



Delivering on the Digital // Divide?

A toolkit for local planning partnerships

October 2007

Acknowledgements

With special thanks to all those who participated in the digital inclusion developments in Glasgow that formed the basis of this report; the members of the forum that steered the project; staff of projects across the city who contributed to the monitoring and evaluation of the project and service users who shared their experiences and whose input influence the outcomes of the project.



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Foreword

We all know now that the causes and impacts of social exclusion interact through a complex arrangement of structural, personal and socio-economic layers. We also know that many local partnerships, in formal community structures and across the social economy, are already tackling why, when, where and how to 'include'.

We have learned that there is a need for genuinely integrated approaches to social exclusion, supported by a practical assessment of the most effective platforms and resources needed to achieve it. The digital platform is a compelling one.

In 2002, Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN) launched a project that took internet access and training on an 'outreach' basis to people affected by homelessness at over 30 venues that suited them. Then our aim was to respond directly to the Scottish Executive's vision for a digitally inclusive Scotland set out in the Strategy: Connecting Scotland's People. 5 years on we are still carrying out the work, bolstered by additional capacity through the EverybodyOnline project that we hosted, and which the learning in this report is also based on. We were particularly pleased to receive a UK-wide innovation award in 2005 for our work in increasing digital inclusion in Glasgow.

While our early priority was to progress the digital inclusion agenda, a number of our most significant outcomes came as a surprise. Providing access to current advice and information created an empowering environment for people to negotiate their own route out of exclusion, and consider - in their time - the type of assistance that they might need. Further, the range of hard and soft skills that people develop and deploy as part of this process will enhance opportunity and ultimately employability. Equally importantly, digital contact provides an unintrusive, convenient method for people to make, sustain and repair their own personal set of social networks. Overleaf, these unexpected 'wins' are more expertly described by two of our key partners: Denise Horn, Partnership Manager (Inclusion) for learndirect scotland, provides a learning providers perspective and Lesley Stenhouse, the Scottish Social Networks Coordinator, presents the linkage across the digital and social inclusion agendas.

Delivering on the Digital Divide? GHN is pleased to offer this collective learning to other local partnerships, formal and informal, as an aide to your local delivery strategy for progressing the digital inclusion agenda in Scotland.

Margaret Taylor
Chief Executive
Glasgow Homelessness Network

Computers are often seen as a solitary pursuit and emails and text messages accused of stopping us speaking to colleagues face to face or chatting to friends...

However often the reverse is the case and those of us who curse the intrusion into our daily life are often unaware of how a lack of access to ICT can impact on our ability to develop strong supportive social networks. The evidence shows that poor social networks are both a cause and effect of homelessness and other forms of social exclusion and that the resultant isolation and loneliness inhibit successful resettlement.

The service users in this report talk about keeping in contact with family and friends, accessing college, increasing self confidence as well as increasing access to community facilities such as libraries, employability related skills and information. Lack of access to ICT shuts off large parts of today's society - physically, financially, socially. Just a few seconds thought about who are in our own social networks - family scattered across the globe, friends met at college or in the local community, colleagues from work - highlights how access to ICT and the confidence it engenders can help reduce isolation and develop stronger social networks.

Lesley Stenhouse
Coordinator
Scottish Social Networks Forum

Let's connect!

Learning really can help to change people's lives - there are people all around you with stories to prove it. Positive and empowering, learning can give people self belief, help them to regain confidence, help them on the road to a new job - a new start, give them the courage to walk away from something..... or simply a way of connecting with people or a community.

It takes time and patience to work with people who are excluded - chaotic lives can mean that there can be a thousand reasons not to do any of that day's learning... and we all know if you miss one day...it is really easy to miss the next. By exploring with new ways of learning we can allow a greater flexibility and choice for people.

When people think of learning and education they might still think of tutor led classes running 9am - 4pm ...but things are changing in adult education and there are more and more options now, people are finding a range of ways to learn new skills. Technology continues to open up possibilities, communities and networks, letting people connect in new ways.

Connecting up services is key to helping people find their way in an area like adult learning. Good services shouldn't develop in isolation - surely it is better to work with a range of partners and pool knowledge, share experience and gather momentum? Working in partnership enhances the flow of information, helps develop quality services and makes sure learners can get the right support and skills easily. Connecting really is the key!

Denise Horn
Partnership Manager (Inclusion)
learndirect scotland

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Executive summary

This report proposes how the learning from a project which looked at the issues around digital inclusion for people affected by homelessness, can be applied to other marginalised or excluded groups. The report also lists points for consideration by a variety of key stakeholders who are considering a similar capacity building exercise.

Digital inclusion - social inclusion in the knowledge and information society - forms part of a much wider agenda which has been taken forward by both the Scottish Government and partnership organisations across Scotland.

The report establishes that focused and supportive projects are a crucial means of engaging with those who have been marginalised due to the complex circumstances of their lives. It highlights the key role played by effective partnership working and underlines the importance of relevant service provision. In addition the report stresses the role of effective and appropriate service user involvement techniques to enable further engagement and capacity building within projects. These techniques, when used effectively, will increase the confidence, skills and self-esteem of service users and use of such techniques will also lead to improved services and empowered staff, and hence better outcomes for the policy maker.

The subsequent points for consideration, presented in the form of a toolkit checklist, are based on the evidence provided by participants in the project at many different levels. Analysis of service user and provider perspectives of user involvement and empowerment has also been taken into consideration.

Background & Context

In 2001, the Scottish Executive produced their first digital inclusion strategy and in the foreword, the importance of a digitally inclusive Scotland was stressed, the key areas of access, skills and confidence were highlighted and the outcome of increased opportunities for individuals was emphasised.¹ By 2006, in the revised strategy, the Scottish Executive were still of the opinion that "Digital Inclusion is everybody's responsibility and a challenge that we must all continue to meet in partnership"²

Funded by the Scottish Executive and managed by the Scottish Enterprise Network, the Digital Inclusion Champions programme was a three-year initiative which aimed to improve access to and demand for ICT in Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas across Scotland. There were seven Digital Inclusion Champions based within the SIP areas of Glasgow who were responsible for providing support to local ICT initiatives throughout the whole of Scotland including a wide range of local projects, providing funding advice, producing best practice guides, running workshops, facilitating strategies and assisting in project design.

The EverybodyOnline project was brought to Glasgow through collaboration between one of the Digital Champions, BT, Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN) and Citizens Online. An innovative thematic approach was taken and it was decided that the focus of the project should be people affected by homelessness.

The thinking was that this marginalised group had much to benefit from digital inclusion in terms of skills development which could lead to increased employability and access to advice and information about housing options and support services. In addition the development of social networks, both actual and virtual, is crucial in the process of reintegration, as recent research has shown.³

The Scottish Executive has a vision of a Scotland which cares for its people and where opportunities are increasing for everyone, enterprise is rewarded, and where people have confidence in their communities and in public services. Government should focus on the issues that matter the most to people, be outward looking and confident, and deliver real sustainable improvements in our quality of life.⁴ The community planning structures and processes are the practical outworking of this and within that framework the main aim of community engagement should be to improve the planning and delivery of services by making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities.⁵ It therefore follows logically that community planning

¹ Scottish Executive: Digital Inclusion: connecting Scotland's people.

² Scottish Executive: Digital inclusion in partnership

³ Glasgow Homelessness Network: The cup with no handle: social networks and homelessness in Glasgow.

⁴ Local government in Scotland Act 2003: Community planning – advice notes

⁵ Local government in Scotland Act 2003: Community planning – statutory guidance

partnerships have a duty towards those in their areas who are marginalised for any of the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The scale of homelessness in Glasgow is currently running at approximately 10,500 presentations per year. In line with the Scottish Executive's 2012 target, the Council has in place a Homelessness Strategy⁶ (currently in revision) which seeks to work towards that target with one of its major planks being the hostel closure and reprovisioning programme. The project worked with both the statutory and voluntary sector as they seek to both prevent and alleviate homelessness in the city.

In many cases homelessness can be seen as the result of failures in other service provision as it is common to find that people affected by homelessness have complex circumstances which go beyond their need for accommodation. It is often only at the point of crisis that people become aware of the need to be referred to other services who may be able to offer support with a specific issue e.g. addictions, physical or mental ill health. It is very noticeable that in recent research around employability and aspirations⁷ only 8% of respondents said they had no barriers that were preventing them from returning to employment.

We believe it is possible to effectively replicate the learning from a homelessness specific project in Glasgow to other marginalised groups in other areas.

GHN, in partnership with Citizens Online and BT, agreed a dedicated focus to access not only networking possibilities but also the benefits of working with colleagues who have expertise in the field of homelessness. GHN is also responsible for the Homeless Information Pages project (HIP), a mobile ICT capacity building mechanism, and it was recognised that this would be an important delivery vehicle for some of the outcomes of the project.

The project was launched in 2004 and a Forum with membership from a wide range of organisations, both strategic and operational, to reflect the importance of partnership working was set up to steer it.

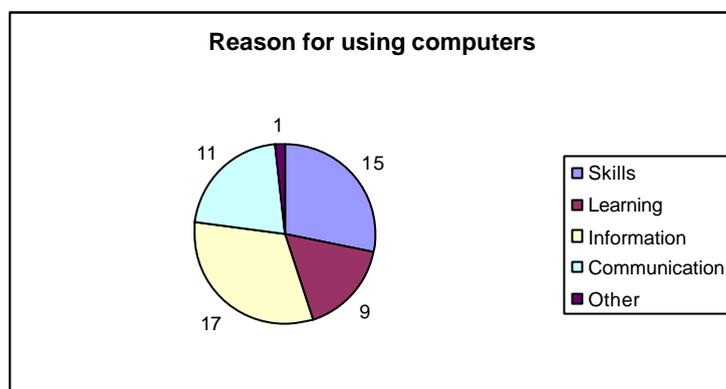
The partners agreed an action plan with three main objectives:

- Strategic – including capacity building, funding opportunities and marketing and PR
- ICT for support staff – including awareness raising and training
- ICT for people affected by homelessness – including awareness raising, signposting and progression

⁶ Glasgow Homelessness Partnership: Strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow 2003 – 2006.

⁷ Glasgow Homelessness Network: Employability and homelessness in Glasgow: evidence and aspirations.

Introduction to the report



Graph derived from service user evaluation responses

Purpose of the project

Learning has taken place at all levels and often in the most unexpected ways. As described, it is the purpose of this report to review how Glasgow responded to the digital inclusion challenge in respect of homelessness, gather together the lessons learned and to show how this kind of capacity building could be replicated in different areas with other marginalised groups. This might include people who are marginalised due to health and social care issues or due to their ethnicity, gender, race or sexuality. While anybody who is marginalised will have their own unique set of circumstances, there are often common issues experienced by those who share common backgrounds or circumstances.

Outline of the report

The report has been divided into six sections which follow the chronological development of the project:

1. Initial research	2. Partnership working
3. Funding	4. Marketing Strategy
5. Service user involvement	6. Monitoring and evaluation

Structure of the sections

Within each section of the report, the following sub-sections have been used so that particular aspects of the project can be located more easily. There may however be occasions where all sub-sections are not used because they are not relevant:

1. Effectiveness - the extent to which we achieved our objectives and how this can be applied
2. Impact - the effects, positive and negative, intended and unintended and how this can be considered
3. Relevance - the extent to which we met the needs of our stakeholders and how this can be applied
4. Organisational efficiency – input, process and procedures and how these should be considered, including difficulties encountered.
5. Sustainability - the continuation of benefits beyond the end of a similar capacity building exercise and how these can be applied beyond time limited funding
6. Points for consideration

1. Initial research

1.1 Effectiveness

In April 2003 the Scottish Enterprise Digital Inclusion team and GHN, representing a consortium of local organisations, commissioned SQW to assist in the development of a Digital Inclusion (DI) Strategy to address exclusion for one of Glasgow's hardest to engage client groups: those currently homeless or at risk of becoming so. The research was undertaken during April and May 2003. The report⁸ presented its learning points under the headings of awareness, access, skills and support and a number of learning points were identified under each of the headings.

One of the key learning points in the awareness section was that engagement is best achieved when initial contact is on the basis of the client's own interests. This was found to be universally true and so tailored sessions were devised to cater for a range of interests.

The report found that access to ICT was limited as a result of cost, the population's mobility and the attitudes of clients towards formal education and anything which might suggest this. Recognising these factors, the project co-ordinator sought to encourage as many projects as possible to offer Internet access on site so that service users would feel comfortable in a familiar environment until they felt confident enough to move onto something more structured. This was highlighted in the support section of the report also.

With regard to skills, the report linked back to what it had said in the awareness section. It found that many clients, once engaged, show an ability to learn quite quickly if the right hook can be found. The project tried to build on peoples' interests and encouraged them to get as much practice as possible. One front line staff member was proud to report, just a few weeks after being introduced to a computer for the first time, that she had purchased a system for use at home, had set up an email account and was in more regular contact with family overseas. Such progress and enthusiasm in staff is invaluable when both raising awareness and developing skills in service users.

In the final section on support, the report highlighted the key role of the tutor and pointed to flexibility, empathy and the range of skills that would be required, ideally within a range of tutors. During the course of the project two additional tutors were employed on a sessional basis and two volunteers were engaged. Within this group of tutors there was a gender balance and a range of ages and experience which allowed best use to be made of the available support in a range of locations.

1.2 Impact

The most obvious and positive impact of the initial research was that it proved that there was need for a digital inclusion capacity building project to work with people affected by homelessness and because of this, the project was set up. The project was established and a Project Co-ordinator appointed.

⁸ SQW Ltd: Digital inclusion strategy for Glasgow's city centre homeless

1.3 Relevance

Commissioned by the Digital Inclusion team within Scottish Enterprise and undertaken by a firm of economic development consultants, the objectives of the study were to:

- seek the opinions of homeless people on their awareness, experience of and interest in Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- assess current provision of ICT services by partner organisations with regard to homeless people
- make recommendations to Scottish Enterprise Digital Inclusion team on the development of its Digital Inclusion Strategy in light of the findings of the above stages.

1.4 Organisational efficiency

When the Project Co-ordinator came into post one of the first tasks was to conduct an audit and mapping exercise of existing facilities and the digital opportunities they offered. From this it was obvious that there was scope for the establishment of new facilities, capacity building in existing projects and the increased utilisation of facilities who might not previously have considered people affected by homelessness as service users. The findings of this exercise informed the action plan and since then there have been significant changes not only in the provision of digital opportunities for people affected by homelessness across the city but also the capacity of projects and organisations to offer these opportunities to their service users.

1.5 Points for consideration

- ❖ It is crucial to undertake research before embarking on a project like this not only to identify the scale of the issue to be tackled but also to ascertain whether the type of project being proposed will be able to deal with all the issues raised. In this instance not only the size of the city but also the changing administrative structures might have lent themselves to a more locality based approach in addition to having a co-ordinator to manage the project as a whole.

2. Partnership working

2.1 Effectiveness

As part of the evaluation of the project, which will be considered in more detail later, several of the respondents commented favourably on the effectiveness of the partnership working of the project.

The Partnership Manager (Inclusion) at Learndirect Scotland said, "The event worked really well because we worked in partnership with the Project Co-ordinator, the Wayside and GHN to plan an event that would be relevant to the service users."

A development worker from the big step (a leaving care service) is also positive about the benefits of partnership working, "The Project Co-ordinator introduced the big step to a group of partners and service users who wanted to plan an event for young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. This was a very positive model of partnership working and it was a very successful event both for young people and the all the invited partners. The project had a positive impact on the young people who attended, all of whom left with a reminder of their day and the project."

As a final comment, the Project Leader at the Lodging House Mission said, "The Project Co-ordinator worked tirelessly to co-ordinate the various sub groups of the forum bringing together leaders from various agencies to look at providing access to digital technology for people affected by homelessness."

2.2 Impact

There has been considerable impact on a wide range of projects across the city. It should be noted that the impact can be considered at two different levels. To begin with it can be gauged at organisational level as there are changes in the way that services are delivered, but the collective impact of multi-agency working which has been encouraged by the project should not be overlooked. This collective impact is not primarily felt at service level, but at the level of service users who benefit from a more holistic and joined up approach to their unique set of circumstances.

2.2.1 Local Authority projects

- The project worked with the local authority to install Internet Hubs in the remaining three hostels and a smaller resettlement unit. Although the large scale hostels are due to close, the Hubs were seen as part of the Hostel Closure programme so that the residents could take advantage of the benefits of digital technology as they prepared for moving into their own tenancies and began the process of reintegration into local communities.

The head of the Homelessness Partnership commented, "We have developed a stream of work around the digital inclusion agenda as a direct result of this project. The levels of use and the levels of demand for access to IT from our

service users indicate that both awareness and confidence have grown substantially during the period of the project. It worked successfully to open pathways to other learning opportunities by developing tutorial support for our service users and promoting access, with a number of partners, to further learning.”

- The Project Co-ordinator worked in partnership with the staff of this small assessment and resettlement unit for young people and other departments within the local authority to put together a six week programme of activities. This included bringing a technology bus to the project so that the young people could access the Internet.

One of the depute managers commented, “It’s brilliant. It will give the young people the opportunity to learn and develop their skills in a way they were not able to do before – and it will boost their confidence!” One of the young people was equally enthusiastic and said, “It will make a huge difference – it gets boring here sometimes and now we’ll be able to get onto the Internet” See Appendix 1 for the full case study

2.2.2 Partner projects

Partner projects include a wide range of organisations, large and small, within the voluntary sector, who work in Glasgow to support people affected by homelessness as well as organisations from the public and private sectors

- Further Education

In a further move to encourage the residents to engage with the new ICT Hub in the large male hostel, an e-literacies project was developed. This involved the project working in partnership with a local college to submit a bid for funding to the Glasgow Community Learning Strategy Partnership. Following the appointment of a literacies worker, the ICT Hub was used as a tool to deliver basic skills training that allowed the residents to make full use of the digital technology. Residents and staff were offered a range of activities and the confidence of the learners was boosted when some of their work was put on display in one of the local libraries. The Project Co-ordinator was delighted when the e-literacies project received a Good Practice Award (Innovative Methods category) from the Scottish Adult Learning Partnership.

- Voluntary Sector

Already a well established centre, a day centre (Lodging House Mission) has benefited from involvement in the SCB/BT Seeing is Believing programme which led not only to the refurbishment of their IT café, but also contacts with other companies who have enhanced other areas of their service provision. The Project leader says of this, “One of the best contacts developed by the Project co-ordinator was that between the day centre and Scottish Business in the Community. Of the twenty business that visited on the day more than three-quarters got involved in a practical way assisting with developing the capabilities of the mission to reach out to those most socially excluded, a number of these developing into long term relationships that have meant thousands of pounds of infrastructure development and hundreds of hours of volunteer time donated as part of social responsibility programmes.”

Because of the physical limitations of their premises, laptops were the preferred option to provide ICT opportunities for a second day centre (Wayside Day Centre). With support they successfully applied for funding for new equipment and were supported in an application for a refurbished system from one of the major financial institutions. The necessary software was made available through the agreement between Citizens Online and Microsoft. To make best use of their equipment, additional tutors were required and the Project Co-ordinator recruited two volunteers through IT4Communities.

The Wayside was also the location for one of the Learndirect Scotland "Give it a go!" events which brought together a number of organisations to promote learning to the service users. The Project Co-ordinator was one of the partners on the steering group for the event and ran ICT taster sessions on the day. One of the senior members of staff said, "There's a buzz about the place ... and the level of engagement has greatly exceeded my expectations. I'm really pleased to see people accessing information about opportunities."

Another voluntary sector resettlement project (Council for Homeless Young People) wanted to acquire its own equipment. Using "A guide to funding sources for community-based ICT initiatives"⁹ the Project Manager was supported to identify suitable sources of funding for ICT and assisted in the completion of the funding applications. A further larger sum was received quite some considerable time later and this will allow further equipment to be purchased and a tutor to be employed to offer training to the residents.

The Project Manager of this voluntary sector resettlement project (the Arch) was keen to not only offer the residents opportunities to access the Internet but also to do this in a structured way. The organisation was able to source four laptops but the Project Co-ordinator provided Microsoft software so that all the laptops were running the same programs. Following this the Project Co-ordinator worked with the project's ICT/literacies tutor to produce a seven part Computer Skills course, suitable for those with little or no experience.

Artworks is a specialist project offering creative opportunities to people affected by homelessness. The project was supported to set up a website for the project so that they could market their work to a wider audience, using the free website facility for community groups provided by BT. Project Manager at Artworks said, "It's been an excellent piece of joint working and even better because the Project Co-ordinator has come in to work with service users who have been involved from the beginning."

A further resettlement project has benefited from the donation of an Internet ready computer system and a series of taster sessions being offered to the residents. To build on the skills acquired during these sessions, the Project Co-ordinator has made available the computer skills course that was developed in one of the other projects and also some CD based training materials for staff who felt that their ICT skills required updating.

⁹ Hall Aitken: A guide to funding sources for community-based ICT initiatives

2.3 Relevance

The foreword of the Scottish Executive's revised Digital Inclusion strategy¹⁰ makes the following assertion: "Digital Inclusion is everyone's responsibility and a challenge that we must all continue to meet in partnership, to ensure meaningful delivery of efficient and effective services to citizens.....it is evident that this will only be possible through a coherent and joint approach between the public, private and voluntary sectors." There is no doubt that given the range of organisations working with marginalised groups, there is a real need for partnership working to ensure the best possible continuity of service provision – in the area of digital inclusion as in other areas.

The nature of partnership working is such that there are obvious differences in the types of relationship that exist between organisations that may be working together. Members of a strategic partnership for example will not have the same kind of relationship as would members of a more operational partnership. The project worked with both strategic and operational partners with the following organisations all being closely involved because they saw its relevance to the delivery of some of the stated aims of their own strategies and action plans.

Glasgow Homelessness Partnership The GHP comprises Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Homelessness Network, the Scottish Executive and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The current strategy document, "Strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow 2003-2006"¹¹, is clear that there is a clear link and an important role for education and training in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. The strategy is currently being revised and the project Co-ordinator submitted a paper demonstrating how the project is contributing to these aims.

Glasgow Homelessness Network (www.ghn.org.uk) As the umbrella body for just over seventy organisations, GHN provides a voluntary sector and service user perspective into the planning structures within the city. As the Digital Inclusion Project was hosted by GHN, it was possible to feed the aims and objectives of the project into the city-wide planning structures and allowed the digital inclusion agenda to be taken forward into existing organisations, committees and structures.

Scottish Executive – As a contribution to the consultation process around the revision of the digital inclusion strategy¹²:

- A visit to digital inclusion projects across Glasgow for the team involved with this revision was organised
- Participation in the Voluntary Sector focus group convened to investigate the input of the sector into the revised strategy

¹⁰ Scottish Executive: Digital Inclusion in partnership

¹¹ Glasgow Homelessness Partnership: Strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness 2003-2006

¹² Scottish Executive: Digital inclusion in partnership, 2006

- Provision of background information in the form of examples of best practice for the Deputy Minister for Communities' ministerial speech at the Telecities conference held in Glasgow in June 2006.

In addition to these specific digitally focussed activities, the Project Co-ordinator has also responded to the consultation on Community Learning and Development and the refresh of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland report.

BT – as the funder of the project BT has sought to support and promote the project in a variety of ways.

- The project Co-ordinator was invited to take part in a round table discussion chaired by BT and hosted by Holyrood Magazine. The transcript of the discussion was subsequently published.
- In order to both raise awareness and engage with the business community BT organised a "Seeing is believing" event in conjunction with Scottish Business in the Community. The day focussed on digital inclusion and employability and was a chance for company managers to see the work being done and what kind of support their business might be able to offer.

2.4 Organisational efficiency

Given the size of the city and the number of people involved, it was essential to work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations in order to achieve the required outcomes.

A wide range of organisations became involved with the project – day centres, resettlement units, the remaining large council-run hostels and specialist projects with a specific focus e.g. creative art for people affected by homelessness as well as service providers such as colleges, community learning services and libraries.

One strand of the projects action plan recognised that if members of staff in projects are not enthusiastic and competent around computers, then it is unlikely that they will consider offering digital technology opportunities to their service users. The project coordinator has worked with wide range of organisations and has consulted with them on training needs to educate frontline staff. This has led to bespoke training including online awareness raising sessions to allay fears, basic computing skills or using computers for creative purposes such as posters or newsletters. This has been the way to ensure that staff are brought on board and are able to cascade the knowledge and learning to their service users.

The extent of partnership working has varied considerably and not all partnerships have proved to be as fruitful as might have been expected. It has sometimes been difficult to understand why this has happened, but often it has emerged later that there were different organisational priorities or internal reorganisation that has led to contacts being redeployed or having their job remits changed. This demonstrates the importance of maintaining contact with

partners to try and ensure that any difficulties can be resolved, although given the constraints of time this was not always possible.

2.5 Sustainability

During the lifetime of the project many new links between projects were forged and it is hoped that these will continue to the mutual benefit of all those involved. It was gratifying to note that at the celebration at the end of the project, new contacts were still being made, visits were being arranged and people were discovering areas where it might be possible to work co-operatively.

2.6 Points for consideration

- ❖ No matter the advantages of collaborative working and the benefits that accrue to individual organisations and projects, partnerships will only work if there continues to be a person whose responsibility it is to ensure that this happens. It is therefore crucial when looking at the issue of sustainability that this is taken into consideration and that if the project co-ordinator does not remain in post that some means be found to mainstream this element of the project. This may require the re-negotiation of someone's job description or the willingness of one of the organisations in the partnership to allow some flexibility within its staffing structures.
- ❖ It is crucial that the explicit nature of partnership working is acknowledged. It can be all too easy for there to be a superficial partnership arrangement that is nothing more than a group of people meeting round a table, without their being a real commitment to its practical outworking, visible in agreements and protocols that will have an effect on both working practices and service delivery.
- ❖ It is important that those entering into a partnership agreement are fully aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect from others, since it is all too easy to concentrate on individual agendas and forget about the bigger picture and its intended impact and outcomes.

3. Funding

3.1 Effectiveness

BT has been supporting EverybodyOnline projects around the UK since 2002. As part of BT's Community Investment, BT has invested £120,000 over the three years of the Glasgow project as well as providing in kind support, hosting events and with PR and Marketing for example. The funding for this project was handled centrally, and had it not been for the unrestricted contribution to the project by Scottish Enterprise, the project co-ordinator would have been much more limited in what she was able to do. There is certainly a case for a small locally held budget in order to respond quickly to requests for assistance that cannot be easily met by going through a formal invoicing procedure e.g. purchase of prizes for competitions or ad hoc catering requirements.

3.2 Impact

3.2.1 Additional fundraising

During the course of the project an additional £38 309 was generated to benefit seven different projects across the city. The funding came from a variety of sources – business and enterprise, charitable trusts and a partnership responsible for managing funds devolved to it by the Scottish Executive.

It should be noted that the impact these funds have had on the receiving organisations has been out of proportion to the sums awarded as it is often the case that a relatively small pot of flexible funding is of much more use to an organisation than a large sum which is restricted.

3.2.2 In kind support

In addition to the direct and additional funding, there has also been in kind support for the project. It is difficult to put a monetary value on this but it includes the following:

- The provision and installation of telecommunications hardware and lines
- A reduction in printing costs to allow a Microsoft Unlimited Potential grant to go further.
- Time and materials donated to refurbish the IT Learning Centre in one of the day centres as a result of the "Seeing is Believing" visit. This included furniture, carpeting and redecoration.
- Volunteers as IT tutors at another of the day centres.

3.2.3 Resources

The project has also been able to source 2 donated computer systems that have been installed into resettlement units. 10 software packages were obtained to complement the purchase of new equipment by projects.

3.3 Relevance

Given that the local authority has a statutory responsibility for service provision to marginalised groups, it would have been entirely feasible that they alone should fund a project like this. However it would also be possible for any large organisation or business to be the main funder as it should not be difficult to justify the costs involved as part of the budget set aside for corporate social responsibility. It might also be considered that one of the new Workforce Plus partnerships could assume financial responsibility for a project which has such obvious links to the current employability agenda

It should be noted that the voluntary sector should play an important role in a project like this because of the more flexible possibilities of their funding. This however has to be weighed up against the short term nature of funding in the voluntary sector.

The above suggestions show that it would be possible to have either a single funder or a cocktail approach to funding. There are of course advantages and disadvantages to both these methods and it is necessary to weigh up the possible ensuing difficulties of conflicting objectives against the reliance on a single source of income.

3.4 Organisational efficiency

Whilst it is not possible to put a monetary value on the benefits that were gained from the hosting of this project by an organisation with the thematic specialism, it is none the less important to note that the overall project outcomes benefit greatly from co-location in a setting appropriate to the project theme in order to take best advantage of knowledge, networking and partnership working opportunities.

3.5 Sustainability

When the project was first launched, there was an expectation in some organisations that it was to be the point of supply of computer equipment, while the reality was that the project worked more effectively at a strategic and capacity building level. Whilst this may have been an initial disappointment, by the end of the project it was clear that the capacity building approach had been successful and that the support that the project had been able to give in terms of sourcing additional funding and staff training had indeed paid dividends that would be more valuable.

3.6 Points for consideration

- ❖ Careful consideration should be given to the funding of such a project to ensure that the best solution is found, remembering that the project co-ordinator will be required to satisfy the demands of all those who contribute and that this might lead to either a duplication of effort or a conflict of interests

- ❖ In addition, however the project is funded, consideration should be given to a simple yet accountable mechanism whereby the project coordinator has access to a locally held budget.
- ❖ It should be noted that the impact that additional funding has had on the receiving organisations has frequently been out of proportion to the sums awarded. It is often the case that a relatively small pot of flexible funding is of much more use to an organisation than a large sum which is restricted.

4. Marketing strategy

4.1 Effectiveness

The Project actively sought out promotional opportunities at both a local and national level. These opportunities could be considered under the following headings:

- Direct/personal approaches - presentations to groups and the provision of displays at exhibitions and conferences.
- Direct mail - the use of existing mailing lists to target potential partners
- Electronic media – items on websites and articles in e-bulletins
- Advertisement – fliers, posters, articles in newsletters and magazines

The following list, although not exhaustive, gives an indication of the range of opportunities and events that may provide a showcase for a similar project locally, nationally and UK wide.

- Organisational/project staff meetings
- Annual conferences of a variety of organisations
- Business and social enterprise opportunities
- Education and learning events

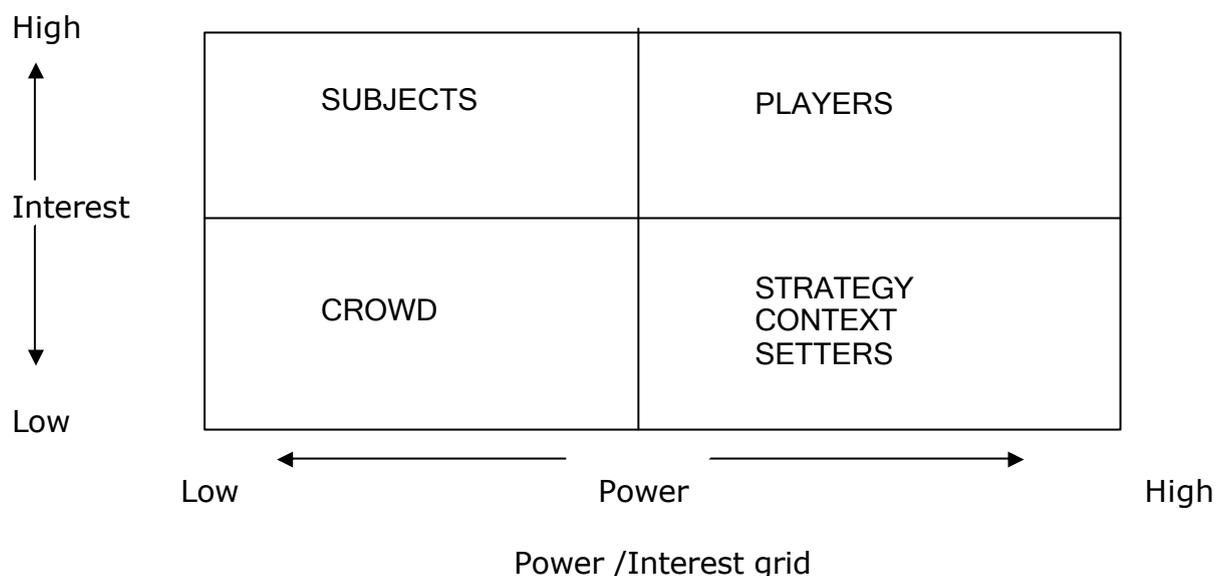
In addition to direct input at such events there have also been numerous opportunities to attend events where it has been possible to talk in a more informal way about the project and its objectives.

4.2 Impact

When the project was launched there was considerable media interest in its innovative aspects and following the success of the promotional activities, a press conference was held. This resulted in coverage on STV's breakfast news programme and Saga FM and in addition to this a number of local newspapers picked up on the story. The publicity generated has reached a very wide and varied audience because of the range of publications that have carried articles about the project. See Appendix 2 for the full list of media coverage.

4.3 Relevance

It was essential that the promotion of the project had the correct tone and clear message for the target audiences and that marketing materials are tailored to the media being used. An example of this might be the use of case studies, where it should be possible to find stories with a good fit for either a publication or a website. Because marketing has to be targeted a wide range of materials will be required to ensure relevance to a variety of audiences working at both a strategic and operational level.



Another way of looking at the marketing of the project is to plot the stakeholders on a 'power and interest' grid. This allowed the Project to identify those who are going to be of most support within the area of marketing as well as those with whom perhaps the project might have unrealistic expectations of support.

In the project under discussion it would be possible to plot the participants as follows:

- Players: the funder and the hosting organisation
- Strategy context setters: national and local government
- Subjects: projects delivering digital inclusion services and some service users
- Crowd: projects not delivering digital inclusion services and some service users

4.4 Organisational efficiency

Given that marketing is a specialist area it may be necessary to draft in the skills of those who have expertise in this area. For this reason, the project had a Marketing and PR subgroup that was responsible for the marketing strategy for the project and the preparation of press releases. This gave an additional breadth to the expertise available to the project as well as bringing new networking and promotional possibilities.

It is important to make best use of all the possible marketing and PR opportunities, and as such to utilise the network of contacts within each partner organisation and the opportunities they can bring to the project for placing publicity e.g. in house newsletters, website etc.

4.5 Points for consideration

- ❖ Everybody uses marketing at some point even if they are not aware of it but Marketing and PR is a specialist area which does not often form part of a general job remit. Consideration should be given to the availability of specialist support and advice which might be available within one of the partner organisations.
- ❖ Sufficient flexibility should be given to the Project to allow the exploration and development of new networks and networking possibilities.
- ❖ Mapping potential stakeholders on a power/interest grid can be used as a tool to analyse various areas of the project and at different stages during its lifetime.
- ❖ If case studies are to be a feature of the project, then details of individuals' stories, along with supporting quotations and permission to use them should be collected in a methodical manner.
- ❖ Marketing and PR can be an expensive element of any project and consideration should be given to how to make best use of what may be limited resources.

5. Service user involvement and empowerment

5.1 Effectiveness

In order to ensure that the project met those of its objectives that directly involved service users, there was early discussion with GHN to identify any work that might already be going on in their service user involvement activity and also, given their expertise in this area, to discuss with them how effective participation might take place.

These discussions centred on a modified version of the six levels of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation¹³:

- Level 1:
No control – service users as passive consumers
- Level 2:
Information – telling people about the service, service users have no influence
- Level 3:
Consultation – asking people what they think about the service, service users have no influence
- Level 4:
Participation – encouraging people to take part in the shaping of services, service users can make suggestions and influence outcomes
- Level 5:
Shared power – share decision and responsibility where service users can influence and determine outcomes
- Level 6:
Full control – service users control all aspects of decision making

During the project the Project Co-ordinator worked with service users at different levels on the ladder since several levels of service user involvement can co-exist within a project depending on the aims and objectives of each element of it.

5.2 Impact

The further up the Ladder of Participation that service user involvement takes place, the greater the impact will be on the individual in terms of their empowerment providing the involvement has been undertaken effectively. In a recent report¹⁴ it was pointed out that "...service user involvement itself is not an

¹³ Arnstein, Sherry R: A ladder of citizen participation

¹⁴ GHN: (Dis)empowerment through involvement...an empowerment framework for employability services in Glasgow

indicator that a service is empowering. An excellent service can be empowering without using service user involvement techniques at any level, and although effective service user involvement can be very empowering, where involvement is tokenistic, it is more likely to be disempowering.”

At the beginning of the project, most service user involvement was at Level 2 as this was the stage of raising awareness of the project, although even at this early stage the Project Co-ordinator was open to comments about what might be possible and how the project might take shape.

Concurrently with the information level of the project, consultation with service users was also taking place in order to produce case studies. This was an opportunity for an individual or an organisation to tell the story of their involvement with the project and to make comments on what had happened and how.

One example of work at level 4 would be the involvement of residents in a hostel around the timing of ICT training sessions. Given that the Project Co-ordinator had access to a sessional tutor, who could be deployed on a flexible basis, it made sense to consult with the residents to ensure that sessions were being run at appropriate times in order to maximise involvement.

As the project developed, the Project Co-ordinator continued to work with GHN to discover ways of increasing participation and service user input and a joint Online Service User Forum was established. This piece of work within the project could be considered at Level 5, since attendance at these events led not only to an increased awareness of the relevance of ICT and opportunities to develop computing skills but also gave service users an opportunity to influence outcomes of the project.

5.3 Relevance

This strand recognises not only the importance of awareness raising of the benefits of digital technology, but also that engaging and innovative ways have to be found to overcome any barriers, perceived or actual, and to increase motivation. Although free Internet access is available in all the REAL learning centres within the council’s libraries, there is often a need for both more familiar surroundings and a higher level of support until levels of confidence are raised. It is crucial that there are sufficient appropriate training opportunities for people to increase their skills without affecting their benefits. These issues were amongst those discussed at the Online Service Users Forum.

Best practice in service user involvement would acknowledge that the process of involvement has benefits both at service provision level and service user level. At service provision level there should be improved and more informed services and for service users, the process of involvement should be an empowering experience for individuals. Should it be the case that there is ever a conflict in this area, the empowerment of service users should always take priority.

5.4 Organisational efficiency

A consultation exercise was carried out with service users across a range of projects in the city in order to have a more complete evaluation at the end of the project. This is examined in more detail in the next section of the report.

Given the positioning of the Project Co-ordinator within GHN, this allowed access to existing service user networks within the member organisations, but at the same time the design and approach of the service is rooted in an understanding of the complex needs and lifestyles of homeless people, and the other more fundamental priorities people often have at this stage in their lives.

5.5 Sustainability

A powerful spin off from the work of the Online Service Users Forum was the introduction of a mentoring scheme which involved one to one peer support. Peer educators are one of the best ways to get other people involved in a project. They have credibility and an ability to share their learning with others. This is taking things one step further than involvement, into the realm of empowerment and is very much in line with the ethos of GHN. Involvement can wax and wane, but empowerment is much more likely to lead to meaningful sustainability.

5.6 Points for consideration

- ❖ It is crucial that there are sufficient appropriate training opportunities for people to increase their skills without affecting their benefits.
- ❖ Consider the establishment of a Service Users Forum as a means to increasing involvement and empowerment.
- ❖ Identify and make use of existing service user networks
- ❖ Consider the different methods and levels of involvement

6 Monitoring and evaluation

Continuous monitoring took place during the life of the project and was used to provide an analysis of project success. The specific areas that were monitored were:

- Progress against the aims and outcomes of the action plan
- Outcomes of service intervention
- Service provision and take-up

In addition, two separate evaluation exercises were carried out towards the end of the project. Although different in format the results have been pulled together under the same headings that have been used for the other sections of the report, with subdivisions to consider the results and comments from three different groups of stakeholders – policy makers and planners, service deliverers and service users. It should be further noted that stakeholders had the possibility to evaluate the impact the project had on their service users. The positive scores in this section of their evaluation ranged from 71% to 86%. The reason for this lower level of scores is because some of those completing the form felt unable to comment on operational matters as they were in more strategic posts. This however in no way detracts from the fact that there were no negative impacts noted in this section of the stakeholder form.

6.1 Effectiveness

It is integral to the monitoring process to gather statistical data and indeed the first monitoring exercise provided the required baseline data to enable ongoing measurement of progress. The following table highlights the key statistics for the period October 2004 to December 2006

ICT taster/training sessions	88
People affected by homelessness gaining access to ICT skills through taster sessions and informal courses at partner projects	530
People going onto informal, formal and advanced learning ¹⁵	60
People into employment	1

Individual projects were also actively encouraged to submit data so that a picture of city-wide digital activity could be built up. The inclusion of this

¹⁵ We do not accept this as being the total of people going onto formal learning. Given that homelessness should be a phase and not a permanent state our ability to track people has been limited.

additional monitoring data gives a much clearer picture of the impact of the project. Increases in figures are attributable not only to the fact that projects provided increased digital opportunities for their service users, but also that more projects joined the monitoring process.

Whilst the above table concentrates on the hard skills that are more easily measured, the project also contributed to the development of soft skills.

The former Digital Champion manager said, "It should be noted that the gains made in both self confidence and basic skills in the use of ICT should not be underestimated" and a service user from the Glasgow Simon Community, BUDS project commented, "The more you learn the more confident you feel and the more enthusiastic you get"

One of the strands of the action plan was to look at the issue of ICT skills development for support staff in homeless organisations and projects and so it was encouraging that 92% of stakeholder respondents said that the project had had a positive impact on staff capacity. This ranged from a project manager who felt that "Staff are now aspiring to new levels with IT and are in turn relaying that to the services users" to a development worker who felt "able to access more resource material on the Internet due to the input of the Project Co-ordinator."

However, arguable the most important objective of the project was to increase ICT skill levels among people affected by homelessness, and 71% of the stakeholder respondents agreed that the project had had a positive effect on the ICT skills development of their service users. Several pointed to increased ability to use word processing programmes, not only for letter writing but also for more creative purposes such as producing posters. One project manager noted "Our residents are now accessing Word, Excel and Publisher and are currently compiling a resident's booklet with photos and word art etc and are uploading most of the information with limited input from staff."

The Project Co-ordinator has, throughout the project, championed the use of email as a means of keeping in touch with people. She has encouraged service users to email her to practise their skills and has been encouraged by the progress that some service users have made, moving from simple emails, to longer correspondence with attachments.

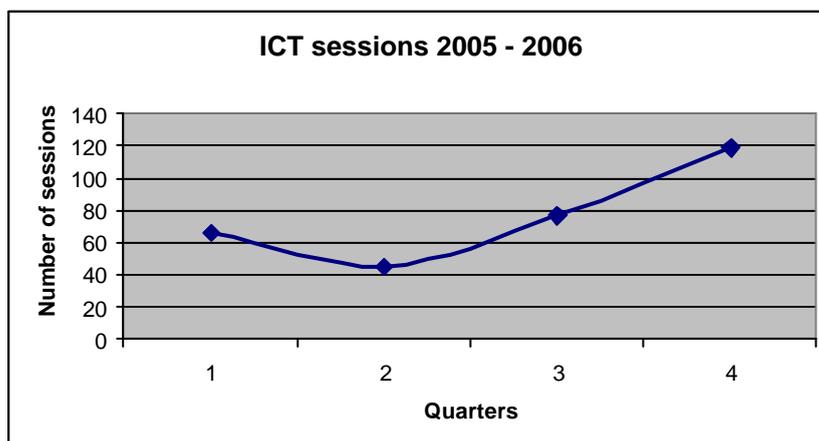
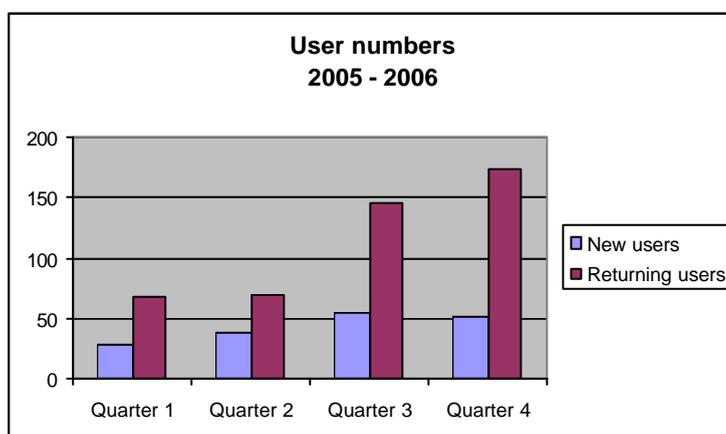
6.2 Impact

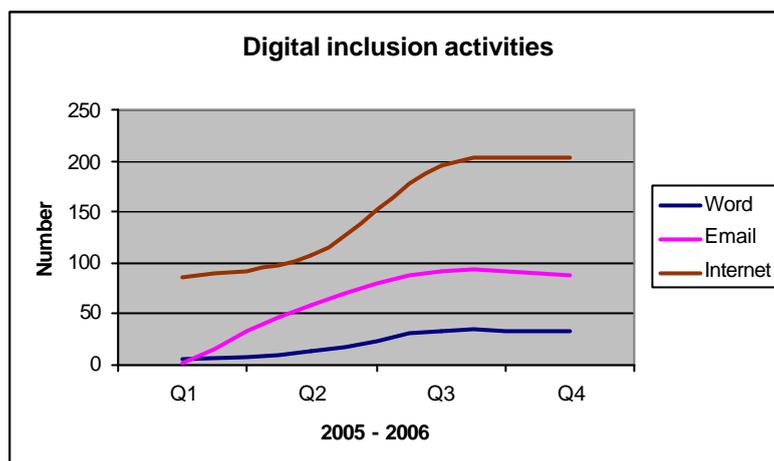
The major achievements of the project can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ 10 new accessible Internet facilities
- ❖ Awareness raising to both people affected by homelessness and those who work with them of the benefits of digital technology.
- ❖ Access to ICT is no longer considered the issue it previously was. In the evaluation 86% of the service users surveyed had noticed an increase in the availability of computers

- ❖ Increased organisational efficiency through the use of ICT. In the evaluation 92% of respondents recorded a positive impact in this area.
- ❖ Increased capacity within organisations both with regard to the ICT skills of staff and the availability of digital technology for service users.
- ❖ Input to strategies at both at local and national level.
- ❖ Additional funding of £38 309 was secured to further the aims of the project.
- ❖ Business partners have been engaged to both enhance ICT facilities and offer practical support by means of staff volunteers.
- ❖ People affected by homelessness have wider access to online advice and information
- ❖ People affected by homelessness benefit from electronic means of communication to maintain social networks.

The following graphs refer to the year September 2005 – August 2006, divided into quarters, with statistics having been gathered from a range of projects across the city. Although each of the projects offers digital technology sessions to suit its own service users, both in timing and in content, it is possible to give an indication of the kind of activity that is going on and what progress is being made.





The ultimate measure of progression might be considered to be employment, although the client group that the project was targeting were often distanced from the labour market. It is perhaps more pertinent to refer to the concept of employability, “the combination of factors and processes which enable people to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to move on in the workplace.”¹⁶ The Head of the Homelessness Partnership commented, “Given the centrality of basic IT skills to employment in the modern world, the development of both confidence and new skills will have a positive impact on employability.”

In terms of organisational practice, where there was again a 92% score on the positive side, one of the most commonly noted impacts of the project was the increase in the number of service users. The manager of a mainstream learning centre was honest enough to admit that he now had a “greater understanding of some of the issues faced by the clients and how our work needs to adapt to meet these needs.” Improved service delivery was also highlighted in one project where there has been a more physical impact as “We have rearranged our IT space to allow for more comfortable and safe use of equipment.”

The impact in the lives of services users was one of the most frequently noted items on the evaluation questionnaires. Many made reference to the soft skills such as confidence building – “Service users now use the computers confidently and frequently” (Project worker)

Perhaps the most significant area of impact is that of progression. For many of the people who have come into contact with the project, their experience has encouraged them to continue to develop their ICT skills. Among the respondents there was a variety of examples: “Some service users are now looking at attending....community courses”, “Many of our service users go on to further their IT skills by accessing college courses”, “...others are currently undertaking a certificated digital photography course....one volunteer now attends an evening class in web design.”

¹⁶ Scottish Executive: Workforce Plus: an employability framework for Scotland

One comment must be allowed to have the last word in this section. The Hostel Closure programme co-ordinator said, "People's lives have been transformed with the help of the project."

In a question designed to measure the increase in computer usage, 77% of the respondents indicated that their involvement with computers has increased over the last two years. This figure rises to 90% if those who indicated that it had stayed the same are included in the calculation. These are encouraging statistics and also encouraging are comments such as "Digital inclusion programme has widened my horizons" (GHN volunteer) which are testimony to the impact that the project has had in the lives of individuals.

The final question in the service user evaluation was a question that not everyone answered, but from the responses gathered, it is obvious that many of the respondents have made progress with what they have been doing and hopefully this will continue. It is interesting to note that the range of achievements included not only concrete things like the printing out of a CV or a birthday card, but also the simple fact of learning something new, in the case of one man, at the age of 71. For some people the fact of going out to use computers and interact with staff in a library or learning centre was a successful outcome and several mentioned the increase in their confidence which allowed them to make progress and move on.

"Getting a certificate from the Lodging House Mission which has enabled me to move on to access the ECDL at Stow College" (Service user – LHM)

6.3 Relevance

Given the national context of strategies covering homelessness, digital inclusion and employability, the timing of the project was particularly relevant, with digital inclusion allowing a holistic approach which underpins the other more specific strategies. By spanning a range of needs and creating an empowering environment, the project was able to provide input into a number of different areas:

- Advice and information
- Social networks
- Meaningful occupation
- Enhancing employability
- Service user involvement and empowerment

Throughout the life of the project, the various activities were being monitored to ensure relevance, although it became obvious that aspects which had not been considered relevant at the beginning of the project assumed relevance as the project developed e.g. basic skills or literacies. It was because of careful monitoring that the need for additional support in this area was highlighted and steps were taken to secure additional funding for a targeted piece of work – The e-literacies project @ the Hub (the internet facility in one of the large council run hostels). Where it is possible to have a degree of flexibility, the resulting responsiveness ensures relevance.

The project has as its context not only the Digital Inclusion strategy of the Scottish Executive, which was revised toward the end of 2006, but also the Glasgow Homelessness Partnership's "Strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow", which is currently under review. In the light of these documents, it is encouraging to receive positive comments on the relevance of the project. The former manager of the Digital Champions commented, "We can see that the project has made good progress in encouraging a number of providers to set out a range of appropriate learning opportunities/progression for their clients." Also from a strategic point of view, the head of the Homelessness Partnership noted that, "...digital inclusion is brought close to service users in a familiar and accessible location."

The project came to Glasgow at a time when there were great changes taking place in homelessness. As a result of new legislation in 2001 and 2003, Glasgow was required to devise a strategy that would work towards the 2012 target – where everyone assessed as homeless will have a right to permanent accommodation. This strategy includes the closure of the large scale hostels in the centre of town and the resettlement of former residents into more suitable accommodation in other areas of the city. Given that the client group who were the main target of the project often have more fundamental issues, it was essential to ensure that the services provided were relevant and that it was responding to expressed needs. The Hostel closure co-ordinator was quite clear that the project had been extremely relevant: "The project has enabled us to work with people who would otherwise have had nowhere else to turn for assistance with IT skills"

Following a meeting of the Online Service Users forum which was a joint project between the project and GHN, the project worker from the big step commented, "We were involved in an extremely well organised and successful focus group. The relationships that the Project Co-ordinator had formed with service users was one of mutual respect; taking on board all service users views, very inclusive of everyone's needs."

In another project there was a need for ICT to be more inclusive as women in the centre did not access Internet. As a result of involvement with the project "...women now take advantage of the computers at their group on a Wednesday afternoon"

Service users are quite clear in their mind about the importance of computers and digital technology, since 90% of respondents gave a score of 4/5 or 5/5, with 75% of these giving it a score of 5/5. In addition, more than half of the respondents said that their opinion had changed over the last two years and attributed this to the fact that computers were now more important for work, more useful than they had previously realised or were easier to use than they had imagined. A couple of the respondents had always thought that computers were really important and the remainder had either not changed their opinion or did not answer the question. In the blunt and down to earth way that is typical of Glasgow, one service user put it like this: "Ye canny dae nuthin' without a computer" (computers are essential! – Service user, Wayside Day Centre), whilst another gave a fuller explanation of his point of view: "I used to think the technology was difficult to use and only beneficial to the young, but now I realise

that it is useful to keep in contact with family and friends and for information” (Service user, Lodging House Mission)

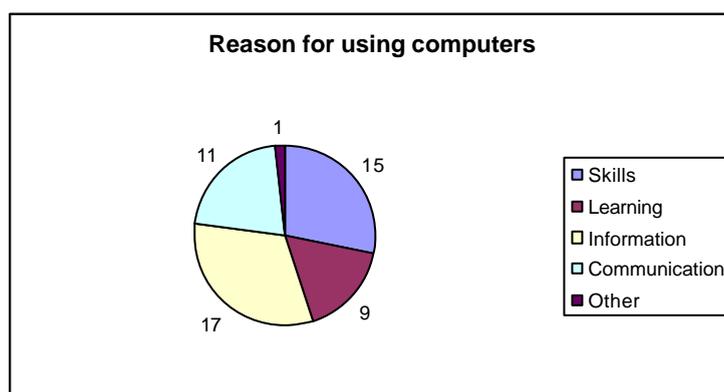
When it came to a question about availability of computing facilities, 86% of respondents had noticed a difference over the last couple of years with the most commonly cited reason being that computers are now available in a wider variety of locations. Some service users specified that they had access to computers in projects that had previously not offered this facility. A variety of other factors were listed including computers becoming more affordable and the fact that people were now more likely to have a computer at home.

“The availability of computers has really increased in the past couple of years” (GHN volunteer)

All those surveyed had taken part in computer activities and usually at more than one location on the list. It was interesting to note that community libraries collected 15 votes from the 22 service users, marginally more than day centres for people affected by homelessness, given that during previous discussions with service users they had been less than complimentary about the support available there. However the day centres and other homelessness projects taken together were more popular. It was interesting to note the range of other places that respondents had access the Internet including in previous employment, in the home of a friend or family member, in an Internet café and for two people, in prison.

“I think everybody should learn to use a computer and I go to the library to use one” (GHN volunteer)

Despite trying to elicit the single most important fact that would encourage computer use, it was obvious from the replies to this question that people found it difficult to choose only one option. The single respondent who put “other” was interested in computer games.



6.4 Organisational efficiency

Although returns from stakeholders were fewer than had been hoped and it is therefore not a wholly representative picture, it is none the less helpful to record the results from those that were returned. It should also be noted that in some cases, given the nature of the project, the respondents were only able to

complete part of the form. However it is extremely encouraging to note that there were no negative impacts recorded.

To set these responses into a city-wide context, it is interesting to view them in the light of a piece of research that was carried out by MORI¹⁷ on behalf of Glasgow City Council. As part of the ongoing consultations with members of the citizens' panel, the subject of Internet access was included in the March/April 2006 survey. The research found that the proportion of people accessing the internet from home (44%) appeared to have increased significantly since the first wave of the current panel (Autumn 2003), when the proportion of residents who had internet access in their homes stood at 31%. However, the figure remains well behind the UK average of 57%.

The MORI research also pointed to class differences in the results, with working class residents among those most likely to access the internet in community centres and came to the conclusion that this reveals that, while the digital divide is still huge, efforts to provide access in public places have been taken up to similar extents by both middle class and working class residents and that it is essentially differential access from home or work that creates the divide.

Another way of looking at the efficiency of the project is to compare the quantity of resources that were assigned to the project and to measure these against the outputs at the end of the project. Given that the only visible input was the appointment of the Project Co-ordinator and that there was a city-wide remit for the project, the resources could be considered as scarce. In the light of this, it is gratifying to note the very positive personal comments that have been received. As a footnote to the evaluation form, the Head of the Homelessness Partnership noted, "I would like to take this opportunity to say that the Project Co-ordinator played a pivotal role in developing the work outlined (GHP's subsequent digital inclusion work).

A further way of looking at this aspect of the project is to consider how it has impacted on the way things are done and whether people feel that their efficiency has improved as a result of being involved in the project. One respondent commented, "All communication about activities now take place by internal email and many service users access this information." and a member of staff who attended a training course said, "the training has shown me how to manage my workload in an efficient manner which will save me time." There has also been increased efficiency in access to resources for projects – not only the EverybodyOnline Hub toolkits but also useful websites and training notes. A member of the HIP team said, "the Project Co-ordinator has helped share resources and when possible improved the learning materials available." And one of the project workers said, "The project Co-ordinator directed me to the BBC web pages which have computer tuition and the resources available on the EverybodyOnline website." And finally from a project worker at a large voluntary sector resettlement unit, "This project has opened doors. The Project co-ordinator's a real information technology resource. I know that if I phone her she's like a library and will have the information or contacts that I need."

¹⁷ MORI: Glasgow Panel Survey 6, March/April 2006

6.5 Sustainability

Contrary to some early expectations, the project did not arrive in Glasgow to distribute computer systems to projects, and the percentage of respondents who marked Assets as a positive impact (64%) reflects this. One project worker commented "We haven't increased assets, but we are making much better use of existing equipment." It is nonetheless encouraging to see the number of projects that have either established new ICT facilities or who have expanded what they already had. These have come about either as the result of the Project Co-ordinator assisting in the sourcing of funding and the targeting of applications or the donation of computer systems because people knew that the Project Co-ordinator could find a good home for them. One of the main stakeholders said, "The Project co-ordinator was always quick to pass on details of potential funding sources to all homeless projects in the city. These funding sources, previously unknown to most groups, became rich sources for new revenue needed to develop innovative projects aimed at people affected by homelessness."

Sustainability of the project can also be considered from the point of view of the knowledge and skills base that has been built in within projects. One of the HIP team commented, "There has been a number of small provider training sessions which have increased the confidence and IT knowledge of many staff members" and this is reflected in the feedback received from training courses e.g. "This will enable me to be more confident on the computer" and "I think I could move on to something more advanced now."

This is in some respects replicated by sustainability issues amongst service users. Firstly, there is the sustainability of the skills that have been developed as a result of being involved with the project and I think it is clear that in many cases service users have been encouraged to develop their skills and to take advantage of more advanced learning opportunities. It is not always easy to quantify this, given the transient nature of the target group, the resettlement of people from the city centre hostels to accommodation elsewhere and the number of possible learning opportunities available in a large city like Glasgow.

Nonetheless one respondent was able to say, "Three service users have moved on to computer courses", although this was qualified by , "...there have been difficulties moving people on to other learning opportunities but this is mainly because of the individual needs of learners."

An additional area under this heading is that of communication and social networks. This is often an extremely difficult area for people affected by homelessness as they seek to re-establish contact with family and friends or cope with a move to a new neighbourhood. Having an email account and being able to keep in touch can be an important part of the reintegration process. In addition the very fact of working in a group at an ICT class can help develop social networks that may last beyond a person's experience of homelessness.

Many staff reported in their evaluation that service users have set up email accounts so that they can keep in touch with friends and family. One of the HIP development workers noted "Many service users set up and use their email

accounts on a regular basis. They have also become more confident and comfortable in group environments.”

6.6 Points for consideration

- ❖ A baseline audit is important to ensure meaningful monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ Regular monitor during the lifetime of the project to ensure that stakeholders are still on board and that additional ideas or sub-projects can be taken on board if considered appropriate and relevant.
- ❖ Ensure that best use is made of existing networks to ensure a broad base for monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion

One of the most important conclusions to draw from this report is to recognise the value of a short term project and its ability to kick start thinking and development in a specific area or with a specific group of people. However it is equally important to ensure that the lessons learned from such a project are mainstreamed across existing structures to ensure sustainability so that the impact will continue to be felt in areas such as Employability, Community Planning, Social Work and Health.

The following list draws one main conclusion from each section of the report:

- ❖ We found there to be an enormous need in Glasgow for appropriate and accessible ICT opportunities to ensure that those who are most socially excluded and furthest from the labour market can take advantage of all the benefits that digital technology can bring. There may be a similar need in other areas.
- ❖ There needs to be a commitment to real partnership working to ensure the success of a project like this – the more that this can be evidenced, the more that other partners will want to be part of it.
- ❖ Flexible and accessible funding is crucial to the smooth running of a project that often requires to be supportive of and responsive to the needs of a vulnerable client group.
- ❖ Short term projects can generate a greater awareness within organisations of the potential of digital technology and how it might be used to develop their work with service users.
- ❖ It should never be forgotten that the project is there to support and offer empowering experiences to service users and to improve services in a way that is relevant to them.

Appendix 1

Case study

Jumpstart! for young homeless people

A group of young homeless people in a supported accommodation project in the North of Glasgow have had the opportunity to informally learn computers, thanks to the EverybodyOnline project, an innovative scheme run by charity Citizens Online and supported by BT and Microsoft.

What happened?

Following her attendance at an Open Day, Linda Walker, the Everybody Online Project Coordinator became involved in the development of a pilot programme for the young people, which was eventually called Jumpstart! Working in partnership with the Community Action Team of Glasgow City Council's Social Work Department and also the Young People into IT project run by the Council's Cultural and Leisure Services, an informal learning programme was developed. The six week programme would allow the young people to take part in a variety of different activities, such as cookery, alternative therapies and DJ skills but also computing. John Howat, one of the staff said, "The pilot project gave the young people a chance to try various new activities and develop their skills. It is a really exciting development which makes it really easy to get inspired"

Given the sometimes chaotic nature of the clients lifestyles, and the fact that the project is a short term accommodation project, the numbers attending the computer sessions varied from week to week. This however did not stop the young people enjoying their computer sessions and learning more about how computing skills could help them in the future.

At the end of the pilot an awards ceremony was held. Seven young people received a certificate to acknowledge their participation and celebrate their achievements. These were presented by Catherine Jamieson, the Head of the Homelessness Partnership who said, "The Homeless Partnership really wants to see young people at this stage in their life thinking about their future. It has therefore been a great achievement for these young people to become involved in a programme that helps them achieve a healthy, active lifestyle."

Key achievements

- The young people benefited from a regular programme of activities
- Some young people who had had interrupted schooling were encouraged to think about improving their computing skills
- The staff of the project undertook the same computing skills audit as the young people

What needs to happen next?

The pilot project needs to be evaluated to see how it can be taken forward. Also the digital inclusion element of the programme needs to be discussed to see if there are ways that it can be improved. The Project Officer needs to follow up on the staff skills audit results to see what training sessions might be required.

Appendix 2

Media coverage

Media coverage is listed in chronological order and one of the early newspaper articles is inserted at the end of the list. Copies of all other articles that have appeared in magazines, newsletters and e-zines are available from the Project Co-ordinator.

Saga fm – news bulletins 16/11/04 – info about project and interview with PO, LHM staff member and service user. (audience figures 100 000 – 200 000 unaudited as it's a new station and has not yet been included in the quarterly calculations)

STV – news bulletins during GMTV Breakfast show 16/11/-04 – interview with PO (audience figures 400 000 – 500 000)

Scotland today website – “The Scotland Today website averages around 250,000 page impressions and just over 100,000 visits a month and this figure is rapidly growing. I'm afraid we can't be specific about visitors to a particular story. All stories are archived on the site, so can still be accessed significantly after the date they are posted.” (STV website administrator)

GHN Service Users Involvement team newsletter EverybodyOnline in Glasgow Speak Out 2004 Special edition November 2004

Glaswegian Homeless help 2/12/04

The Extra Online and on course for help 2/12/04 (inserted at the end of this appendix)

Stepping Out EverybodyOnline November 2004

National Grid for Learning Digital Inclusion e-bulletin, November 2004 issue

Communities Scotland, Literacies e-bulletin

Glasgow's Learning EverybodyOnline in Glasgow Newsletter Issue 6, Winter 2004

Stepping Out Hostels to get Internet information hubs March 2005

Northern Ireland Housing Executive:

- Conference presentation on NIHE website
- Photograph of NIHE speakers in Foyle news
- City hears of hope for the homeless, North West Echo

Inside housing Instant access 22/4/05

GHN Newspaper Crossing the digital divide March/April 2005

Glasgow Homelessness Partnership Empowerment through education, training and employment - EOL photographs from James McLean project and Lodging House Mission used as part of GHP's publicity leaflet

Stepping Out Jumpstart! For young homeless people June 2005

Salvationist Surfing for all 4 June 2005

West of Scotland Mission news EverybodyOnline June 2005

GHN Newspaper Give it a go! May/June 2005

Holyrood Magazine Digital inclusion – transcript of round table discussion (June 2005), circulation 2000

HI-TECH Scotland Home pages October 2005

Stepping Out The Hub – where next? December 2005

Stepping Out E-literacies @ the Hub December 2005

Glasgow's Learning E-literacies @ the Hub December 2005

Stepping Out Building confidence...increasing skills (E-literacies project @ Peter McCann House) March 2006

Inclusion Update Is everybody online? April 2006 Printed copies are circulated but the newsletter is also available online.

Stepping Out Give it a Go @ Hampden September 2006

Stepping Out EverybodyOnline @ Inglefield Street September 2006 (circulation 2000)

Appendix 3

Stakeholder questionnaire

The questionnaire seeks to assess the impact of the EverybodyOnline project in Glasgow. Please complete this questionnaire to allow me to better understand the impact that EOL has had on your organisation, project, staff and/or the people who use your service.

Please consider the following areas of operation and indicate whether EOL has had a positive or negative impact. Please then describe the nature of the impact.

Area of operation	Impact		Please describe
	+ ive	- ive	
Service delivery			
Practice e.g. what has changed in the way you provide services? Has there been an increase in the number of service users?			
Staff capacity e.g. have staff increased their skills? Do they feel more confident about supporting service users?			
Assets e.g. have you increased the number of available computers? Have you improved existing facilities?			

Service users	+ ive	- ive	Please describe
Progression e.g. have service users been able to move on to more formal learning opportunities?			
ICT skills development e.g. have service users become independent in their use of computers? Increase in employability?			
Social networks e.g. have service users used IT to keep in touch with friends/family? Have they become more involved in group work?			
Soft skills e.g. Have levels of confidence increased?			

Given that the project ends on 31st March, is there a way you would envisage sustaining the impact of EOL?

Any additional comments?

Thank you
Linda Walker, Project Co-ordinator

Appendix 4

Service user consultation

1. How important do you think computers and Internet access are?

Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

2. Has your opinion changed in the last couple of years? Why is this? Please comment

3. In the past couple of years have you noticed a difference in the availability of computers? Why is this? Please comment

4. Have you been involved in computer activities? Please tick as many as you wish.

- At a day centre
- At another homeless service/hostel/resettlement unit
- At a community library
- Somewhere else – please specify
- I haven't been involved in computer activities

5. Over the last couple of years has your involvement with computers

Increased? Decreased? Stayed the same?

6. What is the most important thing that has encouraged you to get involved with computers?

- To increase skills – perhaps leading to a job
- As a first step back into learning – perhaps leading to college
- To find out useful information
- To connect with other people, friends and family
- Something else – please specify

7. What has been the most successful result you have had from using computers?

Thank you

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MORI: Glasgow Panel Survey 6, March/April 2006

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Scottish Executive: Digital inclusion in partnership. 2006

Scottish Executive: Workforce Plus: an employability framework for Scotland. 2006

5. Service User Involvement & Empowerment (p26)



It is key for local partners to ensure access to a range of appropriate training opportunities for people to test and increase their skills without affecting benefits.



Consider the establishment of a Service Users Forum as a means to increasing involvement and empowerment. Additionally, identify and make use of existing service user networks



Consider and deploy the different methods and levels of involvement, ensuring that this is situation appropriate and person-centred.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation (p29)



A baseline audit is important to ensure meaningful monitoring and evaluation.



Regular monitor during the lifetime of the project to ensure that stakeholders are still on board and that additional ideas or sub-projects can be taken on board if considered appropriate and relevant.



Ensure that best use is made of existing networks to provide a broad base for monitoring and evaluation.

For more information, please contact:

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Toolkit

This checklist summarises the key considerations arising from the digital inclusion multi-agency project. Please refer to the appropriate page number for more information.

1. Initial Research (p12)



Initial research to help identify the scale of the issue to be tackled but also to ascertain whether the type of project being proposed will be able to deal with all the issues raised. In this instance not only the size of the city but also the changing administrative structures might have lent themselves to a more locality based approach in addition to having a co-ordinator to manage the project as a whole.

2. Partnership Working (p14)



No matter the advantages of collaborative working and the benefits that accrue to individual organisations and projects, partnerships work best when there continues to be a person whose responsibility it is to ensure that this happens! It is particularly important to take this into account when looking at the issue of sustainability beyond digital inclusion projects. This may require the re-negotiation of someone's job description or the willingness of one of the organisations in the partnership to allow some flexibility within its staffing structures.



It is key that the explicit nature of partnership working is acknowledged. It can be all too easy for there to be a superficial partnership arrangement that is nothing more than a group of people meeting round a table, without their being a real commitment to practical outworking, visible in agreements and protocols that will have an effect on both working practices and service delivery.



It is important that those entering into a partnership agreement are fully aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. Individual agendas should be discouraged, and focus instead given to the bigger picture, intended impact and outcomes.

3. Funding (p20)



Careful consideration should be given to the funding of such a project to ensure that the best solution is found, remembering that the project will be required to satisfy the demands of all those who contribute and that this might lead to either a duplication of effort or a conflict of interests



In addition, however the project is funded, consideration should be given to a simple yet accountable mechanism whereby the project co-ordinator has access to a locally held budget.



It should be noted that the impact that additional funding has had on the receiving organisations has frequently been out of proportion to the sums awarded. It is often the case that a relatively small pot of flexible funding is of much more use to an organisation than a large sum which is restricted.

4. Marketing Strategy (p23)



Marketing and PR is a specialist area which does not often form part of a general job remit. Consideration should be given to the availability of specialist support and advice which might be available within one of the partner organisations.



Mapping potential stakeholders on a power/interest grid can be used as a tool to analyse various areas of the project and at different stages during its lifetime. Sufficient flexibility should be given to the Project to allow the exploration and development of new networks and networking possibilities.



If case studies are to be a feature of the project, then details of individuals' stories, along with supporting quotations and explicit permission to use them should be collected in methodically.



Marketing and PR can be an expensive element of any project and consideration should be given to how to make best use of what may be limited resources.