NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB Digital

An update to the Joint Health Oversight Scrutiny Committee

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Digital exclusion challenges

Digital inclusion means ‘ensuring that everyone has the access, skills, support and confidence to participate in and benefit from our modern digital society, whatever their circumstances’.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-inclusion-action-plan-first-steps/digital-inclusion-action-plan-first-steps

Digital skills
Being able to use digital devices (such as computers or smart phones and the internet. This is important, but a lack of digital skills is not necessarily the only, or the biggest, barrier people face.

Connectivity
Access to the internet through broadband, wi-fi and mobile. People need the right infrastructure but that is only the start.

Accessibility
Services need to be designed to meet all users’ needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.

Digital exclusion challenges

Some groups of people are more likely to be digitally excluded than others. These are:

- people in **lower income groups**
- people **without a job**
- people in **social housing**
- people with **disabilities**
- people living in areas with **inadequate broadband and mobile data coverage**
- **older people, especially 75 and over**
- **Socially excluded groups** – people seeking asylum, experiencing homelessness, and people in contact with the justice system
- **people whose first language is not English**

Only 76% of people with any kind of impairment (such as visual) and **72% of people with a learning or memory impairment** specifically have Foundation Level digital skills, compared to 91% of people with no impairment (Lloyds Bank, 2024)

People with an impairment are **1.5 times more likely** to struggle to interact with the NHS than those with no impairment (Lloyds Bank, 2024)

46% of **Gypsy, Roma & Traveller** people reported that they had no access to digital primary care services (Roma Support Group, 2024)

https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/digital-inclusion/
https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/policy-and-research/research-and-evidence/research-2024/digital-inclusion-datasets

Digital exclusion challenges

Research for the UK digital strategy suggests that there are a number of important barriers, and more than one may affect individuals at any one time.

They are:

- **access** - not everyone has the ability to connect to the internet and go online
- **skills** - not everyone has the ability to use the internet and online services
- **confidence** - some people fear online crime, lack trust or don't know where to start online
- **motivation** - not everyone sees why using the internet could be relevant and helpful

As access, skills and confidence improve, it is increasingly important to tackle other barriers, including:

- **design** - not all digital services and products are accessible and easy to use
- **awareness** - not everyone is aware of digital services and products available to them
- **staff capability and capacity** - not all health and care staff have the skills and knowledge to recommend digital services and products to patients and service users

Good Things Foundation has produced an informative report on motivations of non-users of the internet.

https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/digital-inclusion/

Digital exclusion challenges

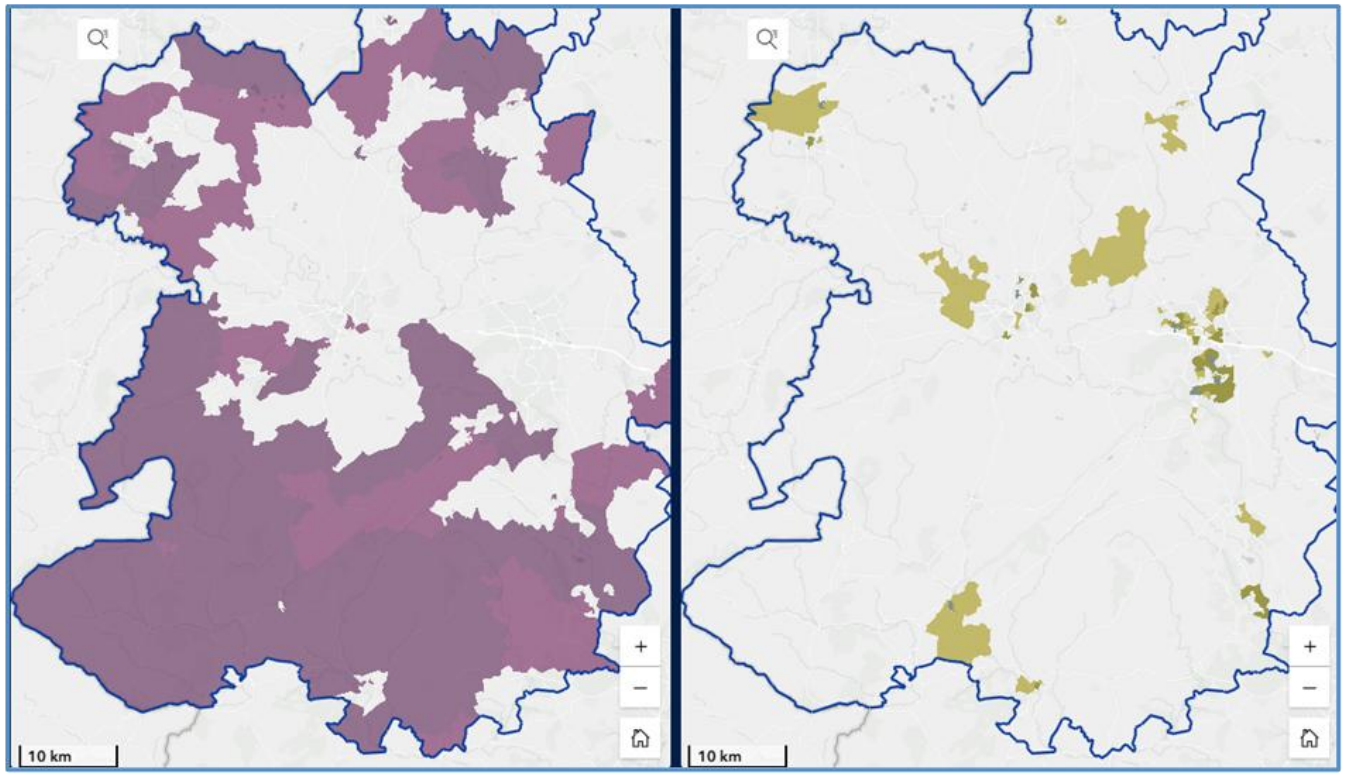
Data from the National Digital Exclusion Risk Atlas (DERA) highlights two key challenges for our local population:

1. **Digital infrastructure** and lack of connectivity disproportionately impacts those living in **rural areas.**

2. **Ability and Skills** to use digital disproportionately impacts those living in **areas of higher deprivation.**

Digital Access
access to essential digital infrastructure

Ability and Skills
population level characteristics that influence people's ability



Rural Infrastructure – Long term National challenge

Ability and skills – most challenged population and greatest opportunity

Digital Inclusion – Measuring What Really Matters

NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
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We have the insight – now we need to make a difference.

UNDERSTAND

Use our data to identify people and communities at risk of digital exclusion.

SUPPORT

Target training and practical help for those who want to use digital services.

PROTECT CHOICE

Keep telephone and face-to-face access available for those who cannot or choose not to go digital.

MEASURE IMPACT

Judge success by better access and outcomes for everyone – **not just** digital uptake.

Digital inclusion is not about getting everyone online. It is about making sure everyone benefits from digital transformation, without leaving anyone behind.

Measures in place to support Digital Inclusion

Leadership and Accountability

- Identified leads across NHS organisations
- Established Digital Inclusion Steering and Working Groups



Improved Data and Intelligence

- Agreed consistent baseline measures for digital inclusion and exclusion, including Digital Risk, Service Access and KPIs



Increasing Access to Devices and Data

- Developed signposting resources to existing offers
- Piloting Trusts and PCNs as Data Hubs
- Establishing local device repurposing schemes



Improving Skills and Confidence

- Increased staff awareness of digital exclusion barriers
- Targeting NHS App support to Core20PLUS groups
- Partnership projects with local Councils

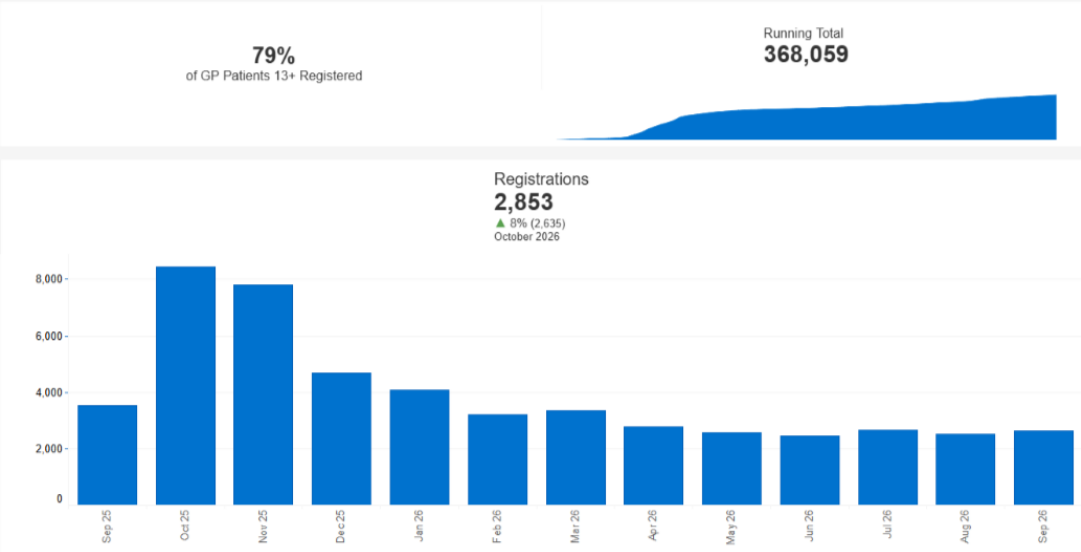


Inclusive Design of Services

- Embedding Digital Inclusion within Equality and Health Inequality Impact Assessments and tender processes



NHS app uptake



Across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin **79%** of the **registered population** have signed up to the NHS app, increasing on average of **4k a month** throughout 2026.

An average of **270k primary care appointments** are booked each month

Within the Midlands region, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin have the most **monthly logins** at **23.8k** as at 8/9/26, followed by Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent at 21.3k

Nationally, the highest ICB has 26.5k logins resulting in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin being **ranked 5** in monthly logins.