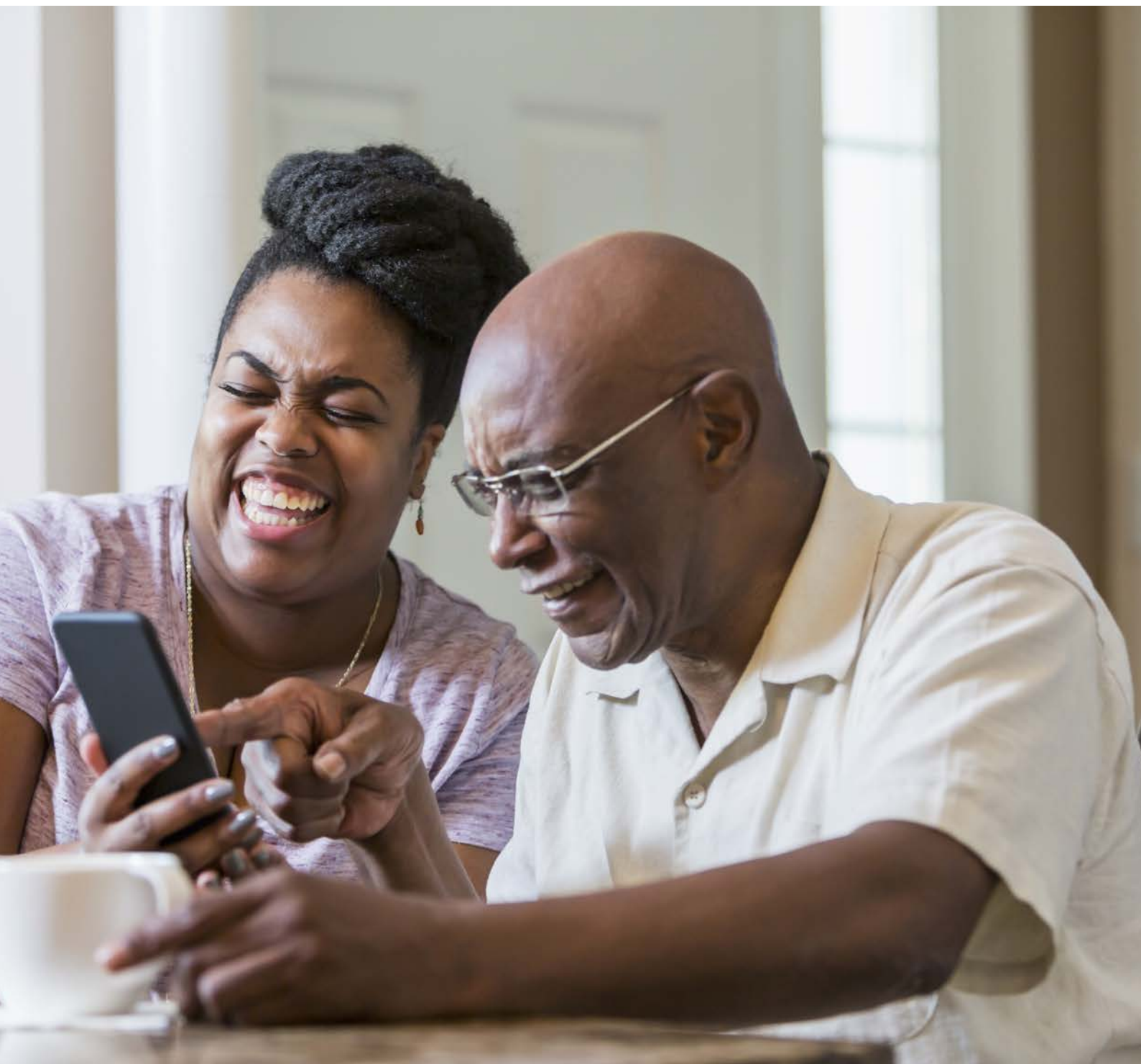


# IMPACT REPORT

March 2020 - April 2021  
Year 2





## WHO WE ARE

Age UK Hammersmith and Fulham is an independent local charity supporting older people across the borough.

Our aim is to promote the wellbeing of older people and to help make their lives fulfilling and enjoyable by offering a wide range of practical services and activities.

## WHAT WE DO

We are committed to addressing poverty, improving wellbeing, mental and physical health, combatting disadvantage, defeating ageism, recognising diversity, addressing social exclusion and promoting more effective public services for older people.

## THE DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT

The modern age is dominated by the Internet and older people can be left at a disadvantage as a result. The **generous 5-year funding and support by The National Lottery Community Fund since April 2019**, has enabled us to provide digital skill training, in order to reduce such disadvantages and as a consequence, address loneliness, isolation, poverty and deprivation. It has also helped to give access to significant services across the Borough and enable older people to stay connected with organisations, friends and family.

The project connects skilled Digital Champion volunteers with clients to demonstrate the usefulness of technology in their everyday life. Digital skill sessions are provided on a one to one basis, using any type of device (laptop, tablet, smartphones etc) giving clients the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Given that older people often lack confidence when it comes to learning digital skills, we have adopted a method in which they choose both the pace and content in which they learn.

In order to reach as many clients as possible, we combine social events and activities with the process of learning. We endeavour to continue reaching as many clients as possible to share the much-needed gift of digital skills.



# DIGITAL INCLUSION AND COVID-19

As the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, it **created more isolated and lonely people unable to stay connected** to friends, family, local services and the world itself. The impact of the virus, as well as shielding measures created a significant surge in demand for digital support, as well as an increased interest in accessing services online.

Due to the national lockdown in March 2020, access to our Activity Centre was restricted and prevented the much needed social interaction, that is at the heart of the community in which we operate. The project requirements were rapidly modified to reflect and address this urgent client need.

Whilst our other in-house services **focused on providing essentials**, such as meal, grocery and medication deliveries, wellbeing support and telephone befriending, we focused on providing digital assistance remotely. This included transferring as many of the centre's activities and services to online platforms. However, that elevated the issues which were identified at the onset of this project, **a need for tailored digital skill training, accessible devices, affordable connectivity, and online safety awareness.**

As many of our client's experience **data poverty**, which is the inability to afford sufficient, private and internet connection to meet essential needs (as defined by the Good Things Foundation), this posed a significant problem. As well as clients having limited access to a personal device and digital "know how", providing support via video call or a messaging service such as WhatsApp proved challenging.

Due to this digital divide, most of the skill sessions needed to be delivered via the telephone, which clients found increasingly difficult and resulted in some of our Digital Champion volunteers unfortunately disengage with providing support. Delivering a remote service, also required volunteers to make and receive client phone calls from their personal mobiles and or home phones, posing both financial and security issues.

However, adamant not to let self-isolation and social distancing measures get the better of us, **we were determined to rise to the challenge!**

Online Training  
Portal Enrolments



# YEAR 2 OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS



Digital Champion  
Volunteers



Online Activities,  
Outreach Events and  
Workshops Delivered



220

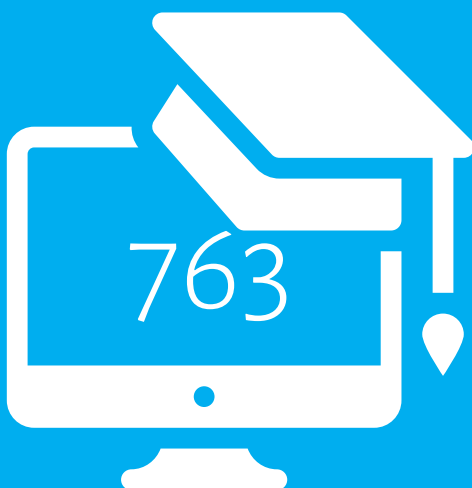
Participants in Digital Skill Sessions at the Activity Centre, via telephone, video call, in homes, online activities, outreach workshops and events.

Local Business  
and Community  
Partnerships



20

Digital Skill Learners



Housebound resident  
interventions via  
telephone / video call

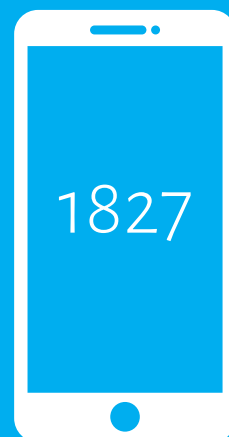


2212

Older people supported  
to learn digital skills



Clients Engaged  
via Outreach



# HOW WE HELP

As the world started to recognise that having the means to stay connected digitally was essential to health and wellbeing amongst other things, our digital team received numerous referrals, as well as conducted over **485 wellbeing phone calls to all clients** who had engaged with the project within the past year. This enabled us to identify who required additional support (i.e. shopping and prescription collections) whilst accessing their digital need.

It was identified that over 100 clients were interested in continuing digital support, **however half did not have access to a device**, whilst approximately 30 needed support with obtaining **broadband or mobile data services**. Our small pool of laptops and tablets could not meet demand and lacked connectivity. However, appealing to our collaborative partnerships resulted in more than **50 data enabled devices being generously gifted** to clients from Lloyds Banking Group, Devices.Now and The Good Things Foundation.

**Weekly online activities and events** such as art classes, Yoga, Bingo, reading groups, quizzes, monthly afternoon tea talks (i.e. banking and shopping online safely tips) Get Online Week, chair based exercises and dance sessions ensured that clients still engaged with their much loved activity with a **total of 1343 attendances**.

A quarterly **digital newsletter, The Digital Digest** was also piloted to help clients explore free online events within the community and worldwide. We experienced a positive result, as over **60% engaged with the digital offerings in the first edition**, we endeavour to build on this success to encourage client confidence.

Our partnership with Lloyds Banking Group enabled us to provide a **dedicated telephone support service** via We Are Digital, who volunteered their time and expertise to clients and filled the much needed gap for telephone support.

A cost effective solution was also found by our telecommunications service provider Evad in the form of a web based communication app. This permitted our Digital Champion volunteers to offer remote support and call clients from a recognised Age UKH&F number, whilst protecting personal details and client confidentiality.



# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

As staff had to work from home, the app also enabled office calls to be seamlessly received, whilst a newly created auto attendant service efficiently fielded calls and eased the processing of the **12,967 calls received throughout the year**.

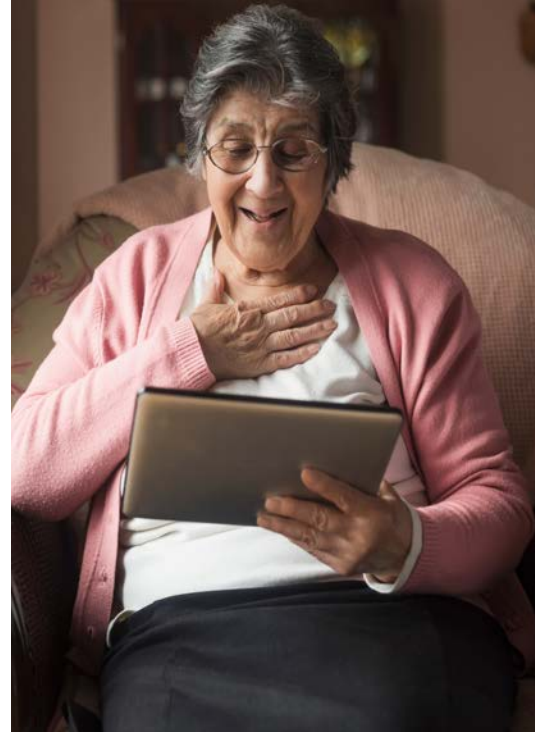
Staff were trained and supported to transition to home working to maintain "business as usual" by using M365 whilst conducting meetings, processing volunteer interviews and DBS checks via video conferencing tools.

Digital sub projects were created to address additional underlying issues namely, a **Digital Device Aftercare Service** (supporting clients who either had a device or had been gifted a device to get the most of out it), an impartial **Internet Advice Service** to help clients investigate suitable broadband and or mobile/dongle data provisions. The service which commenced in November 2020 has **assisted nearly 30 clients save over £600**. It also shined a light on unsavoury practices conducted by service providers and was published in the [Times Newspaper](#).

As the nation embarked on conducting its first ever digital [Census](#), we were successfully selected as only one of 3 dedicated Census Support Centres in Hammersmith and Fulham. This resulted in a huge amount of additional support for clients to complete this legal requirement online. Our trained Census Advisors made over 2,389 phone calls and successfully completed 130 forms which awarded us the accolade of producing one of the highest turnouts for the London area.

A cloud printing system (Princh) was trialled, as clients are unable to print easily whilst using the Activity Centre's Cybercafe (IT Room). However despite its usefulness, due to temporary closure and the lack of footfall, the need was not justifiable but will be revisited in the near future.

As online safety awareness is imperative, we piloted a scheme to offer clients a group video call workshop, with a major bank to encourage online banking and transacting best practice. However, clients were apprehensive and lacked confidence. We decided that it would be more beneficial for a Digital Inclusion Project IT Trainer to approach this topic both holistically and systematically.



“  
"THE HELP THAT AGE UK H&F'S  
DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT  
HAS GIVEN US HAS BEEN  
INVALUABLE.  
I COULDN'T HAVE RUN THE  
ZOOM LESSONS WITHOUT IT!  
YOU ARE ALWAYS THERE FOR  
US WHICH IS WHY WE NOW  
HAVE 2 CLASSES WEEKLY."

LORNA - LET'S PAINT ART  
CLASS INSTRUCTOR

”



# YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISONS

As the project is now in its second year, there has been growing momentum for digital support with an **81% increase in learners**. The 421 initial learners who received support from our digital inclusion service in Year 1 almost doubled to **763 people in Year 2 (Apr 2020 - Mar 2021) learning a digital skill** highlighting the substantial need for the service.

The impact and popularity of the service has been demonstrated by the number of clients who have continued learning since Year 1.

As online activities have provided the opportunity for clients to stay connected, for the foreseeable future, they will be conducted in conjunction with Activity Centre services. Offering a hybrid solution, so that isolated clients can continue to attend virtually.

## NEW DIGITAL SKILL LEARNERS IN YEAR 2

**377**



## ONLINE ACTIVITY ATTENDEES IN YEAR 2

**1343**

## CONTINUING DIGITAL SKILL LEARNERS FROM YEAR 1

**386**

## NEW DIGITAL VOLUNTEERS IN YEAR 2

**11**

## CONTINUING DIGITAL VOLUNTEERS FROM YEAR 1

**5**

Our Digital Champion volunteers have tirelessly continued to provide outstanding support to clients, despite the ongoing challenges. Namely, client reluctance to use the Learn My Way (online training portal), as well as video conferencing tools (preferring face to face support instead). The **27 digital volunteers in Year 1 have increased by 10% to 30 in Year 2**.

This positive growth is the result of nurturing volunteer relationships, ensuring that they feel part of the project, as well as collaborating with placement schemes, corporate, unemployed persons and reaching out to those who simply want to give back.

Working in partnership with our Befriending service, volunteer befrienders are being supported to encourage and assist their befriendees to engage with technology. This is an ongoing initiative which will be further developed in the coming years.

## TEMPORARY DIGITAL VOLUNTEERS

**19**



# COMMENTS

*"We should all get used to the Digital Service  
- it's a lifeline to help us stay connected.  
I am now never alone!"*

Janet - Digital Skills Learner



*"It has been such a great pleasure working with the Age UK H&F Digital Team. To be able to make a difference in the organisation and be useful in someone's life created a huge confidence in me. I managed to build my self confidence and abilities, gaining a lot of experience and skills too. Volunteering is one way of getting life experience and to be able to support others, take their burden away or fulfil their needs, it feels so great and brings happiness."*

Fiori - Volunteer Digital Champion



*"Just to tell you that I am very pleased at your devotion and exceptional help and service. Your attention to detail, patience and exactness stand out as very worthy of emulation. My forms have been filled and sent out with your help."*

*"Thank you very much once again and God bless."*

Rowland - Digital Skills Learner



*"I wanted to volunteer as a Digital Advisor with Age UK H&F because I saw my Mother taken advantage of, even though she had Dementia."*

*"Also seeing news reports where elderly people spoke about being taken advantage of by companies, infuriated me and I was determined to play a part in helping as many people as I could avoid this."*

Kaye - Internet Advice Service - Volunteer Digital Advisor



*"The service is 10 out of 10, absolutely wonderful people, they listen to you and are very tolerant. They book an appointment for me and help me all around with my mobile and tablet. Now I can use Whatsapp to video call my friend in Australia"*

Kevin - Digital Skills Learner



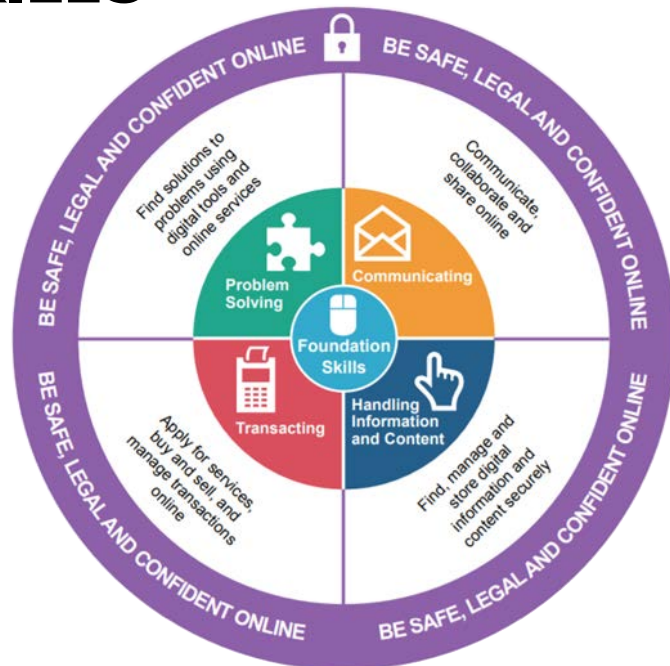
# ESSENTIAL DIGITAL SKILLS

The Essential Digital Skills Framework defines the digital skills adults need to safely benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world, as defined by the Department of Education.

The Essential Digital Skills standards are:

- Digital Foundational Skills
- Communicating
- Handling information and content
- Transacting
- Problem Solving
- Being safe and legal online

We used the framework to categorise all **2,603 digital skills interventions**. As expected, there was a **focus on communicating which is an increase of 39% from Year 1**.



Essential Digital Skills Framework (2019)

Although there is an **urgent need for online safety training**, it proved very difficult to deliver this remotely, as clients usually enlist our help for a specific reason. Whether is it one off assistance to complete an online form or help to generally improve their digital skills. However, our newly appointed IT trainer will investigate suitable methods in delivering this much needed training. We endeavour that this will help both to provide confidence for reluctant beginners and strengthen the developing skills of all learners.

## Year 2: Age UK H&F Essential Digital Skills



Digital Foundation Skills  
(inc Health & Wellbeing)



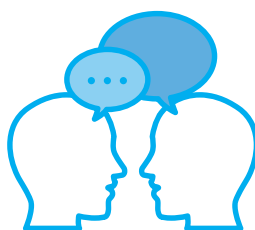
Handling Info & Content  
(Finding Info online)



Transacting  
(Managing and Saving Money)



Being Safe and Legal Online



Communicating



Problem Solving  
(Troubleshooting)

# CAN YOU HELP US?

To meet service demand, **we require additional funding** to support low income learners with suitable devices / data connectivity, transform our dated Cybercafe into a comfortable, modern IT room and pay for extending staff additional working hours.

DONATE



... and if you have some free time to spare, why not come along and **volunteer!**



# SO...WHAT'S NEXT?

In readiness for Year 3 of the project, we will keep working hard to bridge the digital divide.

- **Digital Befriender Focus**

As the nature of the pandemic is still unknown, we plan to prepare housebound learners, as much as possible to stay digitally connected in readiness for any future restrictions.

- **IT Training Courses**

Increased focus will be given to create set training paths for learners, as well as standard online security and safety awareness training, amongst other things.

- **Impact Reporting**

To ensure that learners are fully benefiting from the training that we offer, we endeavour to further develop measures to collate and process useful feedback.

- **Raise funding for our Cybercafe refurbishment**

Feedback from clients has suggested that the Cybercafe requires some much needed attention in terms to aesthetics and equipment. It also need to be reconfigured into that of an IT training classroom to support training by the IT Trainer.

- **Collaborative partnerships**

During the lifetime of the project, we have obtained a total of 35 partnerships, however we endeavour to would develop these into more meaningful proactive collaborations.

...and finally, watch this space!

## CONTACT US

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