

2.2 Digital Literacy

Improvement Project Title Digital Literacy
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Aim statement Increase the % of people in Aberdeen who feel comfortable using digital tools by 2021
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan One of the stretch outcomes in the LOIP is to - Increase the % of people in Aberdeen who feel comfortable using digital tools by 2021. Our citizens will have access to learning opportunities to develop their digital skills, digital literacy, and data literacy through collaborative partnerships to a wide range of age groups and locations.
Introduction to the Improvement Aim <p>We recognise that ‘comfortable’ will have different meanings for different groups of users. From discussions with groups working with a wide range of individuals in the city we have agreed that ‘comfortable’ for the purpose of this improvement aim will be measured against a set of essential digital skills.</p> <p>We will collate our current sets of data and conduct further research with the citizens of Aberdeen to establish a benchmark figure of how comfortable the people of Aberdeen currently feel using digital tools.</p> <p>We know that an increasing number of services are solely accessible online such as DWP processes and banking. Whilst young people are exposed to technology at an early age there are still age groups struggling with digital literacy and there is a risk that these individuals are missing out on developing employability skills, social interaction, confidence with digital tools and ability to make claim for benefits they are entitled to.</p> National level research <p>2019 UK Consumer Digital Index recently published is a behavioural data sample of one million nationally representative customers outlining the digital behaviours of Britain. This report identified that 22% of the UK population are what they class as, digitally disadvantaged, meaning they do not have the digital skills to carry out everyday tasks.</p> <p>The Basic Digital Skills framework used previously by the Government has now evolved into the Essential Digital Skills framework. In 2018 Lloyds Bank and the Tech Partnership worked with the Department for Education and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport to update the framework to ensure it fully reflects the range of skills people need to safely benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world of today and the future. The framework was put out for public consultation and over 400 cross-sector organisations provided their inputs on the practical application and execution of the framework.</p>

Essential Digital Skills Framework (2018)



The new Essential Digital Skills framework now comprises of three tiers and is progressive:

1. Foundation skills - People must be able to do all seven tasks as a prerequisite
2. Essential Digital Skills for life- Individuals must have all Foundation skills to be eligible and be able to do at least one task from all five of the skills
3. Essential Digital Skills for work - Individuals must be able to do at least one task in each of the life skills, be in employment, and be able to do at least one task in each of the work skills.

We can apply the use of these tiers to our improvement aim, whilst some groups of people, perhaps the over 65's may see the foundation skills as being comfortable with digital tools, we may view the essential digital skills for work tier as being comfortable with digital tools for groups of individuals such as school leavers or job seekers.

The UK Consumer Index also provided an insight into the barriers of people choosing to not engage with digital tools. 75% said that they lacked the motivation to investigate what benefits the Internet can offer and more than half said that online safety concerns prevent them from using the Internet. We may find through other feedback from groups that there are other barriers, but these are a good starting point understand how non digitally literate people are currently feeling.

Regional Level Research

At regional level the Scottish housing regulator did a report into tenant participation and digital access, with 85% of respondents said they felt confident using the internet. 34% of respondents responded to say that introductory courses to build confidence and skills would encourage them to use the internet more, which is one of the strategies we want to look out to encourage people feeling comfortable with digital technology.

Local Level Research

At a local level in Aberdeen, the 42nd City Voice questionnaire undertaken in 2018 included questions on the use of technology and has given us some benchmark figures. 78.5% of respondents reported that they owned or had easy access to a laptop or PC, and 71.4% said they

owned or had easy access to a smart phone. 50.5% of respondents reported owning or having easy access to all three devices and 90.2% of respondents owned or had access to at least one of the devices. Respondents were also asked questions on their basic digital skills, the tasks specified are taken from the Basic Digital Skills [100] measure. This is a tool developed specifically to measure the level of digital skills of adults across the UK. Based on this tool, those who could do one task in each of the five skills categories are classified as having “Basic Digital Skills”. These were processes related to managing information, communicating, transacting, problem solving, creating, security and advanced skills such as coding. 70.6% of respondents were identified as having Basic Digital Skills. Whilst there was no significant difference in the proportion of those with Basic Digital Skills was found between males and females, there was a significant difference by age group. The proportion of those with Basic Digital Skills was highest in those aged 35-54 years (85.8%) and lowest in those aged 65+ years (57.9%).

Locally there is already a vast amount of work taking place across Aberdeen City supporting citizens with digital skills and online services.

A fact-finding exercise to determine what is currently being provided to residents in the City was carried out and completed by known groups. A summary of the groups currently in operation is below:

Aberdeen City Council Adult Learning - Currently run beginners ICT groups and offer tutoring in Core Skills ICT level 2 & Level 3. The age of their participants is around 35 -60. Since April this year, 29 participants have engaged with their ICT training courses with the majority of learners in the 30-49 age bracket.

Aberdeen City Council Libraries – Currently offer ad hoc one to one assistance at self-serve PC’s for customers with a variety of online tasks. Have devised guidance documents for online tasks available on their website. Collect data on monthly PC and WIFI usage, technical support given and interactions between staff and those requiring assistance with welfare reform tasks.

Aberdeen City Council Customer Experience – Support with online council processes currently offered at Customer Service Centre and Customer Access Points. Collect data on number of users signing up to online processes, looking to measure the support currently given by frontline staff over the phone and face to face.

Ability Net - are a UK wide charity with volunteers based in the North East too. They support any individual with a disability and the over 55. Their service is run by volunteers who make home visits to individuals and assist with ad hoc digital requests or more bespoke one to one tuition over a number of weeks.

Cummings Park Community Flat - provide a space for groups providing digital literacy support as such Silver City Surfers and Pathways. The Community Flat has public computers and free WIFI and supports people with learning discs.

Digital Maker CIC - run workshops for school pupils aged 9+, CPD for Teachers, public STEAM (Science technology engineering art mathematics) workshops and have been added to the DWP’s preferred suppliers list for level 3 unemployment training. They use “digital making” (robotics, electronics, computer programming, prototyping and “practical making” to give participants key skills, creative & critical thinking, resilience, teamworking, communication and confidence.

EC – PC - currently provide basic and intermediate IT skills to individuals mainly aged 35 - 55 to improve employability.

Inchgarth Community Centre - deliver free beginners and intermediate blocks of classes free of charge to members of the community and work with Pathways to provide support for individuals seeking employment. They also run mobile phone classes.

Silver Surfers - run free, bespoke 1-1 tutoring sessions for learners aged 55 and over in an internet cafe style setting with regular monthly talks on specific topics. The 1 2 1 tutorials last between 40 – 60mins and are covering foundation skills and skills for life. Two weekly sessions at the Salvation Army Citadel, one weekly session at Michie's chemist on Union Street, one weekly session at the Cummings Park Community Flat and one weekly session at the Central library on a Saturday morning. Currently increasing presence at some sheltered accommodation housing sites. Receive an annual fund from Fairer Aberdeen but the teaching is provided by unpaid volunteers. Currently collate a range of data including demographics of participants – age, ethnicity and disabilities. During tutorials collate data on the equipment used, topics covered and postcode of individuals.

Station House Media Unit – SHMU – Offer a range of programmes from radio and TV employability skills, radio training, editorial skills mainly targeted at young people, however they do work with other age groups too. They also deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media to Westhill Academy pupil in school and pupils attend SHMU premises for practical work. Their Media Access Project (MAP) has a permanent unit in HMP Grampian where they replicate the work they do in the community. SHMU are also an SQA accredited centre delivering a range of qualifications.

The Support Advice Finance Education (SAFE) project at CFINE - supports foodbank users and various others referred to the service. They support individuals on a one to one basis helping them apply for benefits and maintaining a claim. This often results in 1-2-1 sessions using a laptop, learning to navigate the UC application, checking their journal, making entries and communicating online. The safe project also runs drop in sessions for those who need help in using a computer in various local areas. The project is also providing 1-2-1 and group education sessions within disadvantaged communities to build knowledge and confidence when using digital platforms that are essential to inclusion. Currently collate data on age, gender and location of individuals.

What is working well?

This fact-finding exercise has demonstrated that there is already a vast amount of digital support on offer, from school age right up to the over 55's. The support offered is in a wide range of accessible locations, as well as at people's homes and those without access to PC's/WIFI at their home are able to access at all local libraries.

Where do we need improvement?

Based on initial discussions, working in collaboration could bring a number of benefits. One of the key themes of discussion was around volunteer numbers, funding streams and resourcing. By working together, stronger working relationships are created, and any duplication of work is reduced. Most people working in organisations supporting digital skills provision are volunteers so again there is potential for some closer working between the groups to share resources, best practice and increase recruitment within this area.

Why is Digital Literacy important?

Some of the benefits of increasing citizens digital literacy are that citizens acquire skills for employment opportunities which could reduce levels of unemployment in the city. Volunteering is a positive way for individuals to develop their own skills as well as support others, particularly with groups of older people and younger people it is positive for cross age group interaction.

Groups operating in communities encourage social interaction, where there may be individuals at risk of social isolation, for example the Silver Surfers sessions are in a café style and encourages social interaction.

Some individuals may require further support in other areas of their life and engagement with these groups could lead to signposting which will have a positive effect on their life. CFINE offers a foodbank to those in need but whilst they are accessing that service they can get support applying / maintaining their benefit claims.

Individuals may have the desire to engage with services digitally but do not have the skillset, by upskilling citizens demand on other services in the city could be reduced.

What are we currently measuring –

Once collated we will be able to demonstrate the following –

- Location map of current services on offer
- Age ranges of people accessing digital support services
- Location of people accessing digital support services

At a recent meeting there was agreement from the groups in attendance that we could start to collate one/two measures and report these going forward.

Measures :

Outcome measures

- % of people who identify with a level of Essential Digital Skills
- % of people feeling ‘comfortable with digital tools’ after interactions with groups
- Postcode of participants (Priority areas vs city centre)
- Number of people completing ‘Digital Skills’ workshops/sessions/groups in the city (pool attendance figures together)

Process measures

- Number of volunteers operating in the city directly linked to provided digital literacy support
- % of groups operating in the city who self-report that they have sufficient devices to provide digital literacy support
- Number of groups operating in the city providing digital literacy support
- Number of locations where digital literacy support is being provided

Balancing measures

- Number of groups dedicated to particular age groups may be unbalanced

Change ideas

- Test how much demand there is for digital awareness drop in sessions by hosting a ‘How to set up your email’ drop in at some locations across the city.
- Test how citizen participation could increase by holding a Digital Skills week with an event with all groups offering digital literacy support participating.
- Test uptake for volunteer recruitment through engagement with VSA and Saltire Awards
- Test a staff training programme with a team of individuals in the city to upskill them so that they feel confident supporting customers/clients with digital processes
- Test how an internal ‘referral’ between organisations could work for individuals identified as requiring digital literacy support

Potential risks mitigating actions:

- Availability of spaces in locations across the city – audit of current sessions operating to ensure no areas of the city are suffering under provision
- Staffing resource including recruitment of volunteers – work with VSA and Schools participating in the Saltire Awards to promote volunteering opportunity
- Lack of funding for groups for purchase of digital equipment to support sessions – audit of current funding streams and potential UK wide grants available, engaging with private companies for resources.
- Low take up of services – work with various comm streams to ensure publicity and joining up of services so that individuals can be signposted to most appropriate support channel.
- Project team time is limited with group members working on other areas of work – ensuring that we work on change ideas collaboratively.

Project Team

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 Ann Campbell, Adult Learning ACC
 Siobhan O Brien, Libraries, ACC
 Neil Woodward, CFINE
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Project Plan

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	1. Initial meeting of representatives involved in digital literacy 2. Initial audit of known groups contributing/facilitating digital literacy skills development 3. Draft charter developed 4. Charter submitted to CPA 5. Project team established	Complete Complete Complete Complete
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	1. Audit of current data 2. Benchmarking measures 3. Identify the current funding streams providing resources/financial support to groups in the city to support digital literacy. 4. Design event for change ideas 5. Timeline finalised for implementation of change ideas	30/11/19 30/11/19 30/11/19 31/12/19 31/12/19
Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-10)	1. First change ideas implemented 2. Initial measurement of change idea 3. All initial change ideas implemented 4. 6-month review of change ideas 5. Further change ideas identified and scheduled	31/01/20 30/04/20 30/06/20 31/07/20 31/08/20
Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	1. Review of 12-month activities 2. Assessment of benefits	31/12/20 31/12/20