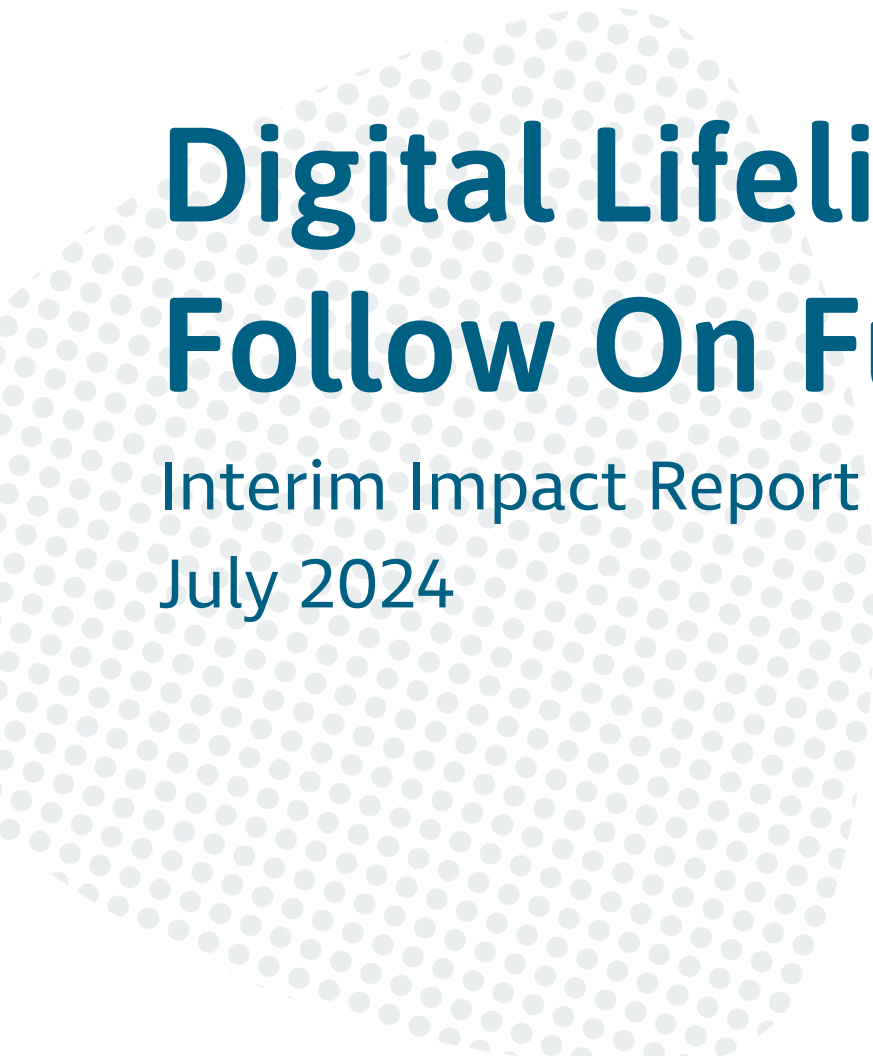




Digital Lifelines Follow On Fund

Interim Impact Report
July 2024



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

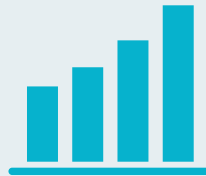
Funded Projects

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



Funded
projects

6



Total amount
awarded

£307,297



Average amount
awarded

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)



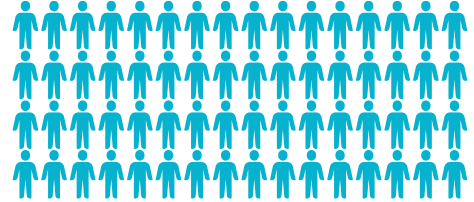
The Beneficiaries

This programme targets 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

450

Direct beneficiaries have been supported currently.



66

People supported released from custody



354

People supported experiencing homelessness



30

People supported recently in a hospital or residential service



41

Digital Champions have been trained



94

Staff and volunteers have been supported



Devices Distributed to date

People Experiencing Homelessness



195

Phones



25

Laptops



92

Tablets



282

Connectivity

People Released from Custody



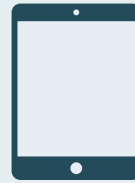
36

Phones



2

Laptops



12

Tablets



41

Connectivity

People recently in Hospital or Residential Service



7

Phones



3

Laptops



9

Tablets



24

Connectivity

Project Insights

Organisation feedback on what worked well and what key factors were beneficial in ensuring the project was successful.



Organisations fed back that staff valued the Community of Learning events as it allowed them to work with other organisations on the programme with similar aims and challenges.



Supporting people with SIM cards on prepaid 6-month contracts has proven beneficial. These SIM cards automatically transition to pay-as-you-go, providing the supported individuals with increased flexibility and control.



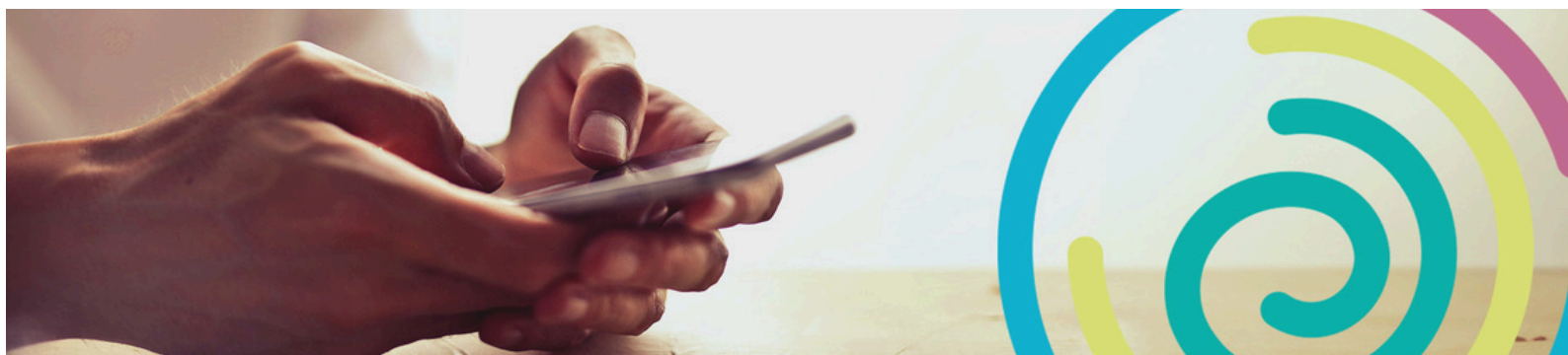
Many individuals supported through the project have shared impactful feedback on how their lives have improved, particularly in nurturing relationships with friends, family, and other support networks through the provision of a device.



One project has been developing a digital signposting document by holding focus groups with those supported to explore what information is needed and how it should be presented. This is due to feedback that a lot of information online is not always easy to find.



One of the most common themes across organisations was the working collaboratively with other organisations is critical to the project's success. Project delivery has enabled them to develop and strengthen partnerships bringing more organisations together to work towards the same aim.



The Impact

Angus Drug and Alcohol Partnership

Theme: Empowerment and Improved Capacity

One of the most significant outcomes of the project is that people feel more in control of their health and well-being. With the support of a device, people can make their health appointments, search for jobs, and perform Internet banking independently without relying on workers for assistance.

Organisations also reported that this led to increased staff capacity, as they no longer need to perform these tasks for the individuals they support.



Simon Community Scotland

Theme: Improved Communication

Before this project, reaching individuals supported by the organisation was challenging. People frequently changed their numbers as they switched connectivity deals without retaining old phone numbers, making the process time-consuming and stressful for staff. Providing unlimited connectivity has made it much easier for staff to keep in touch and provide vital support.

Grassmarket Community Project

Theme: Increased Opportunities

75% of our digital drop-in attendees joined our group IT sessions. By supporting people in receiving emails, they have been made aware of other opportunities they can engage with, such as walking, art groups, well-being sessions, woodwork skills, literacy skills, numeracy skills, and more.



ORG NAME: Recovery Enterprises Scotland CIC

An Impact Story

Our Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) colleagues referred a client fleeing domestic violence and struggling with addiction. Her mental health had deteriorated due to constant fear of her ex-partner. Isolated without Wi-Fi or a mobile phone, she couldn't access essential support services or contact her family. DTTO provided her with a Ring doorbell for security, but she couldn't connect it due to a lack of Wi-Fi.

We worked closely with DTTO to address her needs, providing a MiFi box and a mobile phone. These devices had an immediate impact. With the Ring doorbell operational, she felt secure, significantly improving her mental health. For the first time in six months, she slept soundly, free from constant anxiety. This security was crucial for her recovery.

The support reconnected her with the world. She maintained regular contact with her family, who provided vital emotional support and accessed online support meetings, which were essential for her recovery journey. These meetings offered a lifeline, giving her a sense of community and encouragement to stay on track with her treatment and recovery goals.

Our DTTO colleagues reported that she was deeply moved and emotional upon receiving the digital equipment. She expressed immense gratitude, stating that no one had ever helped her so meaningfully. This response highlighted the depth of her previous isolation and the significant impact of our support.

Since receiving the digital equipment, her progress has been notable. Attending online support meetings has provided consistent, structured assistance for her addiction, and staying in touch with her support network has helped build a robust support system essential for long-term recovery.



The Challenges

Projects experience a range of challenges during the delivery of their work.



Larger organisations' fed back that introducing new processes involved in the programme to their large national team has been challenging due to staff having varying digital skills and people working remotely. They arranged a Team training call to explain the processes, offer support, and answer any questions to address this.



Organisations fed back that some of their clients have struggled with digital literacy.

However, due to the team being trained as digital champions, they have effectively addressed this challenge by providing the necessary support and guidance, supporting clients to use their digital devices and access online services confidently.



Recruiting volunteers who felt confident in assisting individuals at risk of drug harm was challenging for organisations that relied on volunteer support for project delivery. They overcame this by providing comprehensive training and support to their volunteers.



Staff attendance at digital champion training sessions has initially been challenging for some organisations. Feedback indicated that many employees thought the training was meant only for trainers, which discouraged their participation. To address this, organizations have promoted future training sessions differently to improve attendance and engagement.



There was feedback about challenges an organisation would face once funding ends. With people being supported with a device and connectivity until Autumn 2025, however, without a Digital Team, there is concerns about maintaining the support when the connectivity ends.



Grantmaking

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Contact

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