



Connecting Scotland Housing Programme

Fund Details

Connecting Scotland is a collaboration between Scottish Government and SCVO to increase digital inclusion. The objective of this project is to provide devices and/or connectivity to organisations across Scotland providing social housing or transitional accommodation. There are three opportunities within this fund for devices and/or connectivity to support people who are experiencing digital exclusion:

- To form a new lending library
- To be part of a community space where devices and connectivity are available
- A larger improvement project for connectivity infrastructure in communal areas.

We want to support schemes that can be accessed by people who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Those over 65
- People living in low-income households
- People living with a long-term illness or disability
- People currently unemployed
- Women and children at risk of violence

People who meet these criteria may include families, single parents, care leavers, people affected by homelessness, people from ethnic minority communities and other groups which experience digital exclusion. This is not an exhaustive list.

Devices and/or connectivity may support a wide range of needs, for example, to access a device/connectivity in a crisis, to access a job or other opportunity, fulfil a legal requirement or manage a health issue. To more broadly learn digital skills, build motivation and gain confidence in using a device and being online safely before making a purchase.

Organisations must retain ownership of the devices for their lifetime and be responsible for set-up, ongoing management and security of devices.

Organisations and individuals borrowing or using devices will have access to the Connecting Scotland telephone and email helpline for back-up technical and digital skills support. Staff and volunteers supporting the project's users will also be able to join our free Digital Champion training.

Organisation eligibility

This project is for social housing providers and voluntary and public sector organisations providing short- or longer-term transitional housing services. **We are looking to fund**



organisations who are less experienced in digital inclusion work but who have the resource and supporting infrastructure in place to manage new projects. Organisations must be based in Scotland and deliver their support services in Scotland. Types of organisations that can apply include:

1. Social landlords and housing associations
2. Other voluntary and public sector organisations providing short- or long-term housing support services (e.g. homelessness or women's shelters, supported housing for people who are disabled or care leavers, and more)

Voluntary and public sector organisations should be:

- Charities registered with OSCR
- Voluntary Organisations
- Social Enterprises
- Community Interest Companies with an asset lock
- Charitable Trusts
- Community Enterprise Trusts
- Local Authorities
- Arms-length council bodies including trusts (defined by clauses in the constitution that concede control to the local authority)

Examples of organisations who are **not eligible to apply** include:

- Private landlords
- Housing providers who have delivered digital inclusion activity for over one year
- Community Interest Companies without an asset lock
- Care homes
- Organisations not providing housing services

What can we apply for?

Organisations can pick one or more of the activities below, up to a total value of £10,000:

- devices and mobile connectivity to lend to digitally excluded people they work with for short-term use (up to 6 months)
- devices and connectivity to kit out community access spaces or hubs
- capital financial support to fund connectivity and/or infrastructure improvements in communal spaces for residents

Devices available to order are as follows and details can be found in the [device catalogue](#):



- Tablet
- Laptop
- Chromebook
- Connectivity – Mifi dongle unlimited data for 24 months

Organisations who have their own procurement mechanisms in place can also apply for a capital grant of up to £10,000 to be used solely for the purchase of digital devices and connectivity for lending purposes or kitting out community hubs.

Your organisation will have responsibility for device management, security and the privacy and confidentiality of device users for the lifetime of the devices.

These responsibilities include, but aren't limited to:

- GDPR compliant wiping of personal data between loans, which could be done by organisation staff or outsourced to a data cleansing service
- Safety testing, which could include documented Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), visual inspections and physical cleaning
- Terms of use agreement for clients, detailing loss and damage conditions
- Public liability or product indemnity insurance which covers lending of equipment beyond the organisation's central location
- Environmental standards compliant electronics recycling process for damaged or end of life devices and accessories

Devices for lending schemes and communal hubs

What devices can be used for

Some examples of the sorts of things devices could be used for are:

- Used by the people you work with to support them while they are accessing your services
- Used by people you work with or new users/members who would like to borrow a device and/or connectivity for personal use
- Used by people you work with or new users/members to access a device and/or connectivity in a community IT hub/facility

What devices can't be used for

The project cannot support the following:

- Devices cannot be gifted to other organisations or individuals
- Devices cannot be sold to raise funds
- Devices cannot be used solely by staff and/or volunteers



- The grant cannot be used to extend or top up current data contracts

Connectivity infrastructure improvements

Connectivity infrastructure improvements should be for the purpose of providing residents with new or improved access to free internet within communal areas. **If your infrastructure work will cost more than £10,000 you may use your award as a contribution towards costs, but, you must have all other funding for the project in place.**

What the grant can be used for

- Installation and hardware costs to implement new or improved free connectivity in communal areas accessed by residents

What the grant can't be used for

- To fund surveys or work to scope possible connectivity solutions
- To fund connectivity infrastructure projects to provide internet access to staff/organisational operations
- To fund data contracts
- To part-fund projects where not all remaining funds required have been secured

The new or improved system should provide sufficient data throughput speed to effectively run the various IT applications that may be required. The system must also have sufficient capacity to cater for the expected number of users of the space.

Projects must be delivered within 12 months.

Reporting and evaluation

As part of this grant programme, we want to find out more about support for access to devices and connectivity in housing, what user needs it meets and how this kind of support can be delivered in the most effective and sustainable way in the future. Successful organisations will be involved in reporting how devices and connectivity are being used by clients. They will also be asked to speak to a Connecting Scotland researcher about what would help them to continue to provide digital inclusion support to their clients. This will help us to shape future funding and policy initiatives as part of improving digital inclusion provision nationally.

In addition, there will be further research activities that successful organisations can take part in so that we can learn directly from clients about their needs and experiences of the scheme.



Timetable

- Launch of application process will be on August 23rd
- First Assessments made on a rolling basis every three weeks from September 18th 2023 until the budget is
- Applications close 27th October 2023 (assuming budget not already exhausted)
- First awards made w/c October 2nd 2023
- Final awards made November 2023
- Funds to be spent by 31 March 2024

Useful links

[Device Catalogue](#) – all information, devices and pricing for the programme

[Connecting Scotland website](#)

Application Advice & Support

- Be clear and focused and make your application as easy to read as possible.
- Demonstrate clearly the need for the activity and the impact your project/activities will have – don't be afraid to be passionate!
- Think about the timeframe – ensure that you will have enough time to deliver your project/ activities within the period of funding.
- Lastly, please download the application guidance, it will help you make sure you include everything you need to make a successful bid. We have laid out step by step the process for completing the application and the sort of answers you should be looking to supply for each question. We would recommend that you have that guidance open in another window while completing the application so you can refer to it for help.
- We have also provided a handy FAQ sheet – if you have any questions about the fund please check there first and if you can't find an answer get in touch with our team who will be happy to help you emailing help@connecting.scot
- Our team are here to help you and answer any questions you might have about the fund, application process or using the website.