Connecting Scotland Device Lending Libraries

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 that can be used as part of lending schemes or lending libraries to support people who are experiencing digital exclusion.

We want to support device lending schemes accessed by people who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- over 65
- on a low household income
- living with a long-term illness or disability
- people who are the victims of crime or abuse
- unemployed

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.

Device loans 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 devices will have access to the Connecting Scotland telephone and email helpline for back-up technical and digital skills support.

Organisation eligibility

This project is for a wide range of voluntary and public sector organisations who have been delivering device and/or connectivity lending schemes for at least twelve months. Organisations must be based in Scotland and deliver their device lending services in Scotland. Types of organisations that can apply include:

- Charities registered with OSCR
- Voluntary Organisations
- Social Enterprises
- Community Interest Companies with an asset lock
- Credit Unions
- Charitable Trusts
- Community Enterprise Trusts
- Public Libraries
- 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:

- Community Interest Companies without an asset lock
- Private sector companies
- Schools, colleges and universities and associated library services

What can we apply for?

Each organisation can apply for devices and MiFi dongles with 24 months of unlimited connectivity up to a maximum total value of £5,000 inc VAT.

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

Alternatively, organisations who have their own procurement mechanisms in place can apply for a capital grant of up to £5,000 to be used solely for the purchase of digital devices and dongle connectivity.

Digital devices must be lent to digitally excluded people for short-term use (up to 6 months). Ownership of devices must be retained by the applying organisation for their lifetime.

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

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

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.

Additional help and support available for funded organisations

- We will invite all organisations to share the learning from their projects to develop a device lending library. This will be a resource developed to share with other organisations across Scotland and beyond who would either like to set up a similar scheme or learn from others to further enhance their own scheme.
- Once the additional activity has got underway, we will invite everyone to come together for a networking and learning workshop. It's likely that this will be in February 2024.

Reporting and evaluation

- Awardees will be expected to report back on use and impact of devices via the online monitoring in the grant portal using information collected at the point of loan and return. This would also include numbers of devices purchased, number of users supported and impact on users. Awardees will also be expected to assist Connecting Scotland researchers to be able to speak to a sample of service users. Some financial support will be made available to help organisations with data collection and to help with participation in research. More information is available in our FAQs.

Timetable

- Launch of application process will be on August 29th
- First Assessments made on a rolling basis every three weeks from September 18th 2023 until the budget is Applications close 27th November 2023 (assuming budget not already exhausted)
- First awards made w/c October 2nd 2023
- Final awards made January 2024
- Funds to be spent by 31 March 2024
- Monitoring and Evaluation activity to take place until July 2025
- Learning library networking / learning event February 2024

- 15 December 2024 – Initial evaluation report released
- 29 March 2025 – Final evaluation report released

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.