Public Sector Pioneers – reusing IT equipment to bridge the digital divide

Public sector pioneers are leading the way:

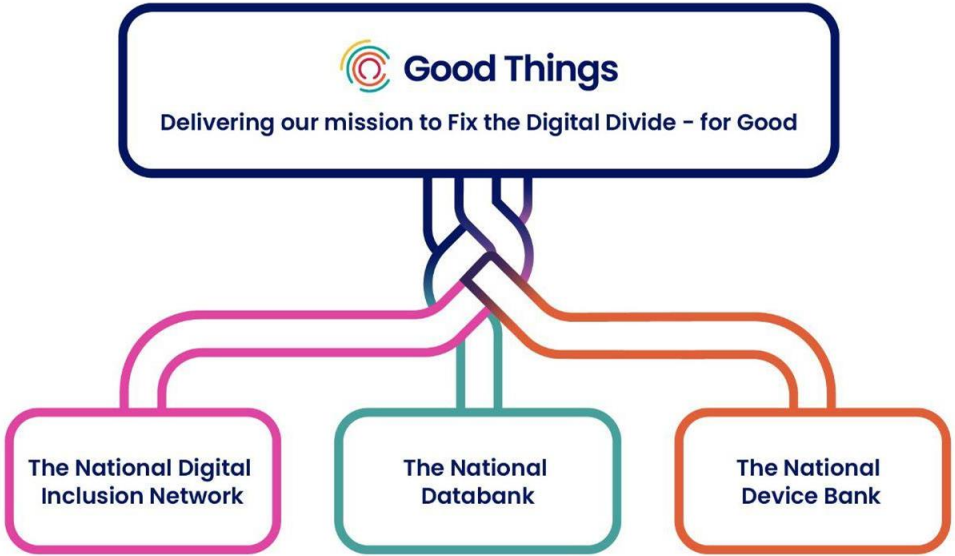
- donating retired IT equipment to the National Device Bank
- reducing e-waste, and delivering social impact

Good Things

Good Things Foundation

We want everyone to:

- Have the internet access they need
- Have somewhere local to go for help to use the internet
- Feel able and safe in the online world



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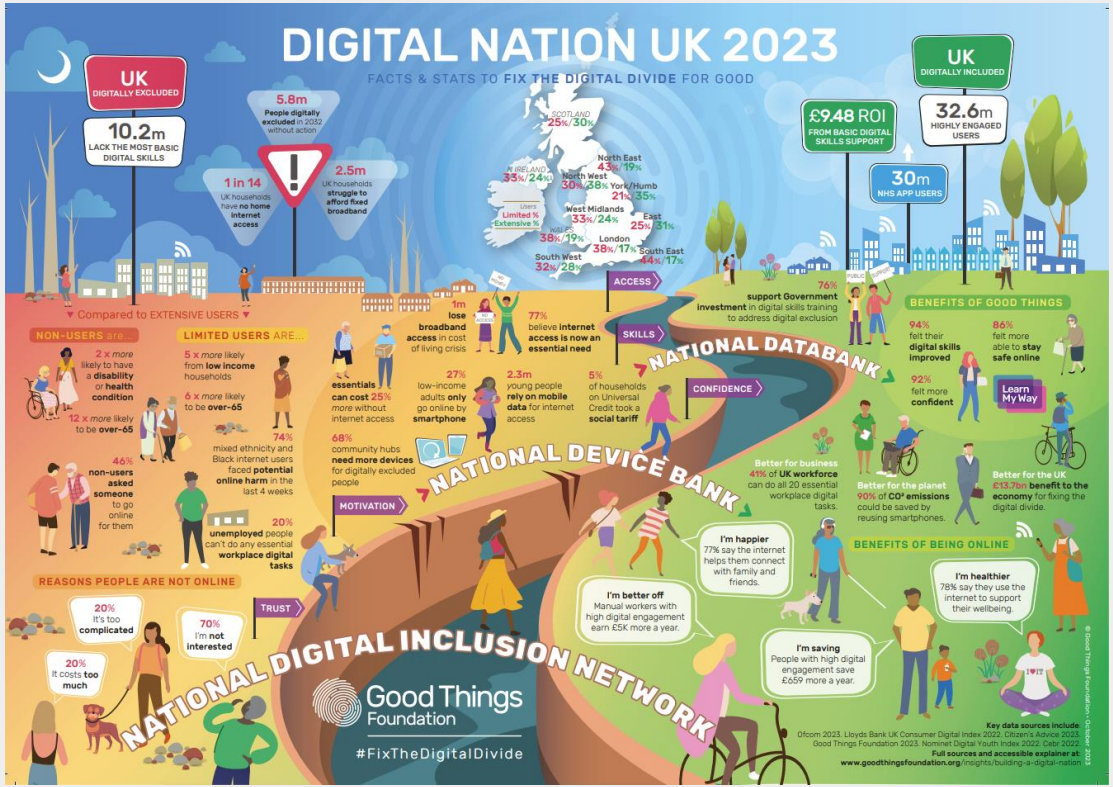
Two goals: Fix the digital divide *and* reduce e-waste

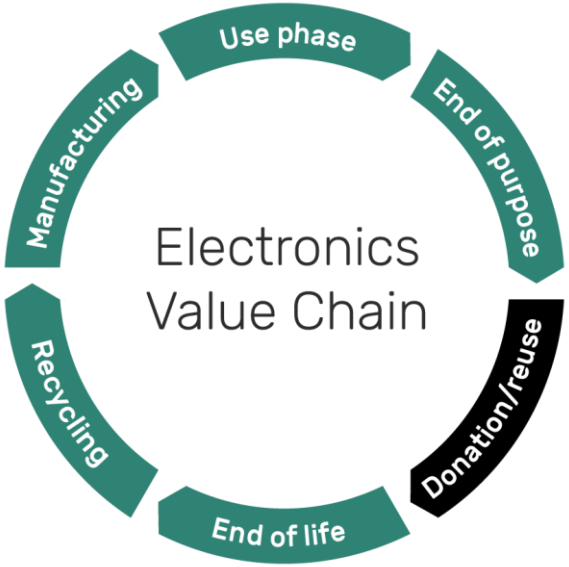


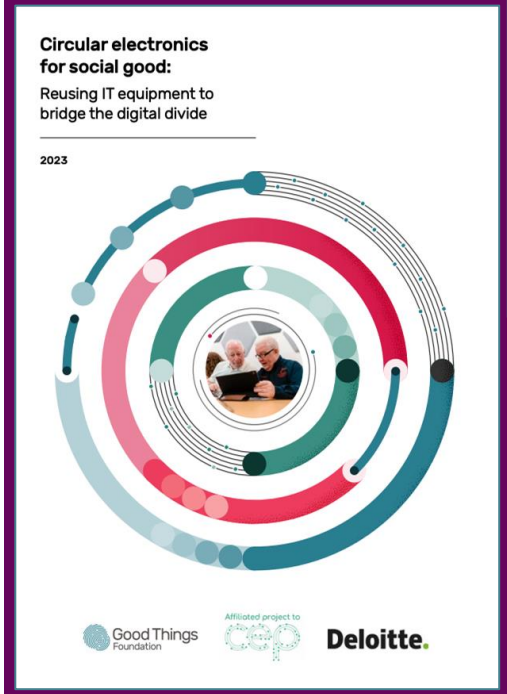
Digital Nation 2023 - Sources include data from Ofcom, Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index, Nominet Digital Youth Index https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/insights/building-a-digital-nation/

Reducing e-waste

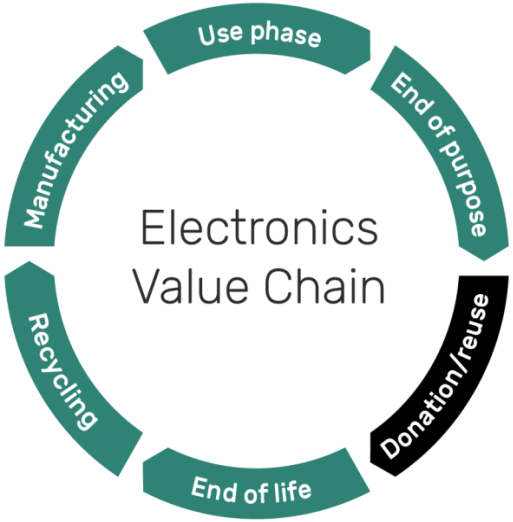
- Electronic waste is the fastest growing waste stream on our planet
- IT sits is high in the 200,000 tonnes of UK business e-waste thrown away each year
- 70-90% of lifetime embodied carbon is in producing new kit - so reuse has a huge impact

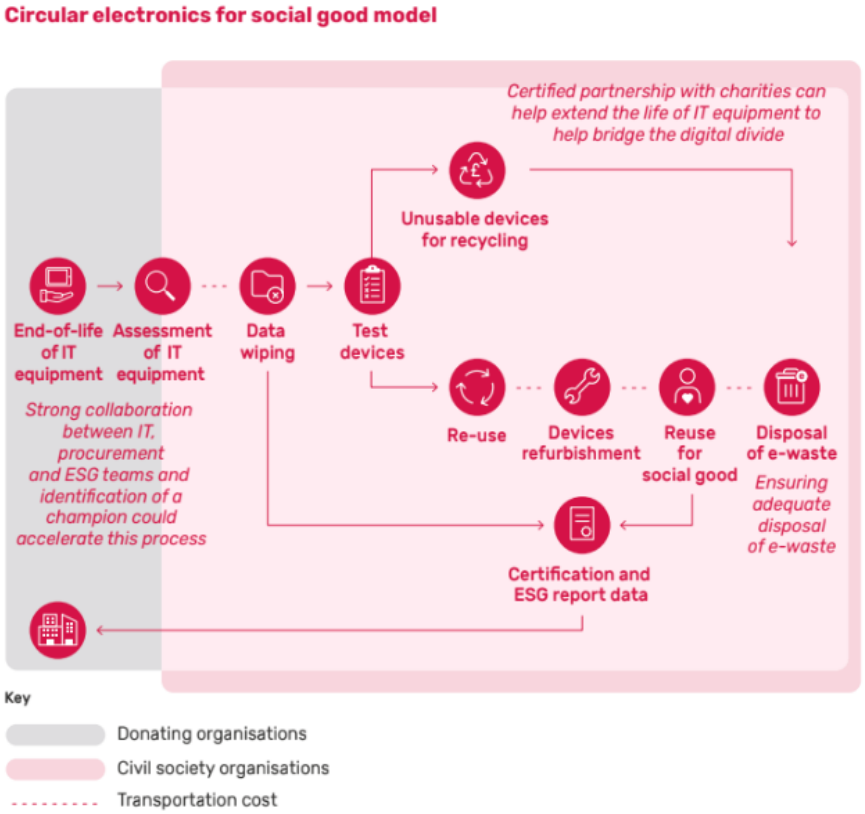
Research partnerships:
Reusing IT equipment to bridge the digital divide





The ‘Circular Electronics for Social Good’ model





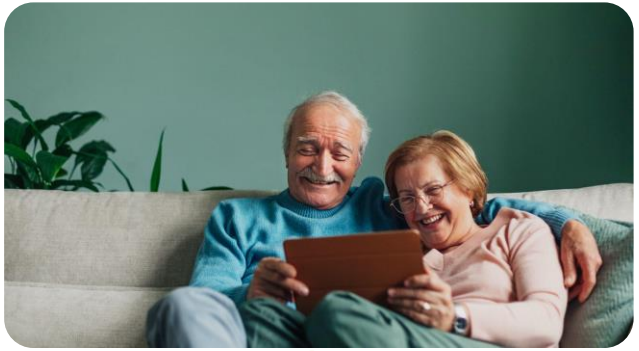
Public Sector Pioneers: Takeaways

Takeaways

- **One model with many pathways** - reflecting differences in how involved public sector organisations wanted to be at each stage
- **Strong motivations in the public sector** for reuse and donation; digital exclusion, net zero goals, giving back to communities
- **Barriers and enablers for the public sector** were similar to the private sector**;** no barriers were insurmountable
- **Sector differences -** across government, health, and education - less significant than differences between individual organisations

"We can't just dump them … We're adding some value for our residents and they're being utilised and given a second life. So it's the right thing to do really"

"If we can find a way to do this for free, that's what we want"



A Assets | B Bureaucracy | C Costs | D Data security | E Equity

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Motivation into action: The 5 C's

Culture	Collaboration	Champions	Chiefs	Catalysts
Especially around managing risks Partnering with reputable organisations with fully certified processes and assurances In-house data wiping (before passing to a reputable partner) Up-to-date understanding in organisations	Once collaboration was in place, momentum built Successful approaches: identification of decision-makers, getting internal buy-in, cross-department communication Collaboration with charities or firms, national & local schemes	Personally & professionally motivated to reduce social inequalities and e-waste Found in a variety of roles & positions Skilled in motivating others	Champions in senior roles Easier to get decisions 'over the line'	COVID-19 Asset refresh cycles / office refurbishments Regional initiatives

How does the National Device Bank work?

Organisation donates devices

Device is wiped by an accredited refurbishment organisation

Some devices May be recycled for money

Devices can be paired with free connectivity from The National Databank

Money generated is invested in digital inclusion by Good Things Foundation

Devices and data distributed to local community organisations and charities

- Gifted device
- Free data
- Digital skills

Digitally excluded people use device, data and support to benefit their lives.

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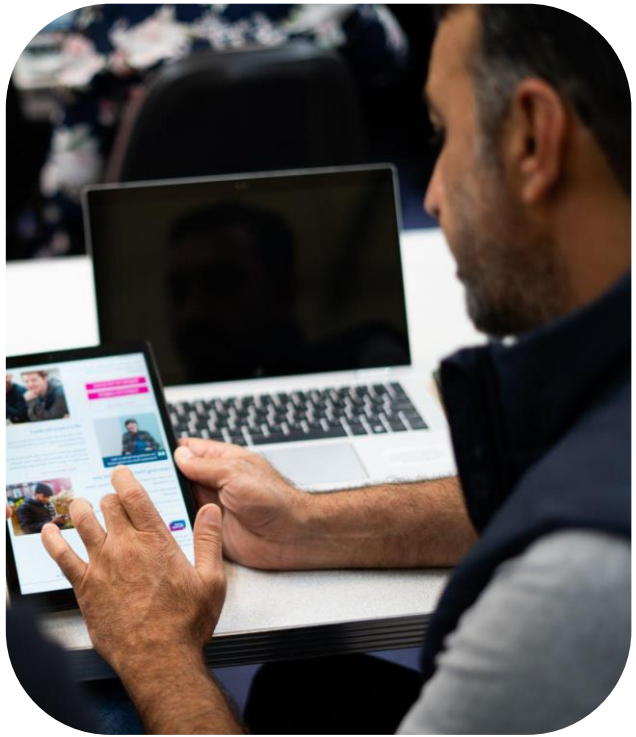
A case study: Liverpool City Region

Rob Benson, Digital Inclusion Lead
Investment and Delivery
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



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METRO MAYOR LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DIGITAL INCLUSION NETWORK

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LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DIGITAL INCLUSION NETWORK

Context – Digital Exclusion in LCR

28% of LCR Residents lack essential digital skills

230,000 Economically inactive &
41,000 Unemployed

65,000 Pupils on Free School Meals in LCR

23% of which Nationally have no Broadband

50% of Households with Children in LCR do not meet the new Minimum Digital Living Standard

82% of jobs require digital skills

Individuals save up to **£900** on average online

56% of non-internet users are disabled adults

One third of LCR Neighborhoods fall into the **10%** most deprived nationally

Where you find deprivation, you'll find digital deprivation.

Why is it important?

- Our old digital equipment was often destroyed, ending up in landfill
- Growing ICT estate with 1100+ Employees
- Hundreds of thousands of digitally excluded individuals across LCR requiring support
- Supporting our local community and voluntary sector
- Social Value
- Environmental Needs & Net Zero
- Corporate Plan & Digital Inclusion Aims

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How did we do it?

Support & Engagement from Good Things Foundation → Buy – in from ICT Team – incredibly supportive → ICT Assurance & Audit Signoff → Legal Team Review → Relationship Handover to Reconome → First Donation in Feb 2024 → Second Donation in Sep 2024

Business as usual embedded into ICT procurement device refresh

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What next?

- Over 600 devices donated into National Devicebank
- Integration in our forward ICT planning and device refresh programmes
- Engagement with our six local authorities – some nearing the finishing line!
- Outreach & engagement to LCR Businesses & Enterprises
- Outreach to local organisations & GTF Digital Inclusion Hubs to draw-down

Creating your own pathway

Creating your own pathway to circular electronics for social good: Checklists

Step 1 Knowing your organisation

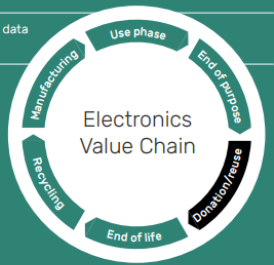
- [ ] I know donating IT equipment for reuse could support our net-zero goals and our social impact goals
- [ ] I know who is responsible for deciding what happens to end-of-life IT equipment
- [ ] I know what happens currently with end-of-life IT equipment and any existing contractual commitments around asset disposal that need to be considered
- [ ] I know that the benefits (social, environmental, employee engagement) of donating devices to fix the digital divide outweigh the cash rebate (if any received)

Step 2 Deciding a reuse pathway which works for your organisation

Stage in the Circular Electronics for Social Good model	We choose to do this:	
	In-house	With a Partner
Identifying end-of-life IT assets	☐	☐
Assessing what has potential for reuse and what has to be recycled	☐	☐
Data wiping to required standards	☐	☐
Testing to sort what is suitable for reuse, recycling, or disposal	☐	☐
Refurbishing to high standard for digitally excluded people	☐	☐
Pairing devices with free data connectivity	☐	☐
Deciding who receives devices	☐	☐
Distributing devices to recipients	☐	☐
Digital inclusion support for recipients	☐	☐
Reporting - ESG metrics and stories of digital inclusion impact	☐	☐
Secure storage and/or transport for each step of the journey	☐	☐

Step 3 Final checks

- [ ] Senior commitment is in place to reuse IT equipment to bridge the digital divide
- [ ] The end-of-life IT equipment has served its purpose in our organisation
- [ ] Reporting processes are in place to provide metrics and stories of positive impact
- [ ] External partners have the required and accredited expertise
- [ ] In-house partners have the required and accredited expertise
- [ ] Our pathway complies with legislation and regulation on data security and e-waste
- [ ] Our pathway is cost-effective (no cost or low cost)
- [ ] There is clarity on which organisations or partners cover which costs
- [ ] Agreements are in place on quality assurance, responsibilities and liabilities
- [ ] Appropriate mechanisms are in place to decide who receives devices
- [ ] Devices will be refurbished to a suitably high standard for digitally excluded adults
- [ ] Devices will be provided with free mobile data connectivity and digital skills support



Circular electronics for social good value chain

You can be a pioneer!

Download the report including the checklist