

Evaluating partnership approaches in digital inclusion

Partnerships to support digital inclusion activity operate on multiple levels including:

Informal collaborations - one to one and multi partner collaborations usually operating in a local area to support digital skills delivery.

Formal collaborations & partnerships delivering digital skills through funded, programmes (governed by contract) such as One Digital and the Good Things Foundation Reboot project.

Larger locality-based partnerships (with wide ranging memberships, often supported by dedicated staff and funding) usually operating within a local authority area. Examples and web links to information on locality-based partnerships can be found at Note (1) below.

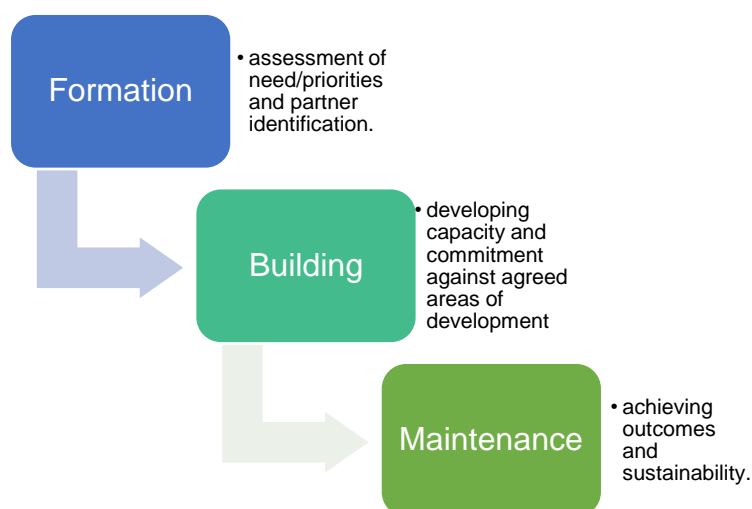
National level initiatives such as the [Scottish Digital Participation Charter](#) led by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations designed to support the third sector deliver coordinated digital inclusion activities, linked to funding and additional digital evolution/innovation programmes to 'build a digitally confident Third Sector'. Or the [Digital Skills Partnership](#) developed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) which operates in England at both a strategic and local level and has been established to improve digital skills for people and organisations.

Evaluating digital inclusion partnerships

Some evaluative work has been done to look at the impact of collaborative work to support digital inclusion. Links to some of this work are included at Note (2) below. There seem to have been limited opportunities to explore the impact of locality-based digital inclusion work. Some partners such as DCMS and Citizens Online are looking to change this. Reflections and background on how partnerships engage in general are shared below and the resources referenced included later in this paper.

Stages of partnership development

Partnerships go through phases as they develop



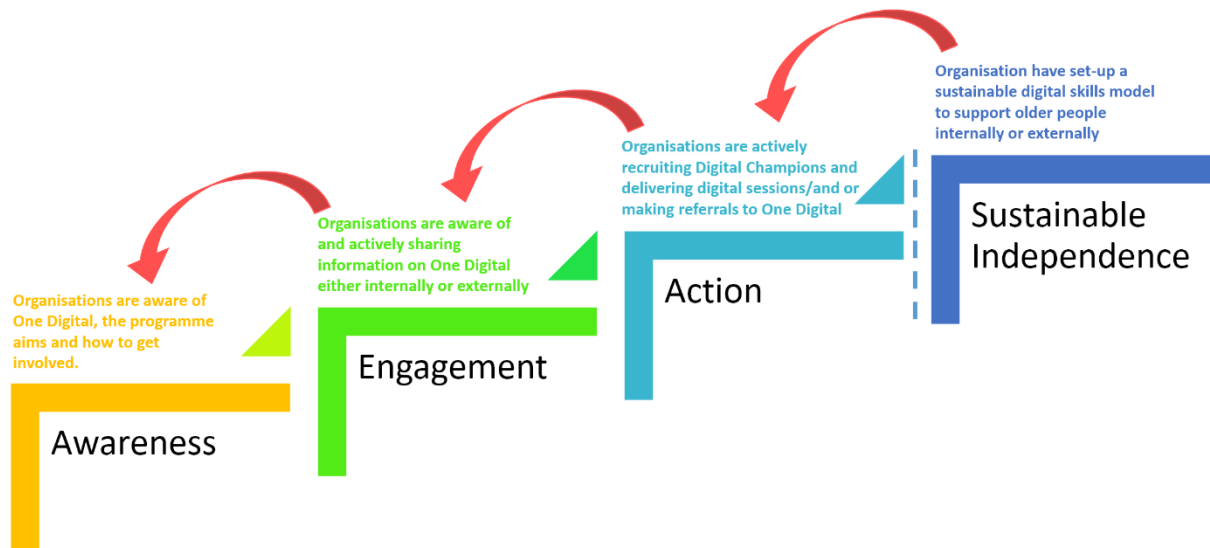
The stages are linked to the capacity of the partnership to deliver effectively.

The partnership stages can be further explored through looking at the group dynamic stages which relate to partnership interaction(s).



Stages of partner engagement

One Digital partners (facilitated by Age UK) have adopted a model to review levels of engagement of partners into one on one or locality-based digital inclusion activity. The approach looks at the journey and stages of partner engagement.



Evaluating partnership activity

Key metric areas relating to the functional operation of partnerships are outlined in the diagram below. These include measures designed to evaluate the impact of the agreed activities of the partnership. The diagram highlights different elements of the functioning of a partnership that may be selected to evaluate. These include, for instance, whether the partnership achieved its goals; or what the members found communication within the partnership to be effective.

Functional areas of partnerships – open to evaluation



Potential evaluative questions for digital inclusion partnerships

Locality-based

1. Impact on local people who are digitally excluded - questions relating to impact in the local area (for instance number of digital skills sessions delivered by the partners) and how successful the activity has been in targeting learners in areas of high digital exclusion; and how successful has the partnership been in increasing digital skills in the workforce of an area.
2. Functional impact of the partnership - evaluative questions on the formation, building and maintenance of the partnership – such as how the partnership has been led/facilitated; whether the partnership has offered useful resources.
3. Impact on the participating partners – questions relating to what would have happened if the partnership had not existed and influence of the partnership on their own organisational approach to supporting digital skills development.

Note (2) below provides information on how One Digital (as a **formal collaboration**) was evaluated in phase 1 of the project (2015-16) and the framework used.

Background information & sources of information

Evaluation Support Scotland [Partnership Assessment & Development Toolkit](#)

WWF [Partnerships Toolbox](#)

For Logic Models and Theory of Change information see the [One Digital resources](#) page

Better Evaluation – Assessing partnerships [blog](#)

[National Collaborating Centre for Methods & Tools \(Canada\)](#) Partnership Assessment Tool

Centre for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (USA) [Partnership Guide](#)

Note (1) Locality based partnerships

These partnerships have a range of resources and inputs – ranging from full-time teams supporting fully-funded activity to partnerships which rely on partner inputs only. Coordination lies with a range of organisations from charities to local authorities and social housing providers.

Citizens Online Deep Dive projects in [Digital Gwynedd](#) and [Digital Brighton & Hove](#).

Digi-Ren in Renfrewshire find out more by following [Digi-Ren on twitter](#)

Go On projects in Croydon and Lewisham ([background information](#)) published information on the delivery of the projects and also what [worked well and not so well](#).

[Worcestershire partnership](#) – established as independent partnership in November 2014 with members ranging from local charities to local Council, DWP and social housing providers currently facilitated by Platform Housing (previously Fortis Living).

Digital Skills Partnerships in [Lancashire](#) and [Heart of the South West](#) Local Enterprise Partnerships launching in 2018. The LEP partnerships have a wider remit focusing on the development of digital skills in the local economy including essential digital skills.

[100% Digital Leeds](#) a partnership led by Leeds City Council and Good Things Foundation.

Note (2)

Evaluation reports of Phase 1 Big Lottery Funded digital inclusion collaborations involving a range of partners.

[One Digital Phase 1 evaluation](#)

Background paper on the reference framework used to develop the collaboration self-audit used for the One Digital evaluation in phase 1. [Evaluating Collaboration for Effectiveness](#). Also available via the One Digital website will be the survey questions used.

Good Things Foundation [Reboot Phase 1 evaluation](#)