

1st Edition | FEBRUARY 2023



DIGITAL KENT



Supported by
Kent County Council's
Helping Hands Scheme

**Kent
County
Council**
kent.gov.uk



Together, tackling digital exclusion.

Digital Kent is working to improve digital inclusion and capabilities in the county of Kent. Formed by Kent County Council in 2021 and part of the Helping Hands scheme and Financial Hardship programme, the Digital Kent service has been created as a response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

Together, working with partners, the services and support that we are providing is currently time-limited, due to the nature of the funding we have available.

JOIN US AS WE TACKLE DIGITAL EXCLUSION

Digital Champions Network

The Digital Kent team are developing a network of digital champions to support and improve the digital skills of individuals within our communities. Our [Digital Champions](#) are volunteers and can be anyone who is willing to support someone with their digital skills and confidence. They do not have to be a technical genius, but be patient, understanding and a strong communicator.



As a [Digital Champion](#), you may support your colleagues, friends and family or members of the community in a variety of ways. **It is a voluntary position with a heap of reward!**

Currently, our network is open for anyone over the age 18. We are working with our partners to create a Youth Digital Champions programme in due course.

Become a Digital Champion. Join our Network. >

www.digitalkent.uk/information/projects/dcn

GREETINGS FROM SAM LAIN-ROSE AND CHLOE JOHNSTONE

Digital Kent is working to improve digital inclusion and capabilities in the county of Kent (including Medway). We are so proud of the work that has been achieved by our team and partners in the last 12 months and are excited to continue our mission to tackle digital exclusion in Kent and Medway.

Some highlights from the last year include supporting over 200 people through our Digital Support Scheme, carrying out over 500 skill and engagement activities across the county, gifting over 3,500 laptops through our Hardware Access Scheme and over 800 connectivity devices to those in need.

Through our county wide volunteer scheme, we have recruited almost 500 amazing volunteers who want to give something back to their local community. Through our projects combined we have supported over 6,000 Kent residents which we are very proud of.

In addition, we have been working hard to raise awareness around social tariffs for broadband and our recent county wide campaign has reached almost 4.5 million people through 26.8 impressions. Our Area Partnership Officers are working with district councils to target messaging to eligible residents.

With our success we now move into 2023 with new team members, exciting new projects on the horizon and the creation of our Operational team, managed by our very own Chris Reddy.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, volunteer champions and organisations who we have worked with and collaborated with over the past year. We look forward to strengthening our relationships further this year.



Sam Lain-Rose, Digital Lead



Chloe Johnstone, Relationships & Inclusion Manager (Deputy Lead)





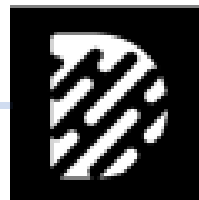
Sam Lain-Rose
Digital Lead
(Inclusion & Capabilities)



Chloe Johnstone
Relationships & Inclusion
Manager (Deputy Lead)



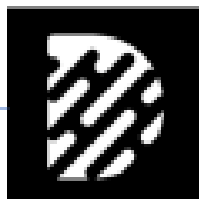
Jake Huggett
Area Partnerships
Officer (West &
Mid Kent)



VACANT
Engagement
Support
Assistant
(Apprentice)



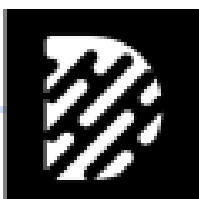
Sophie Mackenzie
Area Partnerships
Officer (North &
East Kent)



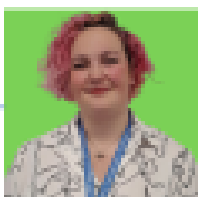
VACANT
Engagement
Support
Assistant
(Apprentice)



Doris Shaba-
Jeffries
Area Partnerships
Officer (South
East Kent)



VACANT
Engagement
Support
Assistant
(Apprentice)



Bryony Goble
Volunteer
Engagement
Officer



Christopher Reddy
Operational Manager
(Assistant Lead)



Brooke Huggett
Operational
Support
Coordinator



Rachel Moon
Operational
Support
Coordinator



Michelle Blumson
Operational
Support
Coordinator



Robyn Jarrett
Operational
Support
Coordinator



Millie James
Operational
Support Assistant
(Apprentice)



Lydia Reeves
Operational
Support Assistant
(Apprentice)

Digital Inclusion & Capabilities

Financial Hardship Programme

Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance
Kent County Council



AREA PARTNERSHIPS AND DISTRICT UPDATE

Going forward into Phase 2 of Digital Kent, we have made some changes internally and we are pleased to announce that Jake Huggett, Sophie Mackenzie and Doris Shaba-Jeffries will be our Area Partnership Officers. They have several exciting projects in the pipeline for 2023 and are looking forward to creating strong relationships with various partners as well as completing a number of districts focused projects within each of the Kent districts to further tackle digital exclusion.



"I am thrilled to be continuing with Digital Kent and building on the great work that has taken place in the previous 12 months. I am looking forward to building strong partnerships within Mid and West Kent to help bridge the digital divide across the county" - Jake Huggett



"I am excited to partner with North and East Kent to deliver vital projects that help tackle digital exclusion and equip residents with essential skills to aid taking ownership of their health, education, employment and wellbeing online" - Sophie Mackenzie



"I'm looking forward to continuing with the work Digital Kent has started to try and bridge the gap in digital inclusion. Helping people and their communities to find their individual path to being digital enabled with skills and confidence. Working with partners to deliver a service that benefits all." – Doris Shabba-Jeffries

ASHFORD



We have partnered with Ashford Council to deliver Digital Support sessions/workshops to residents in the

Independent Living Housing Scheme. The aim is to provide a platform using helpful guides for those digitally excluded so they can receive digital support, learn new skills, gain the knowledge and confidence to continue their digital journey. Each of these includes a presentation from a guest speaker as well as an accompanying workshop which will be focused on a particular set of digital skills. We also provide the opportunity for residents to work with our local Digital Champions to have one-to-one support sessions on any specific digital support queries that they may have, working with our local Digital Champions.

Our aim is to work with organisations as well as guest speakers to offer expertly delivered focused workshops. An example of this would be inviting NatWest Bank to deliver a session on internet banking and focusing on safety, scams, and fraud. Our hope that the residents not only receive knowledge and information on how to better keep safe online but also how online banking can benefit their lives.

Please feel free to reach out to your relevant Area Partnership officer if you would like to discuss how we can support your digital inclusion project.

FOLKESTONE



Currently our Digital Kent team is working on a project which aims to provide hardware

and connectivity solutions to digitally excluded residents who are interested in entrepreneurship within a specific area of Folkestone. Additionally, we are providing digital skills support to those beneficiaries to make the most of their gifted devices. This project is match-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), through the Folkestone Community Works (FCW) for the beneficiaries residing within a specific catchment area. This is an exciting project to be a part of so keep your eyes peeled for updates!

SWALE



We have been working with Swale Borough Council to discuss ways in which recipients of their Household

Support Fund can be supported to access these payments digitally. We are also in the process of setting up a project working with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust to increase electronic immunisation consent submissions for school aged children by 10% on the Isle of Sheppey (an area of low vaccination uptake). We are looking to deliver some digital skills training to support parents in completing the electronic consent forms as well as train school admin staff to be able to facilitate support.

MAIDSTONE

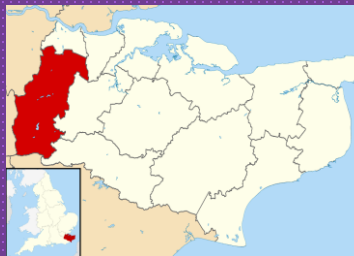


We are working with Maidstone Borough Council to utilise Trinity House to offer Digital Skills support

to several different target groups including warm hubs and a Ukrainian support group. These sessions will be open to residents and members of the public to attend and is part of a pilot for further collaboration and digital skills workshops in the future.

We are also working with Mid Kent Mind to create a digital inclusion project which will help upskill their clients in utilising their online services and accessing support digitally. This will initially be through drop-ins at a scheduled support café with further collaboration currently being discussed and designed.

SEVENOAKS



An initial meeting has taken place with the West Kent Housing team to discuss how Digital Kent can help

support their residents in becoming digitally included. The creation of a digital inclusion project will be a blended approach of targeted workshops/courses as well as drop-in session is currently being designed.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE BY ALEXANDRA PACK

Digital Kent is delivering and developing a varied array of projects. We are currently working on the following initiatives:

Hardware Access Scheme (HAS) & Connectivity Access Scheme (CAS)



HAS and CAS have been established to supply individuals, that meet the

criteria, with access to digital equipment (initially laptops) and connectivity solutions. The Schemes are 'gifting' the devices to the intended beneficiary, with no requirements to return them. In scope of the HAS we have supported 3,847 Kent residents with devices and in scope of the CAS we have provided 877 routers to Kent residents since the schemes launched in early 2022. The schemes are currently paused but we are exploring the reopening of the schemes later this year.

Hardware Recycling Scheme



We are developing a Hardware Recycling

Scheme for residents and businesses to securely dispose of digital hardware, including laptops, tablets and computers.

The scheme will enable residents to recycle their devices, which will then be securely wiped with a certificate being provided back to the residents to confirm completion of the process. The device then will be recycled, for example remanufactured, and we will then be able to provide devices to those most in need. The scheme's platform is undergoing final fine-tuning and is planned to be open early 2023.

Social Tariffs for Broadbands



Following the Kent-wide awareness

raising campaign in November 2022 and based on the direct mailshot we piloted with Maidstone Borough Council, we are in the process of reaching out to all other districts to deliver a direct mailshot to, mainly, universal credit claimants to make them aware of the available discounted deals.

Digital Support Scheme

Launched in 2022, the Digital Support Scheme has been established to support individuals that require informal digital support with skills, motivation and confidence. Beneficiaries are currently being supported by a volunteer as part of the popular Digital Champion project or by one of the Digital Kent team members.

Local Digital Hubs

In our aim to bring everyone closer to the digital world, we are developing hubs within the community that will enable people to visit and get connected to digital services, with support from volunteer digital champions. In addition, we have an aspiration to create 'digital gateways' in our hubs.

Digital Inclusion and Support Scheme – Folkestone

Become an entrepreneur.

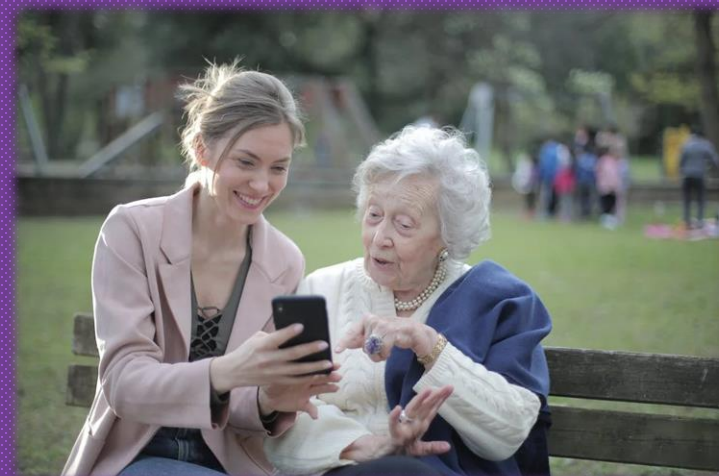
We're here to help you.



We have been working together with Folkestone Community

Works (FCW) and on 1st February 2023 launched a support scheme for digitally excluded residents who are also interested in exploring entrepreneurial endeavours. The scheme is open for a limited amount of time to residents who live in the scope of FCW's catchment area. and will be gifted laptops, connectivity solutions and digital skills support workshops.

We keep on exploring various ways of supporting our residents, watch this space for further developments!



THE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP TEAM UPDATES

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Funded by the UK government, the Household Support Fund scheme supports vulnerable Kent households in need of help with significantly rising living costs. As one element of support, we have set up a scheme for professionals to refer into. This information is for professionals only to support them in making applications, details are not to be shared wider. If you know of other organisations that would benefit from access to this scheme or for any other queries, please send an email to helping.hands@kent.gov.uk



The scheme is now live and available for applications to be made.

You can apply up until 31 March 2023, or until the budget is spent.

Ways vouchers will be issued:

£100 Post Office cash-out voucher to be used to pay for energy costs within the household. We are also able to consider providing vouchers to off-grid customers. Vouchers will be sent by email or text. If the person responsible for paying the energy bill within the household does not have a mobile phone or access to an email account, the vouchers can be posted to their home address

There is a limited amount of funding available for this scheme and funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, with only one award per household.

Applicants criteria:

There is an expectation for professionals to complete due diligence checks

- be aged 16 or over
- be a Kent resident, permanently living within one of the 12 local authorities covered by Kent County Council (this excludes Medway, Bromley, and Bexley)
- be in receipt of means tested benefits, or household income is less than £30,000 per annum before tax
- not have savings above £250
- not be receiving free school meals support for any child within their household (they will be receiving a payment via their children's school)

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND (continued)

Residents with no recourse to public funding are still eligible for the scheme. If a National Insurance number is not available, please email helping.hands@kent.gov.uk with circumstances and reasons why the applicant should receive this support along with supporting documents.

Unfortunately, professionals need to refer residents into the scheme. There is no self referrals for this scheme.

Additional Queries:

Any additional queries can be directed to helping.hands@kent.gov.uk



REFERKENT

ReferKent is an online system that aims to make referrals simple, safe and secure for organisations across Kent.

ReferKent is an online referral system that aims to strengthen referrals across Kent for adults and families who may be experiencing hardship.

Funded by the Helping Hands Scheme, we are encouraging organisations across Kent to sign up as referral partners. This service is free to organisations who support Kent residents, and you can access it from mobile and desktop devices.

ReferKent will help you make referrals with a quick, easy, and secure platform. Your referral can be tracked and monitored to make sure people are getting the support and guidance they need. As we enter the 'cost of living crisis' this service will continue to support individuals who are experiencing, or are at risk of, financial hardship. Referrals can only be made for adults.

Once you've signed up, you can start making and receiving referrals. We look forward to you using our system and know that with your help, we can make referrals simple, easy and secure.

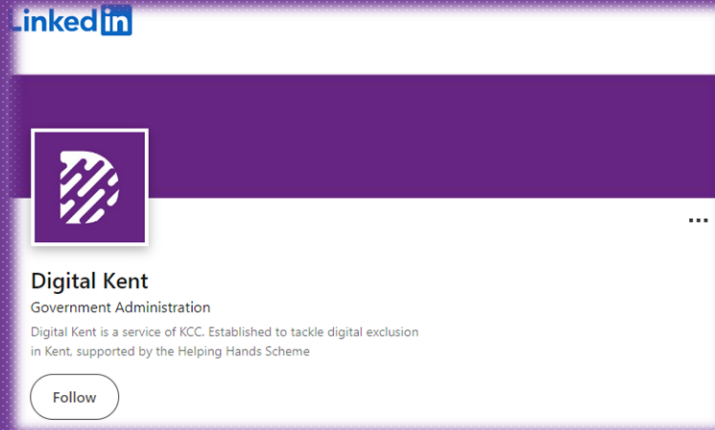
For more information visit www.kent.gov.uk/referkent or to register email referkent@kent.gov.uk.

MAGAZINE QUIZ BY JAKE HUGGETT

Unscramble the first letter of each answer to make 2 words then submit this alongside the answers to digitalinclusion@kent.gov.uk to be with a chance of winning a Digital Kent Bluetooth speaker.

1. What is the first name of our Area Partnerships Officer who covers Southeast Kent?
2. What is the name of the scheme currently being taken forward in Ashford with Ashford Borough Council?
3. What does the E stand for in ERDF?
4. What is the name of the venue Jake will be offering digital skills support at in Maidstone?
5. Which organisation is Sophie working with to increase electronic immunisation submissions?
6. What is the first name of our Senior Project Officer?
7. Which is the name of our project that we are developing that will enable people to visit and get connected to digital services?
8. What is the surname of our Volunteer Engagement Officer?
9. In order to claim Household Support Fund, If what is not available should email helping.hands@kent.gov.uk with circumstances and reasons why the applicant should receive this support along with supporting documents?
10. What word follows Digital in explaining what the Digital Kent team are striving to achieve across the county?
11. Within the Device Recycling Scheme update there are 3 types of digital hardware listed Laptops, Computers and what else?

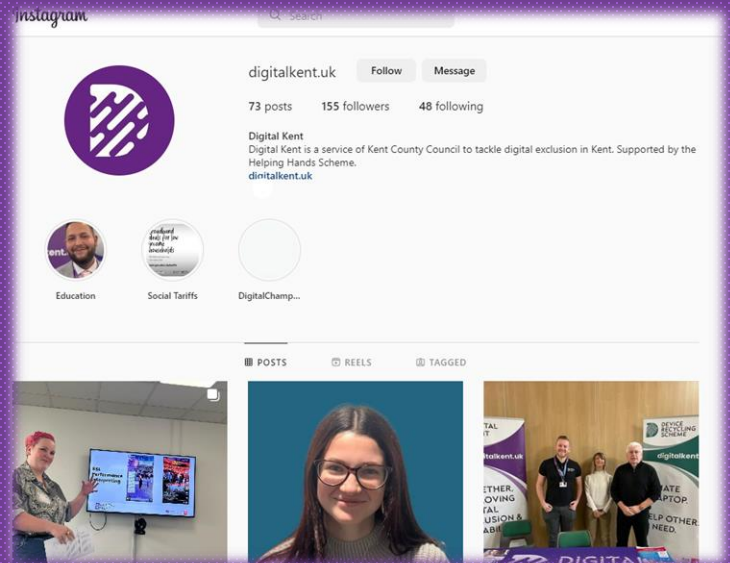
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