the digital transformation of health and care services is also contributing to these inequalities.

Our approach

We'll be partnering with the ICS to carry out a discovery, engaging with people across the region to understand what digital exclusion looks like for them, exploring the role that digital plays in people's experiences of accessing and engaging with health and care services.

Our approach will be to:

- Engage with people and organisations working across the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to understand how they are supporting people in their communities to overcome the digital barriers they face.
- Collate, map and analyse data that exists across the region that helps us to understand the various factors that contribute to people being at risk of digital exclusion and the capacity currently available to support people.
- Review and evaluate existing legislation, policy and guidance locally and nationally that supports digital inclusion.

- Work with people who have lived and living experience, people working in the VCSE sector and health and care colleagues to make sense of everything we discover.

We will use all of this to develop a digital inclusion strategy and a strategic plan that can be put into practice to start tackling the complex and multi-faceted issue of digital exclusion.

If you would like to find out more about our approach or talk to us about how we can support you to develop your digital inclusion strategy, please contact us at thrivebydesign.lypft@nhs.net.