

**Action from ECLS Committee on 28 November 2023**

Agenda Item No:	18
Report Title	Question Time: Connecting Scotland Funding and Digital Lending Libraries
Responsible Officer:	Andy Hall

<b>Information Sought:</b>	<b>Response:</b>
Councillor Warren asked whether funding applications had now been made, specifically in relation to older people who are unable to access libraries.	<p>The Libraries, Learning Centres &amp; Heritage team received funding from the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) in November 2022 to provide digital lending devices. Since March 2023, we lend iPad devices to families as part of our Digi Bytes early years STEM learning kits. We have 8 sets of kit boxes that are loaned to families with a child aged 3 – 7 years to encourage STEM and intergenerational learning at home. The parents/carers come into the library for a short briefing on how to use the resources, then take a kit box home. The kits are exchanged each week until they have had all 4 sets of resources. We piloted this service in Elgin Library, and have since rolled it out to Buckie, Forres and Keith Libraries.</p> <p>The latest Connecting Scotland phase of funding included criteria that stated you had to have been operating a device lending service for more than 12 months but, after taking advice from Connecting Scotland, we submitted an application anyway in Oct 23 for 12 iPads (and 4 MiFi devices) to allow us to expand the above offering. We were informed in Dec 2023 that we had been successful in receiving £5k from Connecting Scotland to purchase 12 iPads.</p> <p>As part of the Moray Growth Deal and Digital Health and Innovation (DHI) funding for the Near Me expansion we will be piloting a device lending scheme. 10 data enabled devices will be available in the New Year, for a 12 month trial – the cost of the data at the moment is prohibitive thus at this stage we are limited to a 1yr trial. Devices will be broader use than just Near Me, but with a health and wellbeing focus, eg curated links to health information, mental health/Wellbeing/Mood boosting apps etc so would be targeted accordingly.</p> <p>Once we have the above lending devices in circulation the team will then explore the potential of providing loanable devices to support people looking for jobs, accessing remote interviews,</p>

	improving digital skills more generally - instances where the People's Network PC's is not always the most appropriate solution to what people need – however this would need investment to explore further.
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