

Digital Brighton & Hove

Phase 2 Evaluation & Impact Report 2017-2019



PROJECT WORK, KEY STATISTICS, ACHIEVEMENTS
AND CHALLENGES

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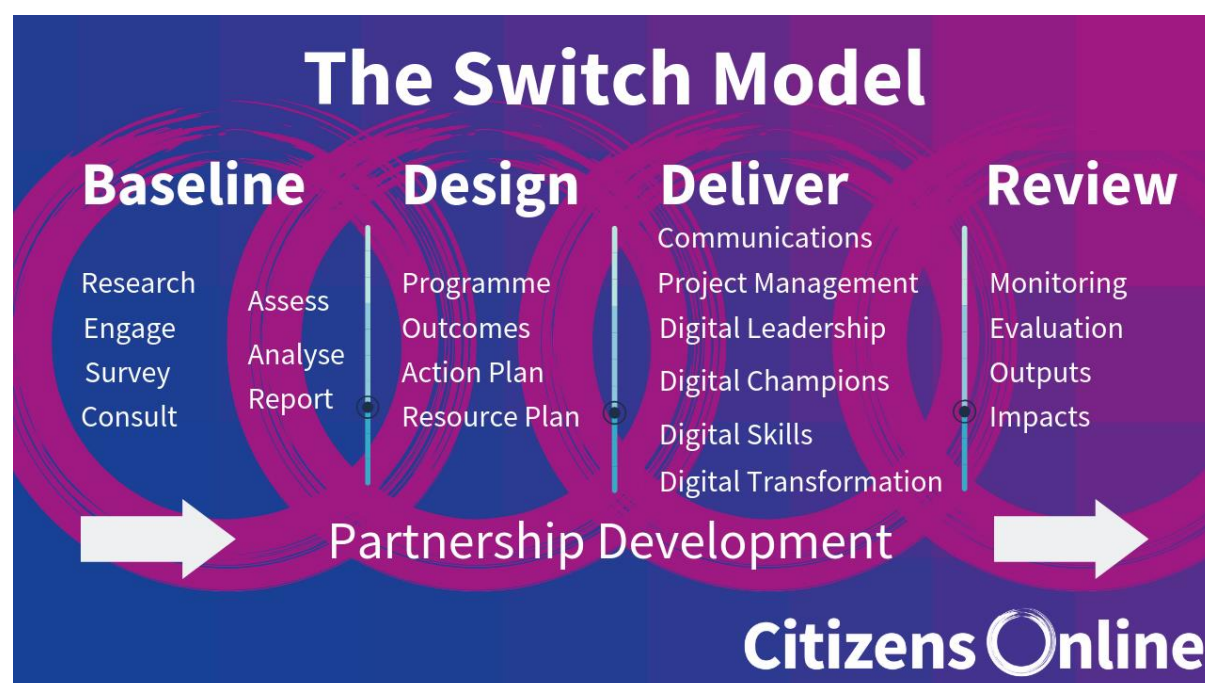
INTRODUCTION

The Digital Brighton & Hove project commenced in 2015, originally commissioned by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) as a stand-alone piece of research into digital exclusion issues in the city undertaken by Citizens Online.

In autumn 2015 the project was boosted by funding from the (then) Big Lottery Fund, BT and BHCC under the new UK wide 'One Digital' programme of digital inclusion work. It developed into a fully operational digital inclusion delivery project, with a small team employed by Citizens Online that commenced working directly in the community and training other services from February 2016.

The 21-month period September 2015 to May 2017 was 'Phase 1' of Digital Brighton & Hove. The intention was to deliver a 'whole system' approach to tackle digital exclusion in the city, using Citizens Online's award winning model, then called 'Digital Resilience', now named 'Switch'.

Figure 1: The Switch Model



PHASE 2 EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

Based on the successful delivery of digital inclusion objectives in Phase 1, Phase 2 was commissioned for a further two years running June 2017 to May 2019, funded by Brighton & Hove City Council and The Big Lottery Fund.

Digital Brighton & Hove has achieved a significant amount and exceeded on its targets, recruiting a high number of digital champions (DCs) across the city, delivering numerous digital training and support sessions, supporting organisations and most importantly developing a sustainable network of stakeholders who have been signed up and engaged with the digital inclusion challenge.

While the Digital Brighton & Hove project delivery involved many aspects of the Switch model, three key performance indicators were identified as part of the One Digital programme that formed the core drivers for delivery: Engaging Organisations; Recruiting DCs and supporting End Learners (beneficiaries).

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Our targets were exceeded in all areas in the course of the project as can be seen in the table below. By the end of Phase 2 May 2019, the Digital Brighton & Hove project had:

- **Engaged with 241 organisations (*target 195*)**
- **Recruited 436 Digital Champions (*target 421*)**
- **Supported at least 4,503 unique individuals (*target 3,200*)**
- **Recorded 6,944 sessions of digital skills support**

With regard to sessions of digital skills support and individuals assisted, we know that the recording systems capture only a fraction of the total level of activity and so the extent of the impact is much greater in reality. We make some estimation of the true number of support interventions later on in this report.

ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED

The Switch model of digital inclusion that Citizens Online promotes through the Digital Brighton & Hove project emphasises the development of strong, local partnerships. We're delighted with the progress made by Digital Brighton & Hove, where a total of 241 organisations have been engaged – exceeding the target by 24%. Further, we believe the majority (90%) of these organisations are Actively Engaged (216 versus 25 which have been engaged to a lower degree so far). In addition, the network's twitter account has over 800 followers (and over 200 on Facebook), while the network newsletter is sent to over 1,000 contacts from all sectors.

Figure 2: How many organisations has Digital Brighton & Hove engaged?

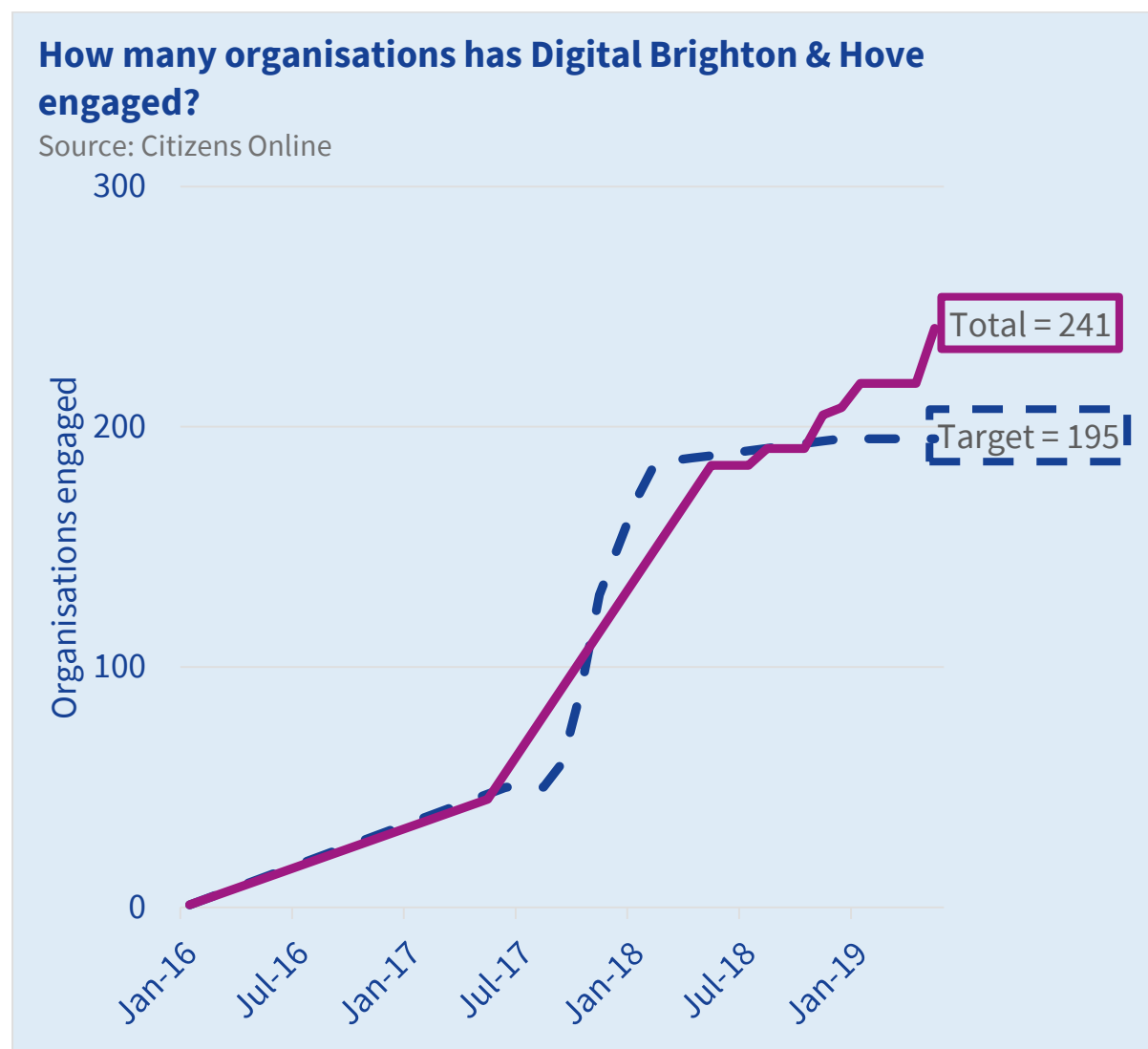


Figure 2 shows that the number of organisations engaged in Phase 2 (196), far exceeds the number in Phase 1 (45). Despite a much higher target reflecting the impressive performance in Phase 1, the target in Phase 2 was still exceeded by 46 organisations – more than were engaged during Phase 1. Figure 3 shows that engagement of organisations peaked in Year 2, before slowing more recently – as would be expected as once the majority of organisations most likely to be engaged have been reached.

Figure 3: Organisations Engaged - Actual vs Target, comparison by Phase of project

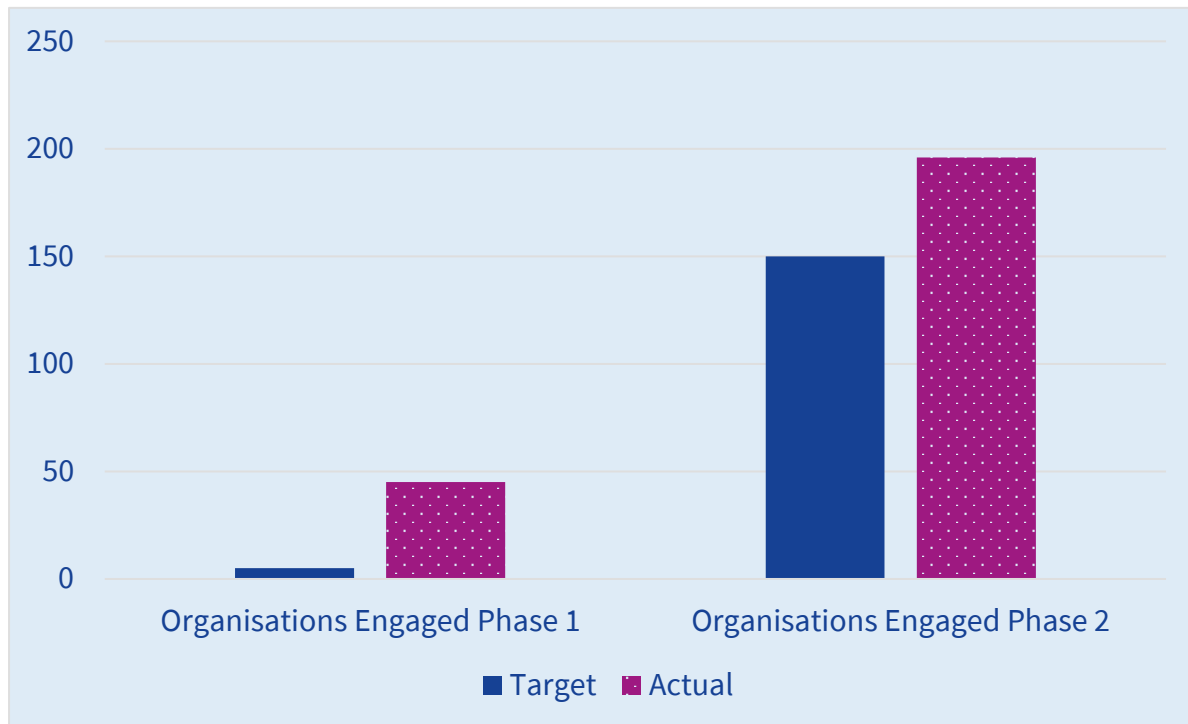
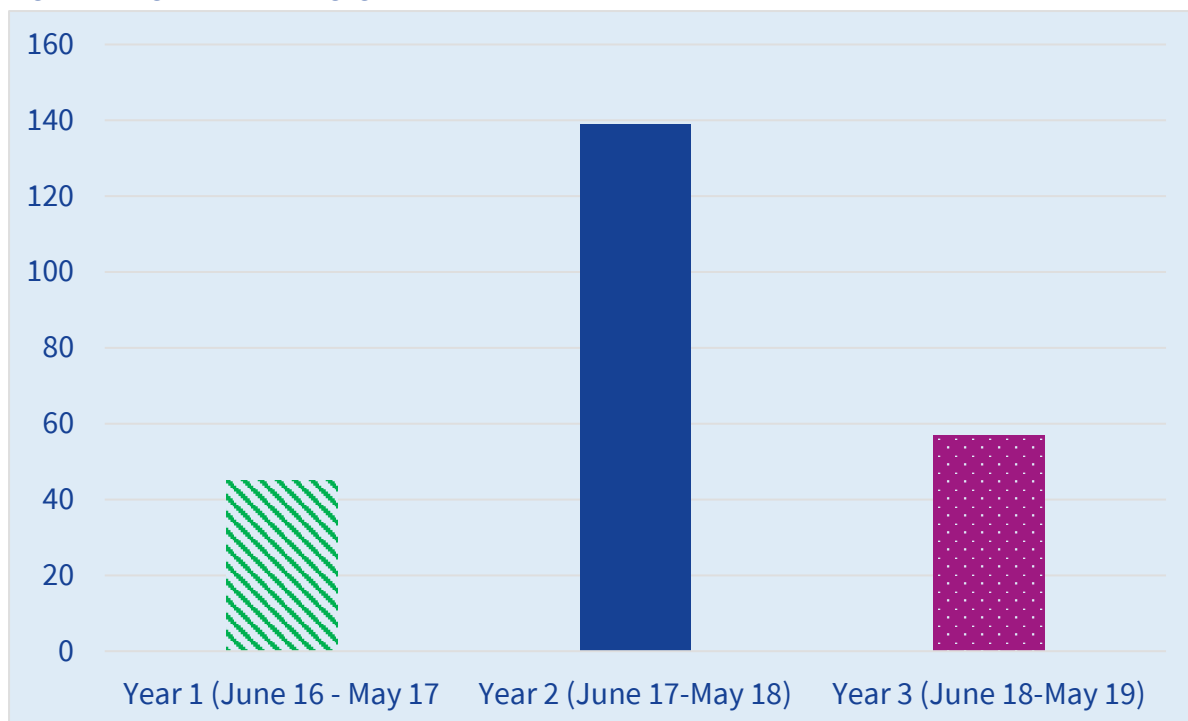


Figure 4: Organisations Engaged, by year



Case Study: YMCA EVOLVE

YMCA Evolve project offers a floating support coaching service to adults receiving housing-related support, and who are ready to take the next step towards education, volunteering, and vocational training or employment.

Sessions showcased various digital services, culminating in the creation of a film by service users providing a whistle-stop tour of the centre and showcasing activities such as cooking and games - with music, annotations and special effects added.

These Digital sessions have given service users and staff the skills and confidence to be able to celebrate their project and achievements in such a way that can be shared with funders, friends, family and other potential attendees.



“

Please do come back! We have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know new digital tricks, and getting to know you.
- service user via Facebook

“

These informal digital sessions have really helped our service users engage with digital skills in a fun and engaging way. There are certainly many areas where we can expand our digital knowledge and I got really interested in the digital champion aspect
- Fabienne, Evolve Work and Learning Coach

We are really enjoying what you have been doing. Your involvement has really prompted me to try and get to grips with using digital better; I now feel really confident to admin the Facebook page and am now using it actively and in ways I wasn't before!
- Georgia, Service Manager, Work & Learning

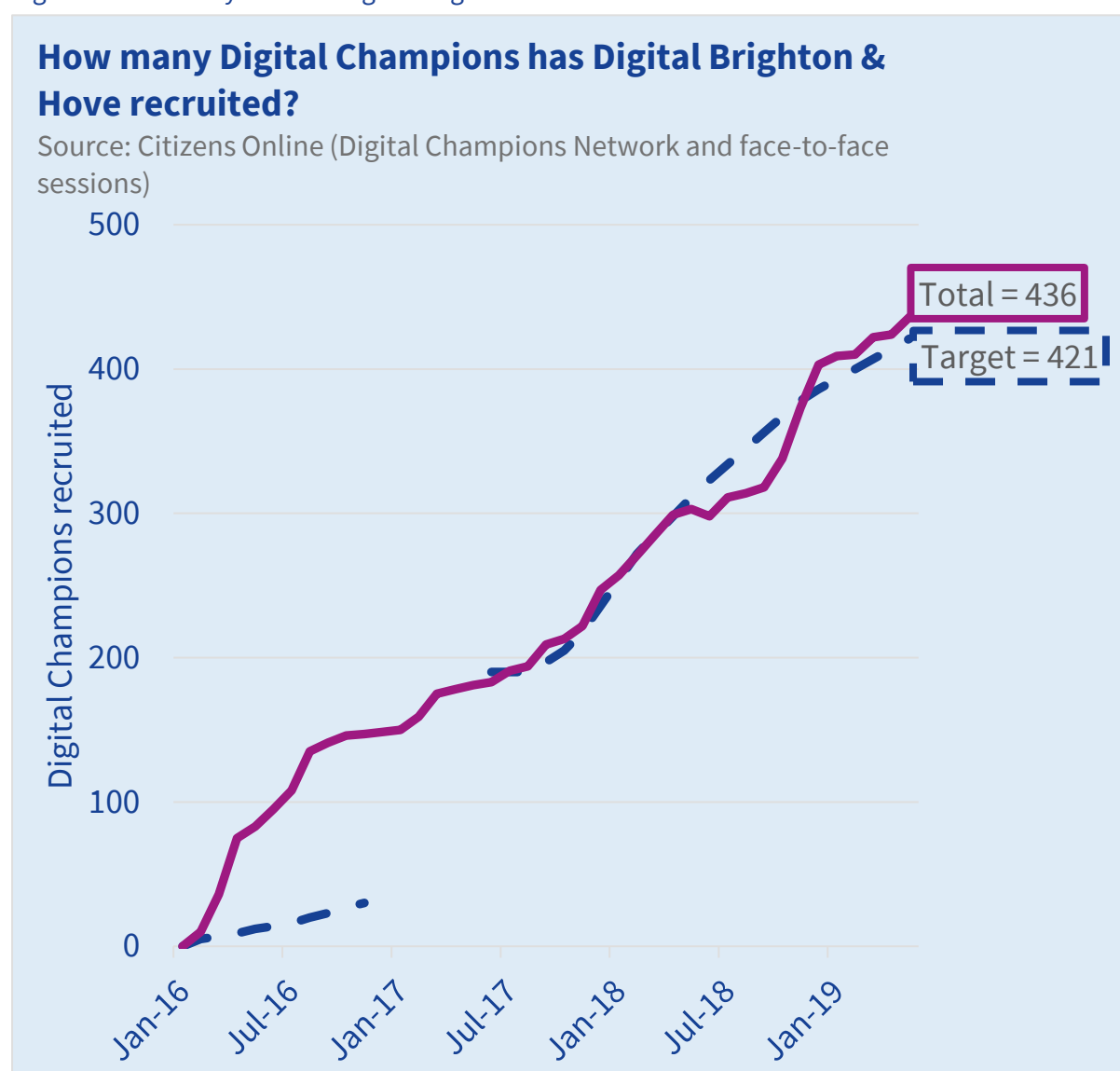
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Read our full case study: [Helping people in supported accommodation to share their stories using digital tools](#)

DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

The level of engagement with organisations has enabled the project to exceed its KPI target for recruitment of Digital Champions too. Though this was by a more modest margin of 4% (15 DCs), the project was below target as recently as October 2018 and has exceeded the target by recruiting good numbers of DCs right up to the end of Phase 2.

Figure 5: How many DCs has Digital Brighton & Hove recruited?



Case Study: Community Digital Champion

Josie Jeffery

Josie worked for the project as a part-time Digital Champion helping up to 15 learners a week. She supported a number of community groups and organisations in Whitehawk, Bevendean and East Brighton to enable them to increase their online presence by setting up social media accounts.



Josie (right) with Sylvie - one of the many people she helped learn to get online

She has also enjoyed running a number of fun social media workshops helping older people combat social isolation by using Facebook or Whatsapp. Josie has enjoyed building strong relationships with residents in local seniors housing schemes and has been supporting them on a drop-in or a appointment basis, helping them with online shopping, browsing, problem solving, learning new things, entertainment and borrowing books from the Library.

“

I find the work very rewarding especially when I work with clients over a period of time and can see their progression. I enjoy finding new and fun ways to make a complicated subject more digestible to people...

Working with people is unpredictable and no day is ever the same, be prepared to meet some incredible people. You don't need to be a tech whizz, just some basic skills, a bucket loads of patience and a desire to help others!

”

Read our full case study: [Digital Champion helps service users and staff to get online](#)

PHASE 2 EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

Figure 5 shows that the number of DCs recruited in Phase 2 (289), is nearly double that of Phase 1 (147). Indeed, the target in Phase 2 was still exceeded by 25 DCs – almost as many as the original Phase 1 target of 30. Figure 6 shows that recruitment of DCs has continued to increase each year, with an impressive 133 DCs recruited in the most recent year alone.

Figure 6: Digital Champion recruitment - Actual vs Target, comparison by Phase of project

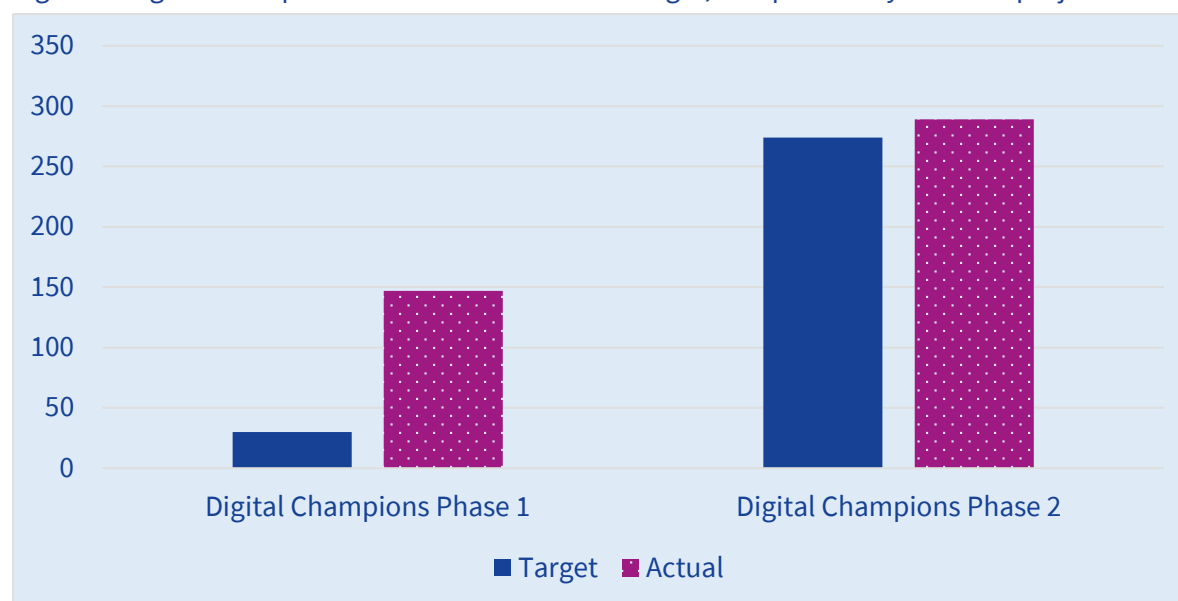
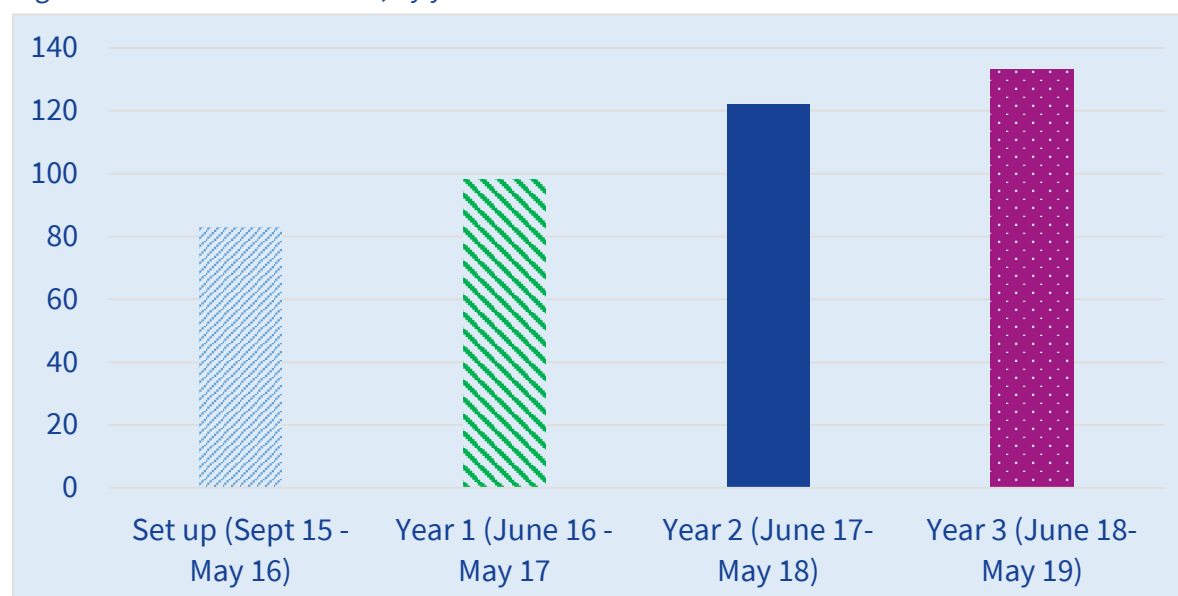


Figure 7: DCs recruited to DCN, by year



Case Study: Volunteer Digital Champion

Peter Greenfield

Peter Greenfield has been volunteering with the Digital Brighton & Hove project since October 2016. His volunteering work has mainly involved helping older people use smart phones and tablets, while also providing occasional help with Windows or Apple Laptops or PCs. Peter has been assisting visited senior housing schemes every week to run 'Digital Gadget Drop-ins' while also providing support as a 'Tech Buddy' for the Hop50+ service in Hove.



“I have found that since volunteering as a Digital Champion, communicating with elderly people is a new skill I have started to learn. I believe this is just as important if not more so than assisting with the technology. Often someone has a device and no one has taken the time to explain to them in simple terms how to access a browser or what the internet can be used for – e.g. borrowing e-books from the library, communicating to friends and family via Skype etc.”

[Read our full case study on Volunteer Digital Champion Peter Greenfield](#)

THE DIGITAL CHAMPIONS NETWORK

It has been very challenging to understand ‘which DCs are actively helping others with digital skills’ based on the numbers of recruits alone or the numbers of Digital Champions Network (DCN) registrations. One way to consider this question is to identify how many DCs completed courses on the DCN or recorded support sessions.

303 of the 436 DCs recruited to the Digital Brighton & Hove project had completed at least one course on the DCN learning platform, with 289 completing one of three courses Citizens Online identified as ‘core training’.

In total, Digital Brighton & Hove DCs completed 593 courses (Table 1). We are pleased that 64 DCs completed at least two courses, and that 28 completed five or more. The fact that 15 DCs completed 10 or more DCN courses is consistent with our understanding of how many DCs were regularly active using the DCN. Unsurprisingly, these include our employed Citizens Online DCs; Glenn (who completed all 17 courses) and Josie (who completed 14). However, the majority of DCs registered to the DCN completed only a single course (186, 61% of those who completed a course). This reflects our understanding that only a minority of DCs registered on the DCN are also active users of the DCN. It may also reflect the fact that some DCs received face-to-face training from Citizens Online, while others may have received other forms of training from their employers or other external sources.

By far the most popular course was “Digital Champion Essentials” – completed by 234 DCs (the majority of DCs recruited to the DCN, 53.7%, completed this course).

The second most popular course was another identified as core training due to its value to Embedded DCs providing digital skills support as part of their existing role. Thirty-four DCs (7.8% of those recruited to the DCN) completed the “Using your role to help customers get online” course.

“Making Digital Work” was the third course Citizens Online identified as being of particular value, and this was completed by 31 DCs – 7.1% of those recruited. It is clear that some courses offer content that is specific to particular demographics – such as people with a physical disability or dexterity issue – and therefore unsurprising that these courses were

PHASE 2 EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

completed by fewer numbers of DCs, presumably on encountering people with particular accessibility issues.

Table 1: DCN Courses completed by DCs registered with the DBH project. Source: DCN

Course Title	Course completions	% of 436 recruited DCs
Digital Champion Essentials	234	53.7
Using your role to help customers get online	34	7.8
Essentials for engaging with older people	32	7.3
Making Digital Work	31	7.1
Online security, banking and money	29	6.7
Using government services online	28	6.4
Digital fun: using the internet to help people love later life!	27	6.2
Finding a job 1	25	5.7
Helping someone with an accessibility need: working with people with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities	23	5.3
Helping someone with an accessibility need: working with people with memory loss	20	4.6
Making and saving money online	17	3.9
Finding a job 2	15	3.4
How to use the Internet to develop your professional profile	14	3.2
Visual impairment and technology	14	3.2
[Title unavailable]	14	3.2
Helping someone with an accessibility need: identifying accessibility needs	13	3.0
Helping someone with an accessibility need: working with learners with a physical disability or dexterity issue	13	3.0
Helping someone with an accessibility need: working with learners who are deaf or hard of hearing	10	2.3

Case Study: Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP) Volunteer Coordinator on using the Digital Champions Network



The Digital Champions Network (DCN) has been a vital resource for our digital support team at BUCFP. It is used by both staff and volunteers to aid our drop in digital inclusion project.

We support people in severe poverty and crisis. Our digital support project offers one to one, drop in support for Centre Users to get online, access emails, social media, update their CVs, job applications, apply for further education, access government services online and much more. We are a small grassroots organisation with limited funding available for volunteer training opportunities and learning resources.



Alex Pritchard (centre), Volunteer Coordinator at BUCFP, at a network meeting

Therefore having such a comprehensive resource such as the DCN available to us for free, has enabled our volunteers and staff to feel confident when offering digital support. Last year our volunteers provided 400 (3h) drop in digital support sessions to over 600 people.

See the feedback below from a Centre User who was assisted by one of our volunteers Dawn (Dawn had completed the 'Accessing government services online' course before assisting this individual):

"I found the gov.uk website very confusing to use at home so booked an appointment here. Dawn logged me straight in and helped me complete the application. We need more services like this. Dawn was very helpful and patient and I am grateful to the staff & volunteers here for all they do."



Read our full case study: [BUCFP trains 14 volunteers using the Digital Champions Network](#)

Case Study: Professional Digital Champion

Glenn Lloyd

Glenn worked with the project since it began in January 2016. He helped local partners set up and run Digital support sessions, digital Gadget drop-ins; a 6-week 'Internet Essentials' course, one-off themed training sessions and Digital Champion training.



Glenn speaking at a network event

“

I often encourage others to become Digital Champions, mainly as it can be very rewarding seeing someone realise that they are not 'too old' or 'stupid' to do things online. Encouragement and praise are the keys to passing on any skill.

”

Glenn's top-tips for DCS

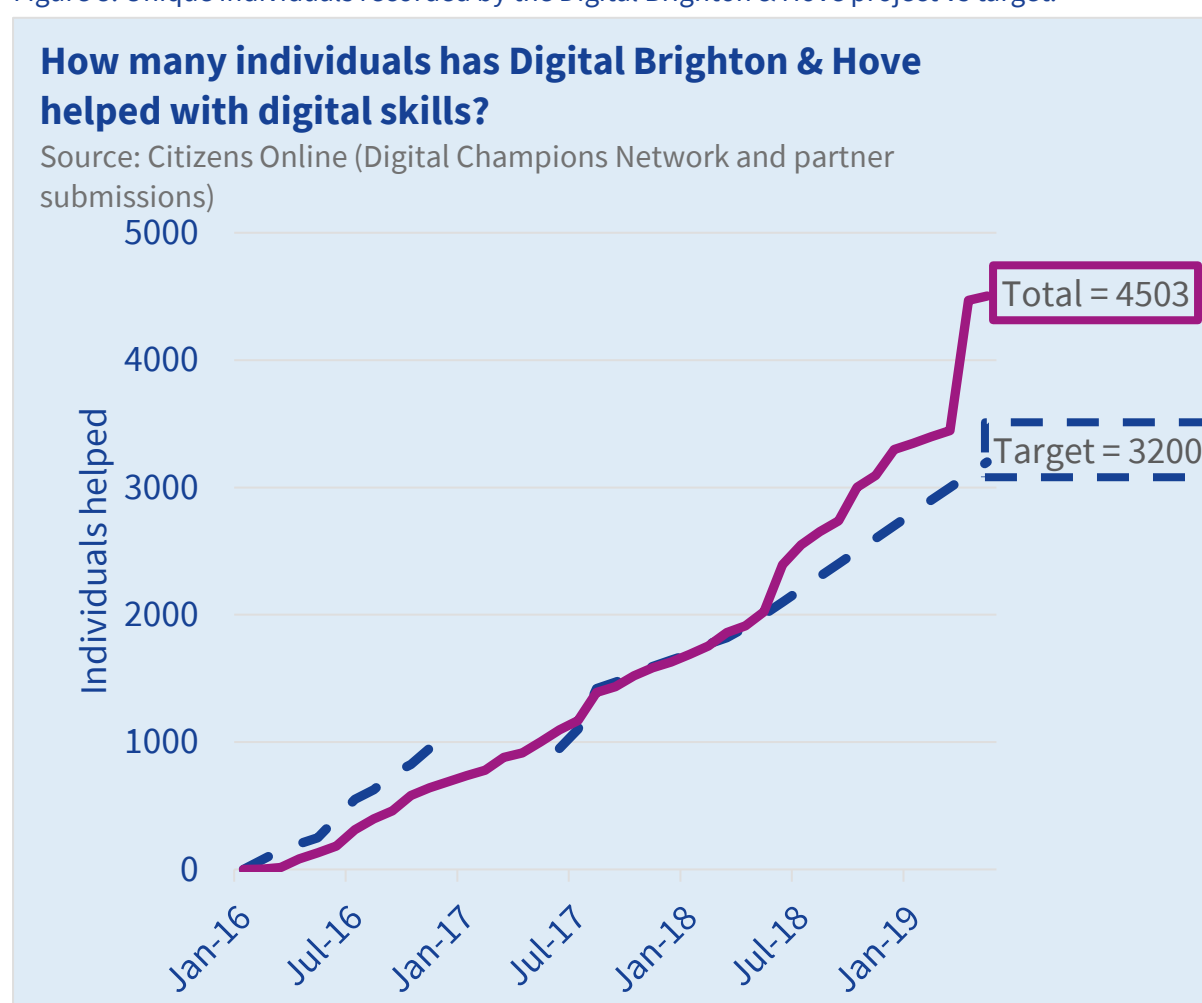
- 'Show, then let them do it themselves and congratulate the Learner. You will see a look of achievement on their face is priceless'
- 'Do not be put off if someone is not immediately interested, this is often through fear, not a rejection of your offer of help'
- 'Don't worry if you don't know the answer to a question, it's impossible for anyone to know the answer to everything. Don't be afraid of looking up the answer online. This can not only comfort learners by letting them know that they are not the only ones that have something to learn, but also teaches them how to research online and therefore be more self-reliant'.

Read our full case study: [Digital Champion helps over 600 people with digital skills](#)

LEARNERS

The core purpose of the Digital Brighton & Hove work is to help people improve their digital skills. We want to celebrate the fact that the project has helped at least 4,503 people based on recording on the DCN and provided to us by partner organisations. The vast majority of these (all but 642) were helped in Phase 2 of the project. In Phase 2, the target to help a cumulative total of 3,200 people has been exceeded by 41%. The target number of people to be helped in Phase 2 (2,558 on top of the 642 helped in Phase 1) has been exceeded by an even greater proportion (3,861 or 51%) – a fantastic achievement. Again, it is worth emphasising that this KPI has been exceeded despite the fact that only a fraction of the digital skills support provided is being recorded.

Figure 8: Unique Individuals recorded by the Digital Brighton & Hove project vs target.



PHASE 2 EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

Figure 8 shows that the number of unique individuals helped in Phase 2 (3,861), is six times as high as in Phase 1 (642). Further, the target in Phase 2 was still exceeded by 1,303 – more than double the Phase 1 level, which fell below target. Figure 3 shows that the number of individuals helped has risen dramatically in the most recent year, with an amazing 2,479 people helped, higher than the project had had helped up to that point. In part, more recent figures reflect better reporting and collection of data – and it is likely that levels of activity in previous years were actually somewhat higher.

Figure 9: Unique Individuals helped - Actual vs Target, comparison by Phase of project

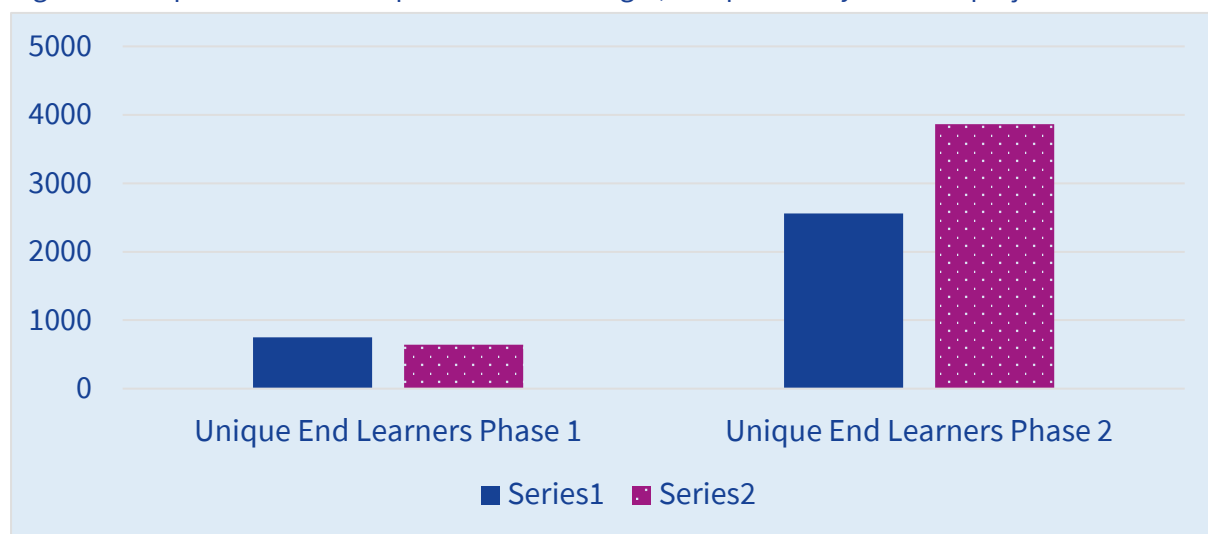
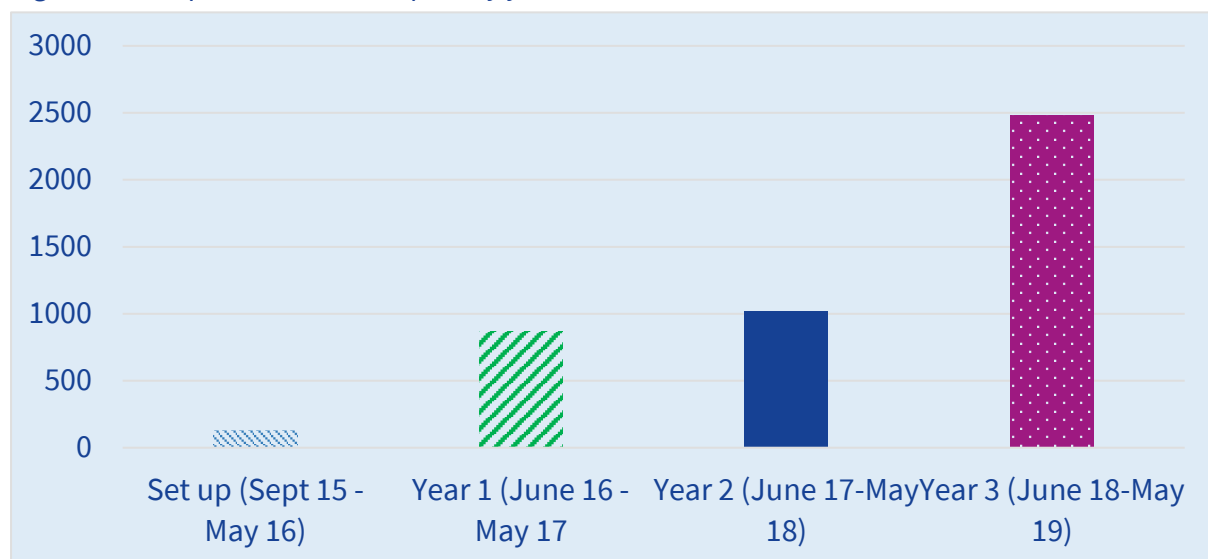


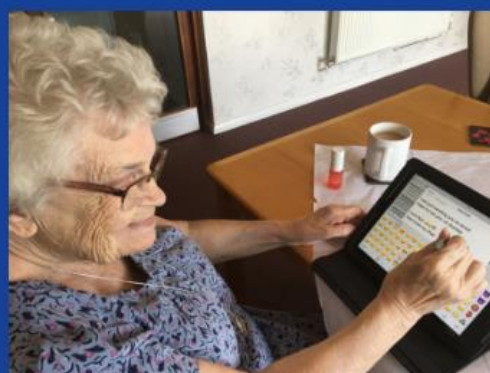
Figure 10: Unique Individuals helped, by year



Case Study: Learner

Sylvie

Sylvie is 88 years old and lives in a Seniors Housing scheme in Hollingdean, Brighton. A keen IT learner and crochet enthusiast, she has been making the most of the monthly digital gadget drop-ins run by our community Digital Champion, Josie Jeffery, for the past six months.



Sylvie used to attend knitting craft sessions in her local community centre until her health prevented her from walking up the hill. She was then thrilled to discover she could learn more about knitting by watching online videos.

Sylvie's own situation is a good example of how digital communications have helped her stay better connected with family, her health issues restricting her from going out and preventing her from seeing her grandchildren as much as she would like. With continued support, Sylvie has learnt how to make video calls and send direct messages with her Grandson using Skype. She has also learned how to compose emails and include emojis while writing to her granddaughter!

“

My sessions with Josie (Community Digital Champion) has given me more interests, more contact and taken away loneliness [...] I think the internet is amazing!”

”

[Read our full case study on Sylvie getting online](#)

Case Study: Learner

Giorgio

Giorgio, a resident of Evelyn Court, has been getting monthly one-to-one support at a digital gadget drop-in. During these sessions, he has learnt how to use Facebook, YouTube, shop online, as well as finding out about online safety.

As a result of the sessions, Giorgio bought himself a new Smartphone that has a larger screen, as he was starting to do a lot more online.



“You’d be surprised what you can do and find online... it was amazing to find my brother after so many years!”

One of the things Giorgio is most proud of doing with his new skills is finding his brother, Lorenzo, who he had not seen for 15 years. He did this by searching for his brother using Facebook. After such a time apart, he was overjoyed to re-establish contact with him.

His brother visited England shortly after they reconnected online to celebrate Giorgio’s birthday. They now exchange pictures of their lives using the internet and arrange regular web chats.

[Read our full case study on Giorgio reconnecting with his brother online](#)

SESSIONS OF DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPORT

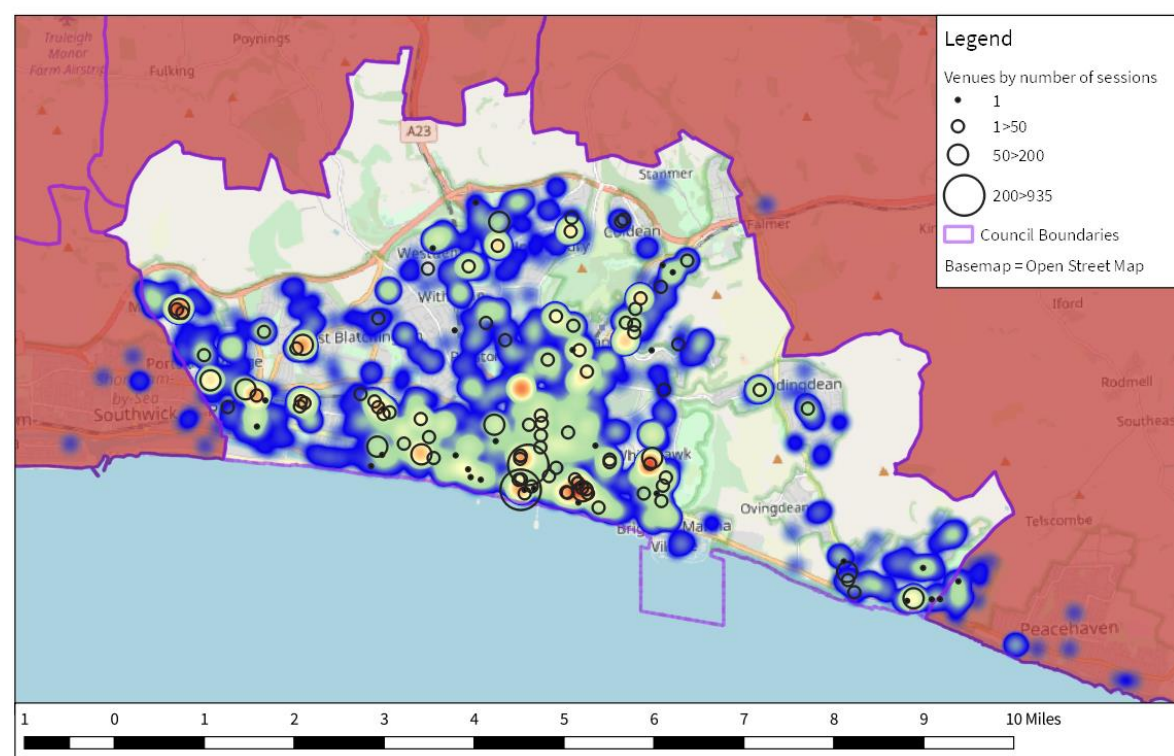
GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Of 6,937 total sessions recorded, 3,740 were recorded in a way that enabled geographic analysis via postcodes provided. Sessions took place at venues across the BHCC area, with a particular focus on the city centre, and further concentrations in Whitehawk, north Portslade, Hangleton, Moulsecoomb, and Kemptown (figure 1). Learners, too, provided home postcodes that represent areas all across the city – again with a focus on the city centre.

Figure 11: Heatmap and Venues by share of 3,740 total digital skills support sessions recorded, Digital Brighton & Hove

Heatmap and Venues by share of 3,740 total digital skills support sessions recorded, Digital Brighton and Hove.

Sources: Digital Champions Network (September 2015-May2019); OS BoundaryLine; OpenStreetMap



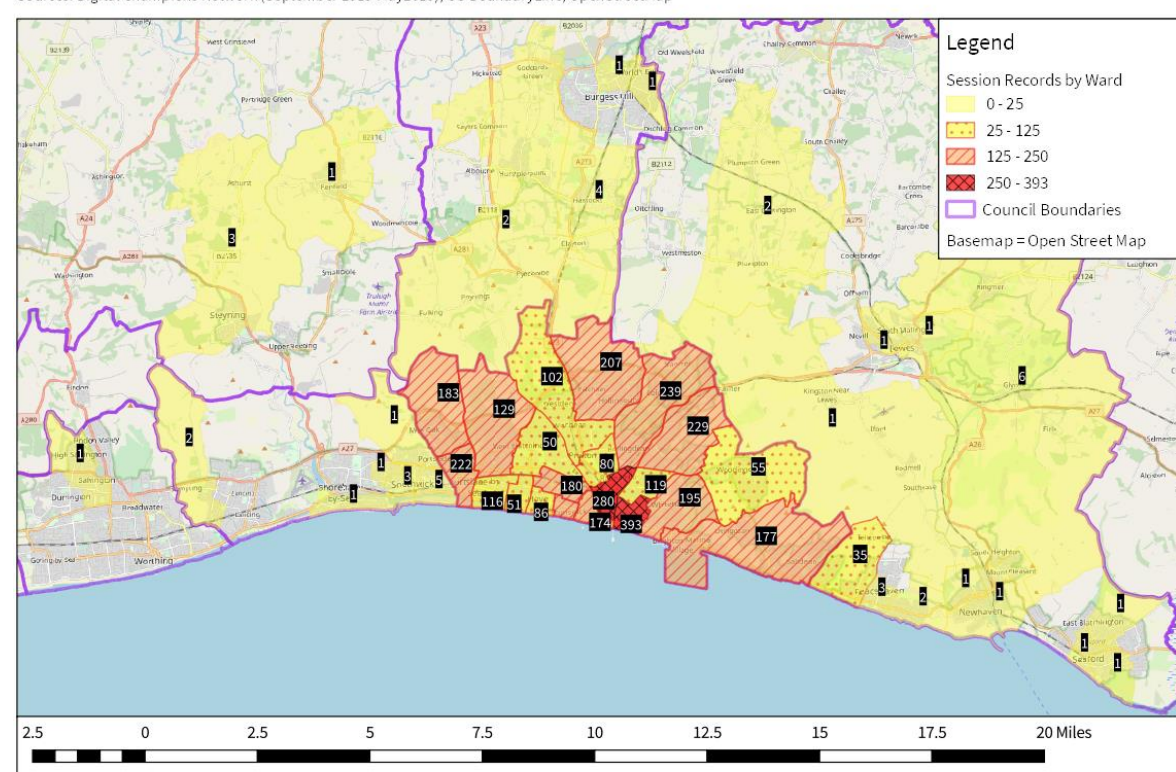
The pattern of concentrations largely matches that of venues, suggesting people tended not to travel far for digital skills support – though a small number came from more distant locations to venues and even from beyond the City Council boundary itself. Further, there are concentrations of learner locations around Preston Park and the Elm Grove area – as

well as in other places around the city - that are not associated with nearby venues, suggesting some people were willing to travel for digital skills support. Indeed, a total of 41 sessions took place with learners resident outside the boundary of Brighton & Hove City Council's area (1% of all sessions), as shown in figure 5.

Figure 12: Digital skills support sessions recorded by Ward of learner postcode

3,740 total digital skills support sessions recorded by Ward of learner postcode, Digital Brighton and Hove.

Sources: Digital Champions Network (September 2015-May2019); OS BoundaryLine; OpenStreetMap

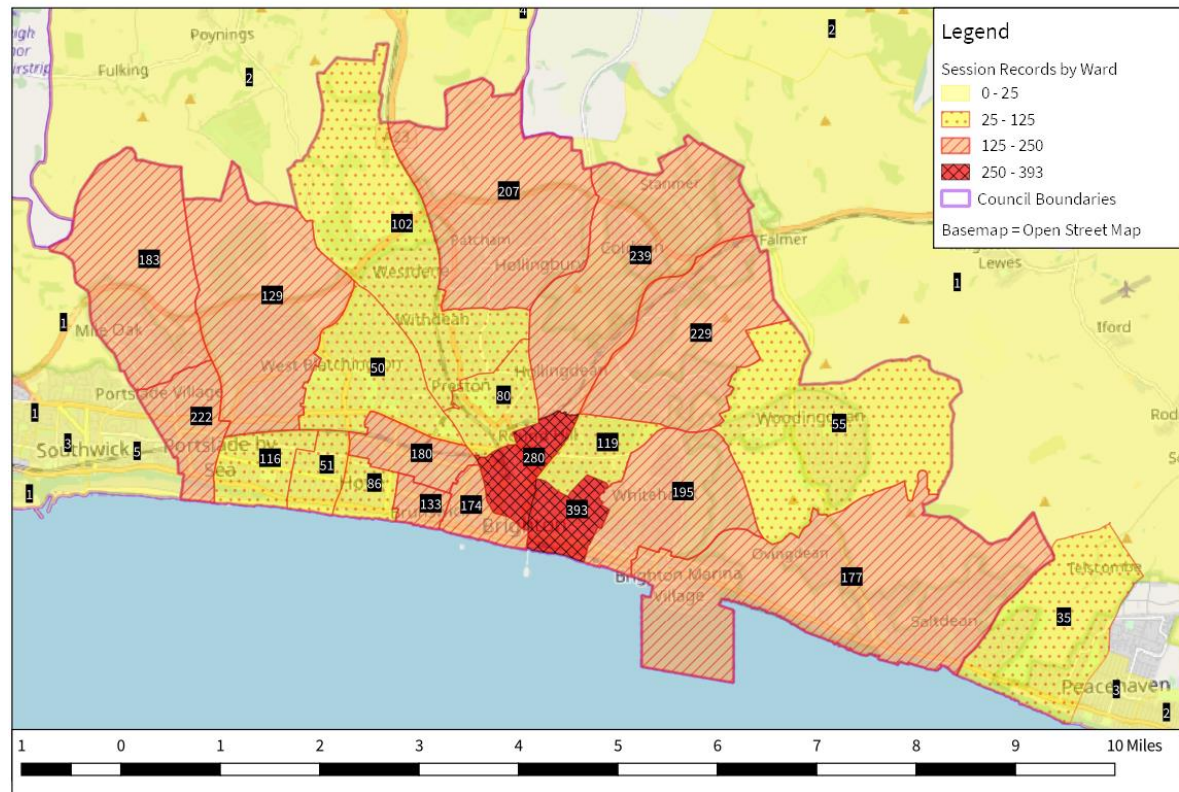


2,167 sessions, 52.4% of those recorded in a way that could potentially be geographically coded took place with residents of wards identified in the original Brighton & Hove Baseline as areas to focus on (see figure 13, table 2). 1,268 sessions took place with residents of other wards, although potentially with people from demographics to those that we intended to target – see below (15.7% of sessions could not be allocated to a Ward, and 1% in Wards outside BHCC).

Figure 13: Digital skills support sessions recorded by Ward of learner postcode, Brighton & Hove only

Digital skills support sessions recorded by Ward of learner postcode, Digital Brighton and Hove.

Sources: Digital Champions Network (September 2015-May 2019); OS BoundaryLine; OpenStreetMap



PHASE 2 EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

Table 2: Session Records by Brighton & Hove Ward

Ward	Session Records	%	Target area
Queen's Park	393	9.5	Yes – under Central (low income / older workers)
St. Peter's and North Laine	280	6.8	Yes – under Central (low income / older workers)
Hollingdean and Stanmer	239	5.8	Yes – Hollingbury (retired people)
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	229	5.5	Yes (low income / older workers)
South Portslade	222	5.4	
Patcham	207	5.0	Yes (retired people)
East Brighton	195	4.7	Yes – Whitehawk (low income / older workers)
North Portslade	183	4.4	Yes (low income / older workers)
Goldsmid	180	4.3	
Rottingdean Coastal	177	4.3	Yes (retired people)
Regency	174	4.2	Yes – some areas as part of Central (low income / older workers)
Brunswick and Adelaide	133	3.2	
Hangleton and Knoll	129	3.1	Yes (low income / older workers)
Hanover and Elm Grove	119	2.9	
Wish	116	2.8	
Withdean	102	2.5	
Central Hove	86	2.0	
Preston Park	80	1.9	
Woodingdean	55	1.3	Yes (retired people)
Westbourne	51	1.2	
Hove Park	50	1.2	
East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs	35	0.8	Yes (retired people)

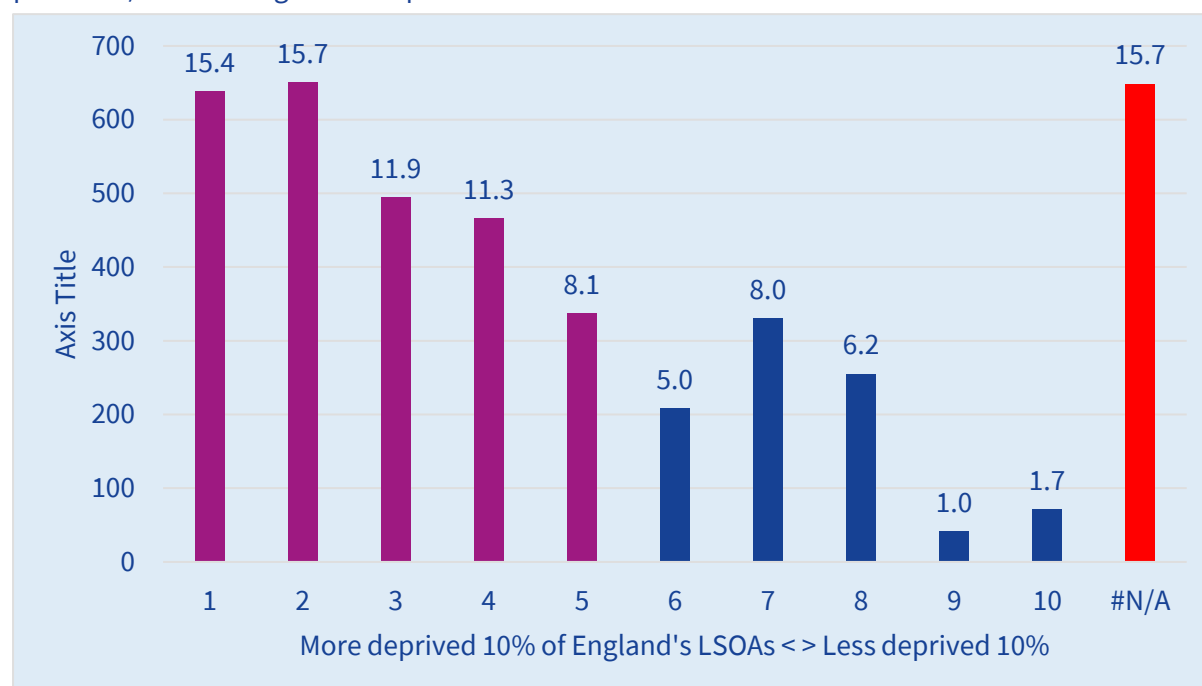
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The action plan agreed also proposed focusing on:

- creating resilient households (low income families and older workers),
- retired people,
- young single households with low income – to focus on young people ‘Not in Employment, Education or Training’ (NEET)

While we did not collect detailed demographic data of the sort that could determine performance against these target demographics, there are ways to do this by proxy. One method is to compare sessions against the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which will cover those on low incomes. Among sessions recorded on the Digital Champions Network where home postcodes provided for learners, the majority took place in neighbourhoods (Lower Super Output Areas or LSOAs) that are among the 50% most deprived in England (62.5%). Nearly one-third of sessions were with people living in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs in England (31.1%; figure 1).

Figure 14: Session Records by Multiple Deprivation Decile of learner's residence (LSOA of home postcode). Source: Digital Champions Network



PROJECT MANAGER REVIEW

This review provides some context to the statistical findings featured in this report, highlighting some of the key digital inclusion achievements and challenges of the past two years.

The main areas of work set out for Phase 2 were:

1. Digital skill training of staff/volunteers
2. Support of BHCC Staff through Digital Sessions
3. Digital skills training and support interventions for residents
4. Partnership development – building an active Digital Inclusion Network for Brighton & Hove
5. Digital Leadership / Transformation
6. Funding resilience

1. DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING OF STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

Context

Staff training has focused on the Embedded Digital Champion approach, working with local partners and through existing services. This approach has two aims:

- 1) Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the challenges digital exclusion poses to their service users, barriers that different people face, the benefits of being online, the role staff can play to enable this and what essential digital skills helps us measure the risk of digital exclusion.
- 2) Ensuring that staff and volunteers receive training and support so that they are themselves able to share their own digital skills with more confidence and help service users to get online as part of their daily work. This support has been provided through a mix of face-to-face training, team meetings briefings e-learning resources through the Digital Champions Network.

As stated above, during the two years covering Phase 2, 289 DCs have been recruited (exceeding the set target by 25DCs).

Examples

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (see Case Study above)

Fourteen volunteers and two staff from the Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project received Digital Champion training both face-to-face and through online resources on the Digital Champions Network. This training ensured that they could make the best possible use of their drop-in facilities in the centre and help signpost service users to online services where relevant. Over the past 2 years, their staff have helped just under 1000 service users through their drop-in centre. The accredited training and development also enabled some of their volunteers to find paid employment.

Challenges

- 1) Recruiting a high number of DCs through online and face-to-face training does not always translate into having the same number of active DCs. The lack of time for dual roles and the perception that this remains a task for 'someone else' is an obstacle we encountered fairly regularly on the ground.
- 2) The awareness-raising and training work does not always translate into a high level of engagement by the service provider. 'Making the case' for digital inclusion work as a whole-system approach is challenging when it is not part of a more expansive training and development or organisational change programme.
- 3) In order for the Embedded Digital Champion approach to have an effective and sustainable impact, staff and volunteers may need support with their own digital skills and confidence.

2. SUPPORT OF BHCC STAFF THROUGH DIGITAL SESSIONS

Context

Brighton & Hove City Council services such as the Revenues and Benefits, Libraries, Housing, Healthy Lifestyles, Health and Adult Social Care services have benefited from Digital Champion training (both online training through the Digital Champions training and face-to-face).

Examples

Revenues & Benefits

Working collaboratively with the Revenues & Benefits service contributed to supporting Revenues & Benefits Officers (frontline staff) delivering a 'self-help' customer service, switching from face-to-face to online services in the council's Customer Service Centre. This involved providing both face-to-face and online 'Digital Champion' training to over 20 Revenues and Benefits officers. The collaboration also involved collating and sharing activity records and other relevant data to help us monitor digital support activity and provision in the Customer Service Centre.

Libraries

The direct access to the Libraries Digital Services team helped ensure that all Library Officers and Connect Volunteers were trained as DCs, and helped monitor activity, demand and provision using the Digital Champions Network. The main central library in Brighton (Jubilee Library) ranked as the venue with the highest recorded digital support sessions out of 119 venues across the city, with another six libraries making the top 20 list of venues providing digital support to local residents.

Challenges

- 1) As above, the Digital Champion training and learning resources were most effective when part of a wider training and development programme. This ensured that the initiative was driven by service management and enabled some continuity in the training process. In some cases, it was challenging to turn a successful Digital Champion training workshop into a wider digital skills development programme supported by our Community Digital Champions.
- 2) The digital needs of local services are widespread and Digital Brighton & Hove did not have the capacity to support the range of different requests. Requests included digital inclusion introductions, social media training, CRM and systems change, Outlook 365 training for staff, etc. The use of the Essential Digital Skills framework as a benchmarking tool was useful but the needs that might stem from its use could be very broad.

Case Study: Customer Service Centre

Our Community Digital Champions have provided digital skills support in the council's Customer Service Centre on a regular basis over the past year, helping customers to manage their queries digitally. This work focused primarily on filling the gaps in provision in the Customer Service Centre on non 'self-help' days, that is when Embedded Digital Champions from other councils teams were not present in the Customer Service Centre.



Glenn (right) helping a customer to get online.

Based on the data recorded on the Digital Champions Network (DCN), 383 digital support sessions took place at the Customer Service Centre.

A further 444 interventions were recorded by Embedded Digital Champions who received training between March and November 2018, namely staff from the Revenues and Benefits team helping customers during the 'self-help' days.

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“It was useful to learn about the free online resources that are available and to think about how to engage people to get online. It helped to discuss case scenarios where we might be able to signpost a customer to an online service.”
(BHCC Revenues & Benefits Officer)

“The training course was brilliant, really enjoyed it – the signposting website is very useful.” (BHCC Customer Service Officer)

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Read our full case study: [Digital Champion work in Brighton & Hove City Council's Customer Service Centre](#)

3. DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING AND SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

Context

The project aimed to support residents' digital skills and confidence to access online opportunities and services, particularly in the areas of work, health and wellbeing.

Based on the activities recorded from local DCs using the Digital Champions Network, 4,503 residents received digital support and 6,944 digital skills support sessions were delivered.

Examples

Learners on low(er) income

These sessions included running digital drop-ins in collaboration with local food banks (e.g. Bevendean, Craven Vale and Whitehawk food banks), with local community pub 'The Bevy' in Moulsecoomb; running creative digital sessions with YMCA Evolve (see case study above); and running Digital Inclusion workshops with the Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project and in libraries.

Older people

Considerable work also focused on supporting older people and exploring how digital skills can help tackle social isolation. Digital Brighton & Hove was active in 23 seniors housing schemes in Brighton & Hove. In total 330 individuals were given digital skills support at 648 sessions, one third of those living in council seniors' housing (see case study below).

The project also delivered a programme of interactive workshops during Older People's Festival in partnership with Impact Initiatives and ran 14 editions of a 6-week Internet Essentials course in partnership with Age UK.

Council Customer Service Centre

Our Community Digital Champions (DCs) provided digital skills support in Bartholomew House Customer Service Centre on a weekly basis over the past year, helping customers to manage their queries digitally (see above case study).

Challenges

- 1) Relying on Digital Brighton & Hove's own DCs to provide support and run sessions indefinitely was quite a common feature during Phase 2. It could be challenging to successfully get frontline staff to fill those gaps themselves, instead calling on volunteers to provide the digital support.
- 2) Different approaches and adaptability were required from DCs to support different client groups, some of which might have multiple and complex needs. To ensure that the support was learner-led could mean spending the first few weeks building trust and being flexible enough to ensure the varying needs of learners were met. This often took time and patience which sometimes challenged our evaluation model. E.g. you might get the three same learners each month working with the same partner which would lead to a low number of End Learners based on our KPI model but a potentially better long-term outcome.
- 3) As mentioned above, with few Embedded DCs able to use the Digital Champions Network recording tool, we had to find other ways to collate the number of digital support interventions carried out by a service. In some cases, some services would be receptive to sharing their data; others less so.

Case Study: Senior Housing Manager

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Working with Digital Brighton and Hove has been a real success in our schemes. The number of people who have come along to the gadget workshops and become more digitally aware has exceeded our expectations.

As more services and information become digital it's important that people don't fall behind and miss the opportunities that this technological change can bring. The examples from our schemes shows just how beneficial this can be. As a result of the success with Digital Brighton and Hove we took the decision to introduce free wi-fi to the communal lounges to encourage more of our residents to make the step of going on-line.

Digital Brighton and Hove also challenged some of the common assumptions about technology and ageing. We learnt that many older people were either already on-line and using technology or had a real keenness to do so. It also challenged the assumption that digital meant computers, when in fact the digital world meant anything from using a smartphone or using voice activated technology.

We tend to associate technological change with youth too, and of course younger people have grown up with the internet... But technology is tailor made for an ageing population too – I've seen how using technology can help different generations within the same family keep on continual contact with other.



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Read our full case study: [Working together to help older people become more digitally confident](#)

4. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – BUILDING AN ACTIVE DIGITAL INCLUSION NETWORK FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE

Context

The development of a local cross-sector network helped to ensure that key stakeholders were working together and in a coordinated manner to tackle digital exclusion across the city. As stated above, the project engaged with 241 organisations from the public, private and third sectors, of which 90% were actively engaged in the project. Digital Brighton & Hove's quarterly newsletters were sent to over 1,000 contacts from all sectors with an average 21.5% 'open' rate.

The number of organisations and contacts engaged in the project increased considerably during Phase 2 showing a growing appetite to connect with local digital inclusion, leadership and transformation work.

Examples

Network meetings

Digital Brighton & Hove's thematic quarterly network meetings were well attended with an average of 40 attendees from 30 organisations and provided a space to learn about digital inclusion and transformation themes, share good practice and engage network members in the project's activities and outputs. External speakers included organisations such as AbilityNet, Diversity and Ability (DnA), SCVO Digital, the Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology (CAST) and Lloyds TSB.

Citywide working groups

Digital Brighton & Hove also took part in a series of citywide working groups to ensure that digital support needs were monitored and addressed in different areas. For example, Digital Brighton & Hove was represented on the Work and Learning Working Group chaired by Brighton Housing Trust which led to new connections being made with number of local charities such as YMCA, The Passage, Just Life and The Clocktower Sanctuary.

Citywide Connect Partnership

Digital Brighton & Hove also played an active role on the Citywide Connect Partnership Board which brought together key stakeholders to tackle social isolation, delivering two

Digital Showcases at the Citywide Connect Hub Events and leading on a collective presentation at the inaugural Ageing Well Conference.

Participation in citywide festivals, campaigns and committees

Digital Brighton & Hove also promoted the importance of digital inclusion through activities in local festivals such as the Older People's Festival and Brighton Digital Festival; through online campaigns like Get Online Week; by sharing local experience with organisations like the Centre for Ageing Better; by taking part in local networks like the Emergency Food Network and the Disability Collective; by presenting in citywide Partnership Groups like the BHCC's Neighbourhood, Inclusion, Communities and Equalities (NICE); and through interviews on national radio programmes (BBC World Service) and local radio stations (Radio Review).

Challenges

- 1) Active engagement with the private sector proved challenging despite some good contacts and connections through the network (27% of all our contacts in our database are from the private sector).
- 2) The more effective partnership work involved a combination of more 'traditional' governance (e.g. a Steering Group meeting quarterly) and a more 'networked approach' to engaging with partners. For instance, local organisations such as Community Works, Diversity and Ability and Clearleft contributed actively to the project's activity while not directly being involved at official 'governance' level. Following the positive energy and fostering fruitful human relationships played an equally big part in developing strong partnerships and creating an actively engaged network.



5. DIGITAL LEADERSHIP / TRANSFORMATION

Context

BHCC Digital First

The investment and support from the local council enabled direct opportunities for collaboration with a range of council departments. The co-location in Jubilee Library provided direct access to the Digital First team's Product Managers which helped align digital inclusion activity with the council's Digital Transformation programme. This also led to delivering numerous staff and volunteer briefings and training on digital inclusion (see above), as well as highlighting the importance of our work with local councillors through the BHCC's Neighbourhood, Inclusion, Communities and Equalities (NICE).

DWP Universal Credit Full Service

Digital Brighton & Hove worked collaboratively with the Department for Work and Pensions, Moneyworks and Brighton & Hove City Council through the Citywide Welfare Reform Group to help coordinate assisted digital support provision for Universal Credit claimants.

NHS services: in collaboration with the local CCG

Digital Brighton & Hove supported GP Practice Managers in Whitehawk and Moulsecoomb, looking at ways to improve the uptake of GP Online Services. Staff training and briefings also took place with The Care Centre, BHCC Healthy Lifestyles and BHCC Health & Adult Social Care.

Third sector

Capacity-building workshops and training sessions were delivered to support local organisations with digital transformation and leadership skills.

Collaboration with Community Works, the support body for local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations grew from strength to strength during Phase 2. Digital Brighton & Hove ran a Digital Leadership workshop at the Community Works Spring Conference 2018, opened the Community Works Winter Conference 2018 in plenary and ran a workshop at the Community Works Spring Conference 2019, which focused on making the sector more digitally confident. A network meeting also took place on digital

transformation for the third sector in January 2018 in collaboration with Community Works, SCVO Digital and CAST (see case study below).

This successful partnership work has helped secure some match-funding from Community Works to help develop a local peer support network as part of the next phase of the project.

Challenges

- 1) BHCC's Digital First programme was restructured in April 2019, with many experienced managers leaving the service from December 2018 onwards. This disrupted some of the good partnership work and activity with the council.
- 2) The learning from Phase 2 highlights the need to help the workforce be more confident with their own digital skills as a prerequisite to being able to help service users to get online. A stronger focus on digital leadership and upskilling is therefore an important next step to take.

Towards a more digitally confident third sector in Brighton & Hove – making change happen?

Research findings from the Charity Digital Skills Report 2018 show that 53% of charities see their digital skills as fair or low, with 65% stating that developing digital skills would help encourage and retain staff (Charity Digital Skills report 2018). With around 2,300 voluntary and community organisations in Brighton and Hove under increasing pressure to provide more effective and better services, there is recognition from key stakeholders that something needs to happen... and fast.

Those at risk of being left behind aren't just the service users but also the staff who are supporting these service users – and potentially a whole sector is at risk of falling behind



A panel of experts: Jess Sumner (Community Works), Richard Rutter (Clearleft), Ellie Hale (CAST), John Reading (BHCC) and Beth Mukushi (SCVO Digital).

Digital Brighton & Hove ran a day of 'digital discovery' for local charities and social enterprises, bringing together over 65 representatives from the local third, public and private sector.

With plenty of appetite and engagement on display, the question is not so much if change is on the horizon but rather how to make that change happen for our local sector.



Although many charities use social media and sites like Just Giving to spread campaigns or engage donors, they're largely missing an opportunity to use digital to better understand and respond to the changing needs and context of the communities they serve. They haven't yet entered this new age yet.

- Ellie Hale, CAST

Read the full article: [Towards a more digitally confident third sector in Brighton & Hove – making change happen?](#)

6. FUNDING RESILIENCE

Context

The project has benefited from financial and in-kind investment from the Brighton & Hove City Council, through both the Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing (Libraries) and Finance & Resources (IT & Digital) directorates. This enabled the funding of two part-time Community DCs, office space in the city's central Jubilee Library as well as free use of meeting room facilities to run training and workshops.

On a strategic level, the Head of Libraries and Information chaired Digital Brighton & Hove's Steering Group during Phase 2 while the Head of Digital First also sat on the Steering Group, ensuring strong input and support from lead council officers. This council buy-in and leadership formed an integral part of the current project's successes.

The project also received support from Brighton & Hove Buses who generously offered advertising space on their buses to raise awareness of the help available across the city.

Challenge

- 1) Turning the above achievements into a sustainable approach which creates lasting impact for the city remains one of the main challenges. Currently, Citizens Online plays a pivotal role in facilitating this digital inclusion work locally, coordinating activities and steering the process; while the local authority provides most of the funding. A strategic plan to ensure continuity and lasting impact therefore constitutes a pressing issue in the next phase of the project.
- 2) As the project enters this crucial phase, even more engagement, advocacy and partnership work needs to take place. Developing a concrete offer to engage better with the private sector in order to develop a truly cross-sector impact partnership is key to making this happen.

Partner Survey

Our One Digital Partner Survey was hosted online between 10th April and 31st May 2019. We received 57 completed responses from Digital Brighton and Hove (DBH) providing insight into the impact of our Phase 2 'Deep Dive' project.

The 57 respondents represented 25 Organisations in the results, including 21 respondents from Brighton & Hove City Council, which we can estimate represented a wide range of services including Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and the Library Service.

Partner feedback illustrates the varied benefits of the project

"Using my Digital Champions skills and with other personal skills, I placed 19 people into sustainable employment. Including 5 people from one family and helped a 74 year old gentleman into college for teacher training."

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"It has raised my awareness of the importance of utilising digital technology and not being scared to use it as a tool to improve my working practice and encourage others to do the same."

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"It has been encouraging to see how colleagues have gained confidence and insight into ways they can utilise digital know how into their daily working practice and be mutually supportive of each other by sharing skills they have or recent ones they have acquired."

"The project has enabled more people to access digital skills through the community facilities available and through professionals being trained as digital champions."

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