

SURREY
DIGITAL EXCLUSION
PERSONAS

What is a persona?

Personas are a tool for designing services providing deeper insight into the user needs.

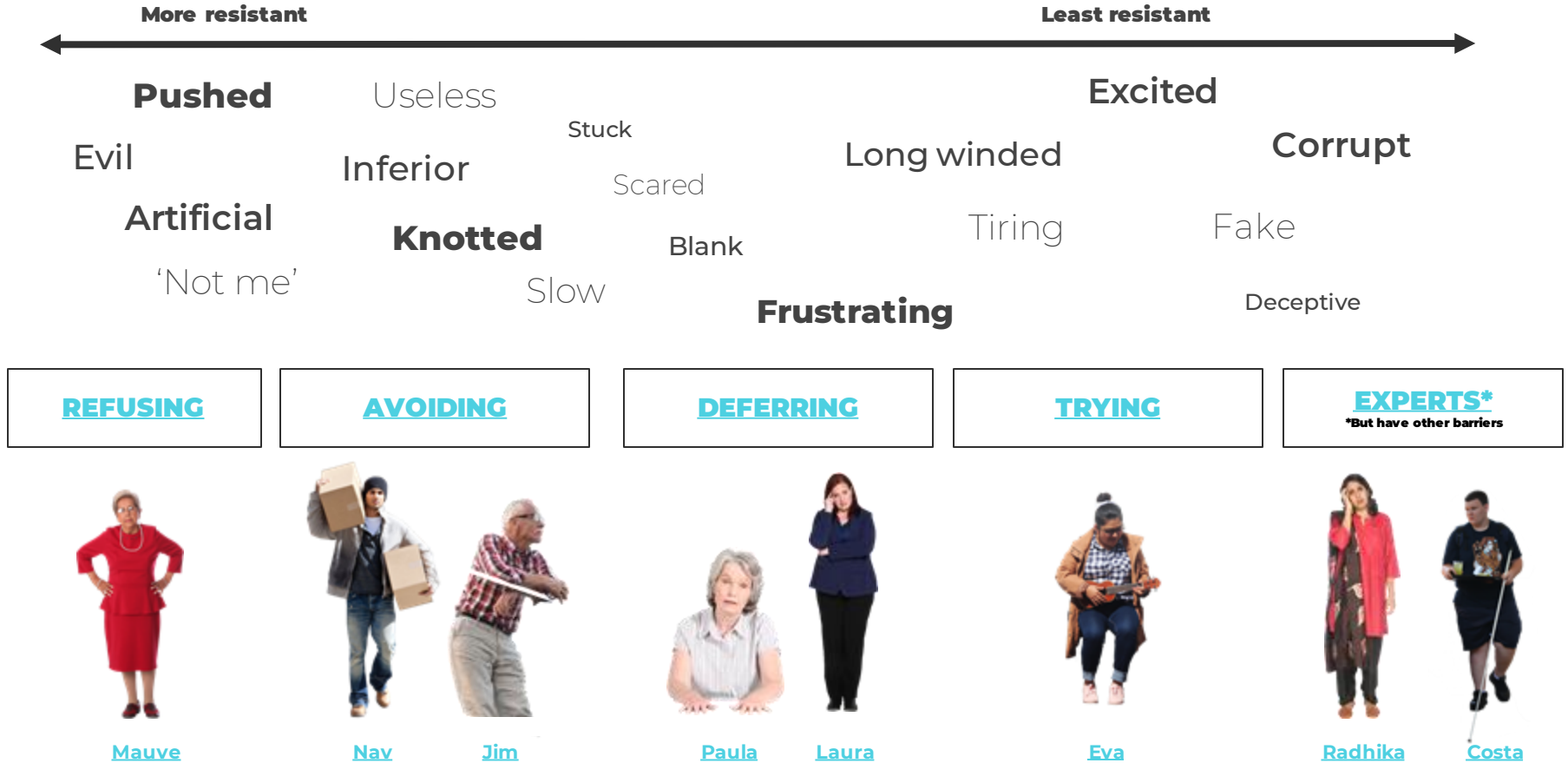
This pack of 8 personas complements Surrey's Digital Exclusion Map and is designed to help you understand the needs, experiences and barriers of people in Surrey who are experiencing digital exclusion.

Although personas are fictional characters, they are based on research carried out and validated by citizens and stakeholders in Surrey. More information on the research methodology can be found [in the appendix](#).

Who should use it?

We suggest everyone involved in designing public services or interventions in Surrey should use this information to tailor their digital offer to the types of needs their intended audience may experience.

A spectrum of attitudes towards digital technology



Refusing

These people are not interested at all in becoming digitally included. They are likely to refuse to engage and only want to use non-digital means of communication.

Persona 1: Refusing 75+'s



Name: **Mauve**

Age: 85

*“Technology is evil.
Look at what it's
done to society!”*

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Mauve lives alone. She never married and has no children. She has long-term health issues requiring regular GP and hospital appointments. Her sister lives close by and helps when she can to ensure that Mauve has her medication.

Attitude and use of digital: Mauve does not use any digital technology. She has a mobile phone, but rarely uses it. She is not receptive to hearing about any form of technology that could help her, even voice-activated devices such as [Alexa](#). All influences around Mauve regarding technology are negative. She has had friends that have lost money making mistakes with online banking. She watches daytime TV, and the one of the programme she watches, 'Rip Off Britain', supports her views and fears about online fraud and the risks of being 'scammed'. The digital world feels 'artificial' to her.

Support: Mauve's sister offered to teach her some basic digital skills, but she rejected her help. She just wants to maintain her independence, without being forced to go online.

Barriers

- Negative attitude due to fear, privacy concerns and identity (*I'm too old...I've not grown up with it. It's not me.*)
- Preference to speak to people face-to-face than go online
- Lacks the skills to undertake any digital task

Enablers and reach:

This group are unlikely to ever engage. Supporting them means making sure they can access non-digital services with ease.

Numbers in Survey:

- An estimated 33% of adults aged 65 or above live on their own (75,316 people). This rises to 41% for those aged 75 or above (46,544 people).
- 36,500 residents are aged 85 or older – 3% of our entire population.

Avoiding

These people avoid digital technology because they feel pushed or forced to engage.

Persona 2A: 'Younger Avoiders'



Name: **Nav**

Age: 26

"I don't go near computers and that, it just reminds me of being at school."

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Nav is currently living in temporary accommodation and works on building sites. He has dyslexia. He has had periods of homelessness and addiction.

Attitude and use of digital: Nav will not use anything other than a smartphone. He does not use computers, as they remind him of ICT lessons at school and bring back negative experiences. He spends more than two hours a day on his smartphone (partly to alleviate boredom). He uses it for gaming, streaming movies, music and to go on social media. He engages more with visual content rather than text-heavy digital interfaces. He uses emails and knows how to show his CSCS certificate online to work. He registered for online banking but has forgotten his password. He does not shop online since a shop double charged him a few years ago. He never used - nor is aware of - NHS websites and in case of need he would call the GP directly.

Support: Nav does not feel that he needs support or upskilling but would be receptive if there were significant benefits.

Barriers:

- Negative attitude towards some digital devices
- Additional challenges due to dyslexia

Enablers and reach:

This group are likely to prefer 1-2-1 over group training if upskilling, to avoid feeling exposed. Training providers should have IT credibility and need to acknowledge the service users existing skills.

Numbers in Surrey:

- Around 10% of the Surrey population have dyslexia. 1 in 6 adults are estimated to have the reading skills of a typical 11-year-old.
- During 2020/2021 some 2,916 households were assessed as being owed either a prevention (1,546 households) or a relief duty (1,370 households) under homelessness duties.

Persona 2B: ‘Older Avoiders’



Name: **Jim**

Age: 62

“Ah, it's taking over our lives. I don't really need to know about it all.”

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Jim did not attend school. He has low numeracy and literacy skills. He is a self-employed builder and is paid in cash. He lives alone since his wife died a few years ago. She did all the necessary online admin for them.

Attitude and use of digital: He has his wife's smartphone and a computer, which he rarely uses. His son and grandchildren have shown him how to use Sat Nav (this has been a revelation for him to get to different building sites and jobs each day – but he still needs his family to input postcodes for him). They also bought him an [Alexa](#) (he enjoys asking Alexa to tell him a joke!) and he has used video calls on WhatsApp a few times. He does not have an email address and does not do internet shopping or online banking and has no wish to use more digital devices that require reading and writing.

Support: Jim relies on his family to perform digital tasks for him, as they all live close by. While his son helps him with life admin tasks e.g., paying bills, his grandchildren try to motivate him to improve his digital skills. He is however not very receptive.

Barriers:

- Low numeracy and literacy skills
- Negative attitude due to fear of being exposed, and identity

Enablers and reach:

This group would benefit from inspiration and a targeted digital technology approach tailored to their situation, e.g., using voice activated tech as a learning aid to upskill.

Numbers in Surrey:

An estimated 33% of adults aged 65 or above live on their own (75,316 people). This rises to 41% for those aged 75 or above (46,544 people).

Deferring

These people have someone else doing all or most part of their tasks online, either because they refuse, are struggling or are incapable due to a disability or illness.

Persona 3A: Deferring 65+'s with additional needs



Name: **Paula**

Age: 70

"If I was to use a computer on my own I would completely struggle".

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Paula is deaf and has a visual impairment resulting in her eyesight deteriorating over time. She lives alone and has a number of female and male Personal Assistants (PAs) supporting her on her day-to-day tasks. She has a daughter that lives in another town close by.

Attitude and use of digital: Paula needs to rely on her PA's using technology on her behalf. She is aware of some technology that converts text to braille. She would like to learn braille to be able to make the best of this opportunity but does not know how and where to ask for this support.

Support: While Paula's daughter will get involved in more personal (e.g., financial) matters, Paula relies on her PAs to get things done, so it can be frustrating for her when they are not around. About half the PAs time with Paula is spent doing things online for her. They will intercept the texts and emails she receives (about five a week), communicating back to her using hands-on signing. They will also buy goods online on her behalf and use search engines to find out about events and groups she can attend.

Barriers:

- Disability which requires continuous support
- Unaware of opportunities to upskill

Enablers and reach:

This group would benefit from learning skills that allow them to use technology independently (e.g., learning braille and using text-to-braille technology). Financial assistance can be important for access. Ensure PAs are skilled, enthusiastic and looking for upskilling opportunities.

Numbers in Surrey:

- 215,634 resident adults (23% of all adults) are estimated to have some form of significant hearing loss.
- 28,336 resident adults are estimated to have a serious visual impairment (3% of all adults).
- The proportion of both forms of sensory impairment increases with age.
- An estimated 33% of adults aged 65 or above live on their own (75,316 people). This rises to 41% for those aged 75 or above (46,544 people).

Persona 3B: Deferring adult



Name: **Laura**

Age: 45

"I am a real technophobe and I hate the thought of having to use a computer."

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

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- Contemplation
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- Maintenance

Background: Laura suffers from depression and anxiety. She lives with her partner, who recently started using the internet, so they got broadband.

Attitude and use of digital: Laura uses her age as a barrier as she has 'not grown up with it' but there may be deeper issues at play around self-esteem and 'phobia'. She 'gave up' on technology after an incident 20 years ago where she believed she caused a 'black out' of everyone's computers - *When that happened, I went to pieces...I have never wanted to go on one [computer] since.*

She has a smartphone (the cheapest available on the market) and only uses it for texts and calls. She likes to write letters.

Support: Her partners' parents have done everything 'essential' digitally for her and her partner, such as online shopping. They also helped Laura apply online for a debit card.

Barriers:

- Negative attitude due to a lack of confidence, and fear of getting things wrong
- A support system that is not encouraging independence

Enablers and reach:

This group have no desire to upskill to be able to use digital more independently.

If they engage in upskilling, they are likely to prefer 1-2-1 over group training to avoid feeling exposed. Trainers should be approachable, and able to deal with anxiety.

Numbers in Surrey:

- Mixed anxiety & depression is the most common mental disorder in Britain, with 7.8% of people meeting criteria for diagnosis.
- 4-10% of people in Surrey will experience depression in their lifetime.

Trying

These people are trying to engage independently, but face challenges.

Persona 4: Young adult with additional needs



Name: **Eva**

Age: 39

"I keep trying but I just get stuck or mess things up."

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Eva has been out of work for some time partly due to an accident that has affected the nerves in her arm. She has a very mild learning disability.

Attitude to digital and usage: Before her accident she used computers at the library but felt judged because she asked too many questions. She has a basic phone. She would like a new one, but she has anxiety around change. She has an email and social media account but has not used them for years because she has forgotten the passwords. She would like to learn how to send an email with a document attached. She does not shop online but would like to use [eBay](#). She has not heard of [Zoom](#) or other video conferencing software. She tried to use online banking but struggled - ("I kept calling the bank for help, but they got fed up with me.")

Support: She lives with her brother, who will 'fix' things if she 'gets in trouble' e.g., sending emails on her behalf (because she is embarrassed by her grammar). She is supported by a charity to help her with the online Universal Credit application.

Barriers:

- Low self-esteem
- Cognitive impairment that makes it difficult for her to use different systems.

Enablers and reach:

This group want to use digital services independently but may question whether the trainer will have the patience to help. *"People have been annoyed in the past if I am too slow learning."* Targeted and regular support, with informal and light-hearted training would be the most suitable approach to support them.

Numbers in Surrey:

- 58,349 adults are claiming Universal Credit (8% of all resident adults of working age).
- 56% of those are entirely unemployed (32,664 adults, roughly 5% of all Surrey resident adults of working age).
- An estimated 1.2% of the population have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder ('OCD').

Expert

These people have other reasons for their exclusion that do not relate to skills, confidence or attitude.

Persona 5A: Adult with security needs



Name: **Radhika**

Age: 25

"I doubt I'll ever be able to use Facebook in case he finds me."

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Radhika moved to the UK three years ago. English is not her first language. She was in an abusive relationship, left the family home with her young child and now lives in secure accommodation.

Attitude to digital and usage: When living with her abuser, she was not allowed to use digital devices, nor to have a bank account. She is living in secure accommodation now and has been told that it is too risky to use social media, as she could be traced by him and his family. She can shop online, uses online banking services and email. She is keen to learn more office-based ICT skills. She also wants to learn more about how to be safe while using the internet and troubleshooting when necessary.

Support: She did not have any support before arriving in secure accommodation. Now she has been provided with a smartphone. She has also attended a digital skills course.

Barriers:

- Concerns over her security and that of her child
- Affordability / Low-income
- Difficulty with English

Enablers and reach:

Privacy and anonymity are fundamental for survivors of domestic abuse. TV ads or comms in public places such as schools and the GP surgery and trusted community ambassadors like GPs could be used to promote digital learning, as *"immigrants don't know what help there is"*. Training should be delivered in small groups, with people and in places where women feel safe.

Numbers in Surrey:

- Almost 8% of women are estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year.
- Some 65,000 Surrey residents speak a language other than English as their main language. Most of them consider that they can speak English "well" or "very well", but nearly 6,500 people cannot speak English well and a further 1,000 cannot speak English at all.

Persona 5B: Expert with anonymity, affordability and additional needs



Name: **Costa**

Age: 30

"It can feel like there is an elephant sitting on my head!"

Indicators of digital inclusion

- Access
- Connectivity
- Digital skills
- Attitude

Behavioural stage

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Relapse
- Maintenance

Background: Costa is visually impaired from an accident that left him blind in one eye. He is also a carer for his brother who has cerebral palsy. Costa has a BSc degree in Maths. He works part-time and is on a carers allowance.

Attitude to digital and usage: He has helped friends to design their websites and is very IT literate but needs larger screens and has to limit use to 1 hour a day or else he will get severe headaches. He is unable to afford the latest smartphones (that he thinks will be easier for him to use because screens are usually larger) and voice-activated software that translates text to voice. He does not use online banking and rarely does any online shopping. This is due to mistrust and concerns about data security and the possibility of his data to be used for marketing purposes without his permission.

Support: He does not need any support in being upskilled, however he might need financial support to fund aids and devices to help with his disability.

Barriers:

- Disability (visual impairment)
- Concerns about data security
- Affordability / Low income

Enablers and reach:

This group are already online and can generally be reached by email. Any digital offer must be tailored to their needs (e.g., screen time exposure, less reliance on reading through voice-activated functions). If there is financial help to fund aids, devices and / or upgrades then this needs to be promoted.

Numbers in Surrey:

- 28,336 resident adults are estimated to have a serious visual impairment (3% of all adults).
- 9,269 Surrey residents are in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

Appendix:

Methodology

A 4-step research process

