

Covid-19 Digital Exclusion Fund

GUIDANCE NOTES AND CRITERIA

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY WHEN COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

The aim of the Covid-19 Digital Exclusion Fund is to support organisations to tackle digital exclusion by providing grants of up to **£5,000** to provide connectivity, devices and support to individuals living in Falkirk who are:

1. digitally excluded – do not have an appropriate device and/or are not connected to the internet at home; AND
2. on low incomes so cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access

Getting online will help individuals access public services, support learning and training, help find or maintain work and provide resilience in the event of further lockdowns. How it works

To identify and reach eligible individuals, Fairer Falkirk will work with other Council services, other public sector services and third sector organisations who already have existing trusted relationships with individuals.

Building on the Connecting Scotland model, successful organisations will receive a grant enabling them to 'gift' individuals with equipment and connectivity as follows:

- kit – internet enabled device – for example a chrome book, iPad, or android device e.g. a smart phone
- 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.

The kit listed above is only there as an example of what you could buy. If you feel none of the above devices suit the people you are trying to support - for example if you have a person who is unlikely to ever use a digital device but needs a phone to contact friends, family or support networks please let us know in the application form what type of kit you propose to buy and why.

Prices

The prices listed here are an estimate cost for the package of devices, connectivity and digital support using SCVO's model and may be different to any other supplier.

- iPad and 24-month MiFi connectivity £800
- Chromebook and 24-month MiFi connectivity £700

Please include your total costs in the application form. Successful organisations will be responsible for purchasing the equipment themselves however there may be an opportunity to purchase devices via SCVO depending on availability.

Who can apply?

If you are part of a public sector or third sector organisation that works with individuals who satisfy the eligibility criteria and live in Falkirk, you can apply. Teams working within Falkirk Council are also welcome apply.

Individuals and private sector organisations cannot apply. Additionally, we will not consider applications from schools within this fund as work is underway through Connected Falkirk to provide devices via schools.

How to apply

You need to apply by downloading the application form and submitting it to fairer.falkirk.gov.uk

If you are unable to send the application electronically, please send a copy to the following address:

'Fairer Falkirk'
Corporate & Housing Services
Falkirk Council
The Forum
Callendar Business Park
Callendar Road
Falkirk
FK1 1XR

Applications must be submitted by 11am on Monday 15th March 2021. Applications will be assessed by members of the Fairer Falkirk Partnership. Funding will be distributed by the end of March 2021

You do not need to submit a list of specific individuals 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 digital champions training
- ensure that the individuals you are supporting haven't received a device from another service or group

Digital champions

By applying for the Covid-19 Digital Exclusion Fund, you are committing some of your own staff or volunteer time to act as Digital Champions to support individuals to get online, and to feel comfortable and safe in using their devices.

A digital champion is a member of staff, or a volunteer who, where possible, already has experience or relationships with the recipients, and has been trained by SCVO to help them get up and running with their new device.

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.

Digital champion training lasts 2 and a half hours and is delivered remotely.

How applications are assessed

Applications are assessed by a decision panel from the Fairer Falkirk Partnership. Their aim is to allocate funding to organisations who are likely to have the greatest positive impact.

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

- organisations are not providing devices/connectivity to people who have already received these from Connecting Scotland
- organisations have previous experience of supporting the proposed recipients
- how closely the needs of the individuals your organisation support, fit the programme's priorities
- how much the support will contribute to broader inclusion or poverty targets
- how much capacity the organisation has to support people through the digital champion scheme
- organisational capacity to capture data and learning



- how applicants can demonstrate their organisation's ability to deliver to the proposed number of recipients
- there are no alternative sources of digital support available for the recipient individuals

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