

# Digital inclusion support: impacts

- Research shows a strong return on investment — around £9.48 in social benefit for every £1 spent on digital inclusion<sup>1</sup>
- Cornwall Council found that delivering a Digital Inclusion programme via community organisations in 2023/2024 had cost £200,000 but reaped £3.9 million in benefits - a return on investment of 18:1.<sup>2</sup>
- Research for the BBC and ETV, using PwC modelling<sup>3</sup>, suggests that PwC findings indicate that achieving full digital inclusion could generate as much as:
  - £21.1–£30.8 billion in annual Gross Value Added (GVA) from increased productivity and employment.
  - £4.9–£9.4 billion in net gains to the Exchequer through higher tax revenues and reduced welfare spending.
  - £26.6–£31.3 billion in non-market wellbeing benefits, including improved life satisfaction and access to services.
  - Up to £2.8 billion in annual NHS savings from virtual GP appointments.
  - Up to £848 million in user savings from digital government services.

## Impacts on the person receiving digital inclusion support

Based on data provided in the Cebr (2022) report:<sup>4</sup>

- Save time: By being able to perform government and financial tasks online, people with digital skills will save on average 30 hours per year
- Save money: Those with digital skills save on average £444 per annum by being able to shop online and use online comparison and discount sites (p41)
- Increase their earning potential: People of working age have an average net earnings increase of 2.8% (p.48). Based on 2025 minimum wage rate of £12.21 per hour, this would be an extra £708 per year. For those on higher income bands, the increase would be more.

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<sup>1</sup> [Cebr \(2022\) The economic impact of digital inclusion in the UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [cornwall-council-digital-inclusion-report.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [socioeconomic-impact-of-digital-transition-june-2025.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Cebr \(2022\) The economic impact of digital inclusion in the UK GoodThings\\_EconomicImpactOfDigitalInclusion\\_2022.pdf](#)

- Save the NHS money  
40% of people gaining basic digital skills will book an average of 3 GP appointments less per year saving the NHS £111 per year with the remaining 60% booking 1 less and saving the NHS £37 per year (p.33). Financial figures are based on the Kingsfund.org website<sup>5</sup> referencing a 2023/2024 study<sup>6</sup> which reported an average 10-minute GP appointment costs £37).

Qualitative impacts could also be captured using interviews around

- Improved access to health care
- Improved access to social connections, hobbies, interests
- Improved access to learning or employment opportunities
- Improved access to financial services
- Improved sense of wellbeing
- Ripple benefits to friends, family and wider society

Impacts on the person providing digital inclusion support

The Government report in published in 2025, 'Estimating the economic and social value of volunteering'<sup>7</sup> measured two monetary values:

#### 1. Wellbeing value

The report calculates this based on A (impact of volunteering on life satisfaction) x B (central value of a WELLBY in 2021 prices) x C (total number of volunteers in 2021/22). This gave an average monetary value of £673 per volunteer.

#### 2. Replacement value

This considers the cost that volunteer-involving organisations would incur to replace volunteers with paid staff to maintain the provision of their services. In other words, the replacement cost method estimates the added value of the services provided by volunteers by estimating the value of the labour used to produce these outputs. The average replacement cost per year per volunteer ranges from £2746 for those who volunteer at least once a week, to £391 for those who volunteer less than once a month. Therefore, the average replacement cost of those who volunteered at least once in the past 12 months across all formal volunteers in England in 2021/22 is £1,339.

Alternative replacement value: This is sometimes calculated using an hourly calculation based on hours of support pledged, rather than a figure per person. Average UK hourly salary from UK ONS data from 2025 is £22 per hour, rounded to

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<sup>5</sup> NHS: Key Facts And Figures | The King's Fund

<sup>6</sup> Unit Costs 2022-2027 - Care and Outcomes Research Centre

<sup>7</sup> Estimating the economic and social value of volunteering - GOV.UK

the nearest pound. This is calculated from: Median weekly earnings for full-time employees (£766) divided by the average weekly hours of work for full-time workers (35)<sup>8</sup>.

Qualitative impacts on volunteers. Studies have shown numerous qualitative benefits of volunteering to help others<sup>9</sup>:

- Purpose, identity & values (increased sense of purpose & identity, expression of altruism/giving back)
- Relationships (increased social connectedness, increased sense of being part of something)
- Personal growth (increased skills, self-esteem and confidence)
- Wellbeing impacts (greater happiness, higher life satisfaction, better quality of life, stronger or clearer sense of purpose, reduced anxiety, less depression)

There is also more to say and unpack around the value of volunteering, how it is defined and measured, and experts such as Gethyn Williams in this field.

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<sup>8</sup> [Employee earnings in the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Volunteering-theory-of-change-1.png \(11533x8583\)](#)