

Digital Guide

A practical guide to help everyone navigate technology.



Digital Cheshire

We help communities access faster broadband. Our team are on hand to support residents with accessing and understanding digital.

A partnership programme between four local authorities:



Whether you are enjoying fibre connectivity, exploring ways to get your community connected or looking into how you can make the most out of your connectivity, our team are here to support your journey.

Digital Cheshire works directly with communities in gaining access to better broadband, in addition to providing direct support to residents through events and community gatherings. Our approach ensures residents can freely access support and learn about vital online services, giving you the confidence to use the internet safely.

Digital Cheshire also works with partners, the commercial and voluntary sector, and other organisations to promote and signpost a variety of digital inclusion interventions, such as databanks, social tariffs, local IT classes, and more.

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To find out about Digital Cheshire's upcoming events visit our website:
www.digital-cheshire.co.uk/digital-inclusion-events/

Benefits of Being Online

Staying connected:

You can easily keep in touch with family and friends through email, video calls, and social media.

Access to services:

Many services (like banking, healthcare, shopping) are now easier to use online — saving you extra trips out!

Lifelong learning:

You can take online courses, read articles or watch tutorials — keeping your mind active and sharp.

Entertainment:

Streaming movies, listening to music, reading e-books, or even playing games opens up a world of fun.

Independence:

Knowing how to do things online helps you stay self-sufficient without needing to rely on others.

Opportunities for part-time work or volunteering:

Some remote jobs and volunteer opportunities are perfect for retirees who are digitally savvy.

Community and hobbies:

You can join online groups related to your interests like gardening, travel, history, or fitness.

Learning Digital Skills

Learn My Way is a website of free online learning for beginners, helping you develop digital skills to make the most of the online world.

This valuable resource is delivered by the Good Things Foundation charity and provides an easily accessible route to learning, at a pace which suits you.

To access Learn My Way you can register using our Digital Cheshire centre number: 9009834

What can I learn?

Below is a list of the subjects available on Learn My Way:

- Using your device
- Starting to use the Internet
- Using email
- Safety and security online
- Staying in touch
- Spending money online
- Online entertainment
- Working with office programmes
- Employment and work

You can use Learn my Way on your mobile, tablet or computer. Whatever you choose to learn, it only takes minutes. To access the platform, you will need a valid email address so you can register for an account.

Visit the Learn My Way website: www.learnmyway.com



Good Things
Foundation

Landline Switch Over

The UK is currently going through a digital transition relying more than ever on broadband connectivity, and less so on landlines, 2G and 3G services.

What is Digital Switchover?

The Digital Switchover is a process of transitioning copper-based landlines to digital telephone systems using fibre connectivity instead of the retiring copper network. This change will see landline phone services wholly depend on broadband and digital technology rather than the historic analogue signals via copper.

The retirement of the landline and copper network is scheduled to be completed by January 2027. However, some providers are accelerating the transition, to begin retiring the network by the end of 2025.

How will it affect me?

The transition to Digital Voice should be seamless and a process managed and supported by your telecom's provider. However, moving to Digital Voice means your calls will solely rely upon fibre connectivity instead of copper landlines.

By 2027 all service providers will have had to migrate their customers to a Digital Voice service. In some instances, you may be required to have new equipment such as a phone or routers in your property, but your internet service provider will discuss this with you.

If you have other home equipment which connects via your existing phone line, you may need to check the compatibility with a digital phone line service. This may include alarms, healthcare products or other analogue dependent devices beyond the telephone.

Scam awareness

Unfortunately, scams are a real threat, and current reports of scamming have already taken place across the UK. Often phone calls are being received by residents alerting them of Digital Voice and "cutting off your landline if you don't act now". In addition, we are aware of phishing emails and websites which are offering protection against the switchover.

This is a national scheme which will impact everyone. Therefore **stop, think and seek advice.**

If you feel a piece of communication has been presented to you about digital switchover, always discuss the matter with your Internet service provider in the first instance.

Stop

Think

Seek Advice

I have a concern, who do I contact?

In the first instance you should always contact your current Internet service provider. This is the supplier who provides your existing telephone line service and broadband.



Public Services Online

Public Services Online

As you may already be aware, many public services are moving online. This means to access Council services such as blue badge renewals, council tax information or booking a slot at your recycling centre you will require access to the Internet and a basic understanding of how to use these platforms.

In addition, NHS and GP specific services are slowly moving online. This enables patients to better manage their information, appointments, prescriptions and records, creating a self-service approach.

What you need to set up an NHS account

To set up an NHS login you will need:

- An email address (with more than 6 characters)
- A mobile phone or a landline number

To be able to use some services, you will also need to provide your:

- NHS number or your full name
- Date of birth
- Postcode

If you are not sure how to create an email address, visit the Learn My Way platform, which has some helpful guides on how to set one up. www.learnmyway.com

To access Learn My Way you can register using our Digital Cheshire centre number: 9009834

Issues Accessing Broadband

There are many barriers to being unable to access better broadband, below we break down those barriers.

I don't have broadband

If you don't have broadband, you can access comparison websites to compare broadband providers in your area. Alternatively, you can contact an Internet service provider such as BT, Sky, Virgin (amongst many others) and enquire about accessing broadband.

My broadband is slow

If your broadband is slow, in the first instance, we would encourage you to contact your Internet service provider. It's important to find out if any faster broadband packages are available; often, customers don't know that faster services are now available.

Our area has poor connectivity

If broadband speeds are poor in your town or village, speak to our Digital Cheshire team, and we will work with you to understand your connectivity issues.

Our team work directly with Building Digital UK and Internet service providers to deliver better broadband provision.

Broadband isn't affordable

Where broadband tariffs may create affordability issues, you can discuss directly with Internet service providers social tariffs, which start from £10 per month. Alternatively, Virgin Media O2 offer a national data bank, providing free Internet SIM access to people who need it the most. This is available from most O2 high street stores.

I don't understand broadband and computers

We recognise for some people, accessing online services is completely new territory. Whilst we encourage you to access broadband, it's important you feel confident.

Therefore, it may be worth visiting your local library first and using the computers there to get hands on experience with the Internet. If you choose to get broadband and are keen to learn, we will refer you to the Learn My Way learning platform.

Useful Information

There is a wealth of support available across the sub-region, below we have extracted some of the support taking place, however for more information visit www.digital-cheshire.co.uk

Library Digital Support

Libraries across, Cheshire, Warrington and Halton offer digital support. Get in touch with your local library to see how you can access this.

GoOnline @ Home – Opal Services

Opal Services offers a range of digital support across Cheshire West. To get in touch contact: fiona.barry@opal.services.org.uk or phone **07923 425 239**.

YouTube

A video sharing platform where you can search for many different video types including tutorials, 'how tos' and educational videos.

Potential Brewed – Support in the Macclesfield area

Potential Brewed offer local, informal, community-based spaces for anyone on the wrong side of the digital divide. They host regular drop-in sessions in the Macclesfield area of Cheshire. To learn more, visit: www.potentialbrewed.com or email hello@potentialbrewed.com.

Digital Drop-ins around Warrington

These Digital Drop-ins can help with navigating around your device,

using your mobile phone, using a tablet/iPad & apps, being able to connect to the Internet, being able to create an email address and save documents, manage your health online and allow you to access council, NHS and Government websites. For more information please contact: Elaine Marsden Ormson, elaine.marsdenormson@warrington.gov.uk or **07815 656271**.

Castlefield's Community Centre in Halton

Castlefield's Community Centre offers access to Wi-Fi, computers, and a printer. They also provide Open 360 Digital Skills IT Training. To find out more – please contact CastlefieldsCC@halton.gov.uk or call **0151 511 7474**.

Disability Partnership

The Disability Partnership can support disabled individuals with: Internet & emails, getting to know your tablet, computer skills, a basic use of Microsoft Word, everyday IT, and help to open an account with an employment site. The Disability Partnership is located at:

Marjorie Griffiths Learning Centre, Centre for Independent Living, Beaufort Street, WA5 1BA
For more information call: **01925 240064**.

Essential Digital Skills Courses at Warrington and Vale Royal College.

These courses will build upon your current knowledge and boost your digital skills. The course is designed to enable you to develop basic IT skills which may be needed for work or home.

You will explore Microsoft Office Word, PowerPoint and Excel, using specific tools to create documents, presentations and spreadsheets. For more information, please contact:

Tel: **01925 494 494**

Email: learner.services@wvr.ac.uk

Or visit: wvr.ac.uk/study/next-steps-in-essential-digital-skills

Virgin Media O2

All O2 stores across the country offer free Data Sims with no joining criteria.

Scam awareness

Age UK Cheshire and Age UK Mid Mersey both offer support with scam awareness and support for victims of fraud.

Address:

Age UK Mid Mersey, The Mansion House, Victoria Park, City Road, St Helens, WA10 2UE

Email:

servicesdigital@ageuk.org.uk

Website:

www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/programmes/digital-skills/

Address:

Age UK Cheshire, Castle Community Centre, Barbers Lane, Northwich, CW8 1DT

Phone Number:

01625 612958

Email:

scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk

Website:

www.ageuk.org.uk/cheshire/our-services/scams-awareness-aftercare-dfa75986-bb28-ef11-a81c-000d3a2d27e7/

High Street Banks

Some major banks also offer digital support and scam awareness support. This includes NatWest, RBS, Barclays, HSBC, Nationwide, and Lloyds. To learn more, get in touch with your local branch.

Contact Digital Cheshire:

Website:

www.digital-cheshire.co.uk

Email:

digitalcheshire@cheshireeast.gov.uk