GCVS
Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector

# Overcoming Digital Exclusion -
# Getting Learners and Others Online
# 10 July 2020 using Zoom

> What an inspiring morning. I'm always heartened by the passion and enthusiasm I see from colleagues supporting and representing people in our communities.

> I'm going to be:
>
> Encouraging more interaction to persuade learners the benefits of online learning - we could perhaps reach a wider audience.

> I was definitely reassured that I was not alone in this struggle! I also got lots of information around tactics to obtain and use technology for and with our learners.

## Summary & Action Points

GCVS in partnership with the Glasgow Citywide CLD Network hosted an on-line session with over 80 participants from across Glasgow: the popularity of the session demonstrating the importance of overcoming digital exclusion at this time.

During the Covid19 crisis and as we emerge, much of our lives have moved on-line. Many people do not have a smartphone or tablet and if they do, may not have credit or internet access. We cannot assume everyone has the skills to set-up and use technology either. Digital exclusion is a real barrier. People cannot access the services they need and service providers struggle to even contact the communities they usually support.

People in Glasgow are however finding a way, so this session was an opportunity to share experiences and identify future actions. Inputs from key speakers highlighted good practice and opportunities whilst the breakout sessions were time to share and plan. Specific useful sources are listed in Appendix A and findings from a brief survey at Appendix B. This is a long report but there is a wealth of detail from partners to share.

### Key themes to emerge:

- Mental ill health, fear, and lack of confidence
- Additional or complex support needs
- Communication and contributions
- Understanding technical aspects
- Blending approaches
- Funding needs
- Use of volunteers

1. Conversations and engagement with partners should continue around Digital Inclusion in Glasgow.
2. Ensure that connections are also made to other agendas such as digital health.
3. Create or find a platform to share resources, allow staff to have focused discussions and identify supports and services.
4. Find partners with expertise to share or develop identified resources.
5. GCVS and partners to continue to work around identify funding opportunities for digital.
6. When restrictions allow, consider a post COVID practice sharing event or publication and either separately or together an exhibition of all the creative work generated in lockdown.

Post Event Note:
- The CLD Network Steering Group will consider the action points and how to progress at future network meetings.

- GCVS with interested partners, staff and volunteers is trialling the use of Mighty Networks to share good ideas, network etc.  Watch out in our GCVS Bulletins for updates and if you would like to be included please email CLD@gcvs.org.uk

- During Covid19 GCVS and partners created Glasgow Helps  as an online directory of services in Glasgow.  Having proved successful, it will continue in a revised form with categories more appropriate to the wider services on offer.  This will include digital support.  Watch out in GCVS Bulletins for updates.

## Speakers' Contributions

**Neil Paterson (Glasgow Life) – Digital Glasgow, Communities Scotland & Glasgow Life Digital projects**

Neil explained his current wide ranging remit with details available at www.glasgowlife.org.uk/glasgows-learning/digital-skills:

- **Welfare and Benefits Advice & Universal Credit Hubs** – offering support with skills around universal credit claims, has now moved online.

- **Digital Inclusion Freephone** Helpline – will be launched in next couple of weeks.

- **Digi Pals** – (information provided from Gail Mills) All library venues continue to be closed at present.  Some of our Digi Pals volunteers will in the future be

providing remote digital help by phone which will support the Connecting Scotland Campaign.

- **Connecting Scotland – connecting.scot**
  Glasgow Life and Neil specifically are the Glasgow contact for Connecting Scotland.  This is the Scottish Government programme set up in response to Covid19 to assist with getting those most digitally excluded online, eg people in extremely high vulnerability groups – "shielding" – higher risk of severe illness.

  In the first phase Glasgow has 780 devices such as ipads for distribution but the scheme has been oversubscribed with approx. 3000 devices in 100 applications requested.   Phase 2 will provide devices to "disadvantaged" children.  These first two phases are an "interim measure" and it is likely that the next phases will split issues;
  - Hardware/Kit
  - Connectivity
  - Support & possibly Training.
  Neil will share further details when he has them and for the national position SCVO share via their digital bulletin.

A follow-up discussion highlighted:
- There is a wealth of experience and knowledge in the city so we need to ensure that we connect better – we could be a strong network.
- There is a willingness to contribute to Glasgow's Inclusion Strategy.
- Will the Glasgow Life Digital Inclusion Freephone be accessible to people with hearing impairment and what level of support will be available to those with visual impairments?
- There is a drive for digital health to be extended, so digital inclusion is important in this context and we must ensure that the various works do not progress in silos.
- GDPR precludes the sharing of participants' personal contact details since we did not ask in advance, but in the interim GCVS will circulate relevant information and opportunities if they are emailed to CLD@gcvs.org.uk. Longer term we will establish a sharing mechanism.

## Sheila White (Glasgow Clyde College) – Gift-Tech
Sheila presented details of the successful Glasgow Clyde College recycling initiative Gift-Tech.  Her presentation is at Appendix C and the programme staff can be contacted for information and a referral form at. Gift-tech@glasgowclyde.ac.uk

@gifttech1    #digitalinclusion    #becauseofcld.

## Martina Johnston-Gray (NWVSN) – Gift-tech & supporting communities

Sheila White from Glasgow Clyde College gave a brief overview of their Gift-Tech project providing free recycled IT equipment to digitally excluded groups and individuals. Her full slides are included at Appendix C.

Features of initiative include:
- It is a sustainable model
- Partnership/collaborative working in the community with key organisations eg North West Voluntary Sector Network and Govan Housing Association
- Organisational referrals only- partners identify need & tell a "story"
- Run by volunteers – Gary McKeown's vital input
- Thus far 280 devices have been distributed free with a speedy turnaround of 7-10 days
- Gift-tech equipment PAT tested

Martina Johnston-Gray from North West Voluntary Sector Network gave a brief overview from a partner's perspective of how Gift-Tech has benefited people in NW Glasgow. They have given out 40 PCs & tablets to date and are accepting donations of laptops & PCs currently which will be wiped & a new operating system put in place so that no previous information / data will remain.

A follow-up discussion highlighted that equipment is only distributed via partner organisations, but Gift-tech covers all parts of the city. Referrals can be made using a [referral form](#).

## Hannah Reynolds and Isla McIntosh (Glasgow Disability Alliance) – support to get online

Hannah Reynolds and Isla McIntosh from Glasgow Disability Alliance gave a joint presentation providing some background statistics but crucially illustrating that it is not just the importance of digital inclusion that we need to consider, but also how wider support is delivered and maintained in a predominately digital environment. The delivery of social care during lockdown has been a huge issue.

Glasgow Disability Alliance's GDA Connects project has found, as have many others that Covid19 has increased inequalities.

The Social Model of Disability underpins GDA's work and as part of a Connecting Scotland pilot, they have been providing more accessible devices to folk (iPad), connectivity and coaching. Ultimately, their aim is that members will be confident enough to participate in learning/training courses online. They found some initial resistance from service users and a great deal of patience and encouragement was required, but this was rewarding for members & staff!

**GDA Connects**

**Disabled People and Digital Exclusion:**
- In 2017 56% of adult non-internet users were disabled
- For non-internet users aged 16-24 60% were disabled (ONS)

**GDA COVID-resilience engagement (March-June):**

**4500** wellbeing check-in calls made

**15,000** letters and information leaflets posted

**2000** detailed survey responses

**54% were digitally excluded**

54%

- Impacts on access to vital information, services, social connection
- 73% worried about isolation
- 80% not aware of local services they could access.

**GDA Connects**

- 'Connecting Scotland' Pilot (from April: 37 devices live from May)
- 345 digital need assessments
- 149 signed up to receive coaching or equipment

**Social Model Approach:**
- Barriers faced are not caused by impairment: finding workarounds together; trying different ways to explain / communicate
- Lack of confidence can be biggest barrier: rapport, trust
- Don't assume anything! Eg 'swipe', literacy, 'tell me what you can see'

A follow-up discussion discovered that:
- This project was staffed by a mix of redeployed existing staff plus some engaged for this specific project
- They have undertaken a few home visits with PPE & talked to folk through the window! They used language and BSL interpreters too.
- Appreciation from at least one client for the support of Theatre Nemo – visit to help with ZOOM.

## Ryan Davidson (Govan Housing Association) – Engaging Communities

Ryan Davidson from Govan Housing Association provided a wealth of detail from their various initiatives for digital inclusion and engaging communities. It is not just about access to devices, but integrating digital into their Social Inclusion programme. To achieve this, they have addressed:
- Both distributing devices and supporting people to use their own devices
- Folk need printing/scanning/copying facilities too
- Employing staff who are knowledgeable of Learning & Development and digitally
- Working collaboratively with partners such as Gift-tech.

Delivery has gone from face to face to online, with increased digital participation and access to the wider programme. Their offer includes:
- Drop in
- Learning programme including working collaboratively with the local Primary School
- 1-1 (mainly own tenants)
- Cinema nights.

They have developed an In house Digital Strategy and then for the wider area in Govan. Part of this has included the establishment of a digital lending library for:
- Android devices
- Laptops
- Ipads
- Digital Cameras
- Mobile phones.

Ryan is happy to discuss any of these initiatives if it would be useful to partners.

A follow-on discussion covered:
- Any security issues that might result from folk using their own devices are covered on a one to one basis
- Glasgow Clyde College offer SCQF unit called "Click2Connect – basic IT qualification at SCQF level 3
- Organisations can help people to access WIFI & data via TV packages they might already have – eg Skye, BT & Virgin.


## Feedback from Breakout Sessions

The following themes and actions emerged.  Resources mentioned by participants have been gathered in Appendix A.

### Mental Ill Health, Fear & Lack of Confidence
- Many people engaging with the organisations are extremely vulnerable and have been shielding for some time.  Consequently, their feelings of fear and vulnerability may have increased.  Lack confidence and / or poor mental health & wellbeing may have also increased.
- Conversely for some, lockdown has had a positive impact - some Glasgow Disability Alliance members are connecting to others for the first time ever, having previously been excluded due to factors like physical or mental health issues.
- Fear of both the technology itself and having to change the way you do things can be real barriers.  People may well then lack the confidence to 'give it a try'.  It takes time and creative approaches to overcome this.
- Starting with a familiar activity or topic and introducing the technology there can be effective, eg Govan Housing Association introducing some of its older residents to ipads through their interest in art or to Spotify by playing songs from their weddings.
- It was observed that one of the most important resources needed at this time is patience, with the people we work with who are very challenged by the circumstances they find themselves in.

## Additional or Complex Support Needs

Challenges were identified where people may have additional barriers to access, eg:

- Different ICT skill and awareness levels in a group setting can be challenging to support and manage.
- Limited English language skills can make it hard to help people navigate the technology and for those with lower literacy skills there can be a fear that they will be given a written guide (double barrier).
- Some people have additional support needs and therefore an extra level of complexity to find the right IT solution.
- It is difficult guiding people with visual impairments through problems over the phone. Video calls do make it easier and the main priority is helping people turn on the accessibility settings on their device.
- Other issues can contribute that are not related to digital skills directly but still make circumstances challenging. Staff find themselves making referrals where they can for additional supports, eg money advice, business support, counselling.

## Communication & Contributions

- Different stakeholders are active in digital inclusion, so it can be challenging to understand who does what and where to find expertise.
- Support for digital health should also feature in digital inclusion work and partners seek to work with others to smooth this for service users.
- Timely sharing of digital information and opportunities is important for all to benefit.
- Terminology is also a barrier and can increase the levels of apprehension and misunderstanding. Having simpler terminology might help with a glossary of useful terms and guides, eg maybe screenshotting different steps in common processes to get people online.
- Share examples of embedding technology use in other activities, eg starting with an activity familiar to service users.
- A place or platform to share good ideas and resources across the city. There is a lot of good work out there but maybe only for specific groups or geographic areas.
- A list of organisations that are offering support or computers/ internet connections that people can be referred to would be helpful alongside where people can get access to funding for these things. Support where there are additional barriers or more complex needs too.
- It would be useful to be able to contact other staff with similar interests, eg via smaller focus groups on specific topics. An example would be a partners' "Chalkface Forum" regarding Microsoft Teams, Zoom, social media, etc., to learn from the diverse experience of other tutors.
- Specific examples included:
  - A WhatsApp group internally for staff to share ideas
  - iCloud softphone app which has no cost and allows privacy of tutor if using their own phone – no caller display, etc.

- A guide for staff around managing privacy etc would be helpful.
- A Post Covid exhibition demonstrating the creativity and inventiveness and staff and service users during this time, eg like Aye Write - Covid Poetry might be a good theme.

## Understanding Technical Aspects
- There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to platforms or devices (it's two tiered challenge to get both right) and it takes a long time to try to find the right medium for service users, each individual's needs, skills and access are different so it needs to be a person centred approach.
- Smart phones, although many users have one, are not easy to navigate or read due to the size not suitable for learning etc.
- Lack of knowledge of different platforms/ programmes/ devices that would work best for users.
- More information needed on Mifi and Dongles.
- Support with procurement routes / money supermarket type website.
- Staff need equipment too as new needs have emerged working in the digital environment.
- Social/Leisure programme – many people have equipment; however, participants may not have connection, eg although much of the Gaelic community is tech-savvy, connectivity itself is the biggest issue.

## Blended Approaches
- Most organisations will be adopting a blended approach to learning and activities, as eventually some face to face provision will return.  There is a desire to embrace the benefits of both face to face and online, rather than just return to how we were.
- We need to recognise the diversity of people's needs.  Often individual solutions are required – no one size fits all for approaches as well as the technical aspects.  Start with an individual and their needs and interests.
- Not everyone wants to join a group, and this is no different in the digital world, therefore a mixture of opportunities needs to be available.

## Funding Needs
- Sustainability is a real concern with the fear that funding for these projects may run out. Some may only provide support for a few months. How can we make sure we help overcome digital exclusion further down the line, after lockdown etc?
- Some people felt it is the costs associated with Wi-Fi and data access that is the biggest barrier, particularly for those on low incomes.
- Some organisations have contacted Connecting Scotland to become digital champions and have not heard back yet.
- Some projects have accessed the Wellbeing Fund during Covid to obtain equipment.
- How does the CLD Network continue the momentum around this?
- There is also a wider issue around continuity of staff, particularly with changes to the Integrated Grant Fund / Glasgow Community Fund – how many current

staff are unsure of their jobs?  Potential loss of experience. Risks and impact on continuity of provision.

## Use of Volunteers

- Increased use of volunteers and some who have not volunteered before to support digital inclusion.
- Glasgow ESOL Forum have been re-circulating their adult protection and volunteering policies as a reminder to staff and volunteers.  Some organisations may need to review policies considering new working practices in the digital environment.

## Priority Actions

1. Conversations need to continue and ensure that there is a coherent overview of what is already happening in Glasgow regarding digital inclusion and how all can contribute to plans for the future.

2. Create or find a platform for:
   i. Sharing resources and examples of good practice particularly around the many barriers highlighted here
   ii. Sharing resources specifically for volunteers who are supporting service users to become more digitally literate including training, top tips etc.
   iii. Allowing staff to have more focused discussions regularly
   iv. Finding supports available and how to refer or access the service.
3. Develop or share some resources identified, eg a glossary of terms; some guidance on hardware and software choices; Volunteering and Adult Protection policies.

4. GCVS should continue to engage with partners and funders like National Lottery Scotland to highlight the importance of digital inclusion and highlight as funding opportunities arise.

5. People would like to see a post COVID practice sharing event or publication and either separately or together an exhibition of all the learners' creative work generated in lockdown.

## Feedback from Participants

I learned:

The importance of facilitating those who need intervention the most with the equipment that will help them the most.

I learned:

That I am not alone or even one of a small group that are struggling to engage our learners. Every project in Glasgow is encountering the same issues and problems.

I'm going to:

Investigate and keep up to date with the projects taking part in the session. Watching out for the next GCVS online

I'm going to:

Share with my team; using the resources I was referred to to give our service users a better service; using more simplistic language or being more aware of how I describe and explain things.

Hopefully, this format is with us for ever as it was very convenient to "attend" - just close the office or room door, click a button and I'm there at the meeting, brilliant! No travel issues or additional time requirements.

**Many thanks to all participants from the CLD Network Steering Group and GCVS Staff!**

# Appendix A - Specific Useful Sources from Participants

These are shared as useful sources for consideration but of course each organisation should make judgements based on their own circumstances.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Connecting Scotland** have useful resources and links to websites to help get people online, eg providing **straight forward information** that explains how you get connected, how you stay safe, how to get extra support | Link |
| **AbilityNet Live** – Staying Connected – full presentation of AbilityNet workshop shared with permission – **useful for those caring for someone else**, explains the benefits of different technologies and how to set them up | Link |
| **Visibility Scotland**- have a YouTube video on how to turn on **accessibility** settings | Link |
| **Triple Tap Tech** – provide advice, help, support, and training for people with **visual impairment** on everything to do with technology | Link |
| **Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living** – David Sands is a useful contact | Link |
| **Scottish Tech Army** – **digital strategy and support provided** to voluntary sector organisations | Link |
| **Tripod Training Glasgow** – Running **free workshops** on how to build an online community. They have good support for getting your services online | Link |
| **Glasgow ESOL Forum** can share basic guidelines for **adult protection** policies and volunteer policies if these are helpful. Contact them directly | Link |
| **Text Local** a **bulk text messaging service** that has been helpful to contact learners | Link |

# Appendix B -Helping Digitally Excluded Learners -   Survey in June-July 2020

This short survey was undertaken on behalf of the Glasgow Citywide CLD Steering Group to consider supports available to overcome digital exclusion in Glasgow.  To date, 26 responses have been received.

1. **Do you know where folk can access laptops, tablets etc.?**



Pie chart: No, 35%; Yes, 65%
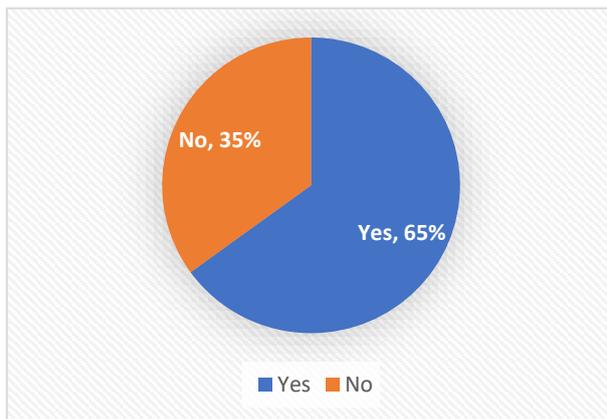
Many are supplying/lending equipment to service users but have limited supplies

Some organisations have applied to the Connecting Scotland initiative with a view to extending provision.

Organisations are working collaboratively to provide re-conditioned equipment eg Gift-tech

2. **Is anyone helping out with WIFI costs/credit for calls?**



Pie chart: No, 43%; Yes, 57%
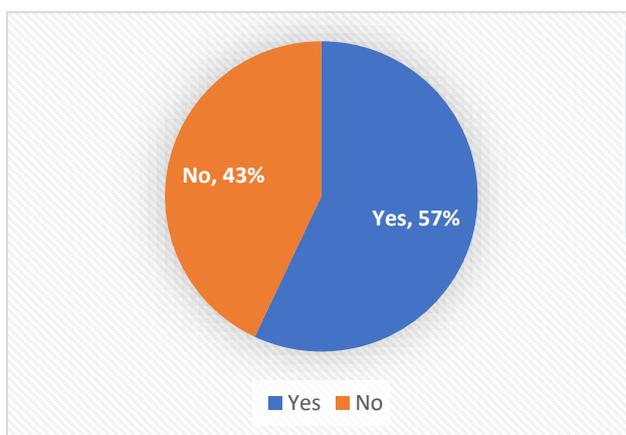
Many want to know how to go about obtaining/where funding is available?

Some help with WIFI costs/Credit but many restrictions, eg to current clients or specific geographical areas

Organisations are also using emergency funding awarded to provide

3. **Is there anywhere offering support to learners to get set up, especially given social distancing?**
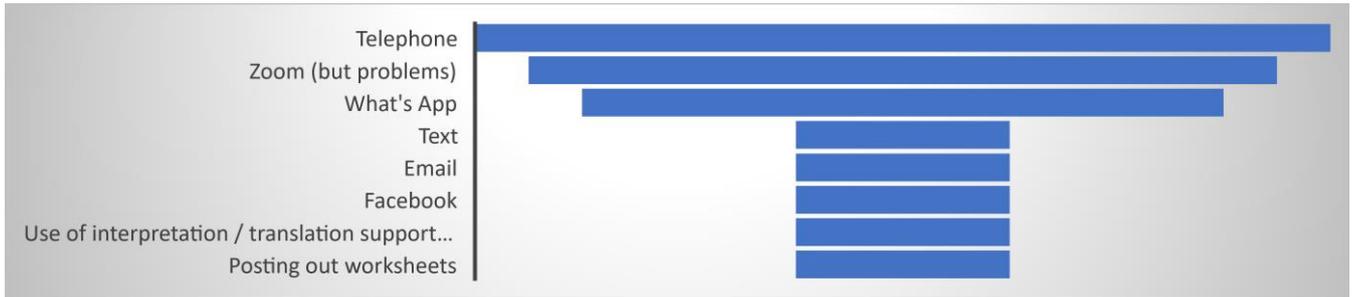
Experts – eg Scottish Tech Army, SCVO Digital Champs

A few examples of internal expertise and on-going support

Online tutorials via social media

Telephone support/Helplines available

Barriers remain - more support needed

## 4. How are folk communicating with learners especially those that may struggle with English language skills?



Bar chart showing communication methods:
- Telephone
- Zoom (but problems)
- What's App
- Text
- Email
- Facebook
- Use of interpretation / translation support...
- Posting out worksheets

# Appendix C -Gift-Tech Presentation


**GIFT TECH**

**Breaking Down the Digital Divide**

Gift-tech@glasgowclyde.ac.uk

@gifttech1   #digitalinclusion   #becauseofcld

**GLASGOW CLYDE COLLEGE**


## Speaker

- Sheila White - CLD Manager, Glasgow Clyde College
- swhite@glasgowclyde.ac.uk

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## What is Gift-tech?

- Gift-tech is an innovative digital recycling initiative which aims to help students and local communities with valuable resources for learning, and to reduce digital social exclusion and reduce barriers to participation , learning and achievement.

- Gift-tech is supported by a small team of volunteers who dedicate their spare time to support the project.

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## What is Gift-tech?

- Gary McKeown, ICT Service Delivery Co-ordinator at the College who initiated this project, said: "Gift-tech offers a practical solution to recycling as well as an opportunity to support identified learners who are facing hardship, on low incomes or benefits and may be at risk of further social exclusion or dropping out of learning as well as local community organisations.

- Gift-tech is available through a simple referral process involving college staff and community partners and has been in operation since August 2019.

- The project aims to improve retention and raise attainment in learning, provide support for digital inclusion and promote inclusion and equality, all the while reducing the number of PCs and laptops given to recycling companies each year.

- Gift-tech addresses a number of Government drivers and policies.

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## What is Gift-tech?

- The aim of Gift-tech is to reduce the number of Pcs and Laptops that are needlessly going to recycling companies every year by finding creative and socially inclusive ways to reuse these valuable resources

- ICT equipment that is no longer fit for College purpose are gathered by ICT Team and sorted by designated members of the Gift-tech team who have **volunteered** their time outside college contracted hours

- Equipment is then cleaned, wiped and made ready to be reused by learners registered with Glasgow Clyde College and local community organisations throughout the wider Glasgow area

- Gift-tech offers a practical solution to recycling as well as an opportunity to support identified learners who are facing hardship, on low incomes or benefits and may be at risk of further social exclusion or dropping out of learning

- Gift-tech offers a practical solution to recycling as well as an opportunity to support local organisations who would like to support digital inclusion in their own community

- Gift-tech is a gift of technology which addresses inequalities

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## Why is this equipment not used by the College and how can it help our students and our communities?

- The computer is not powerful enough for software that is required for teaching
- The firmware of the BIOS and chipset may be unsupported now and is vulnerable for security reason within a Domain
- Batteries in Laptops and tablets may only hold a charge for a little time and not long enough for classes. Factoring in the cost of a battery and the limited performance from an ageing device makes it not fit for purpose
- Many of these factors lead to the decision to making equipment obsolete for college use
- However, the equipment will still be suitable to use at home for research. College students now have access to Office 365 and access to office packages at home making the old kit a great asset to them
- Increased support to Digital Inclusion, Raising Attainment & Family Learning agendas
- Barriers to participation, learning and achievement will be removed
- Improved retention and attainment in learning
- Inclusion and equality is being promoted
- Improved access to learning resources
- Supports the College Vision, Mission and Values
- GCC will be seen as an organisation that recognises the importance of supporting learners and the community
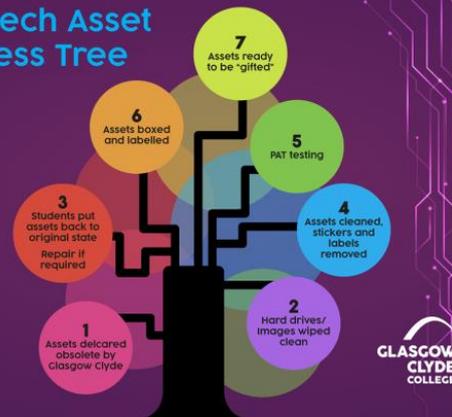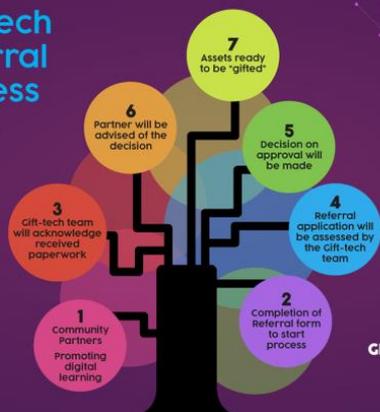
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## Gift-tech Project - Update

- Creation of Gift–tech working group
- Designed paperwork to support systems and processes.
- Creation of email address for project – gift–tech@glasgowclyde.ac.uk
- Discussion with College lawyers, Trading Standards & Microsoft
- Continue to Identify funding sources
- Microsoft Refurbisher License attained
- PAT Testing certification attained
- Internal launch & Community Partner launch
- Saltire Award agreement with Volunteer Glasgow
- Student and Staff Fundraising
- Digital response to Covid-19

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## Gift-tech Asset Process Tree

7 Assets ready to be "gifted"
6 Assets boxed and labelled
5 PAT testing
4 Assets cleaned, stickers and labels removed
3 Students put assets back to original state Repair if required
2 Hard drives/ Images wiped clean
1 Assets delcared obsolete by Glasgow Clyde

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## Gift-tech Referral Process Tree

7 Assets ready to be "gifted"
6 Partner will be advised of the decision
5 Decision on approval will be made
4 Referral application will be assessed by the Gift-tech team
3 Gift-tech team will acknowledge received paperwork
2 Completion of Referral form to start process
1 Community Partners Promoting digital learning

Form Link

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## Stats to Date

- 50+ Saltire Awards
- 20 Certificates of Appreciation
- 146 PC's & monitors distributed
- 13 Tablets distributed
- 41 Laptops distributed
- Student and Staff fundraising – £1948.00
- Area Grants / Covid Response –£7500.00
- 30+ community groups supported
- 3 + Local Housing Associations
- 2 Parliamentary motions
- Working with partners to respond to Covid–19