**Digital Inclusion Update – Summer 2013**

For a breakdown of current policy in relation to digital inclusion activities in Wales take a look at the [Welsh Government Digital Inclusion](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/digincl/?lang=en) pages. This includes links to partner organisations that are establishing collaborative working arrangements with Job Centres and Public Libraries to help people access support and training in relation to ‘digital by default’ and welfare reform. The [Communities 2.0](http://www.communities2point0.org.uk/technology) initiative is extending its volunteering scheme to help more elderly and vulnerable people get online (again in relation to digital by default and universal credit) and getting involved in supporting care home residents. The [Digital Inclusion Wales](http://www.digitalinclusionwales.org.uk/files) community space also hosts a forum and the Delivering a Digital Wales awareness bulletin archive.

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**Updates from the public library information literacy champions around Wales:**

**Carmarthenshire** - Mark Jewell, Library Services Manager is part of a corporate team looking at Carmarthenshire’s approach to digital inclusion – follow up information due by the end of Summer 2013.

**Flintshire** – IL Champions report that the library authority is in the early stages of discussions with [Communities 2.0](http://www.communities2point0.org.uk/technology) regarding the support that could be provided to the local community.

**Monmouthshire** – IL Champions report that Caldicot Library provide job seekers drop-in sessions with an element of information literacy support . Guest blog post with additional information to follow.

**Swansea** – IL Champions report that the public libraries have good contacts with the local job centres and they provide job clubs in relevant libraries in Swansea. The library contacts also act as a referral partner to expert advisers outside of libraries on benefits and financial advice.

**Blaenau Gwent** – IL Champions report that the library authority is involved in a digital inclusion project with the main remit being the financial element. The main project is called [Get Blaenau Gwent On-line](http://www.getblaenaugwentonline.org.uk/) and is part founded by the local authority, Communities 2.0 and a social housing organisation. On-line support sessions are provided in all libraries, delivered by the project staff. Sessions include support for Universal Job-match, job-searching, updating CVs, on-line benefit enquiries and anything linked to saving money e.g comparison sites. The project will also deliver training for library staff in financial literacy on-line. All the libraries also provide work and job-clubs on a weekly basis. These sessions will also support customers in Universal credit advice. All libraries also have front line staff that can provide one to one taster sessions in information literacy, which increasingly involves Universal Job-match.

**Gwynedd** – IL Champions report that Gwynedd Library Service are currently offering IT drop in session at most libraries in Gwynedd and the main training they provide for the public is how to register and use Universal Job-match. [Communities 2.0](http://communities2point0.wordpress.com/2013/07/05/tackling-poverty-in-wales-using-ict/) also offer support and first steps ICT training in partnership with [Digidol Gwynedd](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?cat=7287&doc=26406&Language=1&p=1&c=1) and aim to alleviate poverty, increase employability skills and empower communities through the support they provide.

**Cardiff** - Cardiff Libraries are not currently in the process of developing any formal training for those affected by Welfare Reform. Cardiff Council has a department called Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal which offers more professional advice and support on these issues, including financial literacy i.e. helping people to manage their money, create and stick to a budget. For example, the new [Advice Hub](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2867,6391&parent_directory_id=2865#marland) in Marland Libraries are continuing to support those affected by welfare reform by signposting them to relevant partner agencies , offering free internet access and helping people with basic IT support such as setting up an email account, using the internet to search for jobs, using the GOV.UK and Universal Jobs-match site. Cardiff Libraries monitor and record these activities on a monthly basis and have received a large number of requests for help from those affected by welfare reform since the first changes came into effect last year. The Hubs at Llanrumney Library, St. Mellons Library and @Loudoun community centre (Butetown) also offer advice and support with housing and benefits and Welfare Reform queries. There are also housing officers who visit Fairwater and Splott Libraries on a weekly basis to give advice on these issues. Some branch libraries also hold drop-in sessions in partnership with other agencies, such as [SpeakEasy](http://www.speakeasyadvice.co.uk/), [Citizen's Advice Bureau](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm) , either on a formal regular or an ad hoc basis.

**Bridgend** – IL champions reported that the library service is working in conjunction with several local Job Centres to offer drop-in sessions for accessing Universal Job-match and facilitate job-searching on the Internet. Kris Rees is the Digital Inclusion Tutor for the area. Kris reported that since November 2012 people claiming Jobseekers Allowance have been required by the Job Centre to use the Universal Jobmatch website to look for work or risk losing their benefits. While it is felt that the website is site is well designed, there are a large number of people who are not able to use a computer. As such these changes have been a source of great consternation for many in Wales. The project activities in Bridgend teach people how to use the computer so that they can email, use the Internet, and ultimately search for work independently. Relaxed drop-in sessions in are held in 5 locations around Bridgend where people can receive help and guidance tailored for them. Kris is also able to offer advice regarding additional services and courses that may be of help. Sessions are currently available in Bridgend library, Pyle Life Centre and also in the Bettws, Sarn and Pencoed libraries.

**Rhondda Cynon Taf** – IL Champions report that public libraries offer help with E-Gov access through two Community Learning workers employed within the Library Service. The library authority also delivers partnership work with [Interlink](http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk/), the Job Club via Job Centre Plus, Communities First groups and through the EU funded [Bridges into Work](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/systemadministration/bridgeintoworkcoursesinformation.pdf) programme. The Bridges into Work scheme is also active in the Bridgend, Merthry Tydfil, Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent areas.

**Torfaen** – [Communities First](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/JobsCareers/Careersadvice/Help-to-get-back-to-work/Communities-First-Digital-Inclusion.aspx) offer digital inclusion sessions in community locations across the area which aim  to encourage access Internet services and skills opportunities. They also aim to provide local people with the tools to engage with government and local authority services.