

# How to design inclusive digital services

**Hello!**

How are you doing this morning?

Add your response in  
Mentimeter:

Scan the QR code or visit

<https://www.menti.com>

Use code: 2920 7234



Wifi:  
RFLPublic WiFi  
Welcome123



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On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you in developing digital services?

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<https://www.menti.com>

Use code: 2920 7234



On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you in developing digital services?



Not at all confident

Very confident

# How to design inclusive digital services: Key principles for small charities

November 2024

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**CAST works to ensure civil society has greater agency, presence and influence in the technologies that affect us all**

**Setting the scene for today**



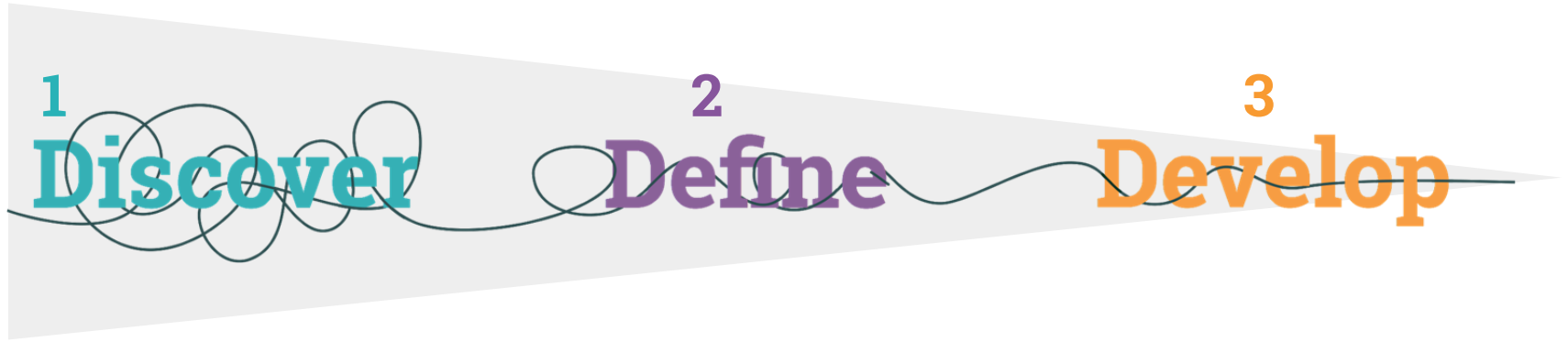
Blue sign with a red square containing a white '1' and some illegible text below it.

# Why doesn't everyone own a Segway?





## Putting the user at the heart of the process



1  
**Discover**

2  
**Define**

3  
**Develop**

~~Three~~ **Four key principles**

1. Understanding the problem you're trying to solve

What problem are  
you trying to  
solve?

The problem should be clearly defined and focused.

The problem should be one you can address with the resources and skills available.

The problem must reflect the real needs or pain points of your service users.

## Problem area – Issue to be addressed or a condition to be improved upon

*We want to ensure that women who are most at risk of abuse are able to access our support via the helpline in a safe and confidential way.*

### What we know

Things you know for certain, and why

*Anonymity and safety is key*

*Users' expectation of response time - usually several hours*

*Higher risk of domestic abuse in people with disabilities*

*Confidentiality script for helpline may be useful*

### What we think we know

Things you need more evidence for

*Young users prefer texting*

*Confidential disclosure is needed by some users*

*Case number for users might be helpful*

*GDPR compliance criteria*

### What we don't know

Things you need to find out

*If an app is the answer*

*Older people's use of tech*

*We don't know how many people are not contacting us*

*Resourcing that will be needed for this*

# What's the outcome you'd like to have?

Thinking of the user's problem or frustration or opportunity you'd like to tackle, what is the outcome once it's solved?

*E.g. women at risk of abuse will have a safe, easy and confidential way to seek help via the helpline, empowering them to take the first step toward support without fear of exposure or danger.*

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## 2. Understanding your users

# Stakeholders



CAST



## Stakeholders



## Users



CAST

# Why do user research?

It helps understand your service users - their needs, motivations and behaviours in various contexts.



# How to do user research?

(on a shoestring)

- ~5 people
- ~20-30 minutes each

## 3 top tips for speed user research

**Carry out 1-to-1 interviews instead of / as well as surveys**

**Tap into existing touchpoints**

**Don't ask leading questions**

# 3 top tips for speedy user research

1

Try to carry out 1-to-1 interviews instead of / as well as surveys

You'll learn much richer insights than from a survey.

You'll be able to ask follow-up questions if it takes you down an unexpected but interesting route.

# 2

## Tap into existing touchpoints

Use opportunities where you already interact with users (e.g. phone calls, zoom calls or community events) to gather insights.

Tap into your network of supporters, volunteers or staff who interact with users regularly. They can act as intermediaries for gathering insights.

Ask them simple and focused questions about their needs and challenges.

# 3

## Don't ask leading questions

User research is only useful if we're hearing what users actually think, feel and do.

Try and think of ways to get information from someone without asking them about it directly.

**An example:**

Was this a good session?

vs

How did you find the session?

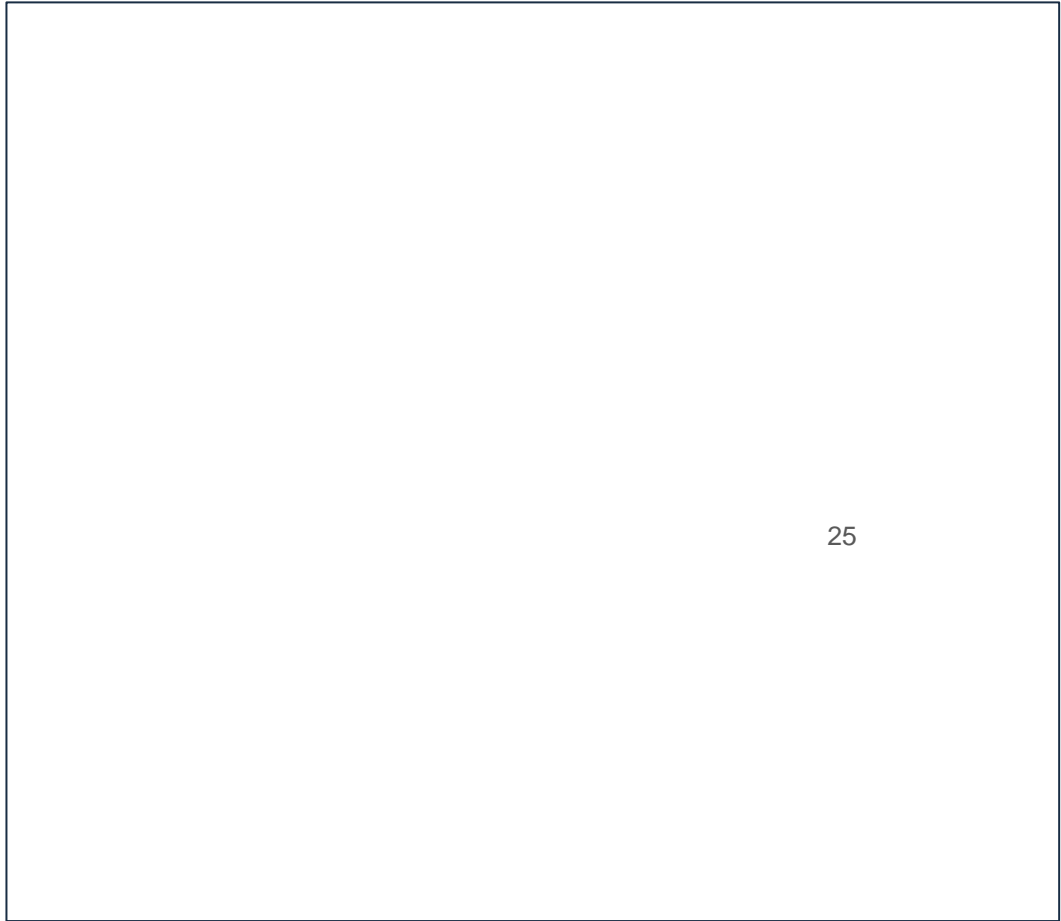


# User Research Worksheet

## Example questions

- What devices do you use?
- What do you use them for?
- What websites / services / apps do you use on a regular basis?
- Would you mind running through a typical day from start to end? What do you do first?
- In the last 6 months, how often have you used X service/product?
- How do you find out information about X?

Write your interview questions here...



## Applying these principles at small charities

Small team - limited capacity

Deciding where to prioritise resources

Smaller organisations can often move more quickly

Good access and relationships to service users

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What would help you to understand more about your users right now, and how they need your services at this point in time?

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## What would help you to understand more about your users right now, and how they need your services at this point in time?

16 responses

Return to previous beneficiaries to check impact

Feedback on our new tools, how are they using them, are they working for them, any issues

Data capture

What are their strategic goals for 2025

What they respond to, what they ignore

How do they feel this year has gone? Pain points, successes

Language, readability issues

Feedback from hard to reach service users

How to hear from quieter or shy users

Doing simple/basic questionnaires interviews about service user needs around digital access and also on benefits advocacy. Can easily ask this during monthly meetings

1:1 conversations - focus on improvements we could make (rather than make assumptions)

How confident to they feel in their ability to use digital tools

What would help you to understand more about your users right now, and how they need your services at this point in time?

16 responses

Doing simple/basic questionnaires interviews about service user needs around digital access and also on benefits advocacy. Can easily ask this during monthly meetings

What they need right now and what they need in long term

Feedback from people where English is not their first language to shape services

Feedback from hard to reach service users

1:1 conversations - focus on improvements we could make (rather than make assumptions)

Feedback from hard to reach users

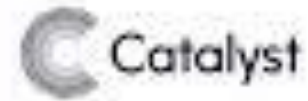
How confident to they feel in their ability to use digital tools

What improvements they want us to prioritise

3. Look at what's already out there

# Universal Credit tool

<https://youtu.be/erCx-UZn8-c?si=JPFdoPKZp24la6hL>



They've ended up with this  
really really really useful product in just ten weeks

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What stands out to you about this example?

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## Practical tips

- Find useful tools and resources you can reuse
- Build a clear picture of your internal assets / tools / you already have
- Identify potential collaborations and partnerships
- Save money and avoid duplication

# Benefits of reuse

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- Often **cheaper and quicker** to repurpose existing digital tools than to build something from scratch
- **Speeds up** the testing and learning process
- **Prevents** organisations building / **developing** things they **don't need to**
- Helps build a community of practice: many organisations **working on similar challenges and sharing solutions**
- Network of people **to ask for support**
- More charities can deliver **more social impact, quicker**



# Shared digital guides

Catalyst

[Home](#) [Recipes](#) [Contributors](#)

ALPHA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.

[Home](#) > Recipes

## Browse service recipes

Search all recipes



Showing recipes 1–15 of 82 total recipes



Street Soccer Scotland

Implementing live feedback by Street Soccer Scotland

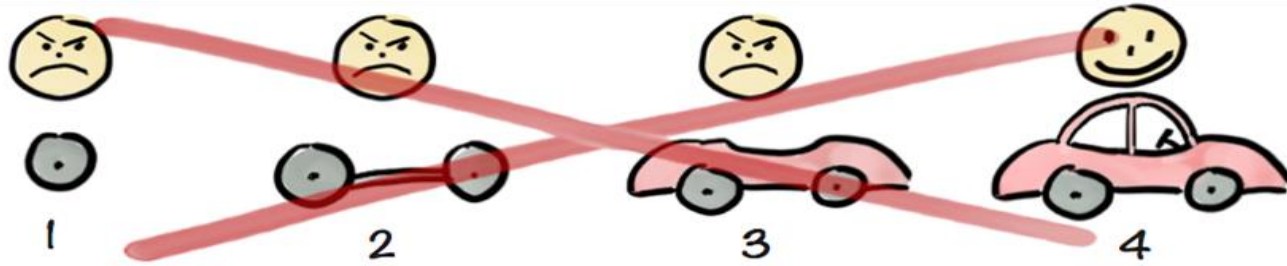


Street Soccer Scotland

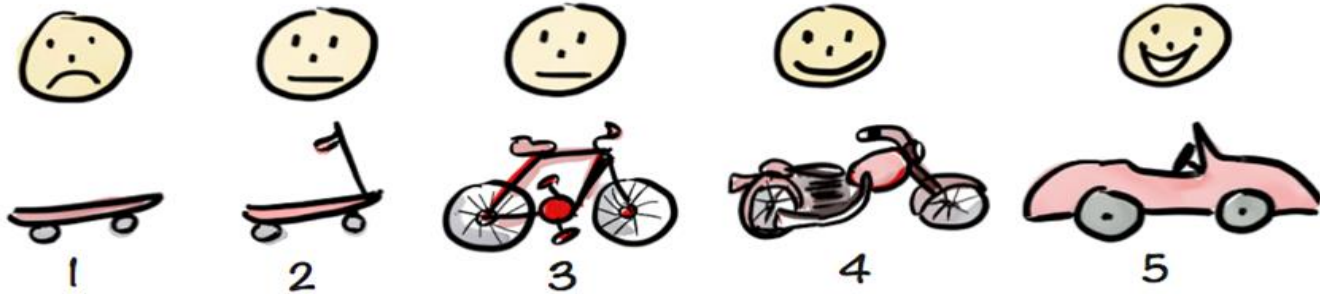
Breathe HR by Street Soccer Scotland



4. Start small and take  
incremental steps



## Constant iteration



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Starting small is all about working out what is the smallest, cheapest thing you can do to help your users with their problem. Then get it out there, test with people, and tweak it as you start to get feedback.

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# Examples

# The Well Communities

## Core Challenge

- Peer-to-peer support service unable to help abstinence-based recovery clients 24/7 if they relapse outside office hours

## Solution

- Online version of the service tested using a WhatsApp chat group

## Next steps

- Clients received peer support within 14 seconds of activating the app
- Awarded funding to build a native mobile app







**WhatsApp**

## Tech

- Free WhatsApp group
- £5k initial grant funding to test proof of concept
- Users actually prefer WhatsApp to a new tool

# Example - User Research



The challenge: Budget cuts and closures mean fewer children and their parents can access local children's centres, leaving many to cope – or not cope – by themselves.

# Case Study



Advice ▾

About ▾

Donate

1:1 chat

Search



## Parent Talk

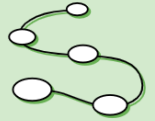
Down-to-earth parenting advice you can trust.

We're here for you, when you need us. Find answers to parenting questions in our advice articles. Or talk to a parenting coach about anything that's worrying you. It's all free, and no topic is too big, small, or embarrassing.



### Development and additional needs

Communication, social and emotional development, neurodiversity and support for additional needs



### Feelings and behaviour

Understanding behaviour and emotions, talking about feelings, safety and wellbeing, rules and rewards, wellbeing activities



# Law Centres Network

## Core Challenge

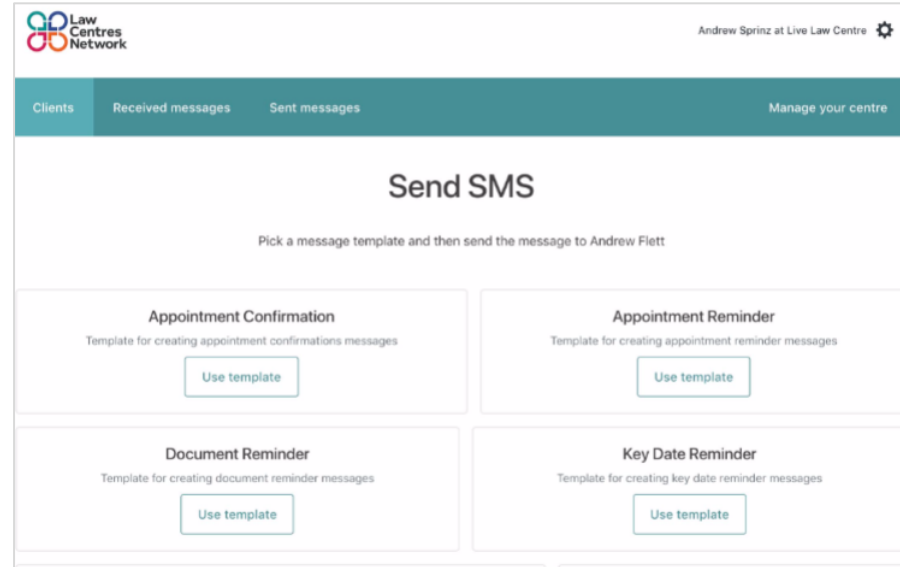
- Reducing missed appointments in law centres

## Solution

- Automatic appointment reminder SMS tool (twilio) only £20 a month
- Easy-to-use for law centre staff

## Aha moment

- Trying out manually on a £10 SMS phone first
- Clients asking for 'text reminders like we get from the doctor'



# Asylum Guides: Co-creation Project

## Core Challenge

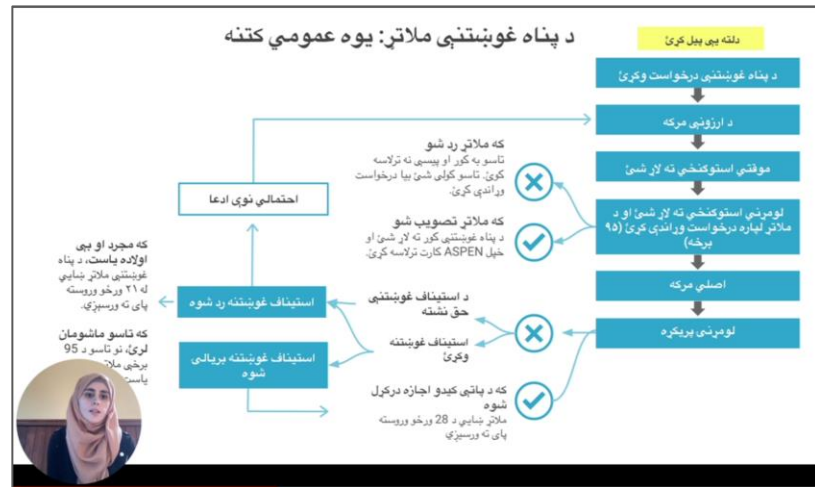
- How might we improve access to information about Asylum in the UK, no matter what language people speak?

## Solution

- Create videos about the Asylum process and Asylum support in the UK in lots of different languages so that anyone can access them.

## Next steps

- We have got the slides and script translated into 18 different languages
- They delivered training to volunteers in the NAP partnership to develop the videos together.
- They're now live on YouTube





## Tech

- Loom is an easy to use video making software that records your screen while you speak, creating a video.
- It works for Asylum Guides as the slides are ready to use, and it is easy to make, edit and share.

# Four key principles to get started



1

**Understand the problem** you're trying to solve



2

**Understand your users needs**, their behaviours and expectations



3

**Reuse** what others have created and shared



4

**Start small** and take incremental steps

# Support, resources and training



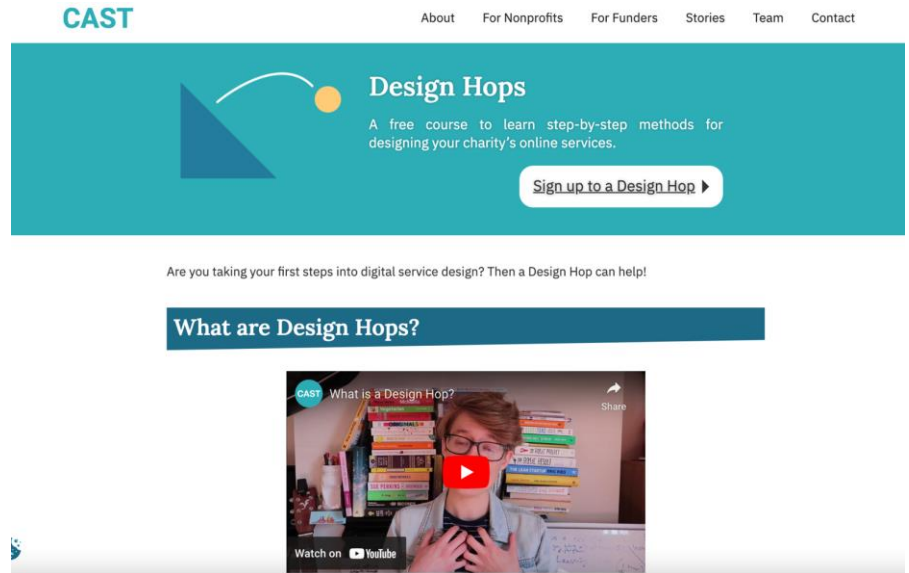
# Design Hops – Free course to learn step-by-step methods for designing your charity's online services

Next course dates:

- Wednesday 29th January 10:30am-12:00pm
- Wednesday 5th February 10:30am-12:00pm
- Wednesday 12th March 10:30am-12:00pm

Attendees must be able to attend all three sessions and commit to the 10-15 hours of 'homework' in their own time.

Link to register interest: <https://www.wearecast.org.uk/our-work/programmes-and-initiatives/design-hops/>



The image shows a screenshot of the CAST website. At the top left is the 'CAST' logo. To the right is a navigation menu with links for 'About', 'For Nonprofits', 'For Funders', 'Stories', 'Team', and 'Contact'. Below the navigation is a teal banner with the 'Design Hops' title and a sub-headline: 'A free course to learn step-by-step methods for designing your charity's online services.' A white button with a right-pointing arrow says 'Sign up to a Design Hop'. Below the banner is a dark teal bar with the text 'What are Design Hops?'. Underneath is a video player showing a man with glasses speaking, with a red play button in the center. The video title is 'What is a Design Hop?' and there are 'Watch on YouTube' and 'Share' icons.

Browse tools and resources



## The Design Process

Find out more about the tried and tested digital design process we follow with charities

1 Article



## Tools

Find tools and resources to use on your digital projects

25 Articles



## How to use the Digital Toolkit

Learn everything about how to get started with the Digital Toolkit

3 Articles



## Success Stories

Hear how other charities have put this process into practice

1 Article



# Digital Candle – 1hr free expert advice – <https://www.digitalcandle.org.uk/>

**DIGITAL  
CANDLE**

[Home](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Blog](#)

[Ask your question](#)

## Free digital advice for charities

Ask us a question, and we'll connect you with a volunteer expert.  
No question is too broad or too niche.

[Ask a question](#)



# Dovetail – directory of tech for good agencies – <https://www.dovetail.network/>


Dovetail

Home Agencies About My shortlist 0

## Dovetail helps charities find a digital partner

Tools and resources to write a brief, shortlist, and choose a partner.

[Browse agencies](#)



## Support for charities

### My shortlist

Build a shortlist of agencies to evaluate or contact.

[My shortlist](#)



### Briefing template

Share your project with agencies using this simple briefing template.

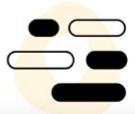
[Briefing template](#)



### Example briefs

Examples of what real briefs and budgets look like.

[Example briefs](#)



### Digital Charities Slack

Get recommendations from people who have worked with different agencies.

[Digital Charities](#)



# Digital Leads Network – community of charity digital leads

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<https://www.wearecast.org.uk/our-work/programmes-and-initiatives/digital-leads-network/>



**Further support**

# The Curve – training webinars on digital best practice

## Upcoming online workshops

<https://thirdsectorlab.co.uk/training/>

### DECEMBER

#### **04 SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY FOR IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT**

DEC

WITH ROSS MCCULLOCH

#### **11 DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE DIGITAL STRATEGY**

DEC

WITH ROSS MCCULLOCH

#### **12 HAVE YOUR SAY: DIGITAL SKILLS IN 2025**

DEC

WITH THE THIRD SECTOR LAB TEAM

# DigiSafe – A step-by-step digital safeguarding guide

<https://digsafe.thecatalyst.org.uk/>










 DigiSafe

Q Search...

96 K

 Welcome to DigiSafe

## CHAPTERS

-  1. Start here
-  2. Build foundations
-  3. Assess risk
-  4. Apply principles
-  5. Design for safety >
-  6. Educate everyone
-  Afterword
-  Give feedback 

## Welcome to DigiSafe

A step-by-step digital safeguarding guide. For charities designing new services or taking existing ones online.



## Contents

 1. Start here



Powered By GitBook



# Coffee Connections – connecting charity peers for a virtual chat

<https://www.wearecast.org.uk/our-work/programmes-and-initiatives/coffee-connections/>

## Meet new people in the charity sector

More conversations and sharing in the charity sector can only be a good thing. That's why we want to make it easier for people to connect with each other.



### How does it work?

- You sign up (below)
- Every 2 months we'll match you with another person in the sector
- You arrange to meet for a coffee and a chat online

### Who is this for?

Anyone who works within a social or voluntary organisation and has an interest in digital.

This initiative was started by Nesta in 2012 – you can read more about it [here](#).

### How do I sign up?

Sign up with the form below, or if that doesn't work for you, email us at [coffeeconnections@wearecast.org.uk](mailto:coffeeconnections@wearecast.org.uk)



Register

press Enter ↵



# How are you feeling after this workshop?



Add your response in Mentimeter:

Scan the QR code or visit

<https://www.menti.com>

Use code: 2920 7234



One word check out, how are you feeling after this session?

25 responses



Thanks!

[www.wearecast.org.uk](http://www.wearecast.org.uk)

[david.scurr@wearecast.org.uk](mailto:david.scurr@wearecast.org.uk)

