



CITYWEST HOMES

Digital Inclusion Strategy

2017- 2020

1. Introduction

The internet has transformed almost every aspect of public, private and working life and can help reduce household bills, find a job or keep in contact with friends and relatives.

As part of our transformation programme we will provide our customers with a full range of online services, this will provide better ways for us to reach customers and for our customers to connect with us.

Our digital inclusion strategy sets out three key objectives to increase digital inclusion over the next five years for CityWest (CWH) customers:

- Objective 1 - We will increase the information we hold so we better understand our residents' skill levels, willingness to go online and their access to online services
- Objective 2 – We will provide assistance to our customers so they gain the confidence, skills and access to use online services
- Objective 3 – We will promote the benefits of CWH/WCC/government online services to motivate residents to use them.

2. Strategic reasons for digital inclusion

2.1 CityWest Homes Strategy 2015-2020 – our services

Our strategy recognises the benefits that online services can offer:

- We will provide a full range of online services for tenants and lessees to use quickly and easily anywhere and at any time

Digital inclusion is a prerequisite to accessing these services and our strategy makes the following commitment to maximise take up:

- We will offer access to our online services at our local offices and provide help and support to customers wishing to use them

The new arrangements will increase choice and consistency, making it easier for customers to contact us at a time and through a channel which suits them. We wish to help our residents to improve their skills as those who do not have the skills, motivation or capability to go online will miss out on the new services we are offering.

2.2 Welfare reform

The Government's digital programme means that universal credit claims can only be accessed online. Improving tenants' digital skills will help them with welfare reform changes including managing their claims online and carrying out job searches.

2.3 Westminster City Council - City for All

Westminster City Council is committed to online self-serve as a modern cost effective way of delivering services that is in line with customer expectations and needs. Their vision document 'City for All' includes a commitment to ensure that *"it will be easier than ever to contact the council and use our services online, anytime, anywhere."* Helping tenants to improve their digital skills will enable them to access council services online and supports the Council's channel shift programme away from more expensive face to face and phone service delivery.

3. Digital inclusion, digital skills and barriers

3.1 What is digital inclusion?

We have adopted the government definition of digital inclusion - *"making sure that tenants have the capability to use the internet to do things that benefit them day to day."*

In their Digital inclusion Strategy (December 2014) the Government estimate that 21% of people are digitally excluded of whom 37% are social housing tenants. They believe just under 10% of the adult population may never be able to gain basic digital capabilities, because of disabilities or basic literacy skills; we will continue to provide face to face and phone services for this group.

This strategy seeks to ensure that residents who do not have the skills, motivation or capability to go online do not miss out on the new digital services we are offering. We recognise that some residents may never have the capacity or inclination to use online services and our company strategy sets out to deliver services in a range of ways to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

3.2 Digital skills

The Government have defined basic digital skills as having the ability to:

- Send and receive emails
- Use a search engine
- Browse the internet
- Fill out an online application form

These skills are underpinned by the ability to keep safe online.

3.3 Barriers to digital inclusion

The challenges that people face when going online generally fall into four categories:

- Access - the ability to go online and connect to the internet
- Skills - to be able to use the internet
- Motivation - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing
- Trust - the risk of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online

4. Findings from CityWest Homes 2016 customer satisfaction survey

For the last three years we have been asking our tenants if they have internet access and we now hold information for 84% of tenants. This tells us that 63% of our tenants have internet access and 37% do not which is in line with the national statistics for digital inclusion. However, we believe some tenants in answering this question may not count the internet access they have via their mobile phones which would increase the percentage digitally included.

The survey included the following questions on internet access and usage:

Do you use the internet?				If yes where do you use the internet?		
Tenure	No of replies	Yes	No	Home	Work	Other
Tenants	2657 (23%)	70%	30%	77%	12%	11%
Lessees	867 12%*	82%	18%	60%	28%	12%

*The response rate of leaseholders is significantly higher than the figure shown as leaseholders/RSLs with multiple properties are counted once only

How do you use the internet?				
Tenure	Laptop/ PC	Smart phone	Tablet	Other
Tenants	48%	34%	14%	4%
Lessees	46%	30%	22%	2%

Would you use CWH online services?			If no, what is the main reason?			
Tenure	Yes	No	Skills	Trust	Access	Preference
Tenants	46%	54%	32%	10%	17%	41%
lessees	64%	36%	21%	12%	14%	53%

The responses shown above are based on our current online offer which is very limited and not easy to use. Once attractive online services are available we expect to see a big increase in willingness to use our services.

5. Objectives

We have set three objectives to increase digital inclusion for our customers and to meet the objectives in the strategy. An action plan is attached to show how the objectives will be taken forward.

Objective 1 - We will increase the information we hold so we better understand services

To achieve this we will:

- Use all contact opportunities we have with our tenants to increase the profiling information we hold on internet access

Ways we will measure our success

- Information on digital inclusion held for 75% of tenants by March 2017 and we are aiming for 100% of tenants by March 2018
- Digital inclusion data held for 100% of new tenants from December 2016.

Objective 2 – We will provide assistance to our customers so they gain the confidence, skills and access to use online services

To achieve this we will:

- Facilitate applications from broadband suppliers to provide tenants with affordable, efficient broadband
- Map online training available in Westminster and use the profiling information we hold to notify tenants of availability
- Map online centres across Westminster and publicise them to tenants
- Offer help to get online at our housing offices and at the sign-up meeting for a new tenancy
- Provide opportunities for our people to volunteer at IT help sessions at libraries across the city

Ways we will measure our success

- Achieve our targets for managing broadband applications

- We will update and publicise the map of online centres in Westminster every six months and deliver a targeted communications programme on digital to customers who can't access services online
- 100% of new tenants who can't access the internet to be signposted to training and help
- We will achieve our targets for number of volunteer days at libraries
- Positive feedback from library staff and users on assistance provided by CWH staff

Objective 3 – We will promote the benefits of CWH/WCC/government online services to motivate residents to use them.

To achieve this we will:

- Involve customers in prioritising the order services become available online
- Involve customers in developing online services
- Involve customers in testing new online services to ensure they are easy to use and attractive to residents
- Communicate the benefits of the internet and, in particular, of using CWH/WCC/Government services online

Once CWH online services available we will:

- Publicise the new services through newsletter articles, website and social media
- Provide help and support to tenants who want to access our services online at our offices demonstrating how secure our services are
- Ensure new tenants are aware of the services available online making a demonstration part of the sign up procedure

Ways we will measure our success

- The order different online services become available matches customer preference
- Satisfaction ratings with new online services
- Number of tenants using online services

If you have any queries concerning this Strategy please contact Angela Ravenscroft on 020 7245 2236 aravenscroft@cwh.org.uk

CWH Action plan for digital inclusion

Objective	Action	Owner	Do by Date
Objective 1 - We will increase the information we hold so we better understand our residents' skill levels, willingness to go online and access to online services	Use all contacts with tenants to meet targets for increasing profiling information 75% by end of March 17 Aiming for 100% by March 18	Zoe Evans	End March 2018
Objective 2 – We will provide assistance to tenants so they gain the confidence, skills and access to use online services	Establish a process for broadband applications from broadband suppliers and manage within targets set	Julie Day	Ongoing
	Include articles in newsletters and on website to signpost tenants to online centres across Westminster	Angela Ravenscroft	6 monthly
	Include articles in newsletters and on website to map training available in Westminster against the needs of our residents, identifying any gaps and publicising/signposting available courses	Angela Ravenscroft	6 monthly
	Amend sign-up pack to include demonstration of offer of help to get online	Steve Braganca	April 2017
	Build relationships with local libraries whereby CWH staff provide assistance during their weekly IT help sessions as	Lauren Apostolou	Start January 2017

Objective	Action	Owner	Do by Date
	part of our CR programme.		
Objective 3 – We will promote the benefits of CWH/WCC/government online services to motivate residents to use them	Involve resident council/area panel members in prioritising the order online services become available	Steve Bennett	April 17
	Involve resident council/area panel members in developing online services	Steve Bennett	Ongoing
	Involve resident council/area panel members in trialling online services	Steve Bennett	April 17 - Phase 1
	<u>Once online services available</u> Produce and deliver a communications plan using all publicity opportunities - newsletter articles, website stories, social media and community events to communicate the benefits of the internet and, in particular of using CWH/WCC/DWP services online	Steve Bennett	Once online services available from September
	Ensure frontline staff are aware of the necessity to promote the new services and set up a training package for demonstration purposes	Steve Bennett	Before online services available