

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref SL/MK

Date 13/03/25

Digital Connectivity Masterplan for Council Housing Tenants

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the proposals for a long-term integrated plan to provide digital connectivity for council housing tenants, creating the foundations for transformational change to facilitate the introduction of enabling technologies and solutions across multiple aspects of modern life.

It builds on previous work undertaken to identify potential delivery options and outlines the potential benefits of enabling digital connectivity for council housing tenants, which will open up endless possibilities to radically transform, for the better, the way in which the council delivers supports and services, empowering tenants with increased choice and control over how they interact with services, enabling faster access to services and improving customer experience. At a more fundamental level, the report outlines the benefits realised which will provide tenants with the foundations to achieve their full potential and prosper, improving access to opportunities and reducing inequalities.

Other aspects of the outlining business case are detailed in the report, in that, as more services are being delivered online, and as online increasingly becomes the preferred method of contact, digitally excluded people are in danger of being left behind. Exclusion needs to be overcome by addressing the barriers to opportunity, access, knowledge and skills for using technology. The focus set out in the report remains steadfast on improving lives, aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and to the Digital and IT Strategy.

The report seeks approval to explore the feasibility of carrying out a test of change, subject to a future committee report, to inform a digital connectivity master plan for council housing tenants. It also sets out plans to establish a cross service Project Board and Working Group to progress and oversee the development and implementation of the test of change to inform the broader expansion of digital connectivity for council housing tenants.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Recognise the potential for transformational change and benefits realisation through the provision of digital connectivity for council housing tenants.

- (2) Acknowledge the previous options feasibility exercise carried out which identifies potential delivery routes for the provision of super-fast broadband for council housing tenants.
- (3) Approve exploration of a test of change feasibility, subject to a future committee report.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	All ambition statements
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 Digital North Lanarkshire is one of the seven priorities within the Programme of Work for 2023 to 2028. The vision for a Digital North Lanarkshire, with investment targeted in digital and technological solutions that will be of most benefit to the people and communities of North Lanarkshire, aims to help realise inclusive growth and prosperity for all, aligned with the council's long-term ambition set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- 1.2 In March 2024, Policy and Strategy Committee approved the Digital and IT Strategy for 2024 to 2027. The Strategy is key to providing the direction to deliver a Digital North Lanarkshire recognising that technology achieves a multitude of far reaching benefits for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire. This includes supporting people to live independently and well in their own homes, providing greater control and choice over care and support, enabling seamless end to end processes to fulfil service requests, and creating opportunities to provide more joined up support through more effective use of data to monitor and manage demand, enabling better targeting of support and delivery of services to the public. It is key to connecting people and communities, to developing new ways of working and delivering services to provide swifter and easier access to support and services, improving customer experience, alongside a whole array of life outcomes.
- 1.3 The Connectivity Framework is key to achieving the vision for a Digital North Lanarkshire. Previous reports to the former Transformation and Digitisation Committee (December 2021, February 2022) outlined the processes undertaken and award of a Digital Infrastructure Framework to Commsworld Ltd. The Framework has an initial period of 15 years with the right to extend up to an additional and maximum 5 years.
- 1.4 A key aspect of the Commsworld Ltd solution delivery model is to increase the fibre footprint across North Lanarkshire, enabling Commsworld and partners to offer full fibre services quicker than the commercial market intended, while increasing supplier competition, positively impacting on cost and affordability for local residents and businesses. To date 320km of high-capacity fibre across the authority has been installed, connecting council premises and enabling communities. 314 sites have been migrated, with 342 circuits in use, all non-secondary, secondary establishments and corporate buildings now have enhanced available bandwidth, with larger sites fully resilient. 90 of 117 sites identified for Public Wi-Fi are now operational. Smart Park technology has been deployed into Palacerigg and Strathclyde Country Park.

- 1.5 The framework positively influences connectivity across business and communities in North Lanarkshire and progress achieved to date has created the foundations for transformational change to facilitate the introduction of enabling technologies and solutions across all aspects of modern work and life. This will enable the council to continually develop service delivery across all areas, including housing, health and social care, asset management, education, culture, and recreation.
- 1.6 More specifically, relating to the provision of connectivity to tenants, the aims are to address digital poverty by delivering a full internet service which is affordable, superfast, secure, and reliable providing exceptional quality connectivity to all council housing tenants, with:
- All council housing tenants having internet access with a speed exceeding the Government connectivity target
 - A service which can support the connectivity needs for the next 20+ years
 - Option to replace landline
 - A guaranteed price
 - A secure service with ability to control content filtering
 - Ability to control up sell additional services (e.g., TV channels)
 - Easy-to-use in property connectivity with the council systems and devices, enabling complete integration with service delivery and backend processes
 - Support for a seamless service between pupils learning at home and in the classroom
 - The infrastructure to support rapid deployment of the IoT (Internet of Things) and smart solutions e.g., telemedicine and healthcare

2. Report

The Business Case

- 2.1 Although there has been considerable progress achieved in digital transformation across several areas, digital inclusion remains a key priority for the council. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS)¹ estimates that 10% of households in North Lanarkshire do not have internet access. The SHS also shows that across all tenures social rented tenants are least likely to have internet access, estimated at 15% of social rented tenants². The Survey also shows that there is a correlation between digital exclusion and areas of deprivation, with households in the most deprived areas experiencing a greater rate of digital exclusion than those in less deprived areas.
- 2.2 The council has no right of use of a customer broadband, so any benefits that are directly associated with consumption by the council cannot be delivered via that route. The 85% of social rented tenants with internet access have been procured on an individual basis. This carries limited bargaining power. The potential bargaining power of the council with over 36,000 council tenants could drive a much better individual offer for tenants, even without the council directly providing services to the 85% of tenants who have internet access.
- 2.3 More services are being delivered online, and as online increasingly becomes the preferred method of contact, it means that digitally excluded people are in danger of

¹ The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) internet data tables, local authority level, 2023.

² Based on the percentage of households across Scotland – data not available at North Lanarkshire level by tenure.

being left behind. We therefore need to overcome exclusion by addressing the barriers to opportunity, access, knowledge and skills for using technology. The focus remains steadfast on improving lives and the outcomes required to be achieved from a users' perspective. This means that the council will continue to ensure that activities undertaken understand the needs of those experiencing digital exclusion and that there is a plan of action in place to ensure equity and access for all residents and communities who experience limited digital connectivity.

2.4 Although understanding who is digitally excluded is complex and nuanced, as in it cannot be assumed from demographic groups alone, it is clear that increasing connectivity can only be a positive thing. Enabling digital connectivity for council housing tenants will open up endless possibilities to radically transform, for the better, the way in which the council delivers supports and services, empowering tenants with increased choice and control over how they interact with services, enabling faster access to services and improving customer experience. More fundamentally, this will provide tenants with the foundations to achieve their full potential. It is widely acknowledged that housing is much more than just 'bricks and mortar', the broader concept of home centres on creating homes and communities that are safe, supportive and conducive to fostering a sense of community and belonging. This includes aspects such as:

- Social infrastructure – access to schools, healthcare, recreational facilities and public spaces that promote community engagement and well-being
- Sustainability – incorporating sustainable designs and materials as well as supporting sustainable lifestyles which help us achieve our climate change net zero ambition
- Affordability and inclusivity – ensuring that homes are accessible and adaptable to changing needs of households, preventing social seclusion
- Cultural significance – reflecting the cultural heritage and diversity of the community within housing designs and urban planning

2.5 The provision of digitally enabled homes underpins all of these aspects, from integrating technology to reduce our environmental footprint to enabling means in which tenants can actively manage and monitor health conditions through telehealth and assistive technology. The potential benefits are limitless:

2.5.1 Housing

- Improved Safety and Security: smart home technology, such as digital locks and smart alarms, enhancing the safety of tenants by providing real time alerts and monitoring
- Energy Efficiency: smart sensors, thermostats and lighting systems helping reduce energy consumption, lower energy bills, tackle fuel poverty whilst helping achieve our climate change goals
- Maintenance/asset management: early detection of issues such as condensation, damp and mould enabling swift action the prevent problems from occurring, supporting housing providers to move towards more proactive maintenance, improving the diagnosis of deteriorating environments to improve health outcomes of tenants and reduce costs, predictive maintenance helping prevent costly repairs and extend the lifespan of housing infrastructure
- Improved operation functions: control of sprinkler systems, CCTV, security doors
- Enhanced data management: IoT devices and data analytics providing valuable insights into housing conditions and tenants' needs, enabling more informed decision making

- Universal Credit (UC) Applications: currently delivered through an online platform designed to streamline benefits and make the process more efficient this can present issues for some people - providing digital access (alongside digital literacy measures) ensures people have the means to apply for benefits, including their housing costs

2.5.2 Education/Employability

- Access to resources: enabling access to a wealth of information, online learning and digital resources, enabling continuous learning beyond the classroom – supporting our workforce for the future
- Remote learning: enabling remote and hybrid learning models, making education more flexible and accessible
- Collaboration tools: online platforms and tools facilitate collaboration among students and teachers, enhancing the learning experience
- Remote employment: enabling people to work from anywhere, opening up job opportunities beyond geographical limitations
- Skills development: access to online courses and training helps people to acquire new skills and improve their employability
- Access to NL Virtual Classroom – for children who are not attending school or are on a part time timetable, this enables access to learning resources to ensure all children can access and receive a high quality, differentiated learning experience
- Supporting transition of leaving school – enabling access to an online platform that provides information on local services and support for young people leaving school to support positive destinations

2.5.3 Health and Social Care

- Telemedicine: enabling consultation with healthcare professionals remotely, reducing the need for travel and increasing access to healthcare services
- Health monitoring: wearables and health apps enable continuous monitoring of health metrics, leading to better self-management of long-term conditions
- Information sharing: healthcare providers can share information and collaborate more efficiently, improving patient outcomes
- Automated systems enabling tenants to control their home environment more easily
- Assistive technologies to enable people to have greater independence and safety in their own home
- Access to Making Life Easier, a self-assessment platform to support individuals with health and/or social care needs
- Community Alarm service providing support to individuals requiring an urgent response via a dispersed alarm unit - broadband connectivity will allow digital connectivity to the National Shared Alarm Receiving Centre and will provide further resilience
- Opportunities for future proofing to enable people to contribute and have access to their own social work/health assessment and data

2.5.4 Social Inclusion

- Community capacity: social media and online communities helping people stay connected and build relationships, reducing social isolation and improving capacity
- Access to services: digital platforms make it easier for people to access essential services, such as banking, public services and social support

2.6 Enabling digital connectivity for council housing tenants will be a major step forward in ensuring everyone is equally able to engage with public services, whilst helping address some of the most deep-rooted inequalities in our communities, such as poorer

health outcomes, lower life expectancy, loneliness and social isolation, educational attainment and access to jobs. Digital technology currently and will increasingly play a crucial role in levelling the playing field across economic, educational, healthcare and social inequality. By bridging gaps in access, opportunities and resources, digital technology can considerably mitigate disparities.

- 2.7 It also creates multiple opportunities for greater efficiency, with potential for significant savings achieved through smart housing, care and ultimately smart connected places:

Smart Housing

- Reduced mould and damp and expensive repairs
- Reduced voids and rental losses
- Reduced contact centre calls
- Improve access via reminders/improved contacts – reduced housing visits
- Optimised power consumption
- Reduced insurance premiums
- Reduced safety and asset repairs issues

Smart Care

- Reduced care packages - visits
- Improved medication compliance
- Reduced GP appointments
- Reduced acute hospital admissions
- Reduced need for more intensive support/care
- Reduced delayed hospital discharges
- Reduced falls
- Reduced health care costs associated with early detection of health conditions and improved self-management long term conditions
- Reduced social isolation pressures

Smart Places

- Smart assets – community hubs, offices, community facilities
- Smart environment – improved flood prevention and air quality
- Smart infrastructure – smart roads, temperature, disrepair, influencing road maintenance, smart fleets and routes
- Smart communities – CCTV, smart parks, homes

- 2.9 The appendix attached to this report provides an example of how integrating technology within a home environment can impact positively on people's lives.

- 2.10 This project will build on some of the key projects in motion, such as participation in the Smart and Connected Social Places initiative (part of the Department for Science Innovation and Technology 5G Glasgow City Region programme), entailing the use of IoT in council homes in North Lanarkshire to better understand the efficiency of zero carbon homes to ensure a just transition as we strive to achieve our net zero goals.

Options – Previous Modelling

- 2.11 Previous work was undertaken in 2022 to identify and cost options to progress the deployment of superfast broadband to council tenants, with two initial high-level options presented as possibilities. From this, one option was identified as potentially viable and more detailed commercial models were developed on this preferred option basis.

- 2.12 The models made assumptions based on a range of differing potential scenarios in relation to set up, installation and annual rental. Each commercial option resulted in different capital and revenue cost implications. These ranged from between £19.85 million - £36.86 million in revenue costs (0.8% and 1.2% of planned revenue spend over the 15 year period modelled) and £32.75 million - £49.75 million in capital costs. An additional commercial model was also identified within these parameters with revenue and capital costs estimated at £28.86 million and £40.75 million respectively (0.7% of planned revenue costs).
- 2.13 Estimates did not include inflationary costs over the 15 year delivery period, which would need to be factored into any refreshed modelling, and as the initial financial modelling was completed in late 2022 it does not account for any wider market inflationary changes since then.

Next steps

- 2.14 This modelling exercise illustrates that various delivery routes are possible. It also highlights that there are significant capital and revenue cost implications, alongside considerable benefits realisation, with the potential to accelerate the pace of change to transform communities and people's lives in North Lanarkshire through digital connectivity, improving life outcomes across various domains. This combined with rapid growth and evolving innovation in the development of digital solutions creates an opportunity to revisit and further explore the potential options to provide digital infrastructure and internet services to council tenants.
- 2.15 To achieve this it is intended to establish a Project Board and Project Working Group, with the potential for additional subgroups, as necessary, to further develop and refine a business case for the provision of ultra-fast internet to council housing tenants. Although, terms of reference and membership have yet to be finalised, indicative representatives from services have been identified and it is intended that the group will undertake a fuller more in depth analysis of potential commercial delivery models alongside an options appraisal to understand the wider benefits, costs and impacts of this project.
- 2.16 This is a long-term project and the breadth and magnitude of this task should not be underestimated. The council has 36,575 homes and this project will have significant resource implications. From inception to completion it is envisaged this project could span 10 to 15 years.
- 2.17 As an initial step to aid the understanding of benefits, costs and wider factors it is proposed to carry out an initial test of change. Although the finer details of the test of change have yet to be fully explored by the Project Working Group and Board, it is likely that it will involve a smart home model, integrating advanced technology, which will be tailored to the needs of tenants.
- 2.18 It is anticipated that this initiative will require a degree of subject matter expertise, which may require to be procured from an external organisation with proven proficiency in understanding and knowledge of smart home technology and experience in deployment.
- 2.19 There will be other considerations in relation to monitoring of data from this test of change. These relate to privacy (user consent, data minimisation, anonymisation), security (data encryption, secure devices, network security), compliance (regulatory requirements such as General Data Protection Regulation), data management (storage

and retention) and lastly but not least, ethical considerations (user control, purpose limitation).

- 2.20 It is intended that specific proposals for the test of change will be subject to a future committee report later in 2025.

Challenges

- 2.21 Digital technology has become a cornerstone of modern life, offering countless benefits, but it is notwithstanding some challenges. As we become more reliant on digital technology the threat of cyber-attacks increases, with increasing amounts of data being collected. Protecting the privacy of individuals is critical with data breaches and misuses of personal data potential issues. Other challenges include ethical concerns, such as the implications of surveillance and moral responsibilities, environmental impacts and social impacts – job displacement, dependence on technology impacting on other social interactions.
- 2.22 As outlined in section 2.10 there are significant resource implications. The deployment of digital connectivity for council tenants relies on robust and scalable infrastructure, a skilled workforce – for developing, maintaining and advancing digital technologies, and human resource requirements in relation to continuous learning and development to ensure continued proficiency in new technologies. Clearly there is also significant financial investment required for research, development and implementation as well as ongoing operational costs in maintaining digital infrastructure, software and services.
- 2.23 Navigating these challenges requires careful consideration and collaborative efforts across services and sectors. Balancing the benefits of digital technology with these challenges will be key to fostering a more equitable and secure digital future to deliver the intended societal benefit and achieve our long-term ambition of inclusive growth and prosperity.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Success will be measured through implementation and completion of a test of change to identify key learning points to inform the wider implementation of a digital connectivity masterplan for council housing tenants.

4. Supporting documentation

None



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5. Impacts

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? This report has the potential for significant impacts across several protected characteristic areas, some of which are compounded due to the intersectional nature of some protected characteristics/inequalities experienced. It is considered that on large these impacts are positive should the proposals be approved. A full EqIA is underway and will continue to be developed and updated as required. If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Solutions will be a key member of the proposed project Board tasked with developing the detailed Business Case If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering a social housing broadband solution may incur significant investment by third parties and will require the provision of guarantees on minimum contract term and volumes. These factors will impact provider offerings and the commercial structure i.e. upfront and recurring fees. The potential size of this opportunity within a relatively small geographical area has the potential to affect the local broadband market and may be considered in terms of a subsidy to any supplier, that is "providing a significant commercial advantage through funding by public sector". The Council will seek legal advice on whether any proposed plan should be considered a Subsidy and if so how Subsidy Control Principles would be applied. Legal would also be a key member of the proposed project Board. If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>

5.5 Data protection impact
Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes No

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

This will be considered as the project team.

Yes No

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes No

5.6 Technology / Digital impact
Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Potential for long-term digital transformation and service redesign through the provision of digital connectivity for council housing tenants. All impacts are explored and detailed in the body of the report.

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

This will be explored by the project team and actioned accordingly.

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact
Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Potential for carbon reduction through easier access to services.

5.8 Communications impact
Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.9 Risk impact
Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

There exist risks in relation to failure to improve digital connectivity for social housing tenants, alongside risks in relation to investment/disinvestment in some areas given the potential financial resource requirements. Risks will be fully considered by the project team and recorded appropriately.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

An initial CRWIA has been completed which identified a positive impact for children, young people and families, through improved access to online learning, educational opportunities, improved education attainment, socialisation and future employability prospects.

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes No

Appendix – The Benefits of Technology

Laura is a busy single mum with two children. Managing her home while balancing work, parenting and everyday life is a challenge.

Her property has been fitted with new SMART sensors which measure temperature, humidity and CO₂ levels. This helps ensure the heating system is running optimally, saving energy and reducing Laura's utility bills. By continuously monitoring conditions like humidity, temperature, and even the health of appliances like boilers and heating systems, the sensors can alert the council to potential faults before they become a major issue.

When Laura notices an issue or needs a repair, she can use the integrated app to instantly report the problem. Because it's linked to the council's property database, and informed by data from the sensors, repairs are addressed quickly and efficiently. This saves Laura valuable time and lets her focus on her family and other responsibilities.

Mary is 84 years old, lives alone, and has dementia. She has two daughters, and while her eldest daughter has been her main support, she has been struggling to provide all the care Mary needs. Mary has had difficulty remembering to take her medication and struggles to navigate surroundings which were once familiar. She does not want carers in her home.

After visiting the Assistive Technology Flat to see how SMART technologies such as KOMP could support her, Mary has been provided with the device. Now her daughters can video call her on a rota to prompt her to take her medication and see her taking it. She was also assessed for GPS which can be attached to her keys, and magnetic door contacts that alert the community alarm service to Mary leaving the house. The GPS has built-in falls detection as Mary can sometimes be unsteady on her feet when out.

Her home is also fitted with smaller tech items such as sensor lighting to reduce the risk of falls when moving around the house at night, and Just Checking which uses motion sensors and door contacts to allow her family and social worker to build a clear picture of Mary's day to day activity.

Mary is now taking her medication on time and the caring responsibilities are shared between both daughters. The introduction of assistive technology has also reduced Mary's social isolation, as family members from all over the world can video call her and send her family pictures. The family are reassured that Mary is safe at home when she should be, and on the occasions she is out they can check in on where she is.



Emma is a 10-year-old primary student who has faced challenges attending school full-time due to health issues. With frequent absences, Emma has struggled to keep up with her peers.

To support Emma's learning, she was introduced to the NL Virtual Classroom which offers lessons, activities, quizzes and other digital resources to support pupils with high quality learning experiences in Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing. Emma's class teacher directed her to personalised tasks online, thus providing appropriate challenge, and enabling her to work at her own pace and stay engaged in distance learning.

By the end of the term, Emma had made significant progress in both Literacy and Numeracy. The NL Virtual Classroom provided her with a tailored, flexible learning experience that kept her on track despite her health-related challenges. The same technology will accompany her through her learning journey, to higher education and beyond, ensuring her location is not a barrier to access.

Jack, a 17-year-old school-leaver, struggled with mental health issues and disengagement from school which left him uncertain about his future after school. Without a clear career path and facing anxiety about in-person events, Jack felt isolated and unsure how to transition into the workforce.

Jack was introduced to the Developing the Young Workforce Task Force's digital resources which offers a flexible and accessible way to explore career options. He was able to access a wealth of career resources, including videos on apprenticeship and training opportunities which helped him explore careers he hadn't considered, like IT and digital marketing.

Jack participated in MS Teams sessions where he could interact with service providers and employers. He also received online counselling, including guidance for securing an apprenticeship and preparing for interviews.

Jack secured an IT apprenticeship, with the flexibility to work remotely. This was a key factor for him which helped him balance his job with his well-being. His success demonstrates how digital tools and connectivity can empower young people to overcome barriers, access flexible opportunities, and make a successful transition into the workforce.