

Securing Digital Inclusion in the City

Leeds Community Foundation recently hosted a Digital Inclusion Roundtable event at Engage; a Leeds based digital-marketing agency and a member of the Leeds Community Foundation '100 Club'.

The event was attended by key decision makers from across the private and public sectors, along with representatives from community groups in Leeds.

With a quarter of the city's residents' fearing they have been left behind by the digital revolution, the event highlighted the amazing digital innovation being born and raised in Leeds but explored the stark challenges in the city between the haves and have nots and the possibility that the digital revolution could result in further challenges to inclusion. The breakfast event explored the role of Leeds Community Foundation as a conduit for action and connections.

Speaking afterwards, **Stuart Clarke, Director of Leeds Digital Festival** said:

"Leeds is growing quickly in the tech sector with lots of wealth and lots of jobs being created, but we are in real danger of creating a two-tier city and leaving lots of communities behind."

"The key thing is co-ordination. There are so many amazing projects and organisations but if we are not co-ordinating them and linking them together we are in danger of missing entire communities out or doubling up on work. We should do more to come together." Kate Hainsworth, Chief Executive of Leeds Community Foundation, said she was concerned that gaps in skills and knowledge may be widening.

She said: "The giant strides that are being made in terms of digital progress do mean that those who are struggling to engage are getting left further and further behind."

"Digital education can play a significant role in protecting people from cyber-crime."

"As negative forces become more sophisticated, their techniques get more sophisticated," she said. "Public institutions are depending more on digital to be efficient and that is also problematic for individuals for whom digital is a challenge."

"There is a lot of fantastic work that's happening at grassroots level. The council are doing great work through their libraries and '100 per cent digital'

schemes. It's just a question of bringing all that together. If we can play a role in that we will be delighted to do so."

The roundtable, which is the first of a series hosted by the foundation, will bring together leaders from the private and public sectors to share expertise, ideas and ambitions.