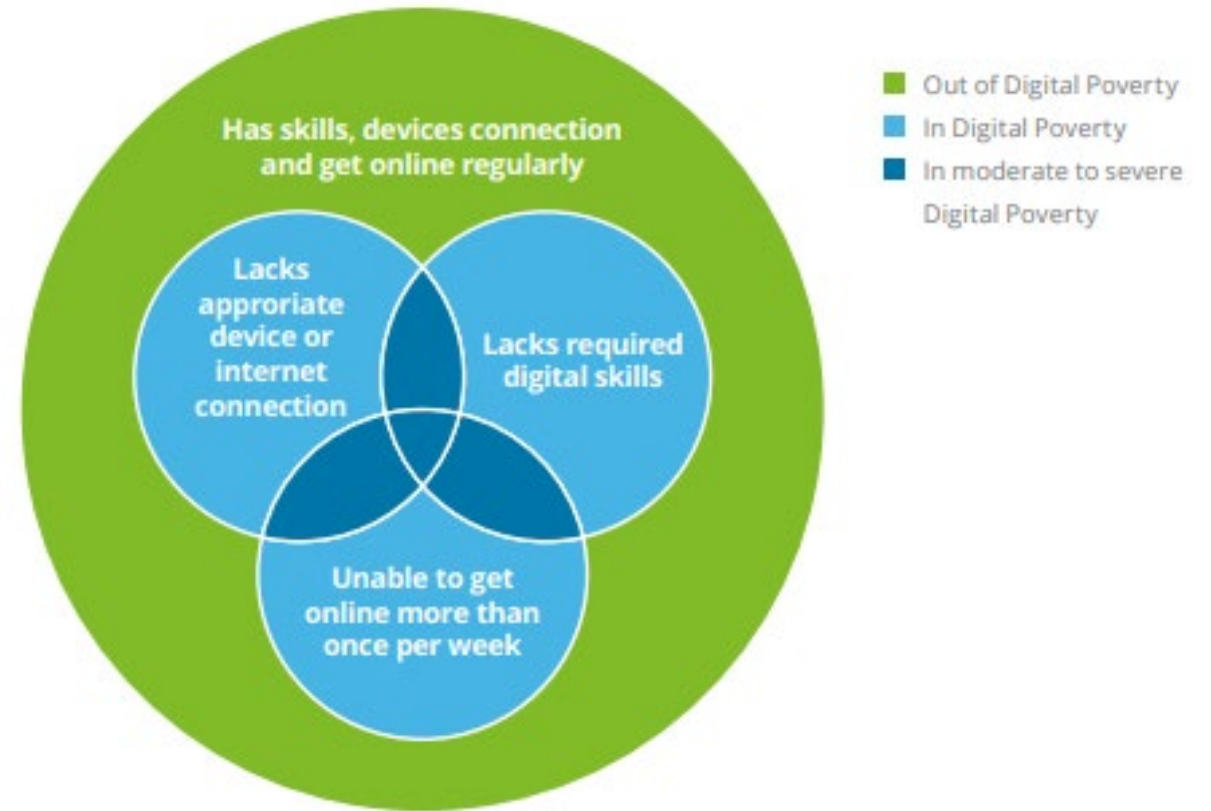digital poverty alliance

Tom Lowe: Head of Policy and Comms at DPA and Learning Foundation

Outside in Project

DIGITAL POVERTY: THE INABILITY TO INTERACT WITH THE ONLINE WORLD FULLY WHEN WHERE AND HOW AN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS TO.

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The concept of digital equity can be defined in different ways

- **Digital exclusion**: "Digital exclusion is where an individual lacks internet access and/or has low levels of digital skills or confidence." (Ofcom)

- **Digital divide**: "Digital divide is a constellation of diverse and intersecting divides with salient gap in access to connections and devices, skills, literacies and meaningful outcomes." (Digital Poverty Alliance)

- **Data poverty**: "Data poverty means those individuals, households or communities who cannot afford sufficient, private and secure mobile/broadband data to meet their essential needs" (NESTA)

Has skills, devices connection and get online regularly

Lacks approriate device or internet connection

Lacks required digital skills

Unable to get online more than once per week

■ Out of Digital Poverty
■ In Digital Poverty
■ In moderate to severe Digital Poverty
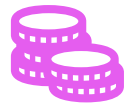
Society is becoming increasingly digitised

Access to the online world is essential for everyday activities. Accessing healthcare, applying for jobs, access to banking and education all rely, to some extent, on internet access.

Landline phones are currently in the process of transitioning to internet-based connections. Over time, it is likely broadcast television will also change to IP transmission.

As services transition online, there are millions of people that lack the capability or motivation to get online. Or they may be sceptical or concerned about using digital tools.

For millions, the cost-of-living crisis has squeezed household income and the affordability of connectivity.

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Groups most affected

Digital Poverty can impact anyone as life and circumstances change. However, there are groups where experiences of digital poverty are more common.

People on lower incomes.

- Approximately 1 in 2 DE Households are in digital poverty.

People over 65

- Approximately 1 in 2 older people are in some form of digital poverty
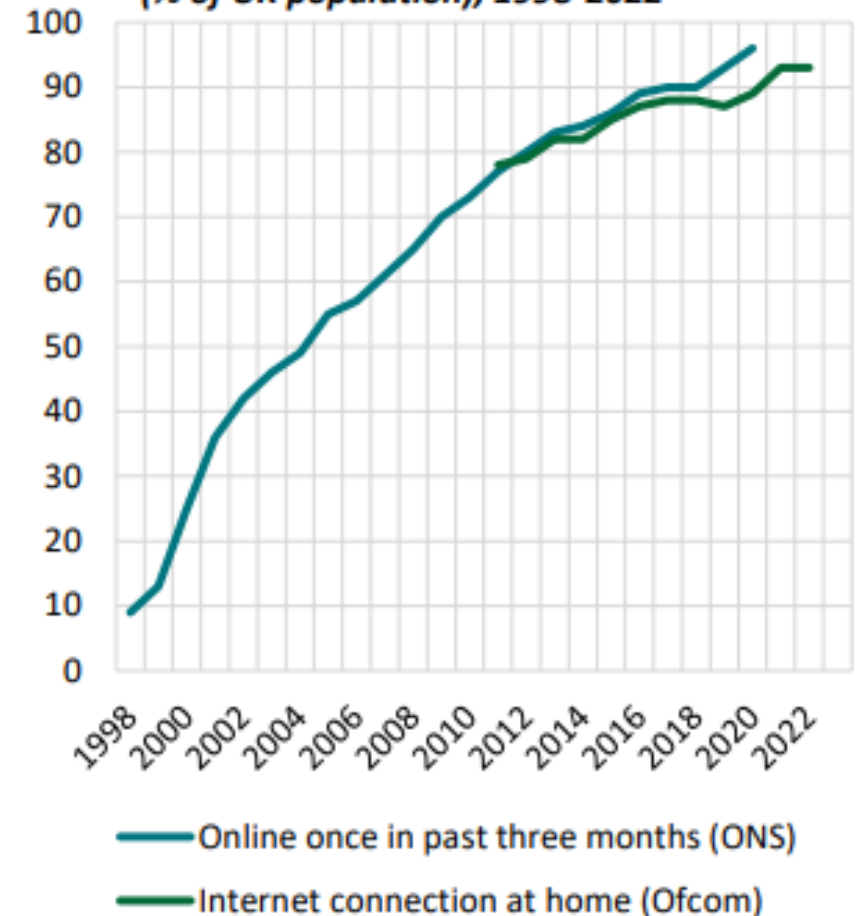
People with a disability

- Approximately 90% of websites do not meet web content accessibility guidelines and of non-internet

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Key stats

- 13–19 million people aged 16+ in the UK are estimated to be in some form of digital poverty

- Around 20% of the adult population across the UK have low levels of digital capability.

- 1 in 5 young people only access the internet through a mobile phone

- Around 6% of households do not have a home internet connection (approx. 1.7 million people)

- Ofcom estimates that about 8 million households are finding it difficult to afford communication services.

Fig 3.1. Internet access (% of UK population), 1998-2022

— Online once in past three months (ONS)
— Internet connection at home (Ofcom)

Source: Ofcom (2022) and ONS (2020)

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Misconceptions about digital poverty

The problem will naturally fix itself over time.

It is only a problem facing the older generation.

Providing access to devices and connectivity is sufficient to tackle the problem.

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The DPA is a community response

A National Delivery Plan

A route map to **2030**

Focusing **attention**
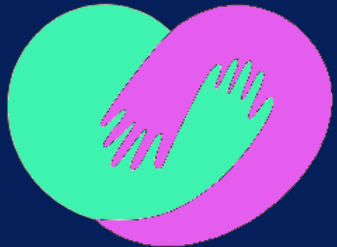
Setting out **actions**

Identifying **key stakeholders**

Bringing **organisations** together

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The six missions

1. Increase awareness across society about the need for sustainable and strategic action to end digital poverty.

2. Ensure affordable connectivity and guarantee full digital access for those in need.

3. Improve standards of accessibility, safety, and inclusiveness across all digital products and services.

4. By 2030, significantly reduce the proportion of individuals without essential digital skills and ensure the sustainability, and expansion, of these skills in response to changing technologies and needs.

5. Enhance knowledge and understanding of digital poverty among all stakeholders, including citizens, governments, and the public and private sectors, through the development and utilisation of research.

6. Increase local capacity to provide joined-up digital inclusion support to individuals and communities.

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Help for people now

Tech4Families: Programme to provide devices and support to families on a low income.

Tech4Teachers: Half of teachers in summer 2021 didn't have the tech they need to teach outside the classroom. The Tech4Teachers Programme supplied nearly 2,000 devices to teachers.

Tech4Prison Leavers: Programme working with prison leavers to provide wraparound support - tech, data, mentoring and skills support.

Tech4 Schools: Programme focusses on providing tech to pupils in schools with high pupil premium numbers.

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JOIN THE CAUSE

Find out more

Visit our website and discover the work we're doing across the UK:
www.digitalpovertyalliance.org

Join the hub

Got ideas?

Please contact Tom Lowe at
tom@digitalpovertyalliance.org

TOGETHER WE CAN END DIGITAL POVERTY

Join us.

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