Digital Inclusion Fund Guidance

What is the funding for:

In today's digital world, access to technology is essential for education, employment, and social inclusion. However, many individuals and families continue to face digital exclusion due to a lack of devices, limited technical support, or low digital literacy.

To address this, funding will support Virgin Media O2's Social Value commitments, delivered in partnership with Lewisham Local, with a shared commitment to closing the digital divide within the local community. The initiative will provide digital devices, technical support, and training to help ensure everyone has the tools and confidence to participate fully in an increasingly digital society.

The funding pot is made up of contributions from Virgin Media O2 and underspent funding from Lewisham Local's previous Digital Inclusion project, which was originally supported by Lewisham Council. This combined investment will help extend the reach and impact of this vital work.

The funding could help with:

Access to Devices
Providing new or refurbished laptops, tablets, and smartphones to individuals and families who lack the resources to purchase essential digital tools.

Device and IT Support
Offering practical, technical assistance to help users set up devices, resolve common issues, and confidently use technology for everyday tasks.

Digital Skills Development
Delivering accessible training programmes that build digital literacy from basic internet use to more advanced skills like Microsoft Office, coding, AI, and cybersecurity to improve education, socialisation and employment.

How to Use Funding-Examples

1. Device and IT Support Services

- Pay for salaries or stipends of IT support staff or volunteers providing ongoing technical assistance.
- Cover costs for helpdesk support, phone/email consultations, or remote troubleshooting services.

- Develop user manuals, video tutorials, or FAQs to assist users with common device problems.

2. Digital Skills Development Programs

- Fund trainers, instructors, or facilitators who deliver digital literacy courses.
- Pay for curriculum development and training materials (printed guides, online content, subscriptions to educational platforms).
- Organize workshops, webinars, or community classes to build skills like Microsoft Office, coding, AI basics, cybersecurity awareness, and safe internet use.

3. Outreach and Engagement

- Support community outreach efforts to raise awareness of services and recruit participants.
- Cover communication costs (phone, internet, social media campaigns).
- Arrange partnerships with local organizations to expand reach.

4. Program Management and Evaluation

- Fund project management roles to coordinate service delivery.
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to measure impact and improve programs.

A total funding pot of **£7,250** is available, from which **up to four grants** of a maximum of **£1,800 each** will be awarded.

Funding can be used for:

- Activity Costs
- Staff
- Volunteer Expenses
- Refreshments
- Publicity
- Reasonable Capital Cost
- Other necessary and appropriate expenditures supporting the Digital Inclusion project including a proportion of overheads

Things the funding can’t be spend on:

- Activities that have already happened
- General overheads not related to the delivery of your project
- Salaries to staff and allowance for volunteers for unrelated duties
- Promotional items not tight to engagement outcomes
- Activities that don’t serve Lewisham residents

- Profit-making activities or projects
- Fundraising activities or challenges (an expedition etc.)
- Statutory activities
- Religious activities (we can fund religious organisations if their project benefits the wider community and does not include religious content)
- Projects where political activities are the main purpose, or that support or oppose a specific political party
- Lobbying activities
- Loan repayments
- The topping up of organisation reserves

What we hope to achieve:

- Reduce digital inequality across Lewisham and surrounding areas.
- Empowered communities with future ready skills for access to education, job opportunities, and essential online services.
- Build long-term digital confidence and skills in the community.
- Support social inclusion by ensuring everyone can participate in an increasingly digital society.

This funding is vital in helping us scale up our support, reach more individuals in need, and create lasting positive impact in the community.

Project Duration:

Between 2nd week of September to the end of January 2026

Eligibility Criteria:

The following organisations are eligible to apply:

- A constituted group with a volunteer management committee with a minimum of three unrelated members that meets on a regular basis (at least three times per year)
- Registered charity, with a board of trustees
- Charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- Community interest company (CIC)
- Community benefit society (CBS)

Community interest company (CIC) or Company Limited by Guarantee (that are not registered charities) will be asked for your Community Interest Statement, details of the Asset Lock included in Memorandum and Articles of Association, a copy of latest annual community interest report and minimum of three unrelated directors with no one director with more than 50% control

Your organisation must:

- Provide community activities or services which are of benefit to the residents
- Have a formal constitution or set of rules
- Have a bank account requiring at least two unrelated signatories
- Operate with no undue restrictions on membership

We cannot fund:

- Organisations that are aimed at generating profits
- Individual applicants
- Local branches of larger regional or national organisations/charities
- Schools
- Organisations not currently up to date with funding monitoring reports if funded by Lewisham Local
- Activities taking place outside of the London Borough of Lewisham

Application Form Questions:

Qs 1: Hope to achieve with funding
What is the need or issue you are seeking to address, how are you planning to bridge the gap in digital inclusion within Lewisham-explain how you ensure that residents are engage with your work. [Maximum 250]

Qs 2: Activities Provided
Please outline the activities you plan to offer through this grant. Include details such as the type of activity, when and where it will take place, how often and how long. [Maximum 250]

Qs 3: Need Identified
How have you demonstrated your understanding of the digital inclusion need within Lewisham Borough? [Maximum 250]

Qs 4: Who will benefit?
Could you explain how your project could benefit the community within Lewisham and how? Include estimated numbers of individuals directly and indirectly benefitting from this project? [Maximum 250]

Qs 5: Risks Assessments
What are the risks and bearers that you have identified and what measures would you take to minimize these risks? [Maximum 250]

Qs 6: Budget
How much are you applying for? (Please note you may not receive the full amount applied for)

What would you spend the money on? Please give a projected budget for how you would use the money in the Budget Spreadsheet. Provide a breakdown of costs and all money that is accounted for as much as possible

Monitoring-Reporting on the grant:

All successful projects will be required to undertake basic monitoring as part of the grant agreement to help us understand the impact of the funding and learn from your work.

- **Final Report:** All grant recipients will be required to submit a final impact report within one month of project completion**.** This report should summarise the outcomes, learnings, and how the funding contributed to community benefit.
- **Site Visits:** Some projects may be asked to host a site visit from a member of the funding panel or Lewisham Local staff to share more about their activities and the difference the project is making.

These steps are designed to support transparency, learning, and continuous improvement not to overburden you, so we'll keep the process simple and supportive. Monitoring report form will be provided by Lewisham Local and will require

- Budget Expenditure
- Submission of receipts
- Request for at least one or two case studies
- No. of service users/residents
- Age of service users
- Photos (where appropriate)
- Learning from the project to demonstrate impact to inform an end of project evaluation which will be made public

How decision will be made:

Recommendations for funding will be made by the DAFA team members, volunteers and stakeholders working at frontline digital access and inclusion in the borough.

Applicants are responsible for completing the due diligence section of the application to ensure they meet the specified selection criteria and organisational requirements to be eligible for funding. Requests may be made to applying organisations for due diligence information by Lewisham Local Staff. If we do not receive the required information, we will not be able to proceed with your application.

Application Deadline:

4th August 2025, 6pm

When you will find out:

We will aim to inform you if you have been successful four weeks from the application deadline.

Successful awards are subject to submission and review of the following documents:

- Children's & Adults Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Public Liability Insurance Policy
- Bank Details
- Risk prevention through conducting a risk assessment (a template risk assessment and project agreement can be provided if needed.)
- Completed enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) checks for any staff or volunteers working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults.
- Organisations must keep financial records of transactions made using the grant award and keep copies of any purchase receipts to provide as evidence if requested at the end of the programme
- Adhere to monitoring requirements which includes a final impact report which details what the money has been spent on, evidence of impact on the individuals supported and case studies
- Successful organisations will also be asked to provide publicly accessible examples of their work (e.g. case studies, photographs-where appropriate-blog posts) to promote the work of Lewisham Local Giving and must be willing to engage to share learning and reflections from the project to inform future ways of working.
- A commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Engaging with Lewisham Local y to share learning from the project to inform future programmes of work
- Payment to be made within 10 days after the above submission