**Application Guidance – Cambridgeshire Digital Hubs:**

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| **Enabling Digital Hubs in Cambridgeshire:** |
| Connecting Cambridgeshire are looking to enable digital hubs in communities across the County.  These hubs will provide communities with access to connectivity, devices, and skills & confidence support in a local communal space.  We are inviting groups/organisations who manage or are part of a local community space to apply to become a Digital Hub using the below form.  The funding is only available for the rest of the financial year (ending 31st March 2026). If you are in any doubt as to the eligibility of your activity, please email the team at [connecting.cambridgeshire@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecting.cambridgeshire@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) |
| **What would becoming a Digital Hub look like?** |
| If you are successful in applying to become a Digital Hub, you will receive up to £4,200 in the form of a grant, to be paid in increments upon receipt of evidence of quotes/costs that fit within the eligible expenditure as set out in the ‘Conditions of Grant’ - attached to this form as Appendix 1.  You will be responsible for identifying the connectivity contract and devices, submitting claim forms to receive the grant monies, and then purchasing those items. You will also be responsible for ongoing contract management, maintenance, and all other aspects related to owning the connectivity and devices you have purchased.  Connecting Cambridgeshire can provide support and advice when determining what products could be right for your Hub and your audience and can help with introductions to some suppliers and providers where relevant.  We are encouraging recipients of grants to purchase refurbished devices to contribute to the circular economy, reduce tech waste, and stretch the grant money further.  Connecting Cambridgeshire are also able to initially provide licences to the [Digital Champions](https://www.digitalchampionsnetwork.com/) platform from Digital Unite. This will enable your staff and/or volunteers to access a variety of resources to help them plan and deliver digital skills and confidence support sessions to your Hub users and wider audience, as well as furthering their own knowledge and skillset. Please note that this will be on a first come, first served basis. Please request further information from us on this should you be interested.  You will be required to complete monthly monitoring forms to report progress, as well as regular impact evaluation assessments throughout the first 6-12 months of being a Digital Hub.  Connecting Cambridgeshire will continue to support you throughout your time of being a Digital Hub should you need it, but please note that this will not be extensive due to the capacity available within the programme team. |

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| **What is this form and what will it be used for?** |
| This form is to be used to submit your application to become a Digital Hub should you feel that your space/group/organisation meet the eligibility criteria set out in the form.  Your responses in this form will develop the basis for a proposal for what equipment will be required for each hub, as well as what support might be best, and in what format that support should be delivered.  We will schedule follow-up briefing calls with successful registrations. We may also be in touch with some further clarification questions to progress registrations of interest. |
| **Scoring and Evaluation of Applications** |
| Applications will be evaluated and scored by a panel of at least 3 Cambridgeshire County Council officers, including 1 place-based officer.  In the application form, you will be asked to confirm whether you meet the six eligibility criteria to become a Digital Hub. These responses will be scored as either ‘met’ or ‘not met’. If you do not meet any of the six, you will be assessed as ineligible, and your application will not be considered further.  You will also be asked to provide a response of how you expect your prospective Digital Hub would meet the seven expected outcomes. Each response will be marked from 0-6 points, to provide a total overall score. Scoring guidance can be found below.  Please note that we are only able to fund up to 6 Digital Hubs per district across the County, and total scores will be taken into consideration when determining which applications are successful.  The panel will also use their place-based expertise and experience to help evaluate the application.  Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis, so we encourage applicants to apply early, to avoid missing out due to over-subscription.  If you are unsuccessful in your application, we may be in touch to discuss other opportunities to provide digital inclusion support from your space or through your group/organisation. |
| **Marketing and promotion (branding requirements)** |
| In the delivery of any activities which require marketing / promotional materials to be produced, we will require that you incorporate the Connecting Cambridgeshire logos alongside your own.  Templates will be provided on request. |

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| **Scoring Guidance** |  |
| **Response** | **Score** |
| The response did not provide evidence that the expected outcomes would be met; and was wholly unsatisfactory in terms of contact. Major weaknesses, issues, or omissions were identified. The response was poorly articulated and/or inconsistent. | 0 |
| The response provided limited evidence that the expected outcomes would be met. There were major weaknesses or concerns with the content. The response lacked significant detail/or clarity. | 2 |
| The response presented evidence that the expected outcomes would be met, good in many respects but with minor weaknesses or concerns with the content. | 4 |
| The response was robust. detailed, well-articulated in all material respects providing strong evidence that the criteria would be met, with no weaknesses or area of concern with the content. | 6 |

**Application Form – Cambridgeshire Digital Hubs:**

**Please return completed form to connecting.cambridgeshire@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Applicant/Organisation** |  |
| **Proposed Project Manager / Lead Contact** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Signature (electronic)** |  |
| **Date of Submission of Application Form** |  |

**DIGITAL HUB DETAILS**

Please complete the following tables for each individual digital hub you wish to enable. Add tables as required. **[Please select all suitable options and provide as much information as possible]**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location (Name and Address)** |  |
| **Description (i.e. Church hall, café, pub, etc.)** |  |
| **Opening Days/Times of the space/venue (or what time it is open to the public).** |  |
| **Owner of the space (if there is a leaseholder please add freeholder and leaseholder name and contact details)** |  |
| **Manager of the space (**if different from the owner/leaseholder **[Please provide name and contact details])** |  |

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Please complete the table below to confirm whether you meet the eligibility criteria. Please provide further information where relevant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Eligibility Criteria** | **Response (Met or Not Met)** |
| **Own/manage a community space that is publicly accessible.** |  |
| **The community space must have the capacity to be open to the public for a prescribed number of hours per week for digital inclusion support** (this must be a reasonable availability and can be discussed between the recipient and Connecting Cambridgeshire). |  |
| **The community space must not be too near to an existing public service providing similar support** (e.g. a Cambridgeshire Library), **it is up to Connecting Cambridgeshire as the funding provider to monitor this.** |  |
| **The recipient must have the capacity to contract between themselves and a connectivity service provider directly – we will provide the funding, but the contract will solely exist between the recipient and the service provider.** |  |
| **The recipient must have the capacity to buy, store, and maintain a number of digital devices to be made available for community use during the hours made available for digital inclusion support** (we can help advise what devices might be most appropriate for certain target audiences/user groups). |  |
| **The recipient must have a single point of contact who has the capacity to become a ‘Project Manager’ on the Digital Champions platform, so that staff and volunteers can become Digital Champions and access the relevant support and resources to help them deliver digital inclusion skills & confidence support to the community using the hub** (we can provide more information on what this would entail). |  |

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

**Please complete the table below to convey how your prospective Digital Hub might help meet the expected outcomes. Please provide as much information as possible.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expected Outcome** | **Response** |
| **Visitors using the hub to access connectivity** |  |
| **Visitors using the hub to access devices** |  |
| **Visitors using the hub to access digital skills & confidence support** |  |
| **Visitors reporting positive impacts from access to digital inclusion support from the hub** |  |
| **Visitors using the hub for specific reasons** (i.e. accessing health and wellbeing services, accessing banking and financial management online, shopping or transacting online, etc.) |  |
| **Delivering targeted digital skills & confidence support sessions** (i.e. how to apply for jobs online, how to stay safe online, how to spot scams, how to use video calling, how to manage passwords, etc.) |  |
| **Users clearly improving their life outcomes** (e.g. enrolling onto skills/education courses, getting a job, managing their finances better, spotting a scam, etc.) |  |

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Please complete the table below to provide further information relating to your prospective Digital Hub. **[Please select all suitable options and provide as much information as possible]**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Does this space already have connectivity?** |  |
| **If so, please answer the following points:**   * **Who is the internet service provider?** * **What is the monthly/annual payment for the service?** * **If there is a contract, when does this end?** * **What service is provided?** (i.e. full fibre or fibre to the premises [FTTP], fibre to the cabinet [FTTC], satellite, ADSL, mobile, or other) * **Is this connectivity available for the public to use for free?** |  |
| **Does this space/venue already provide access to devices?** |  |
| **If so, please answer the following points:**   * **How many devices are available?** * **What kind of devices are available?** * **Are they new, refurbished, end of life?** * **Are they well used by the community?** * **Any other**   **information you could provide would be useful.** |  |
| **What demographics are represented within your community/those who use the space/venue?** | Older Residents (65+)  Unemployed/Seeking Employment  Lower Educational Attainment  Lower Income  Families/Households with Children  Young People (18-24)  Homeless/Rough Sleepers/No Fixed Abode  Recipients of Care/Service Users  Carers  Those seeking specific skills/accreditation (e.g. apprenticeships, degree-level, courses, etc.)  Those with English as a second language  From a Global Majority Background (formerly BAME)  Other **[Please Specify]** |
| **What demographics do you think would benefit most from the digital hub(s)?** | Older Residents (65+)  Unemployed/Seeking Employment  Lower Educational Attainment  Lower Income  Families/Households with Children  Young People (18-24)  Homeless/Rough Sleepers/No Fixed Abode  Recipients of Care/Service Users  Carers  Those seeking specific skills/accreditation (e.g. apprenticeships, degree-level, courses, etc.)  Those with English as a second language  From a Global Majority Background (formerly BAME)  Other **[Please Specify]** |
| **What type of devices do you think would be most suitable?** | Laptops  Tablets  Smart Phones  Mifi Routers & SIM Cards  Specific Accessible Hardware/Software **[Please specify what types of accessibility requirements would likely need to be supported]**  Other **[Please specify]** |
| **What type of support do you think would be most suitable?** | 1-2-1  Group  Drop-in  Other **[Please specify]** |
| **What cadence of support would be most suitable** (or what days/times/regularity would the space be available for specific digital support)**?** |  |
| **Any other comments/information you would like to provide.** |  |

**APPENDIX 1 – CONDITIONS OF DIGITAL HUB GRANTS**

**Please note, that if your application is successful, upon receipt of the award letter you will be required to sign and return a copy of these conditions which we will also supply to you in your award pack.**

**Conditions of Grant – Digital Hubs**

1. **Overview**
   1. We are looking to support holistic digital inclusion support to be delivered locally by creating and utilising place-based partnerships.
   2. We will be providing funding to community organisations and groups to enable them to procure good fixed or mobile connectivity and devices to be used by the public in their communal spaces.
   3. We will further support recipients of these grants by supporting them to sign up to the National Digital Inclusion Network and offering licences to the Digital Champions platform under our Connecting Cambridgeshire programme licence.
   4. We will also support recipients in setting up the relevant processes for them to successfully run a Digital Hub, as well as monitoring and evaluating the impact of the work.
   5. Connecting Cambridgeshire have a template flyer/poster that can be amended with the relevant details to help promote individual Digital Hubs and may be able to cover some of the costs of printing and distributing to help raise awareness of the support on offer in the newly enabled space.
2. **Eligibility Criteria to become a Digital Hub**
   1. To be eligible to receive a grant in order to become a Digital Hub, the applicant must:
      1. Applicants must own/manage a community space that is publicly accessible;
      2. The community space must have the capacity to be open to the public for a prescribed number of hours per week for digital inclusion support (this must be a reasonable availability and can be discussed between the recipient and Connecting Cambridgeshire);
      3. The community space must not be too near to an existing public service providing similar support (e.g. a Cambridgeshire Library), it is up to Connecting Cambridgeshire as the funding provider to monitor this;
      4. The recipient must have the capacity to contract between themselves and a connectivity service provider directly – we will provide the funding, but the contract will solely exist between the recipient and the service provider;
      5. The recipient must have the capacity to buy, securely store, and maintain a number of digital devices to be made available for community use during the hours made available for digital inclusion support (we can help advise what devices might be most appropriate for certain target audiences/user groups);
      6. The recipient must have a single point of contact who has the capacity to become a ‘Project Manager’ on the Digital Champions platform, so that staff and volunteers can become Digital Champions and access the relevant support and resources to help them deliver digital inclusion skills & confidence support to the community using the hub (we can provide more information on what this would entail).
3. **Conditions**
   1. Requirements of Recipient Organisations
      1. Applications for party political or religious purposes will not be normally considered.
      2. The recipient organisation must have a democratic governance structure and a bank account and must be able to demonstrate that it can manage its affairs effectively.
      3. The recipient must be able to demonstrate that its policies and procedures comply with the Council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Employment Policy Statement
      4. The recipient must comply with all relevant laws and regulations.
      5. The recipient must maintain appropriate insurance cover (for instance, public liability insurance, employer’s liability insurance etc.).
   2. Use of Funding
      1. The grant must only be used to enable the community space(s) outlined in the application to provide holistic digital inclusion support. This includes:
         1. Procuring a robust fixed or mobile connectivity solution to provide publicly accessible WiFi in the space for a period of time up to 36-months; and
         2. Procuring a reasonable number of digital devices for public use to enable the community to get online if they don’t own their own device.
      2. The recipient is responsible for ensuring best value for money in any services and/or goods procured using the grant.
      3. The recipient must ensure that their spend does not exceed the maximum value of the grant as set out in the Award Letter.
   3. Financial Requirements
      1. Payments will be made on a phased basis. They must be made in advance of any purchases.
      2. It is the responsibility of the recipient to provide evidence of quotes from trusted providers/suppliers as supplementary evidence when submitting the claim form for the monies under the awarded grant.
      3. The total amount requested must not exceed a reasonable proportion of the maximum amount of funding awarded as set out in the award letter. (I.e. where the maximum amount of funding is £4,200 for a single digital hub, broadband should not exceed roughly £1,200 and devices should not exceed roughly £3,000)
         1. £1,200 based upon an estimated monthly contract cost of £28 with 2% inflation over 36-months – costs will vary depending on location, type of contract, and supplier
         2. £3,000 based upon an estimated requirement of around 20 refurbished devices per Digital Hub at a unit cost of £150. Costs may vary depending upon type of device.
      4. Grants cannot be used to replace money already spent, or to cover items or services already bought.
      5. Grant monies will only be paid via bank transfer and will not be paid to a personal bank account.
      6. Any Grant monies not used for the express purposes set out in section 3.2 are liable to be repaid to the Council upon reasonable request.
      7. Any excess Grant monies not required once the Digital Hub has been enabled will be repaid to the Council to allow for the enabling of further Digital Hubs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
   4. Monitoring and Evaluation
      1. The recipient must participate in relevant monitoring and impact evaluation activities to help Connecting Cambridgeshire ensure best practice in delivering the Digital Hubs scheme.
      2. The monitoring and evaluation period will run for a minimum of 6-months from the date of acceptance of the grant. Recipients will be required to complete the relevant forms as below:
         1. Monitoring Form – once per month, beginning at the end of the first month of delivery (i.e. one month after the date of acceptance of the grant).
         2. Evaluation Form – at the beginning of the period (one week after the date of acceptance of the grant, in the middle of the period, (three months after the date of acceptance of the grant), and at the end of the period (six months after the date of acceptance of the grant.
      3. Both the monitoring and evaluation forms will be attached to the email awarding the grant.
      4. At the end of the 6-month period, a discussion will take place between the recipient and Connecting Cambridgeshire to discuss options for ensuring the longevity and sustainability of the Digital Hub and the delivery of digital inclusion support.