

The form is online – this is a working document to cut and paste from

4 - If you have ticked 'no' or you think we could improve any of the actions please explain why:

We feel the No one Left Behind actions are currently scoped to reach many people, but not all. Our suggestions are focussed on the persistent challenge of striving to leave no one behind:

Ongoing support to learn and to stay safe: We welcome the commitment to build on the Connecting Scotland programme to provide equipment and data packages and digital skills training to those in greatest need. In our experience, not everyone is moving towards digital adoption at the same pace and some people will need ongoing support for many years to stay safe and to realise the potential of technology for life, work and to be an active citizen.

Digital poverty: What percentage of the 50,000 beneficiaries may find it challenging to independently finance an ongoing broadband connection at home and in due course a new device at the end of the roll out of the Connecting Scotland Initiative? How will the commitment to build upon this initiative make allowances for ongoing digital poverty? There is a commitment to improve the broadband infrastructure across Scotland, however market forces understandably create fluctuating prices and the broad range of products and offers create unintentional barriers to ongoing participation. We are aware of people who find choosing a product to be a confusing and stressful decision even if they can afford them. If broadband were to be reclassified as an essential household utility would that strategy drive both an improved infrastructure across Scotland and make it easier for individuals to procure a cost effective contract?

Connectivity: We are aware of many rural learners who are not able to access reasonable internet speeds. When combined with a lack of knowledge we are aware of people who are paying higher rates for supposedly higher broadband, but in reality their location means that these speeds can never be delivered.

One size doesn't fit all: The Connecting Scotland initiative offers an ipad or chrome notebook. Whilst the apps and accessibility functions on tablets and ipads are greatly improving all the time some people still need additional adaptive/assistive technology solutions. It would be useful to have some flexibility built into national schemes for the small percentage of people who may require a different type of device or additional apps, peripherals and software to access technology. By way of an example, 6% of the 590 community based young and adult learners who were awarded technology and data through the Digital Inclusion Fund required adaptive/assistive technology, as an indication of how many people might need this extra flexibility.

Definition of accessibility: There is an expressed commitment to 'accessibility' on page 16 with reference to providing access for those who choose not to use a digital route. We think 'accessibility' can be interpreted in a wider sense than simply being online or offline. Digital inclusion means some people will need access to specialist support to self-assess their adaptive/assistive technology needs and preferences.

Ability Net's 'My Computer My Way' offer a useful, free basic solution which suits many people. In our experience some disabled people require more specialist support to self-assess their adaptive/assistive technology requirements and there is a lack of equity to access such specialist support unless you are a school pupil, college or university student or are in work. Lead Scotland offers specialist support in nine local authority areas and we welcome being involved in conversations about how we can be part of the solution to provide greater equity across Scotland. With the right support and accessibility technology solutions some disabled people will choose to be online.

Staying safe online: We welcome the commitment to a new Cyber Resilience Strategy for Scotland. References to Cyber Resilience and Cyber Security throughout the consultation relate to organisations and staff. We would like to see an explicit commitment to supporting participants to understand how to stay safe, not just to get online and make the most of being online.

An education system that builds digital skills: how will the proposed National Digital Learning Strategy articulate or overlap with the Lifelong Learning Strategy outline in the 2020-21 Programme for Government?

5. Are any of the potential actions more important than others?

Please explain why:

The public sector sometimes has to work within parameters, some of which may be financial, statutory or legal obligations; some of which may be about the wider economic conditions and other factors such as skills shortages. Thinking about these, and any other parameters:

7. Is there anything else you wish to comment on that has not been covered elsewhere?