CAST Digital Fellowship

Contents of info pack

Background

About CAST

[CAST](#) supports existing nonprofits to understand how they can make the best use of digital technology - not only to deliver better services to their communities, but also help them to become robust and responsive organisations fit for the digital world.

At a time when the social sector is under increasing pressure from rising demand and decreasing funds, it's more urgent than ever to build digital confidence in its leaders, so that they can use tech to make vital services more sustainable, scalable and effective.

This is not just about building digital capabilities, but also the skills, processes and tools that put people at the heart of development and services.

What is the Digital Fellowship?

The CAST Digital Fellowship is a comprehensive learning programme for nonprofit leaders in the fundamentals of tech and digital innovation.

It is a unique opportunity for senior staff to develop a better understanding and use of digital technology. It will support them to become leaders of their organisation's - and indeed the sector's - digital development.

It also empowers their teams to build their digital capacity and put learnings directly into practise on a tangible digital project.

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2

Key dates

March—early June 2017:	Recruitment window open. All interested applicants should fill out **this form**
Early—mid June 2017:	Diagnostic recruitment calls
Mid June—early July:	Follow-up recruitment calls
Mid July:	Confirmation of Fellows
w/c 11th September:	Fellowship starts
Early December:	Fellowship learning programme ends
Early 2018:	Digital projects (recommended).

Please note the exact dates for the 2017 Fellowship will be confirmed following conversations with the selected Fellows, and we will do our best to work around Fellows' availability.

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3

Who is it for?

Organisation requirements

The Fellowship is open to nonprofit organisations of all sizes and sector focuses.

If there is sufficient demand from suitable candidates, we will run two Fellowships in parallel, with no more than 12 Fellows per cohort. We are also exploring alternative locations around the UK, but at least one 2017 programme will definitely be based in London.

Social sector leaders

The core Fellowship is for senior leaders in established nonprofits. In particular, they should have a strong interest in using digital to better meet the changing needs of their service users. Fellows are actively involved in this programme for an equivalent of 15 days. Eight half-day sessions are scheduled for the peer group to work together, with the other time based on working individually or within your own organisation.

Wider nonprofit team engagement

At the end of the learning programme, Fellows will be supported to share their knowledge with their colleagues, and CAST will train a selected individual or pair of individuals in managing a product (and development team). Their involvement will begin at the November/December creative design workshop and 'design sprint' - one week in total - and will continue into early 2018 to manage the two-week 'build sprint'.

This will ensure the Fellowship learnings spread across the organisation to project/operations managers and service delivery staff, who are best placed to apply the skills to directly support beneficiaries. The specific people needn't be selected until the day of the design workshop itself (December 2017).

Trustees

We are also looking to extend elements of the Fellowship to trustees this year, since there is a well documented need for better understanding of digital on charity boards. If you would like to nominate a trustee for the programme, they will need to be available for a 30-minute chemistry call in June–July.

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4

How is it structured?

The Fellowship is underpinned by a clear focus on digital leadership and pathways to digital transformation.

The programme takes the form of a progressive action learning set, where the Fellows develop by working with digital domain experts, designing digital products and using methodologies and tools that can be applied immediately in an organisation to improve service delivery, reduce costs and free up staff time.

Modular, flexible programme

There are four stages to the Digital Fellowship, the first two of which are mandatory and the second two optional but highly recommended.

We have seen from our experience working with nonprofits that all four stages are necessary in order for senior staff to become fully-fledged sector digital leaders, with the confidence and skills to lead change internally and inspire it externally. Completion of all four stages also ensures that participating organisations leave the programme fully equipped in the tools and methodologies of digital design, and that individuals within those organisations have the chance to develop as product leaders, to help drive and implement digital projects on the ground.

However, we realise some organisations may not be able to make the time or financial commitment to all four stages, so have designed a modular programme that still delivers valuable outputs at each stage.

Through the initial diagnostic calls, we will help each applicant determine which option is right for them. We are also flexible to accommodate changes during the course of the programme itself.

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5

The four stages are:

1) Core learning programme for senior leaders (required)

- Eight half-day digital workshops in London, led by a range of experts across three months from September to December 2017
- The sessions offer a very practical, hands-on approach to learning. They help Fellows apply new tools and processes to specific use cases in their organisations.

2) A design workshop in the charity's office (required)

- A one-day creative design workshop in the charity's own office
- This is an opportunity for Fellows to disseminate their learnings to their teams, and to engage other people in their organisation — fundraisers, project managers, marketing and PR officers or trustees — in the planning of a new digital product or service
- Together they will identify and unpack a beneficiary or organisational need that might be supported with tech, and work with a team of developers to design a potential solution
- If continuing with stages 3–4 of the programme, they will also select a Product Owner who will manage the project and development team through the subsequent sprint(s).

Outcomes

Fellows will gain:

★ An in-depth understanding of how digital technologies can best support their missions
★ A good grasp of the processes of digital innovation and design
★ A strong network of other charity leaders.

In addition, their organisations will gain:

★ Experience of the early stages of a digital design process
★ Knowledge of tools and techniques for user-led, test-driven development.

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6

3) Design sprint (optional but highly recommended)

- Immediately following the design workshop is a five-day [design sprint](#)
- The nonprofit team, led by their designated Product Owner, will take the requirements identified in the workshop and turn them into a set of features for a new digital product/service
- They will work remotely with the development team to create a tangible, working prototype for the new service.

4) Digital project (optional but highly recommended)

- A follow-on digital project, designed to encourage more immediate in-depth application of the learnings
- This will begin with a one-day feedback and integration session in the charity's offices, which allows the team to discuss any challenges or blockers encountered on the design sprint
- Training for the Product Owner in conducting user interviews and usability testing of the prototype. This equips the team to gather actionable feedback and refine the product so that it better meets the needs of its intended users
- A two-week build sprint with developers and/or CAST team.

Additional outcomes

Fellows will gain:
- ★ Support with building and implementing a digital strategy
- ★ Direct access to tech experts and supporters
- ★ The skills both to support their own organisations and their wider networks in realising the potential of digital technology for social change
- ★ Ongoing support and recognition as part of our Fellows' alumni community once the programme has ended
- ★ Increased reputation as a sector digital leader.

Their organisations will gain:
- ★ Experience designing and building a new digital product or service
- ★ Training in how to carry out effective [user research](#) and conduct [usability testing](#)
- ★ Practise working with a development team on short sprints of work, following an agile methodology
- ★ Training in [Product Ownership](#) and use of the [GitHub code repository](#) used by programmers.

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7

Programme costs

Commitment payment

Before embarking on the Fellowship, we ask **all** participating organisations to make a commitment of £3,000 of their own funds, which is 100% returnable upon successful completion of the two core stages of the Fellowship. This helps demonstrate that Fellows are fully committed to the process.

Past Fellows have wanted to continue the work from the Fellowship and found it beneficial to put the returned £3,000 towards a piece of digital work that immediately builds on the work from the design workshop. See the case studies at the end of this document for more detailed examples of previous Fellows' work.

Costs overview

Returnable commitment payment	£3,000
Core Fellowship (mandatory stages 1 & 2):	£2,700
Design sprint (stage 3)	£1,250
Digital project (stage 4)	£3,000

Bursaries

We are aware that cost will be a barrier to many smaller organisations, so we will be offering a small number of subsidised places for this year's Digital Fellowship. These will be determined based on the organisation's financial capabilities and suitability for the programme.

However, please note that we require every participating organisation to make a minimum commitment of £500 towards the cost of the core Fellowship.

We will discuss funding options with each prospective Fellow on their initial diagnostic call.

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8

Cost breakdown

The cost of the core Fellowship helps us cover all speaker fees for the workshops, room hire, production of learning materials, refreshments at each session and administration costs.

The cost of the design sprint pays for two developers to work on the prototype for one week, including agile process support, UI/UX testing support, quality assurance and client support.

The cost of the digital project covers a thorough two-week piece of work with CAST and/or a team of developers (with the development support outlined above).

Example digital projects include:
1. A development sprint, to hone and test the prototype for a new digital product
2. A design deep dive, to scope the requirements for a bigger technical project
3. A digital strategy consultation, working with CAST to create a detailed roadmap for further digital development.

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9

2017 programme agenda

Week/Day	Topic
Week 1, Day 1 w/c 11th September Full day	Chemistry, introductions and overview Introduction to digital trends Strategies for integration and organisational change Lean startup methodology and agile processes
Week 1, Day 2 w/c 11th September Full day	Delivering user-centred digital services and service design Meet the 2016 Fellows
Week 2	BREAK
Week 3 w/c 25th September Half day	Data - from metrics to ethics: Uses of internal and open data Responsibility and governance (including GDPR)
Week 4	BREAK
Week 5 w/c 9th October Half day	Social business canvas and sustainability
Week 6	BREAK
Week 7 w/c 23rd October Half day	Commissioning and recruiting tech talent Working with developers and agencies
Week 8	BREAK
Week 9 w/c 6th November Half day	Scaling, partnerships and measurement in tech for good
Week 10	BREAK
Weeks 11–13 November–December Full day	Design workshop in each charity's office with wider team
Weeks 11–14 November–December 1 week	Design sprint (optional but highly recommended)

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10

Week 16-20	BREAK
Weeks 21-24 January–February 2018 2-week sprints	Digital project (optional but highly recommended) One-day feedback and integration session, including user interview training Build sprints

If a Fellow is unable to attend a session, we will schedule a separate catch-up for them individually to ensure they don't miss out on any course content.

This is the second year CAST has run the Digital Fellowship, and we continue to refine the programme based on participants' feedback.

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11

2016 Fellows

The first Digital Fellowship was grant-funded by Comic Relief, and saw nine small- to medium-sized charities take part in the programme.

Each of the charities involved has been inspired to pursue the use of digital in their organisations, many making this a core part of the strategic plans and recognising the opportunity it presents to fundamentally redesign their engagement with beneficiaries and drive down costs.

Testimonials

"If my organisation is going to be able to make a bigger impact at a time of fewer resources we need to look at how we do things differently. I did not know where to start.

"The programme has helped me to see digital technology in terms of its strategic potential to help us fulfil our organisation's objectives, as well as to consider specific digital products."

Derek Walker, Chief Executive, Wales Co-operative Centre

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12

"The fellowship was a catalyst for our organisation to shift in a new direction – improving the way we approach service development, urging us to become more rigorous, and exploring how digital can increase our reach beyond our natural home.

"Personally it's also fun, engaging and provides new skills and knowledge in an area in which the nonprofit sector sorely needs them. Highly recommended."

Duncan McLaggan, Operations Manager, Quaker Social Action

"Without effective knowledge in the sector, the cost of consultants is prohibitive and digital fear is a real barrier so we tend to shy away from exploring digital options. CAST has given me the framework and ability to understand - the confidence to know what can be done and just as importantly what cannot be done.

"Some of the techniques we are given make me feel able to engage in the digital agenda in a way we couldn't do before. I would recommend forward thinking charities to get on board with the digital agenda and can think of no better organisation that CAST to be their guide."

Graham England, Managing Director, ARA

"We can't thank you guys enough - it has been a really challenging year for the sector and this project has been a ray of sunshine. So thank you.

"It has been refreshing to work with such positive and dynamic people."

Amanda Elwen, Business Manager, Safer Together

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13

Case studies

## SafeLives

Digital Fellow: Suzanne Jacob, Deputy CEO

SafeLives is a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse. Deputy Chief Executive, Suzanne Jacob, had experienced first-hand the transformative power of digital while working with an NGO in Delhi, India. She had seen the use of mobile technology help Indian charities extend their reach, spread information and create community activists for thousands of miles around.

Motivated by a sense of unexplored opportunities and missed potential, she was excited to see what SafeLives could achieve with a little digital guidance.

"When I started at SafeLives I had a glut of enthusiasm but very little knowledge. Friends laughed at my passion for tech. I had the verve of an evangelist but nothing to do with my energy!"
Suzanne Jacob, SafeLives

Four weeks into the Fellowship, Suzanne ran a series of lunch and learn sessions for her team to share some practical take-aways; lean and agile processes, putting end users at the heart of service design and how to map out sustainable revenue models for new digital products.
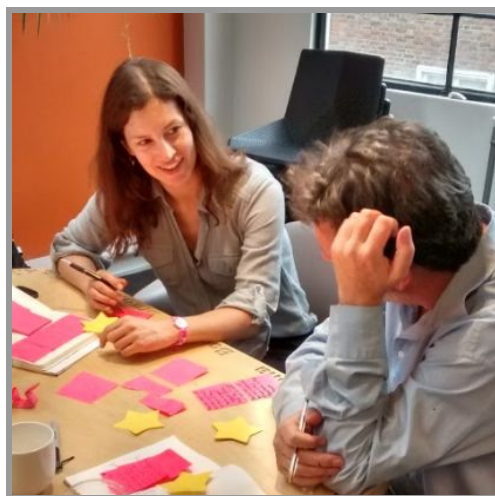
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14

She told us,

"I think as leaders of our organisation we all need that constructive challenge and structured thinking to wrap around our creativity. I'm already putting into practice what I'm learning, and that's exactly what I hoped."

"One of the strongest and most helpful messages so far has been about slowing down to speed up. Know your user, don't assume you know what they want, apply really great project management, plan the long term investment and not a quick win.

"All this is done with a series of bright, engaging speakers who ooze enthusiasm, move things along at a good pace, respect our other commitments but make it really easy to take part. All in inspiring spaces."

SafeLives had previously received a grant from Comic Relief to begin development of an online space for its community of domestic abuse practitioners. Following a review of the existing tools available, they had purchased a piece of off-the-shelf software, but lacked an understanding of how to configure it in a way that actually met their needs and the needs of their users. At the time of joining the Fellowship, there had been a couple of team changes on the project and progress on rolling it out had stalled.

SafeLives therefore divided their design workshop into two camps: one group worked with a CAST team on creating a roadmap for user testing and rollout of the new Community platform, while the developers joined SafeLives' Insights data team to tackle a serious time-sink in the organisation: their inefficient and convoluted system for data collection and measurement.

Both groups made impressive headway, which led to an additional follow-up workshop for the SafeLives Community team and a two-week scoping exercise with the Insights team. They put together a thorough spec for a new system that they have now applied for funding to develop.

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15

In both cases, Suzanne passed on the mantle to the respective team leads to manage the projects. Her colleague Natalie Blagrove, who runs the SafeLives Community, published a guest blog on Charity Digital News about their digital progress, outlining her own growth in confidence around tech terminology and processes, such as the mantra of 'test and iterate'.

SafeLives' CEO, Diana Barran, also joined the design workshop and has become one of the organisation's strongest digital advocates.

Suzanne recently tweeted us that "The ripple effect round our team has been awesome. I've got tech phobes asking for analytics training with a big grin on their face!"

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16

National Ugly Mugs (NUM)

Digital Fellow: Alex Feis Bryce, CEO

National Ugly Mugs is a tiny charity based in Manchester, whose small team works tirelessly to end violence against sex workers and the stigma attached to their work. Alex Bryce, the charity's CEO, knew that digital technology was an essential tool to help make his team more efficient and reach more beneficiaries.

At the point of applying to the CAST Digital Fellowship, NUM had recently worked with developers on a technology project that would allow sex workers to share safety information peer-to-peer. Despite the critical success of the the app, the organisation lacked an understanding of the development processes behind it, leading to some of the misaligned expectations common in charity-tech partnerships.

Alex wrote in Charity Times,
"It is no surprise that when conceptualising tech solutions to their problems, third sector organisations are likely to imagine all-encompassing smartphone apps without considering whether an app is necessary or what the minimum viable product would be.

"This creates a situation where partnerships between the third sector and developers can be imbalanced, and a lack of mutual understanding of the expertise that each party brings to the table."

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17

The Fellowship gave the NUM team a thorough explanation of digital development, tools for honing their grand ambitions into focused, achievable goals, and elements of tech innovation that could be directly borrowed and used in the everyday work of the charity.

Alex reflects,
"The language may seem a little corporate and trite to the most cynical, hard-nosed NGO workers but that shouldn't be a barrier; the theories of tech product development and user involvement are extremely transferable to non-tech projects and I've certainly adopted the main principles as part of any process of developing further services at NUM."

After a day of mapping out some of their most pressing organisational challenges in the design workshop, NUM identified their system for case management as the area where digital could provide the most benefit. This then became the subject of the design and build sprint.

In the old system, important legal documents and case files were stored on a shelf of bursting lever arch files. There was a huge amount of pressure on one of the team members whose job it was to know which document contained each piece of vital case information, and how to quickly locate it when a detail was needed in court or requested by the media.

Prior to investing in a heavy duty case management system, NUM really needed a simple way to test a new process whereby every team member could access and update case information online. In the two-week build sprint the developers created a prototype web app with the necessary security safeguards and, since in this case the NUM team themselves were the end users, it was able to be tested - and provide value - immediately.

The team very quickly saw the benefits of the new tool. They reported that in one week alone,
"We did an audit of case work and pulled out seven or eight opportunities where actions hadn't been done. The tick boxes on our new system should make this easier and prevent things being dropped."

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18

Equally important is the shift in the organisation's attitude towards digital. NUM's Operations Manager, Kerri Swindels, took on the role of Product Owner for the development sprint, and learned to manage the tech team's progress remotely using code repository GitHub - a skill that afforded a new level of transparency to the process.

She told us, "GitHub was great for submitting issues. We could see where the issues had been completed and could keep track of the progress. We realised that prior to a new case management system we needed something else, and what we've got really supports us as a team. Even though individuals in the team may have already had a good system, it's really good to have this as an organisation so we can better work together."

"I learned a huge amount from the CAST Digital Fellowship and feel passionately that tech could have a transformative impact in delivering social change; particularly in times of austerity and cuts to public services, which have brought about both a vast increase in the demand on charities and a reduction in the resources available to fund their work.
Alex Bryce, National Ugly Mugs

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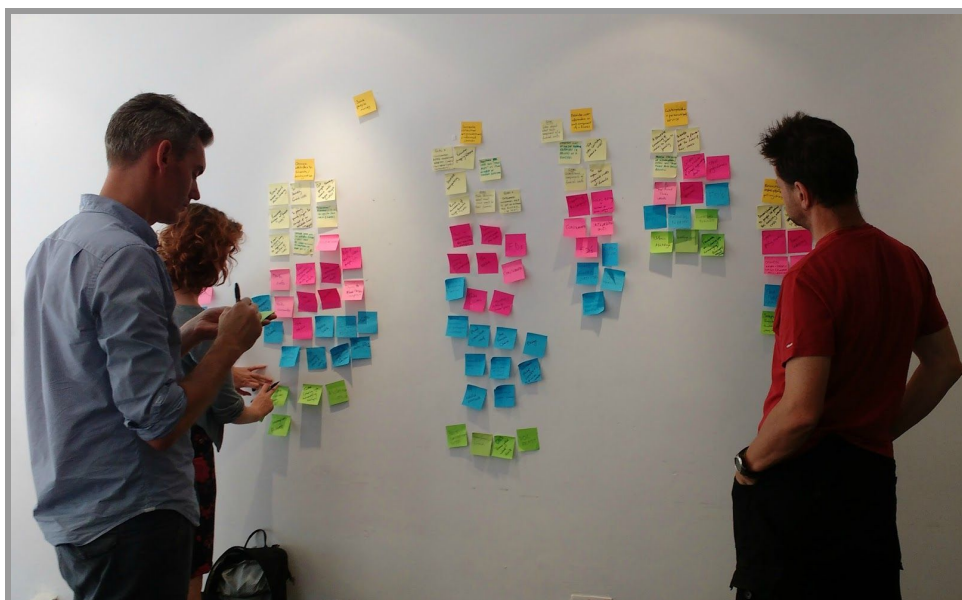www.wearecast.org.uk

19

Quaker Social Action (QSA)

Digital Fellow: Duncan McLaggan, Operations Manager

QSA is an ambitious, services-focused charity that doesn't shy away from new approaches. However, the organisation recognised that its well-developed offline support in the areas of poverty and social justice could have enhanced reach and impact through the improved use of digital technology.

On the first day of the Fellowship, QSA Fellow, Duncan McLaggan, commented,

"We are like the Soviet Union in the 1980s in terms of technology, so I'm trying to bring us into the modern world. It's not about putting everything online but we need to be better at incorporating it."

Eight weeks of action-learning workshops later, Duncan ran a session with his team to share some of his insights from the programme and gather together ideas around what sort of digital service they might like to create in their design workshop with CAST and Founders & Coders. This helped focus the creative process on the day itself, where seven members of the QSA team gathered (including the Director, Campaigns Managers and the charity's IT Officer), and came to a clear consensus on the problem area they wanted to tackle: funeral poverty.

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20

By the end of the design workshop, the team had mapped out a clear vision of a new interactive online tool to complement their Fair Funerals campaign, which will help drive transparency around funeral costs.

Through clickable map icons, the tool helps raise awareness about the average cost of funerals in different areas. It breaks down taboos around what people actually need to arrange a funeral and which items are extras. The design was mocked up and then developed in the subsequent two-week 'build sprint', managed by Duncan as Product Owner.

Most importantly, the whole team was engaged in the design and decision-making process, which both drew on their domain expertise and encouraged them become digital advocates. Duncan wrote a guest post for Charity Digital News about his experience of implementing an agile methodology to create the new prototype service, which is still in development and aims to be tested with real users in the coming months.

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21

QSA has also used their learnings around human-centred design in developing a clear set of pathways and metrics for their [new website](). The site now guides beneficiary visitors and supporters through clear and distinct routes to the information they need.

"The Fellowship was a catalyst for our organisation to shift in a new direction – improving the way we approach service development, urging us to become more rigorous, and exploring how digital can increase our reach beyond our natural home.

"Personally it's also fun, engaging and provides new skills and knowledge in an area in which the nonprofit sector sorely needs them. Highly recommended."

Duncan McLaggan, Operations Manager, QSA.

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22

Additional reading and viewing

- [Testimonials from Fellows (short video)](#)

- [Guest blog from Digital Fellow Duncan McLaggan, Operations Manager at QSA](#)

- [Guest blog from Digital Fellow Suzanne Jacob, Deputy CEO at SafeLives](#)

- [Guest blog from Digital Fellow Alex Bryce, CEO of National Ugly Mugs](#)

- CAST blogs: [Programme review](#), [Day 1 of the programme](#), [Day 2 of the programme.](#)

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email CAST's Digital Fellowship Lead, Ellie Hale, at ellie@wearecast.org.uk.

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23