

**South Ayrshire Council  
Equality Impact Assessment including Fairer Scotland Duty**

**Section 1: Policy Details\***

Name of Policy	HSCP Digital Strategy
Lead Officer (Name/Position)	Thomas Griffin   Digital Programme Manager
Support Team (Names/Positions) including Critical Friend	Tim Eltringham   Director SAHSCP Dawn Parker   Children and Families

\*The term Policy is used throughout the assessment to embrace the full range of policies, procedures, strategies, projects, applications for funding or financial decisions.

What are the main <b>aims</b> of the policy?	<p>The key aims of the HSCP Digital Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that everyone in South Ayrshire has access to our digital platform and services regardless of their background, age, or economic status.</li> <li>• Promote digital literacy and upskilling, allowing residents to fully participate in the digital age.</li> <li>• Create an inclusive digital ecosystem that aligns with HSCP values and strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Ensure everyone within HSCP has equitable access to digital tools and services, enhancing their overall service provision.</li> </ul>
What are the intended <b>outcomes</b> of the policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased digital literacy rates across South Ayrshire.</li> <li>• Equitable access to digital resources and tools.</li> <li>• Enhanced economic opportunities through digital proficiency.</li> <li>• Strengthened community ties through shared digital platforms.</li> <li>• Streamlined operations and improved efficiency across all HSCP teams.</li> <li>• Enhanced care provision through digital mediums.</li> <li>• Empowerment of staff through digital literacy and training.</li> </ul>

## Section 2: What are the Likely Impacts of the Policy?

<p>Will the policy impact upon the whole population of South Ayrshire and/or particular groups within the population? (please specify)</p>	<p>The strategy will impact all teams within the HSCP and the communities they serve. It will also influence third sector organisations and individual staff members.</p> <p>The Digital Strategy will align to the Scottish Governments Digital Health and Care Strategy. This will ensure consistency and standardisation, allow us to share learning and best practices more easily and leverage opportunity with implementation.</p> <p>More locally the Digital Strategy will align with and support Ageing Well and The Promise workstreams/strategies to ensure that we deliver on access to Digital solutions for our residents.</p>
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Considering the following Protected Characteristics and themes, what likely impacts or issues does the policy have for the group or community?

List any likely positive and/or negative impacts.

Protected Characteristics	Positive and/or Negative Impacts
<p><b>Age:</b> Issues relating to different age groups e.g. older people or children and young people</p>	<p>Positive: the development and implementation of the Strategy aims to be fully inclusive to all age groups.</p> <p>In particular, the impact on both older people (by providing tools and resources to bridge the digital divide) and children and young people (by equipping them with essential digital skills for the future).</p> <p>Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.</p>
<p><b>Disability:</b> Issues relating to disabled people</p>	<p>Positive: the Strategy and digital services will be designed to be accessible, catering to varied needs and ensuring no one is left behind.</p> <p>Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic. As part of engagement and consultation activity – information will be provided in alternative formats upon request.</p>
<p><b>Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender:</b> Issues relating to people who have proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex</p>	<p>Positive: the Strategy aims to be inclusive to all irrespective of a person’s gender. It is anticipated that there will be potential for further positive impacts through tailored services if data indicates a need.</p>

	Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership:</b> Issues relating to people who are married or are in a civil partnership	Positive: the Strategy aims to be inclusive to all irrespective of a person's marital/civil partnership status.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity:</b> Issues relating to woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	Positive: by offering online resources for expecting mothers and those on maternity leave.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Race:</b> Issues relating to people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities, including Gypsy/Travellers	Positive: the Strategy aims to apply equally to individuals of all racial groups.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic. As part of engagement and consultation activity - information will be translated or provided in alternative formats where requested.
<b>Religion or Belief:</b> Issues relating to a person's religion or belief (including non-belief)	Positive: the Strategy aims to be fully inclusive to all religions and beliefs (including non-belief).  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Sex:</b> Gender identity: Issues specific to women and men/or girls and boys	Positive: the Strategy aims to be of a positive impact to both men and women.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Sexual Orientation:</b> Issues relating to a person's sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, heterosexual/straight	Positive: the Strategy aims to be fully inclusive to all irrespective of a person's sexual orientation.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.

<b>Equality and Diversity Themes Relevant to South Ayrshire Council</b>	<b>Positive and/or Negative Impacts</b>
<b>Health</b> Issues and impacts affecting people's health	Positive: the Strategy will aim to ensure that residents will have better access to digital health resources and telemedicine.  Engagement and consultation of this Strategy will seek to consider the wider impacts of this protected characteristic.
<b>Human Rights:</b> Issues and impacts affecting people's human rights such as being treated with dignity and respect, the right to education, the right to	Positive: the Strategy will aim to ensure that everyone has the right to information and education through digital means.

<p>respect for private and family life, and the right to free elections.</p>	<p>As part of the development of this Strategy we will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listen to the lived experience of our stakeholders (including, local people, our workforce and wider partners) to ensure this continues to inform our planning</li> <li>• co-design redesign of digital services with our stakeholders</li> </ul>
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<b>Socio-Economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Positive and/or Negative Impacts</b>
<p><b>Low Income/Income Poverty:</b> Issues: cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food and clothing.</p>	<p>Positive: the Strategy aims to deliver digital access to essential services for those on low income. The digital platform can include resources on financial assistance, budgeting, and other welfare services.</p> <p>Negative: some essential digital tools or services might come at a cost, making them less accessible to this group. There's also the cost of devices and internet connectivity which might be prohibitive for some.</p> <p>We will use available data and intelligence and undertake appropriate engagement to better understand the impacts.</p>
<p><b>Low and/or no wealth:</b> Issues: enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future</p>	<p>Positive: digital literacy programs can provide opportunities for individuals to gain skills and possibly improve their employment and financial standing. Access to digital planning and resource tools can assist.</p> <p>Negative: as with the low income group, costs associated with accessing digital services or purchasing necessary equipment might be prohibitive.</p> <p>We will use available data and intelligence and undertake appropriate engagement to better understand the impacts.</p>
<p><b>Material Deprivation:</b> Issues: being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies</p>	<p>Positive: digital platforms can be leveraged to connect individuals with local services and charities that can help meet basic needs. The strategy can include partnerships with service providers offering discounted or free access to essential goods and services.</p> <p>Negative: if the digital strategy does not take this group into account, they might be further marginalised if they cannot access digital services that others in the community are benefiting from.</p> <p>We will use available data and intelligence and undertake appropriate engagement to better understand the impacts.</p>

<p><b>Area Deprivation:</b> Issues: where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)</p>	<p>Positive: digital services can bridge the gap for those in deprived or remote areas, allowing them to access services that might be physically distant. For instance, telemedicine can be invaluable in rural areas. Online platforms can also connect individuals to local community groups or transport services to improve accessibility.</p> <p>Negative: areas with poor digital infrastructure might be left out of the digital transformation, deepening the divide. Those in deprived areas might also lack the resources or skills to access digital services.</p> <p>We will use available data and intelligence and undertake appropriate engagement to better understand the impacts.</p>
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### Section 3: Evidence Used in Developing the Policy

<p><b>Involvement and Consultation</b> In assessing the impact(s) set out above what evidence has been collected from involvement, engagement or consultation? <b>Who</b> did you involve, <b>when</b> and <b>how</b>?</p>	<p>To date there has been engagement with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Leaders from the HSCP via 1:1 meetings</li> <li>• Group discussions for management team</li> <li>• Desktop research via PHS and other national data</li> <li>• South Ayrshire Residents</li> </ul> <p>As part of development of this Strategy there will be robust programme of engagement and consultation factored into planning.</p>
<p><b>Data and Research</b> In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from research or other data. Please specify <b>what</b> research was carried out or data collected, <b>when</b> and <b>how</b> this was done.</p>	<p>To date we have used census data, local school data, and conducted a community-wide digital literacy survey. The datasets that were reviewed are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scottish Census Data</li> <li>- PHS Datasets</li> <li>- NHS Scotland</li> <li>- Care Inspectorate</li> <li>- Local Authority Reports</li> <li>- Local Datasets</li> </ul> <p>What this is showing us as emerging themes is the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ageing population South Ayrshire has on average one of the oldest populations in the UK and this will continue to grow over the next 25 years.</li> <li>- Health Inequalities – Significant health disparities based on location, income and other socio-economic factors.</li> <li>- Mental Health – An increasing need for mental health services.</li> <li>- Digital Health – An increasing reliance and need for Digital Platforms especially post COVID-19.</li> <li>- Increase in Social Care needs - With an ageing population, there's an increased demand for social</li> </ul>

	<p>care services, including care homes and in-home care.</p> <p>Gaps and Uncertainties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural Health - Limited detailed data on health provisions and outcomes in the more remote areas of South Ayrshire.</li> <li>- Specific Minority Groups - Data may lack depth on specific health needs and outcomes for certain ethnic or minority groups.</li> <li>- Digital Access and Inclusion - While there's an emphasis on digital health, data on those excluded or those who can't access digital services remains limited and Anecdotal.</li> <li>- Post-COVID Health Impacts - The long-term health impacts of COVID-19 aren't fully understood or represented in current datasets.</li> </ul> <p>Plan for additional research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural Health - Conduct Surveys and implement qualitative research in rural areas to enhance understanding of healthcare challenges.</li> <li>- Minority Groups study – Link in with Community Leaders to gather and understand health challenges faced by minority groups.</li> <li>- Digital Inclusion – Survey to understand the extent of this, create link with Digital Poverty groups.</li> <li>- Post-COVID – Link in with PHS and UK wide organisations to understand how Digital can provide solutions to long term challenges.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners data and research</b> In assessing the impact(s) set out in Section 2 what evidence has been provided by partners?</p> <p>Please specify partners</p>	<p>To date we have collaborated with local tech companies and NGOs focused on digital inclusion.</p>
<p><b>Gaps and Uncertainties</b> Have you identified any gaps or uncertainties in your understanding of the issues or impacts that need to be explored further?</p>	<p>As with the development of any Strategy there will be a need, at this early stage in development, to identify gaps and uncertainties. We believe there is a need for more data on digital literacy rates among BME communities and rural areas.</p>

**Section 4: Detailed Action Plan to address identified gaps in:**  
**a) evidence and**  
**b) to mitigate negative impacts**

No.	Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timescale
1	Conduct additional surveys in rural areas.		
2	Develop an accessible online platform for digital resources.		
3	Organise digital training workshops.		
4	Meet with Community Groups.		

**Note: Please add more rows as required.**

**Section 5 - Performance monitoring and reporting**

Considering the policy as a whole, including its equality and diversity implications:

When is the policy intended to come into effect?	December 2023
When will the policy be reviewed?	June 2026
Which Panel will have oversight of the policy?	Digital Programme Board

**Summary Equality Impact Assessment Implications & Mitigating Actions**

**Name of Policy:** .....

This policy will assist or inhibit the Council's ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations as follows:

<b>Eliminate discrimination</b>
<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
<b>Foster good relations</b>
<b>Consider Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Fairer Scotland Duty)</b>

<b>Summary of Key Action to Mitigate Negative Impacts</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>

**Signed:** ...Thomas Griffin.....Service Lead  
**Date:** .....