Citizens Online

IMPACT REPORT

2022-23

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INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes increasingly digital, we work to ensure that no one is left behind. We research and understand digital barriers, and work to embed a digitally inclusive approach amongst organisations and communities.

Our vision is to live in an inclusive society where everyone can benefit from being online.

Our mission is to be a voice for the digitally excluded so that they are not left behind in an increasingly digital world.

We do three things:

SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS

We help people to develop digital skills, access devices and data. We run a UK freephone helpline that anyone can call to get support.

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

We advise organisations with recommendations to improve digital transformation and embed digital inclusion into everyday practice. We aim to develop sustainable solutions.

SUPPORT THE SECTOR

We conduct reasearch to understand more about digital exclusion and encourage innovative solutions.

CASE STUDY: Alan's Story

"Technology helps me to manage my disability"

Alan is 68 and retired due to ill health and disability. He is supported by Digital Gwynedd, one of Citizen's Online's projects. As part of this support, Alan has received a tablet, and a Digital Champion has been helping Alan to learn how to use it and to develop digital skills.

These new digital skills have allowed him to manage his disability more easily. He is now able to: take part in weekly physiotherapy sessions over zoom; stay in touch with the muscular dystrophy charity MDUK; research his illness online and keep up with the developments in this medical field.

"These sessions have given me a lot more confidence which I didn't have before. I wish to thank Digital Gwynedd and Citizens Online for their hard work. I feel I can always come back for more support if I need it"

Alan has learnt other ways to use his tablet, such as setting up an email account so that he can send messages to his family, and how to watch films online. He has learnt to connect headphones, which means he is not disturbing the rest of his family. Alan said that the tablet has helped with his mental health too.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

2779
Learners Supported

475
Devices Distributed

223
New Digital Champions

648
Total Digital Champions

8772
Communications Through Our Helpline

18
Projects Led

727
Organisations Engaged

3803
Stakeholders Engaged

39
Workshops and Events Hosted

5

MEASURING IMPACT

Numbers are a great way to show the scope and reach of our work. However, digital inclusion is complex and cannot solely be defined by numbers. Case studies and quotes from learners, Digital Champions and organisations, are included throughout the report to illustrate the deeper, long lasting and often life changing impact of our work.

We collect feedback and data about our impact through surveys, phone calls, face to face feedback with learners, Digital Champions (DCs), and stakeholders, as well as through logging data sets.

Learner Feedback

"My friend's elderly blind mother has a new lease of life since she got an Alexa smart speaker – she asks Alexa to read her Audible books, play her jazz playlist, and broadcast messages to speak to her daughter upstairs"

"These things that people take for granted. It is just a day to day thing for some people but for me learning to do those little things it is like Yay! I can do that now!"

"I was unsure about attending the sessions in the first place - I am glad I did however, as I feel it has got me talking to others and comparing what we do and don't know. Will is very patient and willing to go over the same ground again sometimes if we need to consolidate learning!"

Why Our Work is Crucial

Digital Inclusion spans across all areas of people's lives, from paying your council tax, to staying in contact with family and friends, to learning a new hobby. As more services and day-to-day activities move online, more importance is placed on digital access as a basic right.

Our work to improve digital inclusion aligns with the United Nations (UN) Sustainability Goals, which demonstrate how ingrained digital inclusion is to wider societal benefits.

UN Goal   How we contribute

	UN Goal	How we contribute
1	**End poverty in all its forms everywhere**	Digital access and skills enables people to access better work, develop skills, build CVs, grow their financial literacy, access benefits and save money.
3	**Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages**	Digital Inclusion enables people to manage their physical and mental health through video consultations, attending online support groups, keeping in touch with loved ones & learning about their condition online.
4	**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**	We advocate lifelong learning to make communities and organisations resilient to future technological change. This is a key part of our work as we embed digital inclusion principles.
8	**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**	Our work to support inclusive digital transformation enables organisations to work in a more efficient way. Improving digital skills allows people to access better jobs and helps to grow the economy.
10	**Reduce inequality within and among countries**	Digital exclusion often intersects with other inequality, including social, economic, disability, and age. Digital inclusion is a part of the wider solution to reduce inequality.
12	**Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**	We use recycled devices in-house and for distribution within our projects. We advocate device recycling with organisations in our networks.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SUPPORTING LEARNERS

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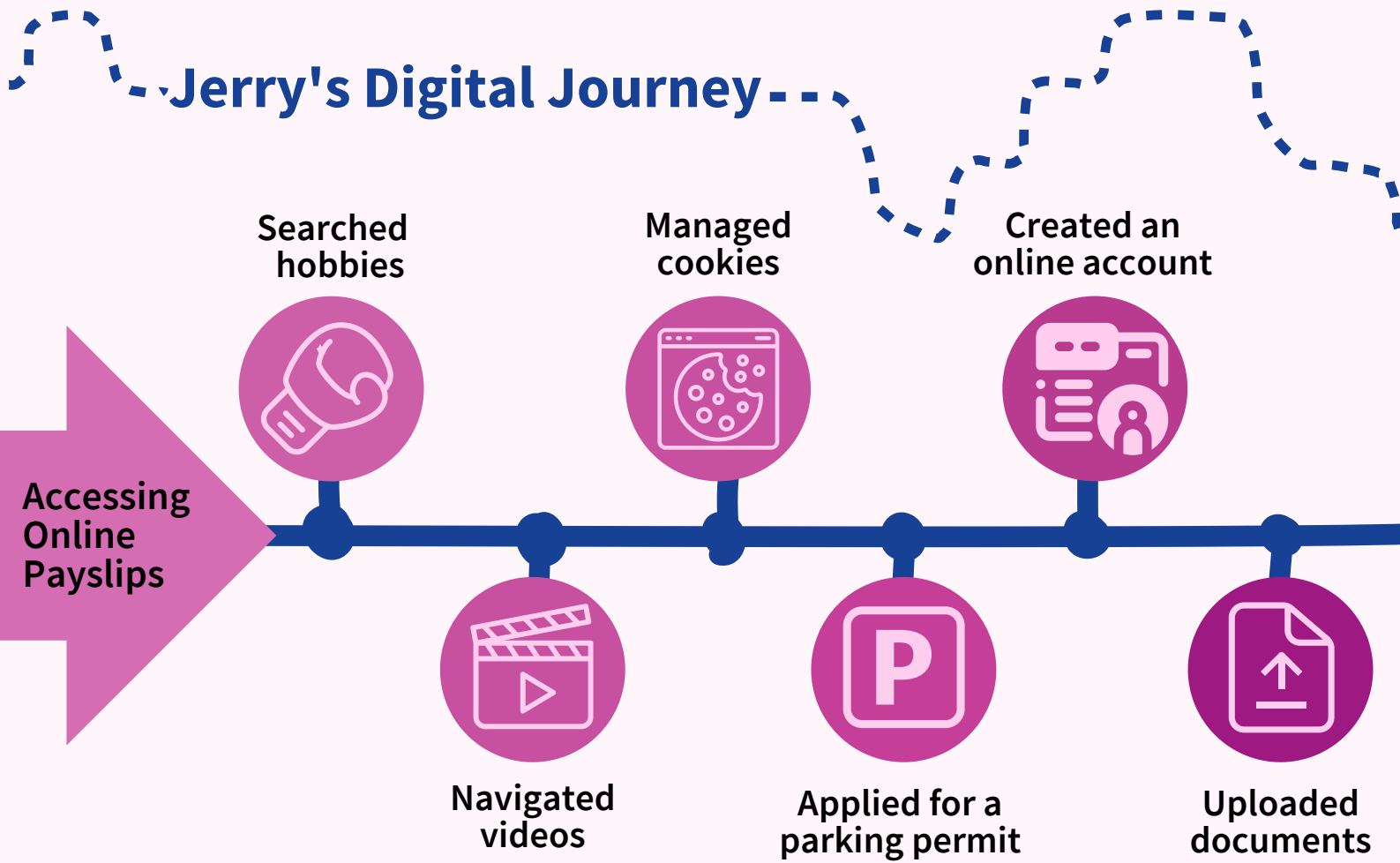Communications Through Our Helpline

CASE STUDY: From online payslips to a digital world

For many learners, overcoming one task is often a gateway to wider digital learning.

Jerry found a job at a supermarket, but wasn't able to access his payslips online. Our Digital Champion Jo, supported him to log into the portal and access his payslips.

From there, Jerry found out from colleagues you could browse jobs within the company online. Jo supported him to navigate pages using the search bar, scrolling, and closing down a webpage.

Jo then supported Jerry to access videos on his interests: boxing and martial arts. Jerry learnt how to navigate the videos, and learnt bout cookies so that he felt confident in managing them. As his confidence grew, Jerry applied for a parking permit, created an account with the Council, and uploaded paper copies for supporting documents.

Jerry's Digital Journey

Searched hobbies

Managed cookies

Created an online account

Accessing Online Payslips

Navigated videos

Applied for a parking permit

Uploaded documents

IMPACT ON LEARNERS

Citizens Online has enabled learners to develop digital skills and confidence in 12 key areas that support positive outcomes for; social inclusion, health and wellbeing, lifelong learning, saving money, financial proficiency, employment, and accessing services and information.

Find community groups

Connect with family and friends

Engage in hobbies

Feel safe and secure online

Learn new skills and complete courses

Apply for jobs

Bank online

Save, budget, and compare prices

Shop online

Web search for information

Access services and fill in forms

Book appointments

Case Study: Digital Gwynedd
2022-2023 numbers

New learners   371

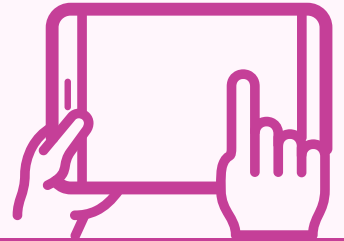**Devices and data packages distributed**   199

Organisations engaged   60

Digital Champions onboarded   25

> " l really appreciate the help l am getting from Llion [a digital champion] to be able to understand and use the technology needed to function in today's world , i.e mobile computer and tablet. He is very patient and informative. He has made something that l have found unfathomable on my own, possible to negotiate. "
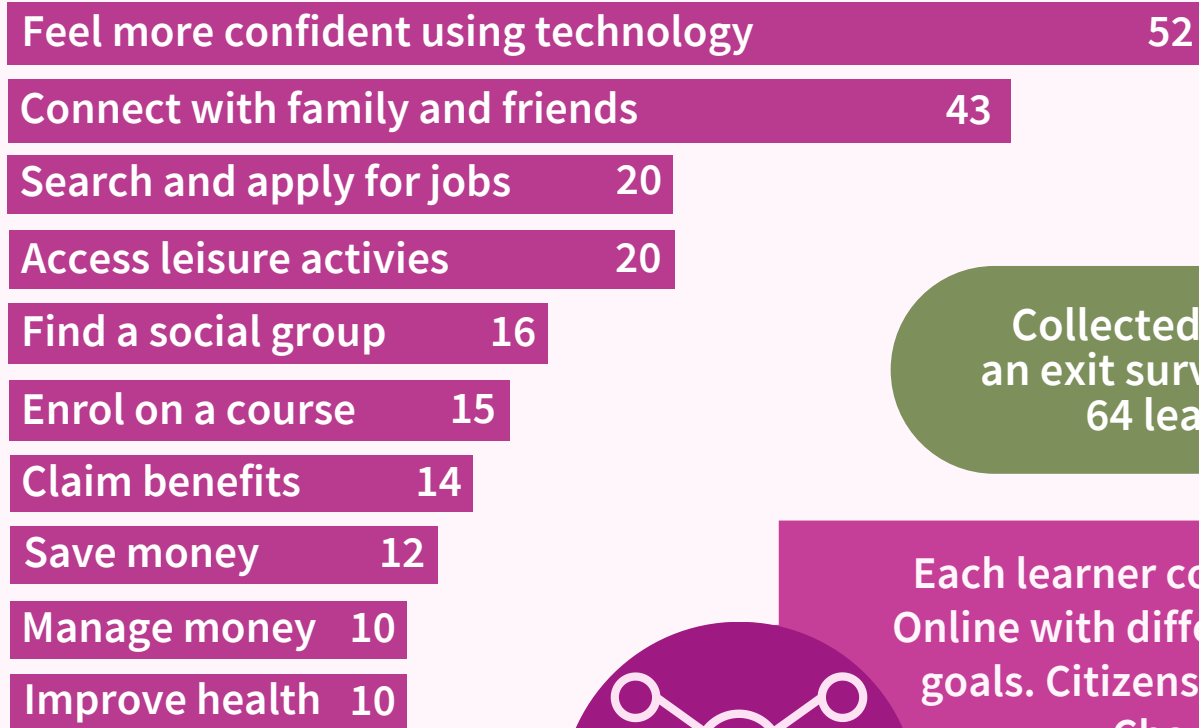
For every £1 spent on the project, a social value of £4.74 has been generated. Social outcomes include: reduced isolation, enhanced employability, and improved self care*

£1   →   £4.74

*Calculated using the socialvalueuk.org standards

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Support from Digital Champions in Gwynedd has enabled learners to...

Feel more confident using technology	52
Connect with family and friends	43
Search and apply for jobs	20
Access leisure activies	20
Find a social group	16
Enrol on a course	15
Claim benefits	14
Save money	12
Manage money	10
Improve health	10

Learners also told us they were able to book doctor's appointments, order repeat prescriptions and learn English online.
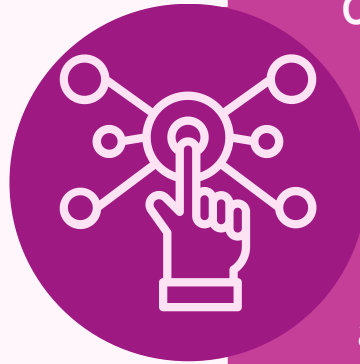
Collected from an exit survey of 64 learners

Each learner comes to Citizens Online with different needs and goals. Citizens Online's Digital Champions focus on each person's individual development. Improving digital access and skills can open up a world of possibility for learners.

Learner Feedback

"I was confident digitally before joining the group but since attending the sessions I have learnt about online safety and feel more aware of how to stay safe online."

"It's given me more confidence and I'm not afraid to try new things on the computer."

"I have enjoyed coming here and learning various things. I'm more confident than before. It's improved my mental health in a friendly and comfortable environment."

DEVICES DISTRIBUTED

195 Laptops

149 SIM cards

50 Tablets

40 Smart phones

28 MiFi routers

13 Extras

During 2022-2023, we have distributed 475 devices in total to learners across our projects in Gwynedd, Brighton & Hove, and North Yorkshire

Case Study: Distributing SIM Cards

"It's made a massive difference to being able to complete forms (I am deaf) on-line instead of struggling to hear on the phone. It has helped my mental health."

What has the SIM card enabled you to do?

"With rising prices, it's nice to know I can still use my device without any worries for a little while. Allows me to stay in contact."

Supporting parents with Laptops
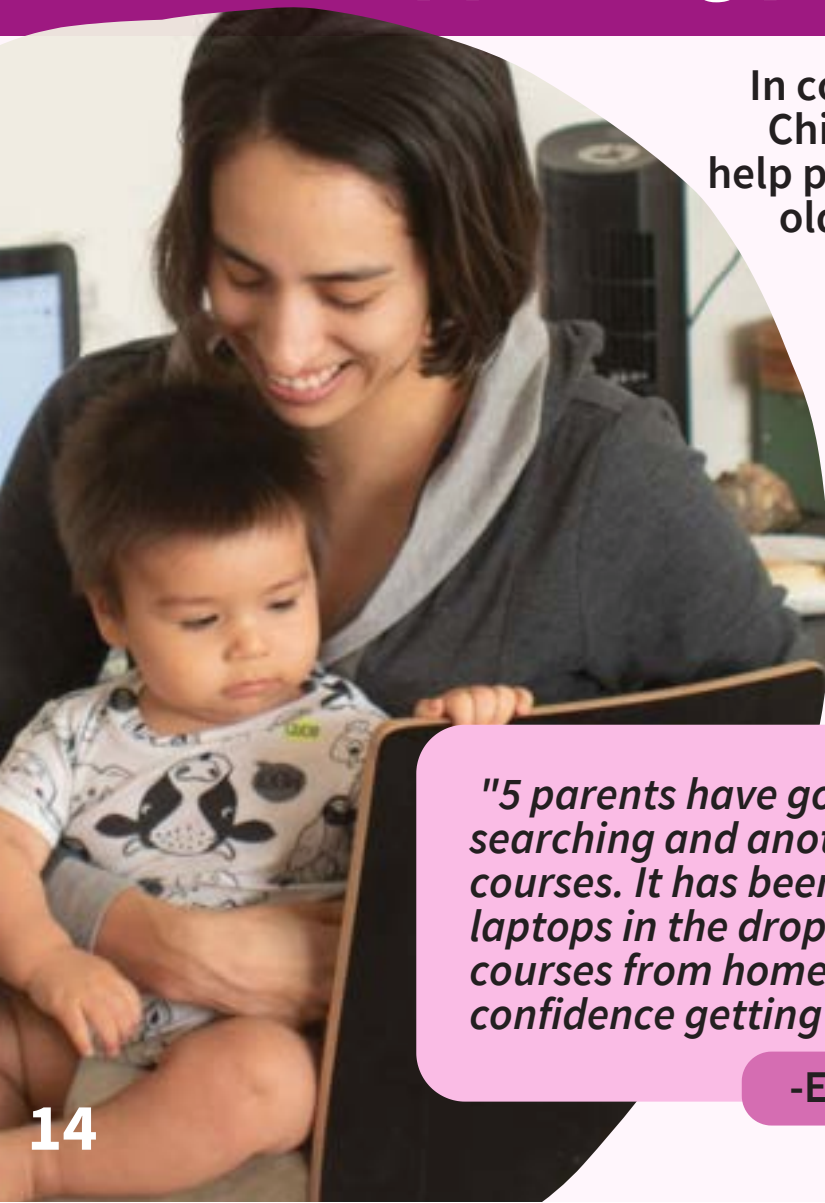
In collaboration with Providing Access to Childcare and Employment (PACE), who help parents with two, three and four year-olds, move into work and volunteering.

Citizens Online has...

Trained

3

PACE staff to become Digital Champions

Distributed

16

Laptops to parents

"5 parents have gone into work, 3 are actively job searching and another 4 are attending online courses. It has been great to see parents using the laptops in the drop-in sessions and accessing courses from home, along with building their confidence getting online."

-Eleanor from PACE

DIGITAL CHAMPIONS (DCs)

We have onboarded 114 new DCs this year, making our network of DCs 580 strong.

Digital Champions make a huge difference to learners, building their confidence to become digitally included.

We advocate for three types of Digital Champions to support learners:

1 PROFESSIONAL
People employed as a Digital Champion

2 EMBEDDED
Those who incorporate Digital Champion support as part of their role, although it's not their job title

3 VOLUNTEER
DCs recruited and trained by an organisation to support digital inclusion work, who offer their time for free

DCs offer a range of support:

- Group drop in sessions
- Support over the phone, using our helpline
- One-to-one in person sessions
- Signposting to other services

"It was a dream session today at the day centre... Conversations may have begun with responses like "I'm not interested in any of that" but before long there were people doing word puzzles, playing music, watching Youtube videos, learning to use a smart phone and painting."

-a DC running a group session

"Digital is now part of my day to day life. I never thought back then that I would be training as a Digital Champion myself and setting up to help other people with computers!"

From one of our learners who trained to become a DC after receiving digital support themselves from us

SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

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PROJECTS

We work with local authorities, businesses, health organisations, housing associations and community groups to:

- Research digital inclusion/exclusion

- Interview stakeholders

- Produce sustainable digital inclusion strategies and action plans

- Conduct Digital Maturity Assessments

- Produce digital inclusion provision signposting maps

Promoting digital leadership, staff digital skills, inclusive digital design and collaboration

Feedback from one of our Stakeholders, Rural Action Derbyshire:

"We have found working with Citizens Online to be a very constructive and rewarding experience. Their friendly, collaborative approach enabled our digital inclusion project to benefit from the organisation's extensive knowledge and skills. The Citizen Online team are clearly passionate and committed to tackling digital exclusion, and their involvement in the early stages of our project no doubt added to the interest and enthusiasm local partners had in the establishment of a digital inclusion network in Derbyshire. "

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Case Study: Building a sustainable digital inclusion network

As part of our sustainable and collaborative approach, our project in Brighton runs quarterly network meetings, which are open to all who are, or wish to improve, digital inclusion.

In the meetings, the network:

- Showcases best practice
- Encourages a collaborative approach
- Hosts a diverse range of speakers
- Shares member news
- Updates the signposting map for digital inclusion support in the City

Feedback from an attendee

"The session was wonderful... I wasn't sure how well it would go because I haven't been involved before and sometimes these things can just be someone speaking to a crowd and not interesting but, actually people were really switched on and willing to contribute which was great and you had arranged such brilliant speakers. That was fantastic that research piece and hearing how people's projects are going."
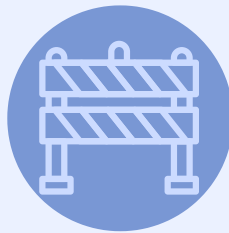
IMPROVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Case Study: Digital Maturity Assessments

A Digital Maturity Assessment (DMA) is a digital 'check-up' of your organisation's digital transformation.

We take a bespoke approach and provide a baseline of digital transformation, indentifying untapped areas for improvement.

A DMA assessment explores:

- Staff digital skills
- Approach to modernisation
- Barriers to online services

- Digital strategy
- Culture
- Infrastructure
- Cybersecurity

What are the benefits of a DMA?

The Inclusion Lead at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, told us:

"Doing the surveys has meant our staff play a significant role in how the Council shapes its digital strategy so that we are equipped to do our jobs in the most efficient way and benefit from confidence with digital skills. We're in a better position to take this work forward as a result of the exercise."

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GET INVOLVED

If you want to help by volunteering, donating devices, or giving money, visit us on:

https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/get-involved/

To find out more about digital inclusion, and the barriers people face, visit:

https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/digital-inclusion/

To read more about our work, visit:

https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/news/

If you or someone you know needs digital support, please call our helpline:

0808 196 5883

OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Our work would not be possible, without the support of our funders and partners: