



Digital Lifelines Scotland Follow On Fund

Interim Impact Report
February 2024



The Digital Lifelines Scotland Programme

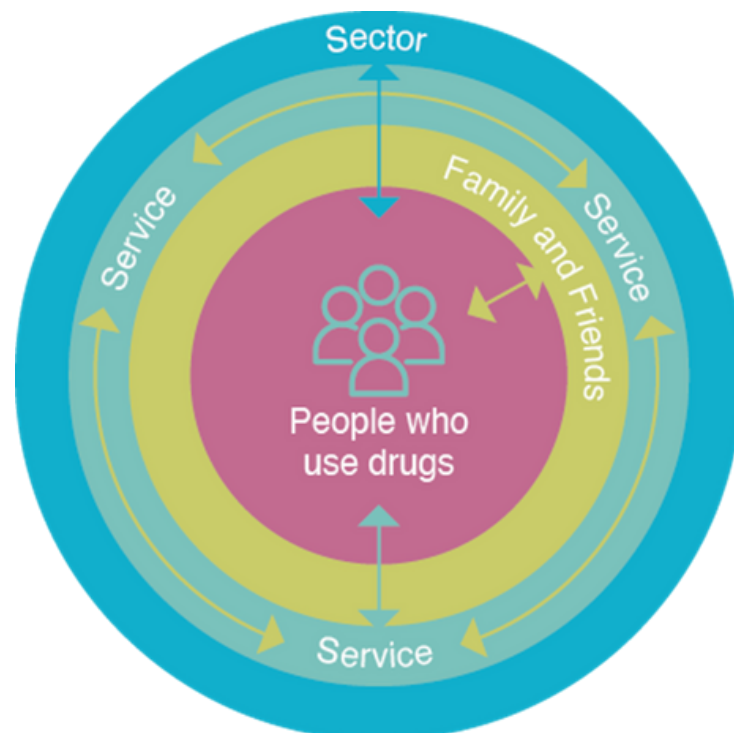
Digital Lifelines Scotland launched in April 2021 funded by Scottish Government as a partnership programme instigated, designed and delivered across a wide range of organisations.

Digital Lifelines Scotland seeks to improve digital inclusion and to design digital solutions that better meet people's needs, to improve the health outcomes for:

PEOPLE have greater access to the confidence, skills, and motivation alongside devices and connectivity that form digital solutions that keep them safe and that enable them to become and remain connected to family, friends and relevant services that support them.

THE SERVICES that support these people have the digital means to develop and strengthen the support they provide, and staff that are skillful in using and developing digital solutions to enable those they support.

THE SECTOR is connected and collaborating, developing joined-up services and exploring digital solutions together.



Follow On Fund

This report provides a summary of the impact of the funding to date from organisations funded through the Follow on Fund.

Organisations funded through Early Adopters 1 & 2 were invited to apply for Follow On Funding in May 2023. All organisations were already delivering digital inclusion work and have:

- Workforce structures in place to support digital skills development e.g Digital Harm Reduction Champions
- Experience supporting people to build their digital skills and confidence
- Are delivering a harm reduction approach or are open to exploring a harm reduction approach and have been supported to do this through this programme

Funding covered an eighteen month delivery period with all funds to be spent by 31 December 2024 and participating organisations are required to attend monthly Community of Learning sessions to share their learning with the programme.

Organisations were asked to meet a set delivery framework focused on supporting individuals on a 1-2-1 basis, providing devices and connectivity and capturing impact at Individual, Organisation and Sector level with the support of the programme.

Sixteen previously funded organisations were invited to apply. Eight applications were received. One project did not meet the criteria and another pulled out due to lack of capacity.



**Maximum
Award Amount**

£65,000

Funded Projects

Six projects were supported through the fund, totalling £307,297.



Funded
projects

6



Total amount
awarded

£307,297



Average amount
awarded

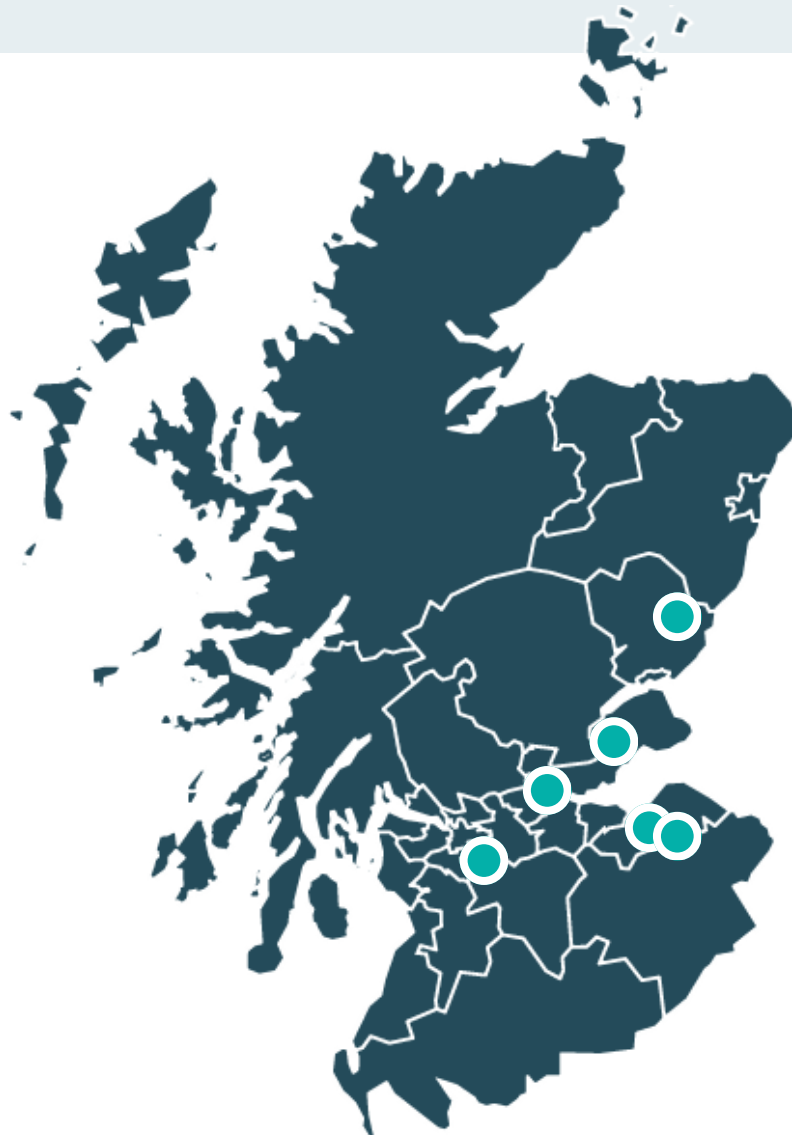
£51,216

Project Delivery

In total, 6 of the funded projects are delivering across 8 local authority areas in Scotland.

[Find out about each funded project in our interactive Google map here](#)

(Use the panel on the left side of the google map to select tick boxes of data you want to view or hide)



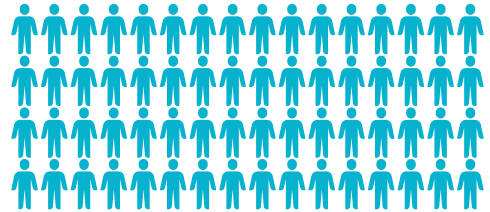
The Beneficiaries

This programme was targeted at people who are at risk of drug related harm and are, or have recently been:

- Experiencing homelessness
- Released from custody: or
- In hospital or a residential service

127

Direct beneficiaries have been supported currently.



5

People supported released from custody



111

People supported experiencing homelessness



11

People supported recently in a hospital or residential service



20

Digital Champions have been trained



18

Staff and volunteers have been supported

Devices Distributed to date

People Experiencing Homelessness



67

Phones



11

Laptops



28

Tablets



101

Connectivity

People Released from Custody



4

Phones



0

Laptops



1

Tablets



3

Connectivity

People recently in Hospital or Residential Service



2

Phones



1

Laptops



5

Tablets



5

Connectivity

Funded Projects

Organisation Name	Project Summary	Amount Awarded
Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership	Angus Alcohol and Drugs Partnership's Digi-Angus project supports people experiencing homelessness or transitioning from custody to increase digital skills and improve access to supports and services. Funding will allow them to expand their partnership approach and provide devices, connectivity, one-to-one support and digital skills sessions to improve access to digital support and reduce drug harm. The project will work with 50 participants, 10 staff and volunteers and train 10 digital champions.	£45,000
Grassmarket Community Project	Grassmarket's Digital Citizens project supports people experiencing homelessness or recently discharged from hospital. Funding will allow them to expand their current hub model to include one-to-one support providing participants with devices, connectivity, and digital inclusion activities. The project will increase access to healthcare and drug-specific support services as well as building digital skills and confidence to improve social connections and overall wellbeing. The project will work with 45 participants, 25 staff and volunteers and train 5 digital champions.	£32,414



Organisation Name	Project Summary	Amount Awarded
<p>People Know How</p>	<p>People Know How’s Reconnect project supports people experiencing homelessness, transitioning from custody, and recently discharged from hospital to help improve their wellbeing by increasing digital and social inclusion. Funding will allow them to work with local ADP's to provide digital drop in sessions and one to one support. The project will reduce isolation, increase access to harm reduction resources and support services and increase coping strategies. The project will work with 100 participants, 40 staff and volunteers and train 20 digital champions.</p>	<p>£64,630</p>
<p>Recovery Enterprise Scotland</p>	<p>Recovery Enterprise Scotland's Foundations Hub project will work with people transitioning from custody to increase digital inclusion support. Funding will allow them to increase their staff team to expand their digital inclusion programme. The project will provide devices, connectivity and one to one digital support to improve people’s access to resources and support services, help them to maintain contact with family, enhance their employability opportunities and reintegrate into society. The project will work with up to 490 participants, 15 staff and volunteers and train 15 digital champions.</p>	<p>£65,000</p>



Organisation Name	Project Summary	Amount Awarded
<p>Recovery Scotland</p>	<p>Recovery Scotland’s Digital Recovery Outreach Project (DROP) will support people experiencing homelessness or people transitioning from custody in Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk. Funding will allow them to developed an additional drop in hub which will be incorporated into the organisation’s Assertive Recovery Outreach Services.</p> <p>The project will provide devices and one to one support, working with people to develop their digital skills and confidence, connecting people to wider support services.</p> <p>This project will work with up to 35 participants, 12 staff and volunteers and train 12 digital champions.</p>	<p>£36,260</p>
<p>Simon Community Scotland</p>	<p>Simon Community's Get Connected Stay Safe project supports people experiencing homelessness to reduce drug related harms and deaths through digital connection, skills and access to information, services and lifesaving technology. Funding will allow them to continue delivery of their Get Connected model providing devices, connectivity and digital skills activities which are underpinned by a harm reduction approach. The project will connect people with family and community and improve access to harm reduction resources and services. The project will work with 140 participants, 70 staff and volunteers and train 70 digital champions.</p>	<p>£64,993</p>
		<p>£307,297</p>



Project Insights

Projects advised on a variety of factors of what worked well and supported them to deliver their project.



Projects have advised that by providing people's families with digital equipment their family connections have improved and this led to people having better emotional stability and resilience during, and following on, from their time in custody.



Organisations have fed back that conducting baseline Impact Surveys has been a good tool to support workers to have initial conversations with people to find out more about their digital needs.



Organisations highlighted that developing good relationships with referral partners and developing good referral processes has helped to support the delivery of the project.



Staff Members who took part in the Digital Champion Training found the training very valuable and used learning from the training to facilitate digital support sessions for family members being supported through their project.



Organisations fed back that supporting people with devices and then delivering weekly support sessions on how to use their device has worked well for supporting people accessing the project.



The Impact

Recovery Enterprise Scotland CIC

Theme: Reducing Isolation

“The follow on fund has helped to reduce isolation by connecting people to their families. By supporting people and their families with devices it has allowed for more efficient virtual visits ensuring regular and meaningful connection between people in custody and their loved ones. “



Angus and Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Theme: Learning Opportunities

“The funding has improved peoples digital skills and confidence. We have supported people to use the device to complete their ICT Level 3 qualification and others have been supported to complete their adult achievement award. People are finding the support invaluable.“



Recovery Scotland

Theme: Access to Support Services

“Having access to devices and connectivity has significantly reduced isolation and improved access to health services including being able to access online clinical appointments in a supported environment“



Recovery Enterprises Scotland:

An Impact Story

Rachael a 54-year-old woman, referred to our community-based hub from prison after serving a six-month sentence for fraud. On leaving prison, she faced the daunting challenge of re-entering society and rebuilding her life. However, her transition was different from previous experiences due to being provided with a smartphone and connectivity on her release.

The smartphone offered a lifeline. It provided her with immediate access to essential resources, support services, and information. With connectivity, she could easily contact her support workers, access benefits support, maintain contact with her family and access online support groups tailored to her needs. The smartphone enabled her to go to secure a voluntary position within the local area.

The smartphone also helped her to navigate public transportation, locate nearby support services and access health support. Being able to use various apps allowed her to set reminders for appointments and medication.

It provided her with a sense of autonomy, empowerment, and connectivity. The ability to stay connected to her support network reduced her sense of isolation and loneliness. Additionally, the smartphone helped her stay engaged with people providing support. This newfound connectivity allowed her to build a strong support system outside of the prison walls, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance.

In the longer term, the smartphone and connectivity have played a crucial role in her successful reintegration into society. It contributed to her improved mental health, reduced the risk of relapse, and significantly lowered her chances of reoffending.



The Challenges

Projects experience a range of challenges during the first few months of delivery.



Delays in equipment delivery which led to delays in organisations being able to start the work. Organisations overcame this by building relationships with the suppliers of their devices to be kept informed regarding delivery timescales.



Organisation supporting people released from custody highlighted that uptake with the prison environment had been slow due to low numbers of people being released since the funding was awarded therefore the uptake has been gradual.

The team have liaised with their colleagues in the prisons they support and they have indicated there is due to be upcoming increase in the number of people transitioning from prison to community. This is likely to lead to an increase in uptake for support to their service.



Some organisations feedback that the uptake for the devices and support was initially slow. That it took some time to get the drop-ins established and clear link with partners to refer individuals. They have feedback that now this in place they have started to see an uptake in referrals into the service.



Supporting people who have been liberated from prison presented challenges and delays to project delivery. The sheer number of support workers to engage with, length of bail and licencing conditions all created barriers to providing devices and support. The organisation is linking in with partners to explore best ways to work in partnership to approach this.



One organisation feedback that it initially took a while for staff to see the benefit of supporting people with devices and connectivity. Staff training and being able to give staff a tablet to use to support individuals has increased skills, confidence and engagement.