



Clarion Futures One Digital 2nd Project Progress Report



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Executive Summary

In this day and age digital skills are essential to finding work. Since its inception, over three years ago, the Clarion Futures One Digital project has worked hard to tackle digital exclusion within the field of employment. Our One Digital model of support has approached this by using trusted intermediaries (known as Digital Champions) to deliver digital skills support to individuals, in order to develop their ability and confidence to find and explore employment opportunities with the use of digital tools.

Since 2017 we have worked in collaboration with 15 replicating partner¹ organisations and central to our partnership activity we have developed a screening tool to aid both us and our replication partners, to identify the essential digital skills (EDS)² needs of our clients in order to better inform the support we give to our clients.

As we enter the last year of the One Digital Project, Clarion Futures and our replicating partners have screened over 4000 people to ascertain digital skills need. Our replicating partners play a central role in the successful delivery of this project and via the 'spotlight feature' in this report we highlight the key learnings from our replicating partners that form the foundations of their successful delivery. These include:

- Creating sustainable and rewarding digital volunteer models
- Strategic positioning of Digital Champions coupled with creative techniques to promote digital skills support with language learning
 - The importance of strategic partnerships and collaborative working.

Data on demographics collected via the screening tool brings to light the makeup of Clarion Futures and replicating partners target group. Data on gender to date reveals that we have conducted screening on more women than men. Furthermore, a significant number of our clients are reporting that they access a computer in a library or public place; which signals the importance of accessing online services in a safe and informed manner from a public computer.

Whilst brief, it is envisaged that the learnings and insights offered as part of this report will help support the development of other digital and employment projects.

¹ 'Replicating' partners refers to Clarion's Future's 15 partner organisations use of Digital Champions to deliver essential digital skills support to individuals within a jobs and training setting, as well as the embedding of our digital skills screening tool in order to identify need and better inform Champion support.

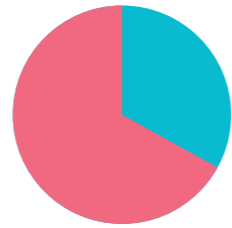
² Essential digital skills refer to those skills needed to safely benefit from, participate and contribute to the digital world of today and the future.

Headline stats*



4,049

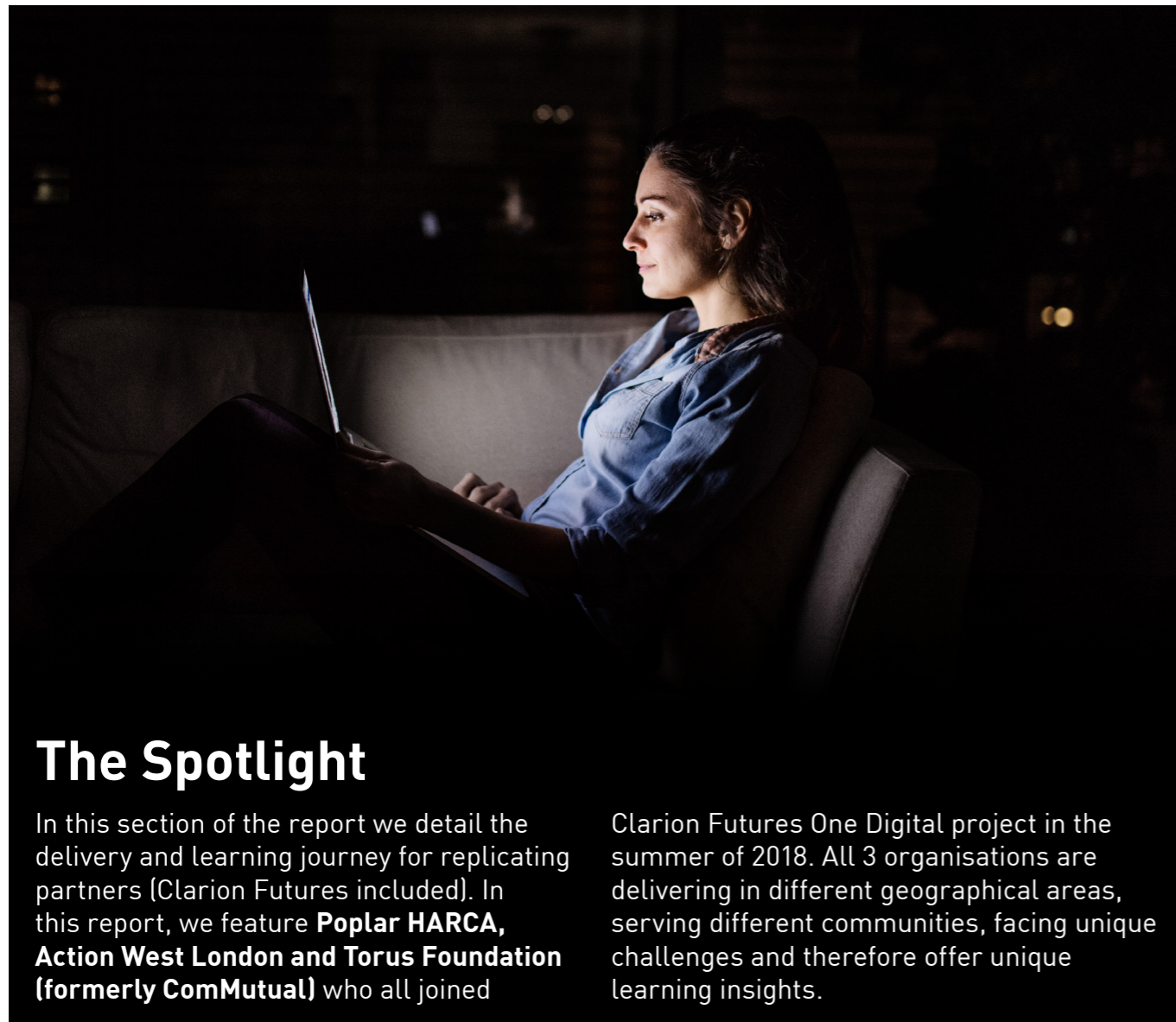
Number of people screened for digital skills (Part 1 screening tool)



1,334

Number of people who after being screened have been referred for Digital Champion support (Part 2 screening tool)

Please find further information on part 1 and part 2 of the screening tool on page 12



The Spotlight

In this section of the report we detail the delivery and learning journey for replicating partners (Clarion Futures included). In this report, we feature **Poplar HARCA, Action West London and Torus Foundation (formerly ComMutual)** who all joined

Clarion Futures One Digital project in the summer of 2018. All 3 organisations are delivering in different geographical areas, serving different communities, facing unique challenges and therefore offer unique learning insights.

Poplar HARCA

Paving the way for Digital Volunteer Models

Poplar HARCA is an award winning Housing and Regeneration Community Association situated in East London. Poplar HARCA provides homes and support to residents helping to create places where people, communities and businesses can grow and thrive.

Poplar HARCA have been an approved UK online centre for digital skills training since 2009, supporting people with digital skills needs by training delivered at their community centres. The organisation is also working with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets aiming to realise a wireless Poplar by 2021 as part of Tower Hamlets partnership Digital Inclusion Strategy to make it an 'Online Borough'³. The strategy and action plan though initially had an end date of 2018 has been extended until 2021.

To be able to achieve this ambitious goal it was vital for Poplar HARCA to increase its capacity to train residents in essential digital skills, whilst developing the skill set of their Digital

Champions. They joined The Clarion Futures One Digital Project in June 2018, with the end view of further enhancing their digital training programme.

The Clarion Futures One Digital offer provided further access to resources and support via the Digital Champions Network (DCN)⁴, as well as opportunities for collaborative and shared learning with other organisations. Having all the above resources at their disposal, did not result in an easy take off for the Poplar HARCA team, as they experienced challenges early on. In the first couple of months, there were very few volunteer sign-ups for Digital Champion roles and an equally small number of learners were taking up the offer of support. The slow start did not deter the team as they believed that come September when everyone was back from the summer holidays, things would quickly fall into place. True enough in October, Poplar HARCA's paid volunteer co-ordinator began to receive applications from prospective Digital Champions. It helped to have an existing structure of continued support and



³ <https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s67609/10.1b App1 Digital Inclusion Strategy Document.pdf>

⁴ Digital Champions Network: Designed by Digital Unite it is an interactive destination that provides learning, tools and a friendly community to help an individual be a great Digital Champion.

encouragement through the embedded volunteer support programme within Poplar HARCA. It contributed immensely in making the project highly rewarding for the digital volunteers.

To date, Poplar HARCA has screened 337 clients, providing much needed 1:2:1 and group support to more than half of these. The project has been successful in recruiting and sustaining over 21 Digital Champions, with many finding additional work opportunities within Poplar HARCA and two of the volunteer Digital Champions progressing into fulltime employment with other organisations.

For Poplar HARCA the process has been clear: Volunteer Digital Champions who have worked within the One Digital project for at least 3 months are invited to apply as paid bank workers (a pool of paid workers who can work flexibly in various roles). Poplar HARCA's Employment & Training team works closely with these bank workers, supporting them to further explore more permanent and sustainable job opportunities.

Feedback from volunteers involved in the work has been positive. For most, it has provided a safe and friendly introduction to employment, apprenticeships or further training/studies. However the One Digital project has had an indirect impact on the older residents as well who are retired or living on their own, by providing a window of opportunity to socialise and give something back to their local community.

Kibria Ali who was successful at securing employment after volunteering as a Digital Champion for over 4 months is now a fulltime staff member at the Competition and Markets Authority. Kibria says:

“Having been unemployed for a few years due to the birth of my children, I did not feel confident to apply for any paid jobs. Thanks to the One Digital Project, I found a chance to slowly regain my self-confidence and rediscover my skills to eventually return to work. The support and trust given to me by the staff of Poplar HARCA to take on various tasks within the project has enabled me to believe in myself again.

At Poplar HARCA, they invest in volunteers and make sure you progress into something meaningful at the end of it. My confidence grew and I was using my experience of delivering One Digital sessions to write up my personal statements and attend job interviews.

I ended up securing two jobs. I worked as a part time services administrator for HARCA and then moved into a full time role in the civil service. Thank you to all those at HARCA who have supported me in returning to work after my 5 year career break”

Poplar HARCA plans to continue providing digital skills support via their volunteer Digital Champions who have expressed a willingness to continue to support learners at various community centres. They hope to continue using the screening tool process as well as the Digital Champions Network to get every Poplar resident online and digitally upskilled, ultimately supporting their vision of a Wireless Poplar.



Action West London

Digital opportunities to support ESOL⁵ learners

Action West London is a charity and Social Enterprise which aims to 'change lives through employment, education and enterprise'. The organisation works with a wide range of disadvantaged groups including the long term unemployed, young and adult offenders, lone parents, black and ethnic minorities, refugees and older people. Many of the individuals that engage with the organisation are also considered to be digitally excluded, a state which further compounds their situation.

Prior to joining the One Digital partnership with Clarion Futures, Action West London offered 'limited and uncoordinated' digital support to participants using mainly the Learn My Way resource. The One Digital partnership presented as an opportunity for Action West London to develop its capacity to support its learners, whilst drawing on the experience of so many other organisations, in order to develop a programme that best addresses the digital skills needs of their learners and helps them to fully participate in society.

The initial model of support for Action West London involved running drop-in Learn My Way sessions and embedding elements of digital support within existing job clubs, which were run in partnership with their local Job Centre Plus. As Action West London supports a large immigrant and refugee population where English is not their first language (ESOL), they soon realised that ESOL learners needed more targeted support than what the Learn My Way resource or the Job club could offer. Providing meaningful digital skills support to learners with ESOL needs proved to be a major challenge.

Nearly twelve months on, the One Digital project funded by Clarion Futures has enabled Action West London to devise creative ways to promote digital skills development when coupled with language learning. One example of this includes recruiting and training Digital Champions with additional language skills and strategically deploying Champions in weekly sessions to learners matching their first language. In particular, the Digital Champions Network (also referred to as the DCN, a support and learning platform developed by Digital Unite) has been an invaluable resource for the organisation. The DCN has supported Action West London to train 16 dedicated Digital Champions. The organisation recognises that without these Digital Champions, the delivery of this project would have been impossible.

“Nissrin, came to the UK from Syria as a refugee in 2016, she had a successful career working as a journalist for a Syrian TV channel, however when the conflict began she had to move to UK to start a new life. She found it extremely hard to adjust and a period of illness really affected her confidence. Nissrin came to Action West London to access support; they quickly recognised her skills and potential and offered her the opportunity to become a Digital Champion. She works with learners, who like her, had to flee their country and seek refuge in the UK. Nissrin's language skills and background allows her to communicate with them effectively. Being a Digital Champion has given Nissrin a sense of purpose, improve her confidence and self esteem and she has lately started applying for journalist roles. She has recently been awarded 'Best Accessibility Digital Champion' at the Digital Champions awards hosted by Digital Unite.”



Nissrin, an Arabic speaking Digital Champion along with other Digital Champions, run independent sessions with learners supporting them in their first language. Champions from Action West London enthuse learners about digital skills by showing them practical ways they can use skills in their day to day lives. Once the learners are comfortable with being online, the Digital Champions plan and deliver courses on Microsoft Office including Word which is essential for CV writing. This has enabled them to support learners in developing their digital skills which in turn increases their ability to apply for work.

Action West London reports that their Digital Champion sessions are well attended as they are made accessible and relevant. To date the organisation has screened 300 clients and have identified over 90 learners who would benefit from additional support, 78 of whom have attended further support sessions.

Keen to continue the provision of digital skills support in the future Action West London hopes to continue using the Digital Champions Network to keep on training and supporting Digital Champions in order to provide digital skills support to their learners.

Torus Foundation

The Power of Partnership working

Torus Foundation (previously ComMutual) is the charitable arm of Torus, the North West's largest provider of affordable homes. Working to fulfil their mission 'for stronger communities' Torus Foundation strives to develop better connected, more independent and sustainable neighbourhoods.

To help achieve their mission, Since 2012 Torus Foundation has been delivering digital inclusion support across their local communities. Torus Foundation recently underwent a merger which widened their catchment area from Liverpool to Greater Manchester; covering Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington. These areas have been recognised as priority areas by the organisation due to the high level of deprivation, unemployment and

low level of digital skills, which are well below the national average.

Helping people get online through digital inclusion and supporting them into jobs are among the primary focus of the organisations delivery. Prior to joining the Clarion Futures One Digital project Torus Foundation offered start-up digital skills support in the form of IT skills training and was looking to enhance the provision of offer across the Liverpool community.

Torus Foundation was delighted to partner with Clarion Futures One Digital as they recognised the potential of collaboration with like minded organisations to further explore this work. The project partnership also provided them the opportunity to enhance their digital inclusion offer and trial 1:2:1 Digital



Champion model of support.

Torus foundation works in partnership with various community centres, sheltered schemes and tenants associations across their catchment areas including Parkhill Sheltered Scheme and L6 Community Centre to run over 25 free digital hubs. The logistics of having over 25 operational locations has been the biggest challenge encountered by the organisation. Providing such extensive support across the local communities has only been made possible by collaborating with key partners and enablers like One Digital.

Residents and community members are invited to the free annual events that Torus Foundation hosts in order to attract people to their offer of free digital skills support. Events include 'Picnic in the Park' and 'Impact Days' which are organised in partnership with internal teams from various departments within the business. These events provide them with an opportunity to engage with potential clients and carry out screening. The screening tool is extremely adaptable and can be effectively conducted on a mobile device enabling flexibility in its administration in various settings. The screening tool has been implemented at the forefront of the project and is used to initially screen the clients for their digital skills and also as a measure to gauge the progress of the learners later in the project.

Torus Foundation reports that, the Digital Champion support model complements their existing offer of support which is provided by their external training provider Everton Development Trust (EDT). To date 19 Digital Champions have been recruited as part of the One Digital delivery process. In addition to this, access to the Digital Champions Network

(DCN) has been extremely beneficial to the Champions and the organisation alike, Digital Champions have benefitted from the various certified training courses made mandatory as part of Digital Champion training by Torus Foundation. To date their Digital Champions have completed a whopping 210 courses on the DCN. The specialist courses on supporting clients with disabilities have also added real value and provided Digital Champions with a useful framework of support.

Digital Champions operating under Torus Foundation commit at least two hours per week at their local digital hub session and work alongside professional EDT tutors delivering a combined offer including both formal training and informal 1:2:1 support. Torus Foundation also works in collaboration with 'Liverpool Mutual in Work' who provides specialist employment support to learners once they have completed their digital skill training.

The One Digital project that Torus Foundation runs has been immensely successful, to date they have screened 319 clients and have provided digital skills support to over 70 learners. Torus reports that many of the learners supported have gone on to gain full time employment.

It is this success that has led to the decision to extend the programme beyond its grant year. Torus Foundation will continue to deliver digital skills support in their existing areas and also extend the support to new areas such as St Helens. The organisation will continue to use both the Digital Champions Network and Clarion Futures screening tool as part of their digital skills offer of support.

Project Updates

Intelligence from the screening tool

As highlighted in the first Project Progress report the screening tool developed by Clarion Futures is fundamental to the digital skills offer of support provided by Clarion Futures and all 15 replicating partners. Our partners have reiterated that the screening tool plays a crucial role in helping them deliver digital skills support as it enables quick and reliable identification of digital skills gaps by frontline staff and Digital Champions alike.

The screening tool comprises of two parts: The first is the initial screening tool (part 1) which serves as an initial assessment of a clients digital skills to help identify if there is a need for support. Learners who have identified

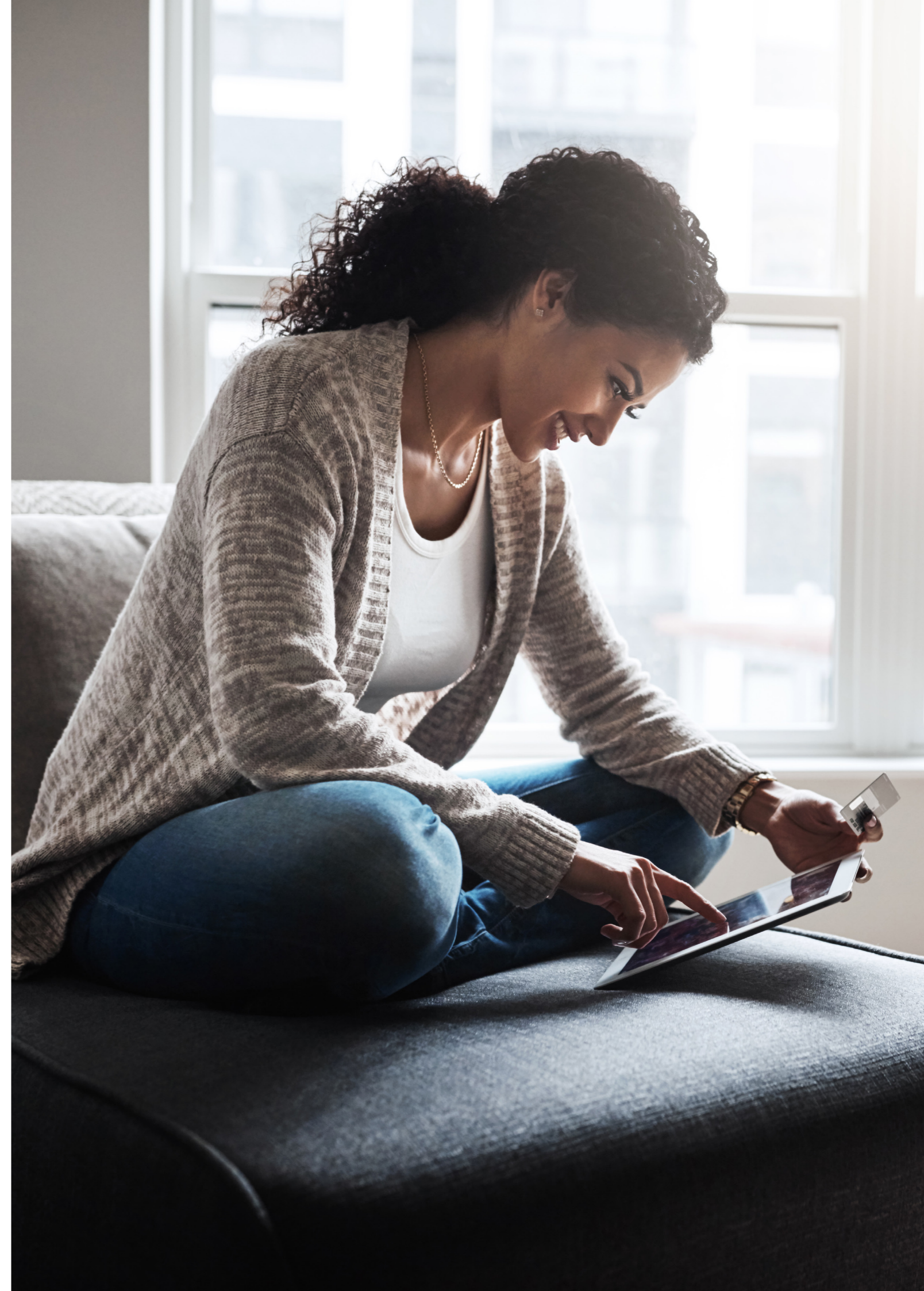
Demographics

The tool collects information on a number of demographic characteristics (gender, age etc.) to give us a basic understanding of our target group.

needs (and importantly want this) are referred to a Digital Champion where the skills check tool (Part 2) is used to help the champion get in-depth information on the areas where a learner may be best/could initially be supported. It provides a framework to help the Digital Champions create a personalised learning plan to provide targeted support to learners.

Data gathered via the screening tool provides insights to Clarion Futures and replicating partners which help all to better understand the digital landscape within which we are operating.

The findings presented are all within the context of digital skills support for employment. The data for the demographics is collected over a period of 5 months from the beginning of 2019. Data true as of 14/06/19.





Age Group most supported

The data on age group informs that 76% of clients screened by Clarion Futures and replicating partners fall in the combined age group of 30-49 and 50-64 years. Diagram 1 (data from screening tool part 1) highlights that 17% of young adults have also accessed digital skills support service in the last 5 months.

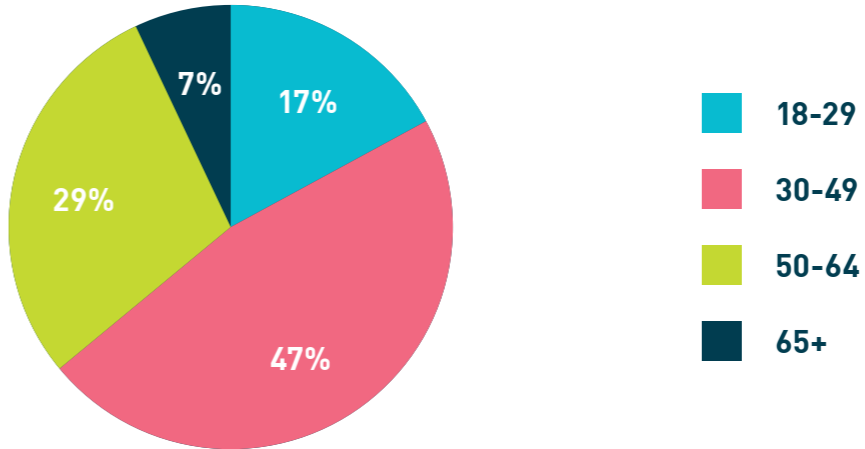


Diagram 1

Gender most supported

Diagram 2 (data from screening tool part 1) reflects that Clarion Futures One Digital and replicating partners have screened more women.

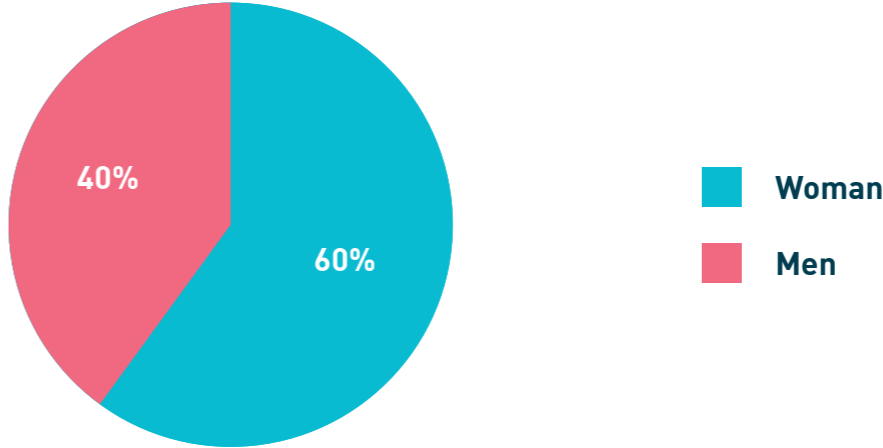


Diagram 2

Data released by the office of National statistics in 2018 reveals that the gap between men and women on internet usage is narrowing. This has been highlighted by the comparative figures released for 2011 and 2018. In 2011, the proportion of men who recently used the internet was 82%, compared with women at 77%. In 2018 the proportion of men who had recently used the internet was 91% and women closely behind at 89%⁶.

Our findings on gender reflect the fact that more and more women are accessing digital skills support to help improve their opportunities of employment and economic independence.

⁶ Office of National Statistics : Internet users, UK :2018

Supporting Disabled people

Being able to get into and stay in work along with access and use of digital technology are among the 5 key aspects of life identified by the disabled people to help them live a fulfilling life. 78% of disabled people think that having access to digital technology is helpful and 63% said that paid employment is extremely important for their independence and is seen by them as a means to contribute to society⁷.

Getting support in both the above areas has been a big challenge for people with disabilities. The employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people has stayed at 30% for the last decade as too few disabled people are able to access specialist employment support. Mostly they get access to employment support which is generic and does not take into account their specific needs. They also have difficulty accessing the internet and getting vital digital skills support to aid employability⁸.

The disability data analysis for Clarion Futures One Digital and replicating partners

has found **that 15% of our learners have reported disability** (data from screening tool part 1) since we started collecting data on demographics from January 2019 which means out of 2000 people screened up until June, 300 people have reported that they have some form of disability, which is roughly 1 in 5 people⁹.

As we are supporting a number of learners with disabilities, it's important that we upskill our Digital Champions to adequately understand and support disabled learners, so that support can be inclusive and Digital Champions can be confident. It's worth noting that the Digital Champions Network designed by Digital Unite, one of the core One Digital programme partners have a suite of courses which can help Digital Champions to develop their understanding of how best to support learners with various forms of disabilities. The courses developed in partnership with AbilityNet¹⁰: **Table 1** offer a brief glimpse of the support available.

Courses

Identifying accessibility needs

Working with learners with a physical disability or dexterity issue

Working with learners who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Working with people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Working with people with memory loss

Helping learners with visual impairment

Table 1

⁷ Scope (2018) Independent. Confident. Connected. scope.org.uk/campaigns/independent-confident-connected

⁸ Scope analysis of ONS (May 2018) Labour Market Statistics, table A08.

⁹ The screening tool data on disability does not include figures from one of our replicating partners who mainly support clients with learning disabilities. This has been done to prevent data skew.

¹⁰ AbilityNet exists to change the lives of disabled people by helping them to use digital technology at work, at home or in education. abilitynet.org.uk

¹¹ theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/09/unconnected-and-out-of-work-the-vicious-circle-of-having-no-internet

¹² goodthingsfoundation.org/research-publications/digilibraries-infographic

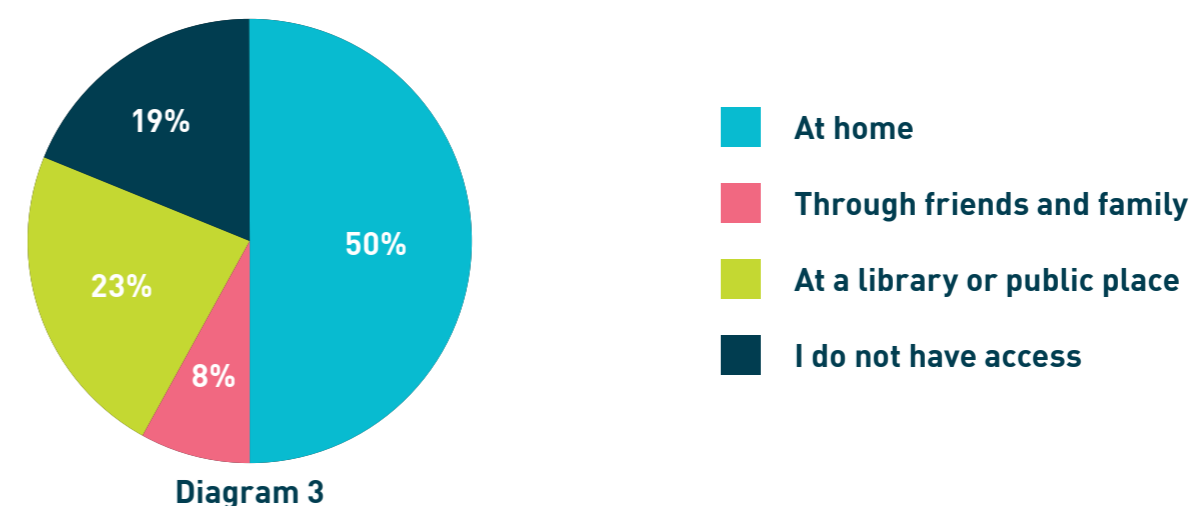
¹³ theguardian.com/books/2018/dec/07/nearly-130-public-libraries-closed-across-britain-in-the-last-year

¹⁴ techrepublic.com/blog/10-things/10-things-you-should-do-to-protect-yourself-on-a-public-computer

Access to a computer

In the screening tool update in December 2018 we also added a question on computer access. We wanted to understand the ways in which people access computers for job related activities. In an increasingly digital society where more and more services are online, including jobs and training, large number of people still lack computer and internet access. Job Centres are installing more computers but the demand for computer access is much higher and increasingly people are using computers at public places including libraries to search and apply for jobs¹¹.

Screening tool data (Part 1) on "In what ways do you access a computer, if at all?" brings to light that a sizable proportion of our clients 23% access computer in a library or public place. (See diagram 3) Data from January 2019 to June 2019.



The number of clients accessing computers from a library or public place is significant and brings to fore the relevance of libraries in our communities. 92% of the libraries agree that there is a high demand from jobseekers to use computers in libraries and 76% agree that demand for basic digital skills support has increased in the last 5 years¹².

As local authorities face budget cuts, their spending on libraries has decreased which has led to closures of libraries all across the country. In 2017 alone, 127 libraries were closed with more following suit in 2018¹³. A decrease in the number of libraries will have a knock-on effect on our endeavour to create a digitally skilled society and access to vital digital technology like computer and internet will be reduced.

Computer access from a library or public space also re-emphasises the important issue of supporting people to access online services in a safe and informed manner. Using public computers carries an inherent risk of exposing personal data¹⁴. To help protect and reduce the risk of people leaving a trail of their personal data on shared computers they need to be informed about the risks and steps they can take to reduce this risk which includes not saving passwords and files locally. Clarion Futures One Digital and our partners equip our Digital Champions with the knowledge on safely accessing online services, which helps them inform and support their learners on the steps they need to take whilst using a public computer.

In the next section on Digital Updates we will touch briefly on digital news updates which are relevant to improving digital skills.

Digital updates

Plans launched to boost digital skills for adults¹⁵

Free courses will be offered to thousands of people to help the 1 in 5 adults with no or low basic digital skills learn how to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

The new qualifications, unveiled by Apprenticeship and Skills Minister Anne Milton, will be based on new, rigorous national standards and will be available for free to anyone over the age of 19 from 2020.

They have been designed to help adults learn the essential skills, such as sending emails, completing online forms or using a tablet that many people take for granted. Research shows that digital skills have become as important

in getting a job and being part of society as English and Maths. An estimated 90% of all jobs in the next 20 years will require some form of digital knowledge, but one in five adults still lack these skills.

The new offer will comprise of range of new Essential Digital Skills qualifications, available from 2020 and Digital Functional Skills qualifications, available from 2021, that will support progression into employment or further education and develop skills for everyday life. Organisations awarding these qualifications¹⁶ will be required to carry out thorough initial assessment of the digital skills levels of individuals using an assessment tool based upon essential digital skills framework.



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**How have you found this report? Is it useful to you?
Do you want to know more or have further questions?**
Get in touch, the team would love to hear from you.

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