

# [News story: Combating rural isolation with technology: apply for funding](#)

The [GovTech Catalyst](#) is to invest up to £250,000 in projects that combat digital exclusion and a lack of access to transport in rural communities in South Wales.

## **Impact on people's wellbeing**

[Monmouthshire County Council](#) is home to 92,800 people, with isolation and loneliness having a significant impact on wellbeing.

Through the GovTech Catalyst – government's £20 million fund to find creative solutions to complex public sector problems – Monmouthshire aims to develop digital innovations that could connect isolated people, transform public services and support transport opportunities.

The first phase will fund a series of feasibility studies. The best ideas could go on to share up to £1 million to develop them further.

This competition is being run under the SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative).

## **Addressing rural challenges**

The competition is calling for low cost, co-designed, user-friendly technology that tackle social isolation.

There are 3 main challenges that projects should address. These are:

- how to use technology to reduce loneliness for older people who are currently digitally excluded
- how to co-ordinate transport to improve the ability to travel while reducing public subsidy
- how to better connect people in rural areas to improve wellbeing, reduce pressure on health and social care and improve efficiency of services

Priority groups for projects include:

- older adults
- people with disabilities
- volunteers with a desire to help those in need in the community
- young people trying to access work

The suggested solution must be suitable for everyone.

## Competition information

- the competition opens on 16 July 2018, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 29 August 2018
- any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea can apply
- we expect phase 1 contracts to be worth up to £50,000 and to last up to 3 months
- we expect phase 2 contracts to be worth up to £500,000
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- you can register to attend a briefing event on 16 July 2018 to find out more about the opportunity