

DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT

YEAR 4 - IMPACT REPORT APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

HOW WE HELP

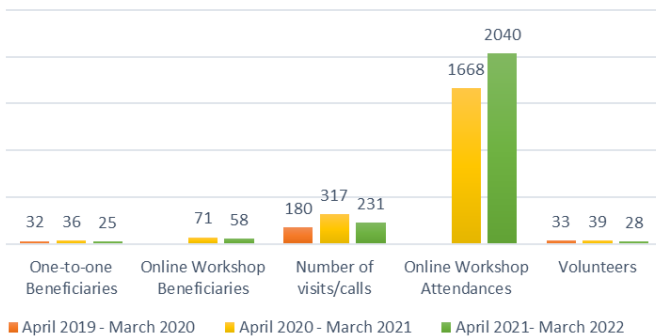
The Digital Inclusion Project with Fulham Good Neighbours (FGN) has been running since April 2018. It had proved to be popular and successful in addressing the demand for digital support from older resident in Fulham and it is working to reduce the digital gap, by connecting them with volunteers who support them to develop their digital skills.

Since March 2022, the project benefits from the generous support of the ExPat Foundation. This enables the project work to continue to develop individual digital skills, grow older people's connectivity and interactions with the community and local services, helping to address feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The project also continues to support the organisational vision of building a community where neighbours look after each other and increases the availability and access to activities via online or hybrid delivery. The Online Chair Based Exercise, Art Groups, Online Gardening events, and online Quizzes attract members who are housebound or still self-isolating. The project also supports the FGN volunteer training and volunteer events by enabling volunteers to join the Induction training and Christmas Quiz online via online video meeting tool Zoom.



FGN DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT OVERVIEW



The awareness of the benefits of technology increased substantially during the pandemic. With the growing number of Digital Inclusion beneficiaries, we have also expanded our offer for digital support and services. In spite of this, we are aware that many older or disabled people remain isolated in their homes without online access, with the Lloyds Consumer Digital Index 2021 estimating as many as 5% of the UK population is still digitally excluded. To help us extend our reach, we created local partnerships with Ready Tech Go and received funds from London Marathon Charitable Trust and Albert Hunt Trust, ensuring that access to digital equipment does not constitute a barrier for those wanting to go online. The project now has a laptop, dongle, tablets, and sim cards, which can be borrowed by beneficiaries to start their digital learning journey. We are also increasing our support offer in the areas of Fulham which are the most financially deprived, aiming to ensure that digital equipment and assistance is offered to those residents who would most benefit from it.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In the last two years, the project has been delivered mostly via remote support on the phone or Zoom, but since September 2021 we have been able to gradually resume home visits, while still observing Covid-19 safety measures. We continue to support people both remotely, as some of the beneficiaries continue to shield in their home, and also via in-person meetings. As volunteers have returned to work after lockdowns or moved out of London, our numbers have fallen with fifteen volunteers exiting the project. However, five new volunteers joined us, eight more continue from previous years and we expect the numbers to grow next year. We will aim to increase recruitment in 2022/23 via partnerships with Team London, Do-it, increased advertising via London university sites, our social media channels and monthly e-newsletter.

The project encourages older people to be digitally curious and try out the technology and volunteer support to see how digital can enhance their day-to-day lives and support them to remain independent at home for longer. To this end, we hosted the Thrive Tribe at one of our Lunch Clubs on the 16th March 2022 to deliver a talk on the 5 Pillars of Wellbeing and how their app Gloji can be used to enhance health and manage weight loss.

Our equipment loaning scheme has proven very useful to those beneficiaries who did not have access to digital tools: *'I'm using it every day for games and doing Sainsbury shopping. I am on it right now, trying to order some coffee on Amazon. Thank you very much (for the loan), it's been a godsend!'* Beneficiary, 78 years old, March 2022

BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK

"I'm so very grateful that he was the perfect volunteer who certainly knew his stuff. I found him friendly, professional, and very patient when explaining the problem with my laptop and how he could help to fix it. He has gone above and beyond to get my laptop upgraded and is really very efficient now. It's better than it was before! I'm delighted." Beneficiary, August 2021

"I got a new printer, but I'm no good at anything mechanic. But a young man came and looked at it and said he's never seen one like it before, so I thought: oh, no why did I buy it? But he said not to worry, he will try and figure it out. So he did and connected it to the iPad and stayed and showed me how to do it. He was so patient." Beneficiary, 87 years old, November 2021

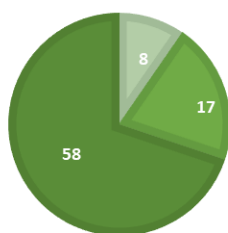
VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

"He is fascinating – he described himself as an aging hippy when I arrived. He has an enormous collection of music CDs (I'd guess over 1000) and huge stacks of DVDs and books. He knows about all sorts of artists but doesn't really go to galleries any longer. He now has email and access to the Internet which are the main things he wants." Volunteer, 64 years old, September 2021

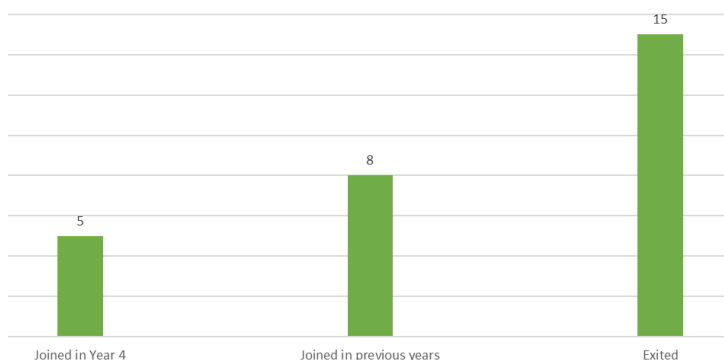
"I have volunteered before in previous roles and found it rewarding. As someone digitally literate and with some spare time on my hands, I am keen to give back where I can." Volunteer, 29 years old, October 2021

BENEFICIARIES
APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

■ One-to-One Joined in Year 4
■ One-to-one Joined in previous years
■ Online Clubs Attendees

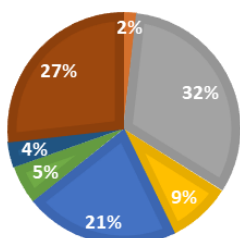


DIGITAL SKILLS VOLUNTEERS
APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022



DISABILITY

■ No
■ Yes-Learning
■ Yes-Long term health
■ Yes-Mental health
■ Yes-Physical
■ Yes-Sensory impairment
■ Yes-Other
■ Housebound



DIGITAL SKILLS ARE HELPING BENEFICIARIES





LENA'S STORY

Lena* is 52 year old, mainly housebound due to ill-health and limited mobility. She first contacted our Digital Inclusion project in February 2021, during the Covid-19 lockdown, to get help with her laptop and to learn how to do online shopping. After being matched with one of our Remote Digital Skills Volunteers, Lena created her first online shopping account.

But the lessons with the volunteer were made difficult by her old laptop computer, which was slow, took a long time to switch on and had to be constantly plugged at her desk when in use due to a deficient battery. This meant that Lena, who was often bed-bound, had to move to her desk so she can use her laptop. The physical effort left her quite tired and the limited mobility meant that the lessons could only go forward on the days when Lena's health was good enough so she could make her way to the desk.

A FGN tablet was then offered to help with these issues and to increase Lena's access to digital tools. She had not used a tablet before but the idea of being able to access her emails and do her shopping from anywhere in the home, was very appealing to her and she decided to give it a go. A tablet was delivered to her door, the FGN Remote Digital Skills Volunteer supported her to set up her email and shopping account on it and Lena soon started using the tablet instead of the old laptop.

As her digital skills grew, so did her confidence and Lena now uses the tablet regularly to browse the Internet and do online shopping. With the help of the FGN Remote Digital Skills Volunteer, she hopes to continue to learn more about using online video meeting tools, online security and installing and using applications on the tablet herself. As she continues to self-isolate for health reasons, Lena finds the remote digital support lessons with our volunteer very useful and is relieved that she can access the project this way:

"The tablet is a big help, wherever the room you're in you can use it there. I am looking things up and use it to check my emails. I can do the things I usually do, but I have more questions for the volunteer. It's nice to have someone to ask. I am still shielding at medical advice; I need a volunteer to help me over the phone. She is very kind and we have a good system in place..."

*The name of the client has been changed for confidentiality reasons.