

Age , digital inclusion and use of ICT

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Chief Exec Wise Age

Digital Exclusion or Inclusion

- Many benefits to digitalisation and to use of ICT by and for older people. This can be seen in the Mayor of London's SMARTER LONDON approach
- BUT - Also older Londoners have many worries and problems
- Ease of access and use – depends if you have computer and skills
- Over 80s and older poorer people face problems in both owning and using computers – especially to communicate with govt.
- HMRC and the Government portal require IT skills to use
- DWP – UNIVERSAL CREDIT- is now only online
- Local authorities and the GLA increasing its use for and by citizens

Digital exclusion and other problems

- To many of London's seniors are facing digital exclusion, though lack of computers/ smart phones / up to date software + lack of training in use of computers, and for those that do, many have additional problems
- Ability to navigate and communicate and change mind
- Rise in cyber crime and scams
- Rise in online unwanted sales pitches
- Problems for poor in owning / using computers / smart phones/ contracts
- Problems for those with low IT skills and dementia
- Problems for those in care homes
- Problems of privacy and security – use of mega data (NHS data by companies)

Positive role of older IT users

- 50- 64 – 70% in work able to use and adapt – part of development process
- 65-75+ – active pensions – volunteers / campaigners / still working (1.3 million – also most were part of digital revolution
- 80 + still alert & can use IT
- Older people can use IT to help them communicate – decision makers/ companies/ finance/ socially
- To learn, to use brains
- To keep in touch – family and friends
- For disabled to order food and medicines
- To build friendships / community

Why is ITC and digitalisation key for govts

- Worry about rising costs of care
- See older people as drain
- Too costly to employ people
- Replace with online records / health checks
- Replace with robots – better than nothing, say 80% of those needing care according to research
- Brave new world ? - in which older and vulnerable people are kept occupied and also able to be monitored
- Control for your own good? – alcohol, sweets / food all can be restricted- / smart fridges and controls set by social workers / carers

Qs for Mayor / GLA re SMART London

- Key Qs to be sent on to Mayor and Digital czar following seniors discussion
- What do we want prioritised as older people from this digital revolution through the GLA , borough and government initiatives
- What are worries that we want addressed – in particular over
- Use of robotics in health and social care
- Use of digital monitoring for health – what controls
- Use of mega data
- Loss of privacy, and ease of access by govt, business and crime
- What protections to be in place to safeguard us from impact of IT failure

How Can Digital Exclusion be overcome

- 1) for many older and poorer Londoners digital exclusion is real as they cannot afford computers / smart phones or the contracts to maintain them. How can this be addressed? Can there be a major campaign to get businesses and others to donate older but still workable models to be distributed - ? Via local age organisations / local authority / carer lists
- 2) how can those in poverty / low incomes be helped to get basic low / no cost contracts by providers
- How can public access to computers be extended particularly in this time of Covid 19, so that it is safe to use and can there be wider free access outside of libraries to community / sports centres / housing associations / older people's organisations and meeting spaces. Can there be a free card given to older and vulnerable adults to access online internet cafes etc

How to overcome digital exclusion- continued

- There are many older and vulnerable /disabled people who need training in using computers, even to a basic degree. Can the old Silver Surfers programme be re-instated, so that older and vulnerable people can be targeted and provided with training at centres or even in their own homes.
- This would require a 'training the trainers' approach whereby those working with older people (in care homes, in older people's wards, in community – sports – local authority centres, in housing associations, through age organisations etc) can be trained in training older people in the basics of using emails, researching via Google etc, joining – starting social networks of friends and families and interests, to access govt and finance information etc.
- Training digital age champions through schools, colleges and Universities, voluntary organisations who once vetted could then visit people in care homes or their own- once vetted and passing a knowledge test sd longas the venues and participants are covid safe

What needs to be done now for those digitally excluded

- 1) while developing London as a SMART city in partnership with older and vulnerable and disabled people also ensure that other forms of communication are still open to them
- Make sure that all GLA, local authority, local health and care facilities have open and operational phone lines, that printed material is available and where possible distributed to people's homes (using volunteers?)
- That key information and messages are also put onto TV and radio – increase the use of community stations for this purpose
- Make websites easy to use and up to date – with back up alternatives. Making sure this also applies to such concerns as GP surgeries etc