Applying to Connecting Scotland

Guidance for organisations working with older & disabled people

Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government programme set up in response to coronavirus.

The current phase now includes an additional winter social support package to target those living through social isolation and loneliness.

Applications will be open until 18th January 2021. However, an applications received before 11am on 18th December 2020 will be assessed for delivery in early January. Applications received after this date will be assessed for delivery in late February or March.

The programme will provide iPads, internet connectivity and support to develop digital skills for people who are socially isolated or lonely and meet the following criteria::

- Are older people (aged 60+) and/or have a disability;
- Are digitally excluded – do not have an appropriate device and/or are not connected to the internet at home; and
- Are on low incomes so cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access.

Getting online will help them access public services, connect with family and friends and contribute towards reducing social isolation and loneliness.

How it works

To reach these people, Connecting Scotland collaborates with local councils, public and third sector organisations who are already working with them.

Organisations and local councils get support from SCVO. This includes:

- kit – an iPad
- connectivity – through mobile data

- training and support – for staff and volunteers to become 'digital champions' to support people to use the internet confidently and safely.

Connecting Scotland is a partnership between the Scottish Government, local councils and SCVO. It's supported by a range of organisations from across Scotland and the UK.

The Scottish Government funds the programme.

Who can apply

If you are a public or third sector organisation that works with this group of people in Scotland, you can apply for devices. Teams working within a local council can also apply.

Individuals and private sector organisations cannot apply.

SCVO will provide support for successful teams and organisations.

How to apply

You need to apply using the online application. There is a template Word application available to help you prepare your answers.

This application round is open until 11am on Monday 18 January 2021. Applications will be assessed by SCVO and the local councils and decisions communicated by early March.

Each local council will has an agreed allocation of devices.

You do not need to submit a list of people you want to support as part of your application. But you'll need to:

- show how you'll identify and choose people to support
- outline what their digital inclusion needs are
- identify members of staff to become digital champions and take part in mandatory digital champions training

You'll also need to identify how this work can contribute to broader social inclusion or poverty reduction strategies.

This means showing how it supports other needs in local and national strategies including the:

- Fairer Scotland Action Plan
- Fairer Scotland for Older People
- Fairer Scotland for Disabled People
- Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan
- National Performance Framework.

Digital champions

A digital champion is a member of staff, or a volunteer, who's already supporting someone, and has been trained by SCVO to help them get up and running with their iPad.

This approach builds on the relationships and trust that your staff have already built up with people.

Digital champions do not need to be technical people. They just need to be confident in their own digital skills. And, more importantly, they should have good interpersonal skills.

As part of their work with users, digital champions will give people regular, informal support for 6 months.

SCVO's training for digital champions lasts 2 and a half hours and is delivered remotely. Digital champions will also get resources and ongoing support to help them fulfil their role.

How applications are assessed

Applications are assessed by SCVO and local councils. Their aim is to allocate devices to where they're likely to have the biggest impact.

Connecting Scotland has developed scoring guidance to support the assessment process. But local councils and SCVO have the power to make the final decision.

The guidance recommends making awards to organisations based on evidence that shows they meet the following criteria:

- they have previous experience of supporting the proposed people
- how closely the needs of the people they support, fit the programme's priorities
- how much the support will contribute to broader inclusion or poverty targets
- how much capacity they have to support people through the digital champion scheme
- their capacity to capture data and learning
- how they can demonstrate their organisation's ability to deliver at speed to your proposed numbers
- what alternative provisions their organization can make

The criteria are not weighted, but priority will be given to applications where organisations have existing contact with people, and capacity to support the programme objectives.

For example, regular contact with the people we're trying to reach and staff or volunteers that can become digital champions.

What you'll need to do if your application is successful

If your application is successful, your organisation will have to sign a [grant agreement](#) with SCVO.

[The agreement](#) covers:

- the devices you've applied for
- your expected commitment to the programme
- SCVO's responsibilities

It also covers general grant conditions. This covers things like:

- an agreement to comply with data protection regulations
- health and safety considerations
- protection of vulnerable groups
- other legislation that's relevant to your organisation
- sharing monitoring and evaluation data with SCVO

Monitoring and evaluation data will be shared with local councils, and the Scottish Government, over the following 12 months.

Devices

For this phase, iPads are the sole device that you can apply for. iPads come with a case for protection, but do not come with a keyboard.

Frequently Asked Questions

If individuals can't apply themselves, what should they do if they think they may be eligible?

We recommend that individuals who think they may be eligible to contact a local organisation who provides support in your area. Depending on your circumstances, that might be someone in your local council, a support worker or a local or national third sector organisation.

Who will meet the cost of sending out the iPads?

SCVO will arrange distribution to successful teams or organisations. Then the teams and organisations will be responsible for delivering them to the people they've identified as needing them.

Who owns the device?

Once a device is given to someone, they will own it.

You'll need to ask them to agree to terms and conditions as part of accepting the device. This will include sharing contact details and being involved in evaluation activities.

What mobile network is used for Mi-Fi devices?

Vodafone is currently the default supplier. There may be some flexibility for cases where Vodafone does not offer coverage.

What is the data allowance for the MiFi?

The intention is to offer an unlimited data allowance for Phase 2 (subject to a fair usage cap) for up to 24 months

What if someone has no mobile reception?

We are unlikely to be able to provide connectivity to people who live in areas with no mobile reception. However, exceptional cases may be considered, so please highlight in your application if this is a consideration.

Who pays for the data after 24 months?

People will be offered the data allowance for 24 months. We will contact people towards the end of the 24 months to explain their options.

How we help people to afford data will be considered as part of the long-term strategy to support digital inclusion at a national level.

Questions?

Contact help@connecting.scot if you've any questions about the Connecting Scotland programme.