

OneDigital

Delivering Skills in Rural Communities

Working with older people in rural areas

Sarah Parkes, Project Manager, Age UK

Though figures show internet use among older people is increasing, this group are still less likely to use the internet than their younger counterparts.



The current cohort who are not online will remain offline for many years.

Digital technology is continually developing and will leave people behind.

Digital exclusion will become less about whether you are online and more about what you are doing online.



Reasons for not using the internet

Figure 13. Reasons for households not having internet access at home, age 65+ (GB)

	%
Don't need internet (not useful, not interesting, etc.)	64
Lack of skills	20
Have access to the internet elsewhere	12
Other reason	10
Equipment costs too high	8
Access costs too high (telephone, broadband subscription)	8
Privacy or security concerns	7
Physical or sensorial disability	2

Base: Households in Great Britain without internet access.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Internet access - households and individuals, 2017

- Lack of skills, knowledge, and experience with the internet
- Lack of belief in/understanding of the value of being online
- Not for them at their life stage
- Outside their comfort zone
- The internet is 'unsafe'
- Perception of high cost of equipment and internet connection
- Worry about loss of face-to-face interactions, or talking on the phone, or need/motivation to get out of the house
- Use by proxy through family

A close-up photograph of an elderly person's hands holding a black smartphone. The person is wearing a white long-sleeved sweater and a gold ring on their left hand. They are seated at a wooden table. In the foreground, there is a white ceramic mug and a small white card with some faint writing. The background is blurred, showing other people and a bright, indoor setting.

Today we will explore
how these barriers are
exacerbated in rural
areas

Best practice in delivering support

1. **Flexibility and relevance:** structured, skills-focused courses won't work. Concentrate on helping people to do the things they need and want to do online.
2. **The right pace:** older learners will pick up information and will progress their learning at different paces – responsive approach is key
3. **Repetition and reflection:** creating space for repetition and reflection on success is vital to success
4. **The right language:** avoid jargon and focus on the task, not the tech

Centre for Ageing Better

Best practice in delivering support

5. **One-to-one support:** a strong tutor-pupil relationship is key to building confidence.
6. **Time to build relationships:** time to build communication and trust helps to maintain learners' interest in digital and increase their self efficacy.
7. **Ongoing support:** support needs to be open-ended, allowing learners to return with questions and problems.
8. **Co-design:** involve a wide range of users in the shaping and design of all services, new and existing, to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

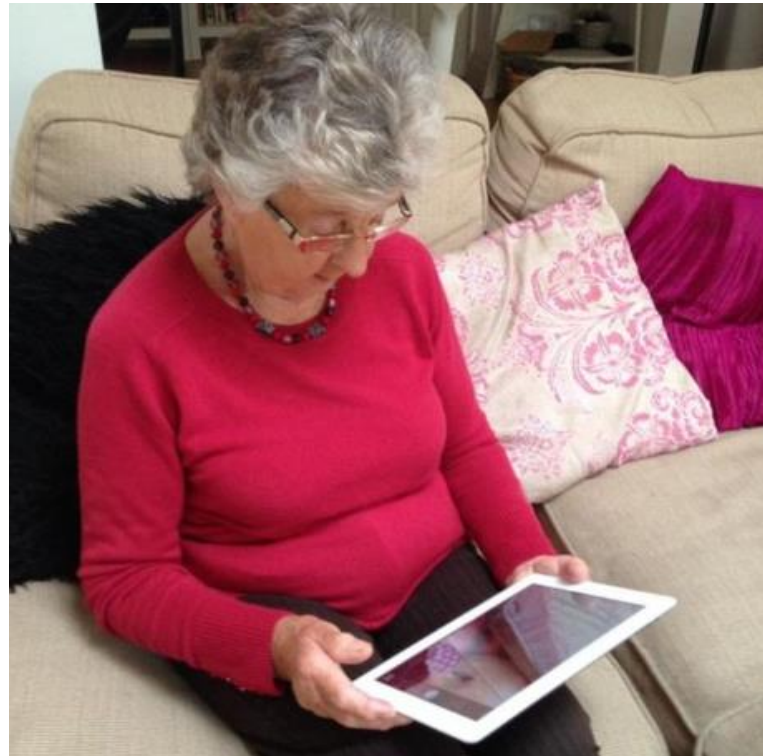
Centre for Ageing Better

Hannah Kitching
Client Services Supervisor



Digital Engagement

Developing Digital Skills in Rural Communities



Background

- **20% of our clients live rurally**
- **Over 90% of clients feel their health affects their daily living**
- **44.3% of clients get out for social events less than once a week**
- **54.4% of clients have no interest in using the internet**
- **87.4% of clients phone their family more than once a week**

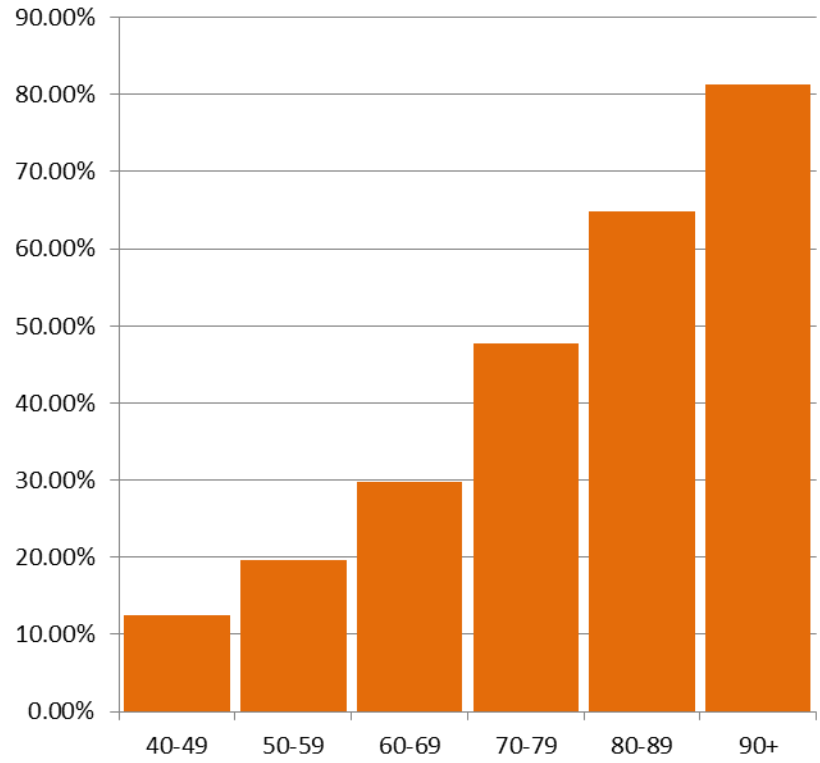
Key factors limiting access to online facilities

- Age of clients – minimal need for online access through life means clients may not see purpose, benefits or ease of online facilities
- Advancements in technology leading to declining confidence, regardless of client age
- Cost and location – Active or adopted barriers?

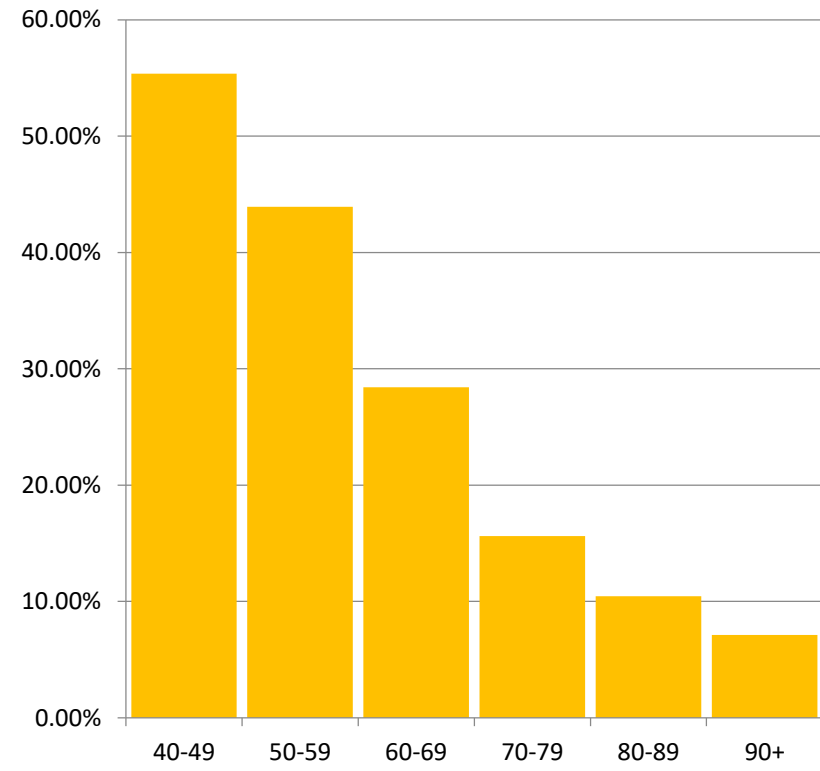
Is Age an active barrier or an adopted barrier?

“How confident are you using the internet?”

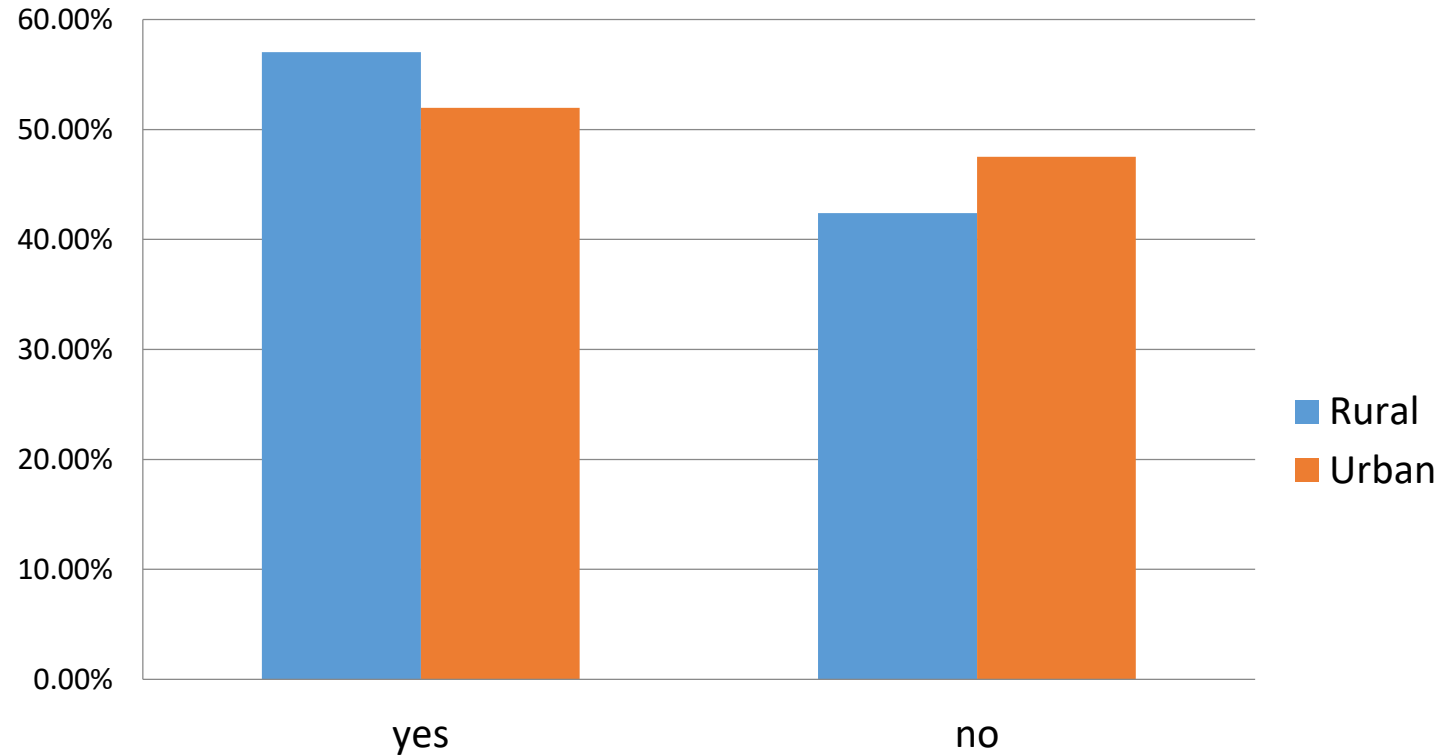
No interest in using internet



Very Confident

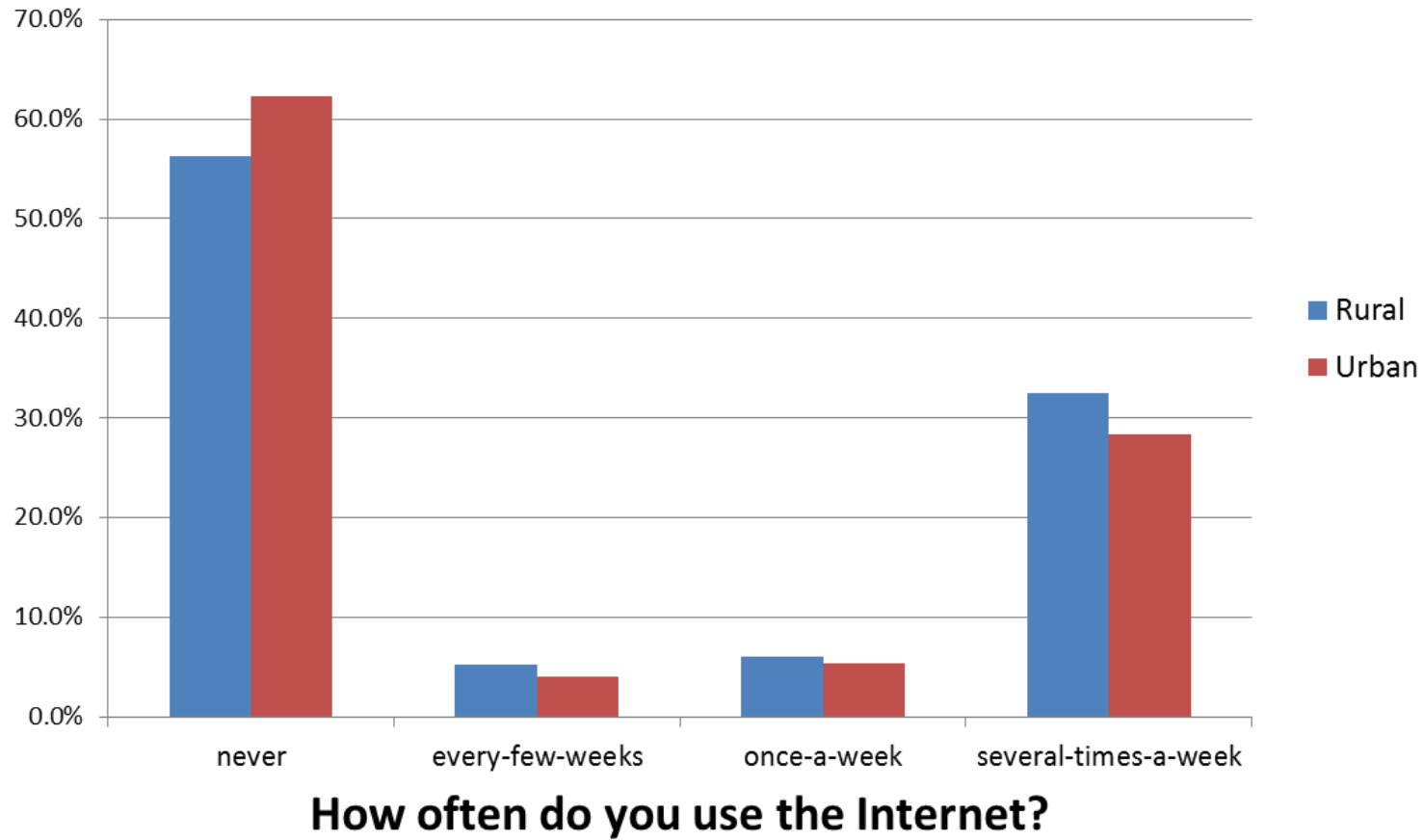


Is **Location** an active barrier or an adopted barrier?



Do you have the Internet at home?

Is **Location** an active barrier or an adopted barrier?



How to overcome the barriers



What support are we providing?



- Identifying the clients in need through holistic casework
- One-off introductory Taster Sessions to introduce the basics of using tablets

What support are we providing?

- Provide a free Tablet Loan Service for three months, with wireless Mi-Fi units if they do not have Wi-Fi at home
- Sustaining drop-ins and one-to-one tuition at home **regardless of location**
- Working to improve long-term financial stability



What have we achieved?

- 94 clients have accessed the Tablet Loan Service
- 25 training sessions for Clients
- 9 drop-in locations set up, running monthly support
- Reduced loneliness, increased wellbeing and supported in learning a new skill

Sustainability

- Over 90% of clients continued with the tablet for over 10 weeks of the three month loan
- Clients developing online skills across PC's and tablets to then use independently
- Clients looking to buy own tablets after loan ended
- Clients part of established long-term support networks

Looking forward

- Flexible duration of loan (to allow for different pace of learning among clients)
- Subsidised tablet purchase
- Working with partners to ensure broadband for all regardless of location
- Provision of IT/Broadband support beyond the tablet loan scheme

Angela Moss

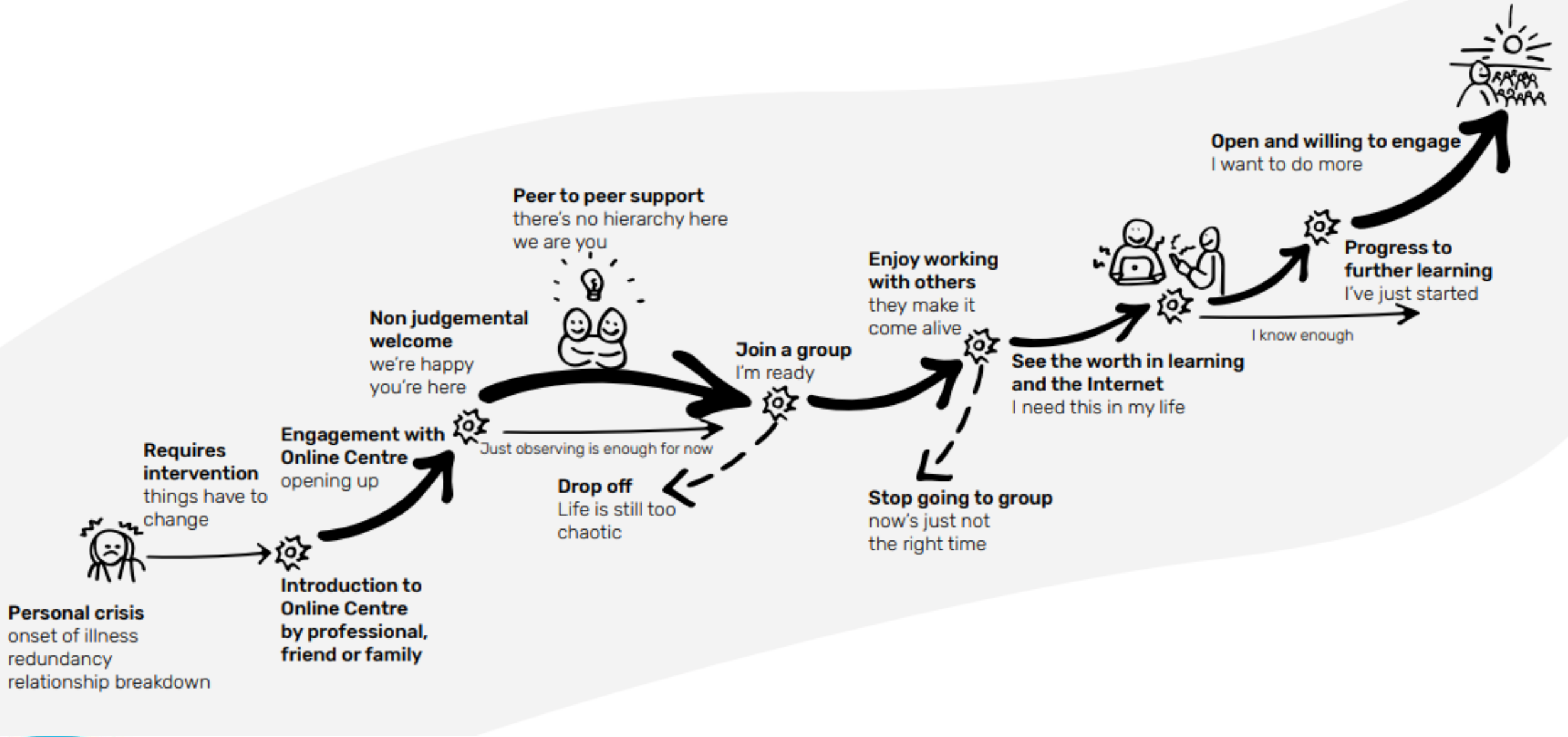
Coordinator of Chorley Lifestyle Centre



Activity

1. **What does a customer journey look like this for older person? (10 mins)**
2. **Where and how can our interventions improve? (10 mins)**
3. **Feedback (10 mins)**





Good Things Foundation

<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/theory-of-change-playbook.pdf>



Questions?

