Cymunedau Digidol Cymru | Digital Communities Wales
Hyder Digidol, Iechyd a Lles | Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being

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Case study

Digital Inclusion Ambassadors

Digital Inclusion Ambassador Carl Griffiths shares how Neath Port Talbot Council is supporting both staff and the general public to boost their digital skills, **ensuring that no one gets left behind.**

Carl works with Neath Port Talbot Council to support digitally-excluded people to use digital services. Carl supports both council staff and people in the Neath Port Talbot borough to make the most of what technology can offer, and has led a range of projects helping to get digitally-excluded people – particularly older people – online.

Community centres were crucial for helping older people to stay connected during the pandemic. Carl identified that a lot of older people in Neath Port Talbot do not have access to the internet or technology, but community centres allowed them to get online while also getting out of the house.

Carl said:

> "We set up days where people could come in for a couple of hours to have a cup of coffee and a chat while learning what they wanted to learn. We'd take in equipment for people to use, such as laptops and iPads.

These sessions were supported by skilled volunteers from Digital Communities Wales, also known as 'Digital Champions', which meant that multiple sessions could run at once and more people could be supported. This also allowed Carl to deliver talks in the community about what digital inclusion means, encouraging more digitally-excluded people to get involved – something he intends to continue beyond the pandemic.

Carl explains:

> I visit local community groups that could benefit from using technology, such as craft groups, 60+ meet ups, to explain what digital inclusion means and how it can improve their quality of life.

Carl also leads an internal Digital Partners Group, to strengthen digital skills within the council. These partners are council employees trained through Digital Communities Wales, who have volunteered to strengthen their skills so they can support others.

Carl said:

> If someone has a tech problem, they now have someone to call. At the moment, we have 42 digital partners supporting colleagues throughout the council and sharing their knowledge.
>
> Over the last two years, more and more services have gone online, and some people find it daunting. The partners can help them to learn the new tools needed to do their jobs in the remote-working world. Rather than feeling lost, they have a friendly face they can turn to that can help solve their problem.
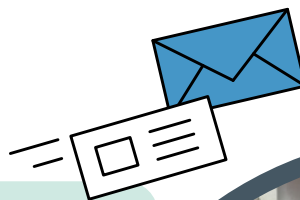
Digital Communities Wales worked closely with Neath Port Talbot CBC to enable them to successfully achieve their Digital Inclusion Charter accreditation in March 2020. Carl and Neath Port Talbot Council are also running 'Learn My Way' sessions, which both staff and the public can attend to learn new digital skills.

Carl said:

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More older people than ever are connected to the internet, but in the past many of them had their sons, daughters, or other family members were able to lend a hand when they had a problem. Unfortunately, the pandemic put a stop to that.

Many people are attending these groups to learn more and help themselves.

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He continued:

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Everything is going online now – bus passes, the Tax Office – and older people are becoming at risk of being unable to access key services. This is also true for other digitally-excluded groups, such as people in social housing or unemployed. We don't want anyone to be left behind, and these community sessions can help.

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Three top tips from Carl

1. **Life is becoming increasingly more digital**
2. **Strong skills make a strong team**
3. **Digital inclusion can prevent vulnerable people from being left behind**

Help your community learn life-changing digital skills with our free training. Get involved here:

digitalcommunities.gov.wales   0300 111 5050   @DC_Wales