SCVO Digital Participation Charter Fund Review

For:

The — Lines — Between

Accessible Social Research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

i. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national membership body for the voluntary sector in Scotland. They champion the sector, provide services and debate big issues.

ii. Alongside the Scottish Government, SCVO is leading in the national effort to tackle digital exclusion. As part of its commitment to promote and improve the Essential Digital Skills (EDS) of both voluntary sector organisations and Scotland's citizens, the Scottish Government supported SCVO in the delivery of a small grants scheme - The Digital Participation Charter Fund.

iii. This fund provides small grants, typically up to £10,000, to help a range of organisations tackle poverty, social isolation and other forms of inequality in society through embedding EDS development in day-to-day activity with their service users.

iv. A total of 169 organisations have been supported through six rounds of funding; many of these used innovative ways to engage and empower people to learn.

v. The Essential Digital Skills Framework equips organisations with the resource and language to enable them to support people to gain five key skills. These are: transacting, communicating, problem solving, handling information and content, and staying safe, legal and confident online.

vi. Within the Framework, SCVO has developed the Essential Digital Skills Toolkit. This can be used by digital skills projects to identify skills gaps among end-users; to benchmark organisations against one another; evidence a need; or measure the impact of an intervention on people or organisations. The Toolkit was an important resource used by funded projects to assess the EDS gained by individuals and to report the numbers of individuals who gained each skill to SCVO.

Findings

Projects and Reach

vii. Across funding rounds 4-6, 86 projects were funded a total of £721,131. Almost three quarters (73%) of projects were located in both urban and rural areas across Central Scotland, with 70% of projects operating in areas of multiple deprivation.

viii. 10,598 people were supported to gain Essential Digital Skills through funding across rounds 4-6, with each person receiving an average of 17 hours of support from projects to gain the skills. Projects interacted with a range of groups, but older people were the most commonly supported at 22%.

Development of Essential Digital Skills

ix. The most common form of delivery (62%) was one to one or small group support; workshops were delivered by just under a quarter of projects (22%). Other delivery models included training courses (20%), drop-ins (20%) and creative approaches

(5%). One third of projects (32%) offered a blend of different activities, for example drop-in sessions alongside workshops and training courses.

x. Over half of the people who took part in EDS training gained skills in managing information. This skill was gained by 4,832 individuals, which represents 59%[1] of the total number of people supported across the rounds. Second most common were skills in 'communicating', evident in just over half of the training participants (4,293 individuals, 53%). Smaller but not insignificant numbers of people were supported with 'problem solving' (3,688 individuals, 45%) and 'transacting' at (3,172 individuals, 39%). 'Creating' was the fifth skill focussed on in rounds 4 and 5, with 2,849 people gaining this skill (47% of people supported across rounds 4 and 5).

xi. Impacts from gaining EDS were wide-ranging. They included direct impacts like saving money on household bills, to more personal impacts such as increased confidence, reduced social isolation and feeling less stressed or anxious because of the ability access to services and manage accounts online. Projects also reported wider or organisational impacts such as increased digital skills of delivery staff or having a greater understanding of end-users needs.

Successes and challenges

xii. When considering success, projects most commonly discussed their approach to delivery; person-led and focussed on an individual's needs and interests. Engaging people through their areas of interest, or 'hooks', is key to encouraging learning. Other successes within projects were: having buy-in from their organisations, high attendance rates for project activity, having safe spaces as venues and adapting the length and pace of delivery to meet the needs of participants.

xiii. The most common challenge identified was in relation to recruitment of participants, and continuing their engagement after an initial interaction. Organisational resource and capacity were also cited as barriers to progressing projects as well as encountering barriers from the end-user perspective.

Embedding digital in organisations

xiv. Projects supported by the fund are likely to engage in further work to embed a culture of digital within their organisations and go on to take part in other activity that supports end-users to gain EDS.

xv. Successful embedment of digital within organisations took a number of forms. These included: creating digitally capable delivery staff - a total of 698 Digital Champions were trained throughout the three rounds; offering more digital support to end-users; defining approaches to training; continuing projects with new funding; collaborating with partners and making a commitment to SCVO through the Digital Participation Charter to continue working to tackle digital exclusion.

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[1] The figures in this section of the report are based on the 65 projects who provided any figures in relation to number of individuals gaining at least one of the five skills, with percentages based on the 8,166 individuals supported by these organisations

1. Introduction

1.1. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national membership body for the voluntary sector in Scotland. They champion the sector, provide services and debate big issues. Along with their community of 2,000+ members, they believe that charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups make Scotland a better place. They lobby Government on policy issues, create jobs for young people and support organisations to embrace and promote digital skills.

1.2. Alongside the Scottish Government, SCVO is leading in the national effort to tackle digital exclusion and promote Essential Digital Skills. This exclusion has far reaching consequences; a lack of digital skills or internet connectivity can hinder an individual's ability to increase their economic prospects, access basic public services or reduce their social isolation.

1.3. Digital platforms are used for social interaction, to access learning opportunities and to progress within the labour market[2]. Common reasons for not using technology include lack of confidence, opportunities and poverty. Consequently, it is often those who are older, younger and without access to digital technology, those on low incomes or those with disabilities who are most likely to be affected by digital exclusion.

1.4. Voluntary sector organisations are often in a unique position of trust, contact and access with some of the most vulnerable groups in Scotland and yet, reflecting learning by SCVO, 50% of these organisations do not make the most of using digital technologies. The sector has a crucial capacity to identify and redress the imbalance in digital access, supporting people who are excluded to become digitally capable.

The Digital Participation Charter Fund (the fund)

1.5. As part of its commitment to improving the Essential Digital Skills of both voluntary sector organisations and Scotland's citizens, the Scottish Government supported SCVO in the delivery of a small grants scheme[3] – The Digital Participation Charter Fund. This fund provides small grants, typically up to £10,000, to help a range of organisations tackle poverty, social isolation and other forms of inequality in society through embedding Essential Digital Skills development work in day-to-day activity with their service users. A total of 169 organisations have been supported through

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[2] Tackling digital exclusion in Scotland (SCVO, 2017)

[3] SCVO was asked by the Scottish Government (SG) to manage what was then known as the Challenge Fund in 2014, with the first three rounds of funding provided across 2014 and 2015. The SG Digital Participation team was the main contributor to the fund, but SCVO secured additional contributions through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and BT. In 2016, the fund was renamed as 'The Digital Participation Charter Fund' and between 2016 and 2019 three more rounds of funding were awarded. The fund is now entering its seventh round.

six rounds of funding; many of these used innovative ways to engage and empower people to learn.

1.6. The fund has evolved to align with the growing ambitions of the wider digital programme in Scotland. Rounds 4-6 of the fund required organisations to sign up to Scotland's Digital Participation Charter before they received their first payment. When organisations sign up to the Charter, they are asked to commit to five key pledges[4]. The aim of which is to create a common goal for organisations. The Essential Digital Skills Framework sits alongside this, equipping organisations with the resource and language to enable them to support people to gain five Essential Digital Skills. These are the skills of transacting, communicating, problem solving, handling information and content, and staying safe, legal and confident online.
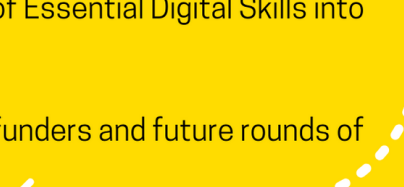
A Review of The Digital Participation Charter Fund

1.7. Over rounds 4-6 each funded organisation was required to monitor and evaluate its own activity or project and to report on that quarterly, with a final evaluation report at the end of the grant.

1.8. This is the second independent review of the fund. In 2016, a review was carried out of rounds 1-3, based on the self-evaluations of the funded projects.

1.9. The Lines Between was commissioned to independently review the self-evaluations from the funded organisations from rounds 4-6. This review aims to identify the following:

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[4] 1. Skill Up: We ensure that our staff & volunteers have the opportunity to develop essential digital skills, 2. Support Staff: We support our staff & volunteers to help others learn essential digital skills and embrace digital tools, 3. Support Scotland: We support our nation by contributing resources and practical support for Scotland in whatever ways we can, 4. The Essentials: We support a common language based on digital participation and essential digital skills to make our thinking and actions as clear as possible, 5. Come Together: We channel our efforts through the Digital Participation programme so that our activities are coordinated and build on each other.

The aims of this review were to examine:

1 The reach of the fund, including how many people it has supported to develop the full set of Essential Digital Skills, and a breakdown of each of the 5 skills separately.

2 How the funded projects are helping to develop the digital skills of end-users, which methods are most effective, and the extent to which the Essential Digital Skills Toolkit is being used.

3 What the challenges and difficulties have been for funded organisations, and how organisations have adapted and developed their projects to overcome these.

4 How organisations embed the promotion of Essential Digital Skills into everyday operations.

5 Lessons and recommendations for other funders and future rounds of similar funding.

Method

1.10. 86 projects were awarded funding in rounds 4-6. This review is based on the data received from 82 projects[5].

1.11. A robust approach to analysis and reporting was required to generate credible, transparent findings. This included gathering all available data from SCVO such as the final self-evaluations from the funded organisations. Blogs, case studies and any other relevant evidence also provided insights into activities and projects, offering a deeper understanding of their scope and operation, where available.

1.12. This report is based on quantitative and qualitative analysis of the available data. The discussion of the qualitative data has been categorised into themes. Themes evident across projects are described as follows:

- Most/the majority = over half

- Many = half or just below

- Some = below half

- A few = between one and ten

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[5] During the course of the funding rounds, one organisation went into administration and a further two projects were unavoidably delayed. Therefore, three projects could not submit any monitoring or evaluation information.

1.13. This report details the findings from our review, using infographics and graphs to present the quantitative analysis. The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 outlines the reach of the fund, exploring the projects funded and how they were supported.

- Chapter 3 considers how the funded projects have helped develop the digital skills of end-users, which methods were most effective, and the extent to which the Essential Digital Skills Toolkit was used.

- Chapter 4 details the challenges and difficulties faced by the funded projects and how these were overcome.

- Chapter 5 demonstrates how organisations have embedded digital skills into their practice, the wider programme and people's lives.

- Chapter 6 summarises the findings of the report and provides recommendations for future iterations of the fund.

1.14. A suite of case studies has been produced as part of this review, to demonstrate the breadth and scope of the projects, as well as the impact of Essential Digital Skills on the lives of people. These are signposted throughout the report and can be found in appendix 1.

2. Projects and reach

Over Rounds 4-6 of the Digital Participation Charter Fund...

86 Projects funded

42 **Round 4**
17 **Round 5**
26 **Round 6**

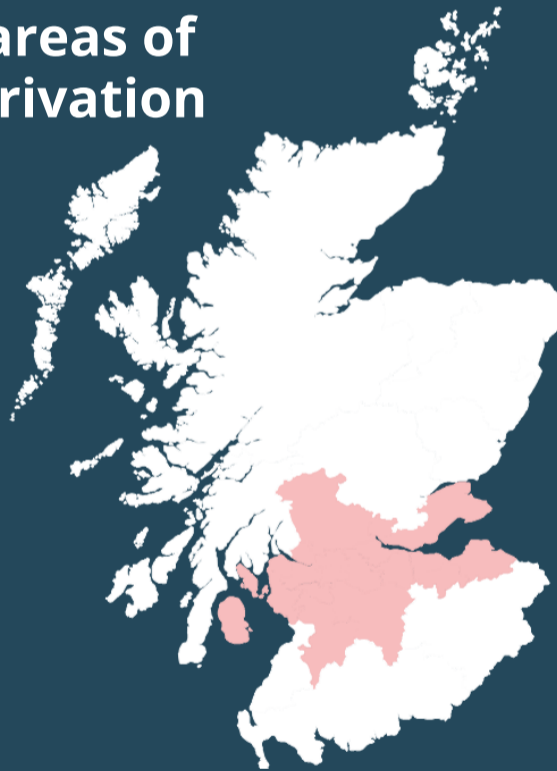**£721,131** total amount awarded

£2,040 smallest grant

£8,794 Average grant

£15,552 largest grant

70% of projects operated in areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland

11% Nationally

11% North

73% Central

5% South
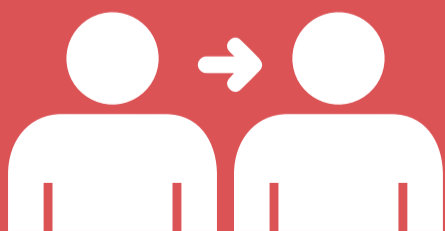
62% of projects chose one to one support as their delivery approach

Workshops

20% Drop-ins

32% Combination

These pages contain an infographic that demonstrate projects and reach. For a full quantitative analysis of the following infographic, see Appendix 2.

Infographic 1: projects funded per round, amount of funding awarded in total, and smallest, largest and average grant per project, location of the projects, delivery approaches.

10,598 Total people supported

140 Average number of of people supported per project
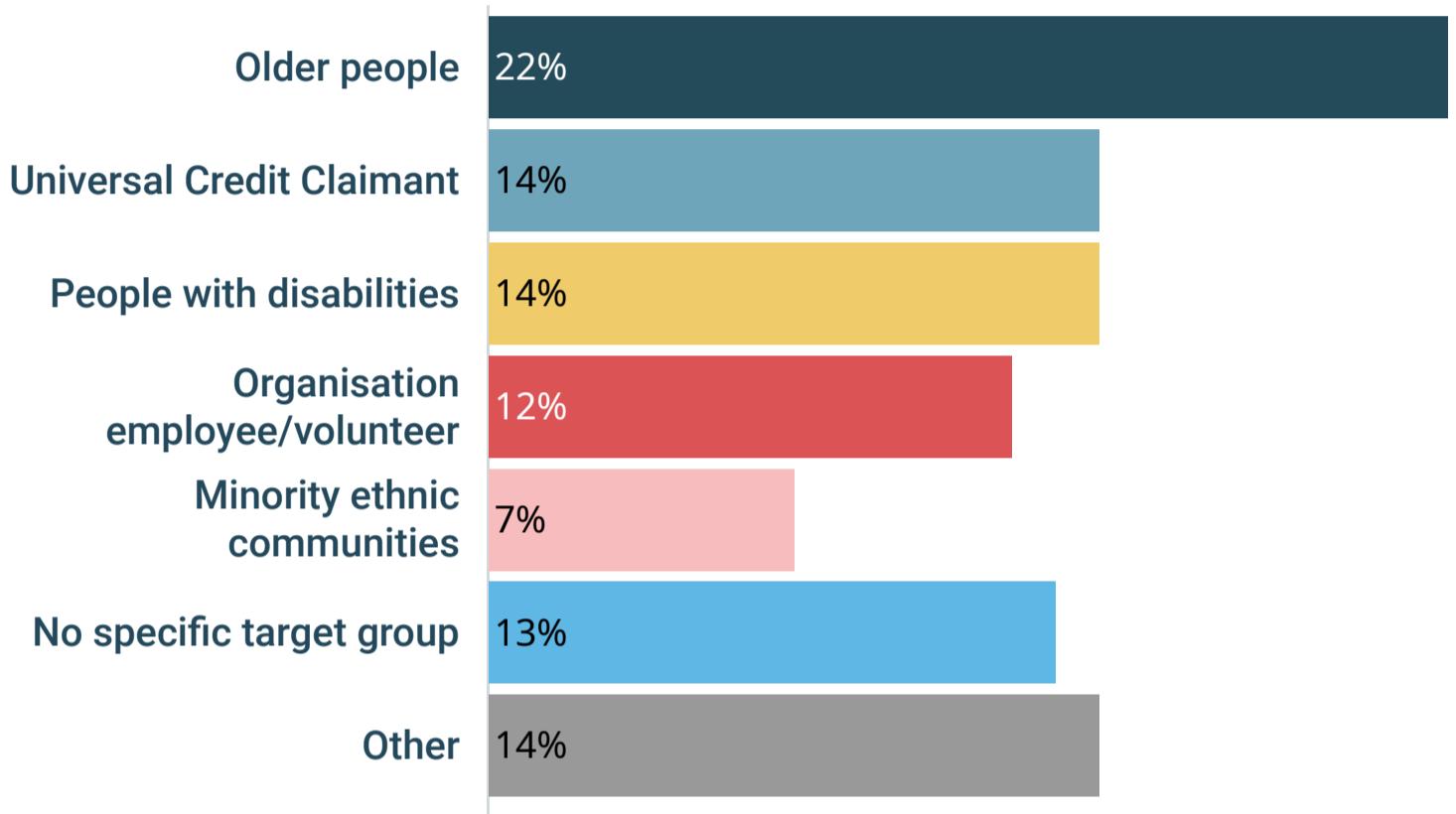
17 Average hours of support each person received

Projects engaged with different groups of people

Group	Percentage
Older people	22%
Universal Credit Claimant	14%
People with disabilities	14%
Organisation employee/volunteer	12%
Minority ethnic communities	7%
No specific target group	13%
Other	14%

The total number and proportion of people who gained each skill

Managing information 4,832 59%

Communicating 4,293 53%

Creating 2,829 47%

Problem solving 3,688 45%

Transacting 3,172 39%

These pages contain an infographic that demonstrate projects and reach. For a full quantitative analysis of the following infographic, see Appendix 2.

Infographic 2: total number of people supported per project and hours of support received, target group supported, number and proportion of people supported to gain each skill

3. Development of Essential Digital Skills

3.1.   Enabling people to gain Essential Digital Skills (EDS) is a primary focus of the Digital Participation Charter Fund. This chapter looks at each of the five skills, how these skills were delivered within the projects and the differences between the rounds. It also considers the kinds of skills people developed and the meaningful impacts of these skills on their lives. Beyond this, it looks at the wider impacts on funded projects and those that they interact with.

3.2.   This chapter is split into two sections, the first of which:

- Discusses the delivery approaches taken by the projects,

- Provides an overview of the Essential Digital Skills Toolkit,

- Details the quantitative analysis of the skills achieved in each round.

3.3.   Secondly it looks at the impacts of gaining Essential Digital Skills:

- Firstly, examining the direct impacts from Essential Digital Skills,

- Personal impacts, and

- Organisational and wider impacts.

Delivering Essential Digital Skills

Delivery approaches

3.4.   Most organisations approached the delivery of their projects through supporting and training end-users (typically, people supported by the organisation). However, the method of support and types of training varied across the projects.

3.5.   As can be seen in Infographic 1, over half of the projects (62%) offered one-to-one or small group support i.e. no more than a few people at a time. This was provided in informal settings such as drop-ins in local hubs like town halls, community centres or libraries, or in the organisation's own location at an organised time. In their self-evaluation reports, projects described the success of one-to-one or small group support in engaging people who lacked confidence in their digital skills. Organisations reflected that larger group settings or formal course styles could be overwhelming and put off those most in need of attaining essential skills.

3.6.   Workshops were delivered by just under a quarter of projects (22%), and usually focussed on a particular area of interest for end-users. Some workshops were held at the beginning of a project to offer an engagement opportunity at an early stage. For example, Connect@Cothrom by Cothrom Ltd offered workshops on digital Christmas card making and shopping safely online and then went on to offer successful drop-in sessions.

3.7. Other approaches used by projects included training courses (20%), Drop-ins (20%) and creative approaches (5%). Some projects used creative approaches like enabling people to use apps to create music and content. See a video case study for more about Tap to the App! and to hear some of the music project participants created.

Music in Hospitals and Care: Tap to the App!
A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

Click the link to learn more about 'Tap to the App!' and their creative approach to delivery; where older people had the opportunity to iPads, new apps, create and explore uses of technology to access activities and information that interested them.

3.8. One third of projects (32%) offered a blend of different activities, for example drop-in sessions alongside workshops and scheduled training courses. This provided flexibility and encouraged engagement from a wide range of people. The approach was described as imperative to the success of 'DigiEmpowerment' from One Parent Families Scotland, where a range of delivery approaches meant that parents with different needs and schedules could access the support they required.

3.9. Some projects used their funding to purchase devices like tablets or laptops, and offered a blended service. This could involve teaching people how to operate the device or supporting them on the device to explore an area of interest, while they became familiar with its functions. Finding this 'hook' was often key to successful engagement.

> *We purchased 5 iPads, which have been used extensively in our Football Memories sessions to encourage older participants to become more familiar with browsing and searching for images and content relevant to the sessions. For example, finding images of Hearts FC team photos from the 1960s. Participants have also been encouraged to take the iPads home to continue their engagement outwith the project with their family members or carers. Beyond browsing digital images, the iPads have also been used in other ways as part of the group, such as completing interactive quizzes and completing web searches on points of interest which come up in conversation throughout the sessions.* [Go Digital, Big Hearts Community Trust]

The Big Hearts Community Trust: Go Digital
A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

See Appendix 1 to read more about 'Go Digital', where Craig Wilson, General Manager, describes their success with a person-led approach to delivery.

3.10.   Projects operated over differing timescales; the majority were long term projects (3-12 months), with intentions to continue or embed the projects into core delivery models. Some had a shorter term focus, for example; these projects may have delivered training courses over a set period of time with a target group of attendees, who may have had to sign up in advance.

The Essential Digital Skills Toolkit

3.11.   SCVO was one of a number of stakeholders responsible for developing the Essential Digital Skills Framework. As a result of this, SCVO launched the Essential Digital Skills Toolkit, enabling people and organisations running digital skills projects in their communities and workplaces to:

- Use as a tool at the beginning of an interaction with an end-user to identify a skills gap;

- enable organisations to benchmark themselves against other organisations;

- evidence a need; or

- measure the success of an intervention; both for people and organisations.

3.12.   One of the aims of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Toolkit was used by the projects. Although there was limited discussion or explicit mention of the Toolkit in the evidence analysed for this review[6], it is clear that it was essential in the establishment of the projects and in the monitoring of their success. The majority of the projects in rounds 4-6 focussed their activities on increasing skills within the five Essential Digital Skills as identified in the Framework.

3.13.   The Essential Digital Skills checklist is a key element of the Toolkit. This checklist was referenced in some self-evaluations as a useful measurement tool, both for the project and the end-user. It offered end-users a chance to visualise what success and increased confidence might mean for them. For organisations, it allowed them to confidently report success in their self-evaluations, or to assess what was working and not working within their projects. The Digital Rural Challenge project, from The Libertie Project, used and adapted the checklist to assess the level of digital skills present in a particularly hard to reach group, they also used it to understand what kinds of skills were most important for this group.

The Libertie Project: Digital Rural Challenge Project
A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

See Appendix 1 for more about the Digital Rural Challenge project and how they used and adapted the Essential Digital Skills toolkit to understand and evidence the needs of a hard to reach group.

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[6] Where the Toolkit or checklist is explicitly mentioned, this has been highlighted in the report.

3.14.   As the projects were asked to report against each skill for their final self-evaluations, it can also be assumed that the checklist was used by projects to measure the Essential Digital Skills.

3.15.   Where projects discussed difficulties in measuring against the Checklist, it was usually due to the specific needs and abilities of their end-users. For example, 'The Go On Learning Zone' at Camphill Blair Drummond, which focussed on offering workshops for those with learning disabilities, shared their experience:

> *Most of our residents and day students were unable to answer these questions. Throughout the project we maintained a record of residents and day students use of the IT equipment including individuals name, how long they spent using the equipment and what activities were they involved in. This information was then taken and the activities were mapped to the basic digital skills categories of managing information, communicating, transacting, problem-solving and creating. Some individuals were observed carrying out the activities with minimal help such as verbal prompting and others require more help to be involved.*

3.16.   Project staff were still able to use the Checklist to map the skills of those they were supporting, showing how the Toolkit was adapted to fit the needs of this specific group. It is clear that the Toolkit provided an essential reference point for projects for mapping, planning and resources, and that projects could adapt the Toolkit to meet their needs.

People supported to develop the Essential Digital Skills

3.17.   Projects were asked to indicate how many people had gained each of the EDS[7] in their final evaluation reports. The analysis below is based on the figures reported by each project in relation to the skills achieved. It should be noted that not all projects provided a detailed breakdown by each of the skills[8].

3.18.   It should be noted here that projects were not asked to report on the numbers of participants gaining foundation level digital skills. This is because it is understood that in order to gain any of the other five skills, people would have to have foundation level skills. Foundation skills as defined by SCVO in their Foundation Digital Skills Checklist include examples like; turning on a device, using the controls on a device, connecting to WiFi and updating and changing passwords.

3.19.   'Managing information' was the skill that most people gained across the three rounds. The 4,832 people who gained this skill equates to 59% of those supported over rounds 4-6. Just over half (4,293 individuals, 53%) were supported with 'communicating'. The fact that these two skills feature more heavily reflects both the foundation level Skills which people were learning as an entry point to digital, as well as the nature of the skills being sought by specific groups. For example, Universal Credit claimants managing their online

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[7] As not all organisations used the checklist, the breakdown provided by some organisations may be based on the subjective interpretation of the project staff

8 The figures in this section of the report are based on the 65 projects who provided any figures in relation to number of individuals gaining at least one of the five skills, with percentages based on the 8,166 individuals supported by these organisations

journal contributed to 'managing information' and older groups creating email or social media accounts contributed towards 'communicating'.

3.20. Smaller but not insignificant numbers of people were supported with 'problem solving' (3,688 individuals, 45%) and 'transacting' at (3,172 individuals, 39%).

3.21. The fifth skill in rounds four and five was 'creating', and across those two rounds 2,849 people were supported to achieve this skill. While this number is lower than the other four skills it represents 47% of people within rounds 4 and 5 – i.e. in line with the proportions gaining the other four skills across rounds 4-6.

3.22. By round 6, the framework was updated with 'being safe and legal online'. This new skill was created within the Essential Digital Skills Framework to capture skills that underpin gaining the other four skills. For example, learning to be safe and legal online should be an element of learning to communicate online, as demonstrated in figure 1 below.

3.23. Across the final self-evaluations, projects described the kinds of activity that took place so that people could gain the five skills. Figure 1 also demonstrates real examples of the skills learned by individuals supported by the projects. Impacts from gaining these skills were wide ranging, and are described in the second half of this chapter.
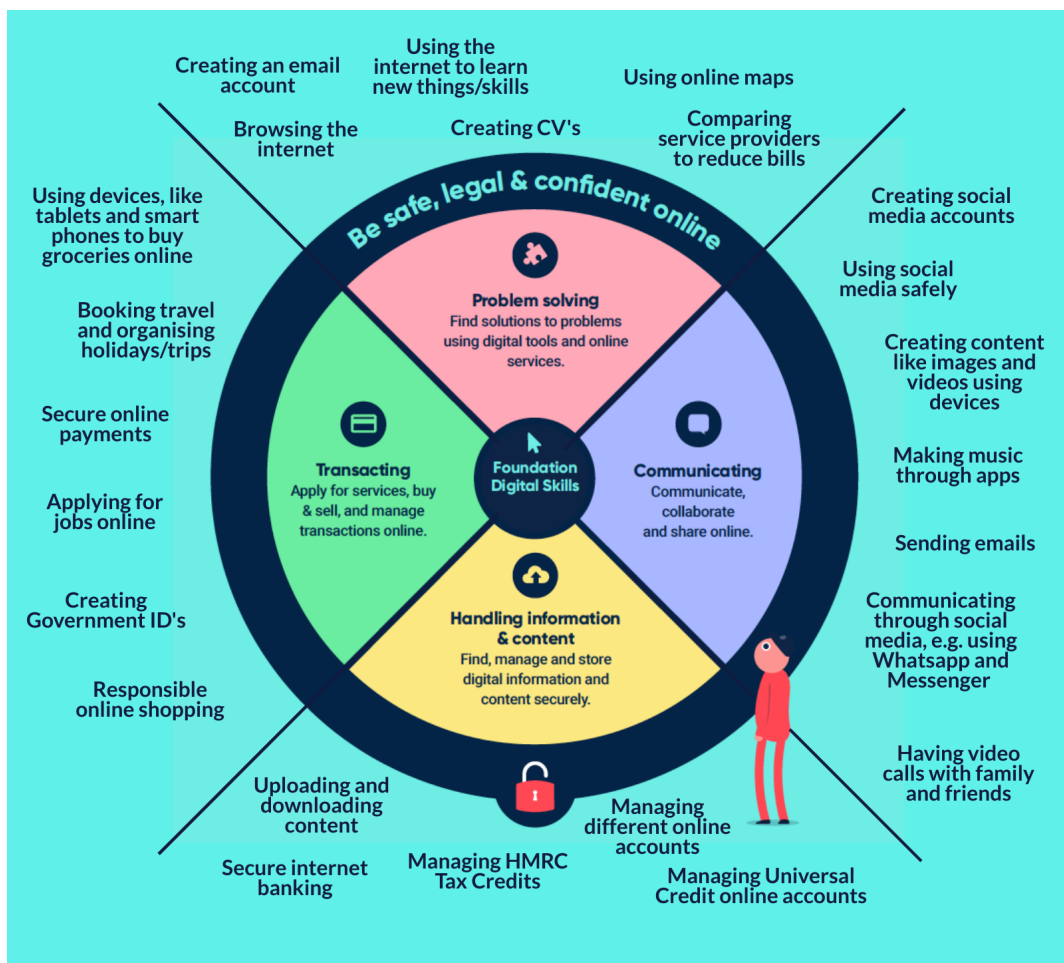

Figure 1: The Essential Digital Skills, and the skills gained by people within those

3.24.   Only two organisations in round 6 reported on the number of people supported with gaining 'being safe, legal and confident online'. The 266 people who gained this skill represent 13% of people supported in round 6. This lower level could reflect projects perceiving this element as a composite skill that feeds into the other four, or a lack of clarity over what constitutes this skill.

3.25.   Figure 2 presents the percentage of individuals gaining each of the five skills within each funding round. A relatively similar pattern of skills gained is evident over each round. 'Managing information' was the most commonly gained skill in each round, closely followed by 'communicating' in rounds four and five and 'problem solving' in round six.
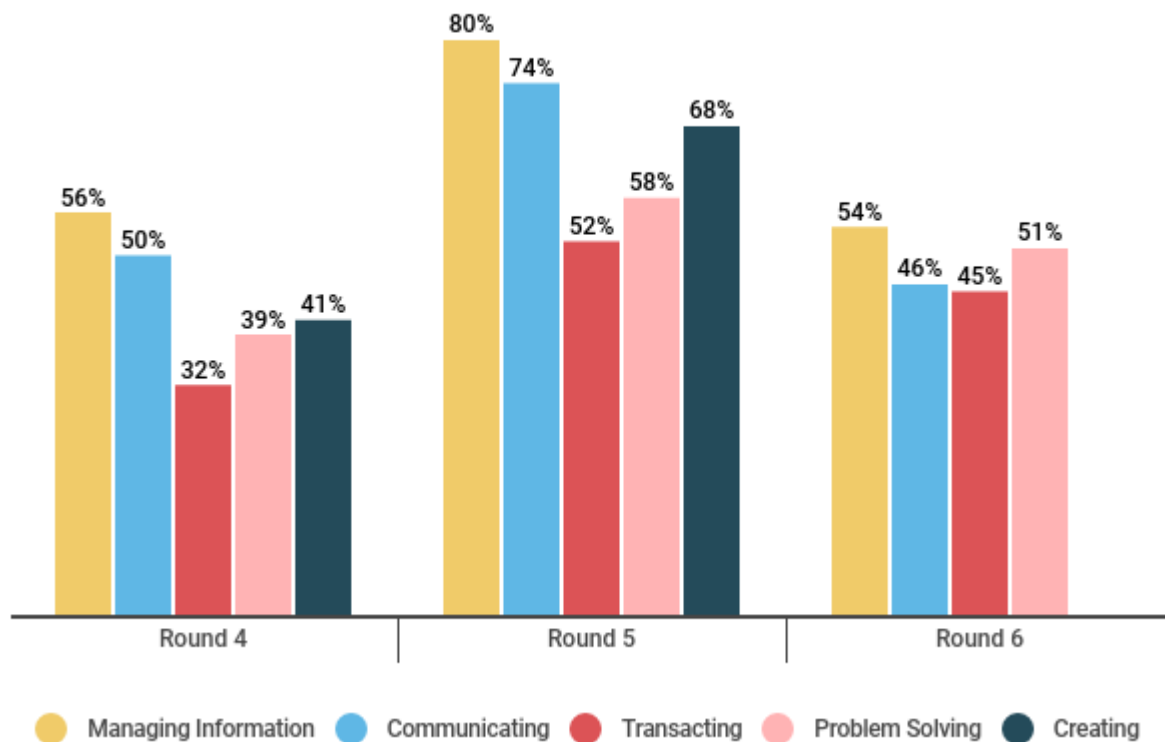

Figure 2: Breakdown of the percentage of people gaining each of the five skills per round

3.26.   However, it is interesting to note that skills gained are markedly higher in round 5 than the other two rounds. For example, 80% of people who were supported in round 5 gained 'managing information', compared to 56% in round 4 and 54% in round 6. This is interesting given that round 5 represented only 20% of the total funds awarded and 16% of the total number of people supported across the three rounds.

3.27.   Given that the average award made to each project was similar across all three rounds and indeed lowest in round 5, it would appear that these differences are due to different levels of support provided in round 5. The table below shows a much smaller number of people were supported in round 5 but they benefitted from the highest average hours of support across all three rounds – 30 per person compared to 12 in round 4 and 17 in round 6.

Funding round	Total supported (based on organisations providing any information about Essential Digital Skills)	Average hours of support received	Average value of funding
Round 4	4730	12	£9,000
Round 5	**1309**	**30**	**£8,711**
Round 6	2127	17	£9,356

3.28.   There was a greater focus on supporting specific groups, particularly older people, people with disabilities and Universal Credit claimants in round 5. Reflecting the needs of these groups, the training was more focussed on supporting the development of Foundation Skills than other rounds. While these groups still featured in round 4 and 6, these other rounds were more likely to feature courses for employees or sought to support a wide range of people within communities, not a specific group. Further analysis has highlighted that a combination of the different target groups and delivery approaches used in round 5 is likely to have contributed to this higher level of supported being gained.

3.29.   The more targeted nature of round 5 has in turn led to different delivery approaches being used. A quarter of projects[9] (25%) in round 5 involved workshops (compared to 17% in round 4 and 9% in round 6), and comments often highlighted that they began their activity with a workshop session to spark interest, which led to more tailored one-to-one support. Almost two thirds of projects (63%) in round 5 used one-to-one support as a delivery approach. This coupled with the higher average hours of support in round 5 indicates an intensive level of engagement between delivery staff and people they supported; potentially driving the higher levels of skills being gained.

Impacts

3.30.   The following section looks at the impacts of gaining Essential Digital Skills, primarily on people supported by the projects. Additionally, the self-evaluations highlighted wider impacts for the organisations themselves, delivery staff and in some cases people beyond the projects, like family or carers.

Direct impacts

3.31.   Many projects identified direct impacts for end users who developed Essential Digital Skills; concrete examples of things they had done as a result of the training, that they would not have been able to do previously. For example, learning how to use a specific device, saving money on household bills or using online tools to apply for jobs. Projects that sought to address a specific need saw more in the way of these sorts of impacts.

3.32.   For example, Changeworks 'Switch to Save' project targeted older people at risk of fuel poverty in Edinburgh. The project offered one-to-one support, and workshops with the goal of increasing the confidence of end-users in switching fuel providers online so they could save money on household bills. The results were hugely positive; people across the project saved £5,273 through successful applications to the Government's Warm Home

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[9] Quantifying the description of the delivery approach provided in the final self-evaluations.

Discount scheme, reducing fuel billing errors and switching suppliers, as well as increased confidence from end-users reported across all five skills.

Personal Impacts

3.33.   When projects reviewed outcomes from their activities, personal impacts were often highlighted, such as increased confidence, social inclusion and a greater awareness of the benefits of having digital skills. The themes identified in the review of the self-evaluation reports are described below, presented from most to least often mentioned.

Increased confidence

3.34.   Many projects stated that their end-users reported increased confidence in one or more of the EDS as a result of their participation. In some cases it was suggested this confidence stemmed from gaining an understanding of the benefits of having EDS, which motivated people to learn and engage. The following examples demonstrate increased confidence as an impact in itself; confidence was also discussed as a starting point for other positive outcomes for end-users which are discussed below.

> *Learners are more confident in using digital devices, and have learnt basic functions as building blocks to future learning.* [Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd, Digitally Active @ Home]

3.35.   Alongside increased confidence came a reduction in fear. Some projects, especially those who supported older people, noted that they often approached digital with a sense of fear. Concerns included internet security, of making mistakes or fear of breaking devices. However, these anxieties lessened as a result of engagement in the project.

> *For many it was an alien concept and 'not for them' as they were fearful of breaking something or assumed they would never be able to learn. Being in the company of those who were learning and making use of devices encouraged some to try it. The training sessions have been very beneficial to those who were already using their own devices but were unable to make full use of them if they were faced with any problems. [Trust Housing Association, Opening Digital Doors: Never too old to learn]*

Reduced social isolation

3.36.   As a result of involvement with activities in group settings, many projects observed social cohesiveness and reduced isolation for people involved in the activity. This was often the case for projects that used a training course approach, as the same group of end-users would come together regularly and get to know each other and the project staff. In other cases, the project may have acted as a catalyst for further engagement with the organisation, introducing the end-user to other services on offer.

> *The project has had a huge impact on people's mental health and wellbeing within the service, reducing isolation and enabling people to build supportive relationships.* [Support in Mind Scotland, U Learn IT]

3.37.   Housing Associations frequently discussed social inclusion as a result of their projects.

> *Feedback from participants suggested that the drop-ins also served a wider purpose, beyond improving digital skills, by allowing participants to feel more connected in their communities. Participants were able to find out about and access other services that are available to them, felt a sense of purpose and appreciated 'having somewhere to be'. This, along with the friendly, supportive environment helped to alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness.* [Linstone Housing Association, ConnectUp]

3.38.   Some suggested that reduced social isolation led to more positive digital journeys for their end-users. When people felt less alone, and realised that they were among a larger group who needed to improve their digital skills, they were more likely to be motivated to continue and to ask questions, therefore improving their learning experience.

Increased awareness and knowledge

3.39.   Many projects discussed increased digital awareness and knowledge. This was in reference to general awareness about the benefits of having EDS, and increased knowledge within one or more of the five skills.

> *Each individual … gained knowledge and experience which has allowed them to explore the use of digital literacy in everyday life. It has grown their confidence but also widened their awareness of what technology can do nowadays and the enhancements it can make.* [NHS Tayside Rohallion Clinic, TechNO!]

3.40.   Increased awareness and knowledge can also lead to greater confidence. One project highlighted that their end-users had started to source their own resource materials and would bring them to the project, making recommendations to the staff team about what they could cover in their training courses. Digital Rural Challenge by The Libertie Project gave examples of the motivation and goals their end-users now have as a result of building their awareness and knowledge of EDS such as; *"How can I start selling online and be self-employed? What kind of support is out there to develop a micro or cottage style business if I'm disabled? How can I find out about volunteering and sharing my skills with others? Is there funding to set up a community tech club?"*

Reduced stress or anxiety, leading to improved general wellbeing

3.41.   It should be noted that while all impacts discussed in this chapter could relate to improved wellbeing of the individual, it was often noted that increasing the digital skills which helped eased worry or stress for the individual led to improved wellbeing.

> *Some of the participants can now use the internet to look up health conditions which has saved them from visiting their GP. The internet has helped find different methods to help treat health conditions that would normally be a trip to the doctors.* [Dunedin Canmore Housing Ltd, Café Connections]

> *Our unemployed participants in particular reported feeling much less stressed about their obligations to evidence job searches and update CV's.* [Pollokshaws Area Network, Pollokshaws Digital Skills]

3.42.   As discussed throughout this review, the need to access Universal Credit acted as a driver for some to gain Essential Digital Skills. Some projects highlighted that the new

Universal Credit system had created significant stress and anxiety for those who did not have the digital skills necessary to manage their online accounts.

> *The crippling effect of the overhauled benefits system continues to wreak havoc, turning lives into mere existences, without provision such as ours that can equip them with ability to navigate a hugely un-user friendly system many people would simply fail and fall foul to grossly punishing sanctions.* [The Ridge, Digital You]

3.43.   However, projects who focussed on enabling people to understand the new system and gain confidence in managing their online accounts, noted improved wellbeing and a less stressful life.

> *The Get It Programme availability has taken away the stress from many people who do not have digital access at home. These people know that there is help available and that benefits will be paid to them on time without any sanctions.* [Ormlie Community Association, IT Catch-UP!!]

Increased independence

3.44.   Gaining EDS can lead to greater independence, as people are exposed to a wide range of resources and services that encourage more independent living. For example, projects that focussed on accessing employment discussed how empowering it felt for people to be able to apply for jobs online in their own time.

> *We have supported people looking to enter work, through job searches, writing CVs, accessing online training. One of our clients comfortably uses the internet for research purposes for her OU course in design. For those who have accessed our service, we have promoted digital equality by deploying digital equity.* [The Ridge SCIO, Digital You]

3.45.   In some cases, having EDS allowed people to feel more self-reliant, in turn increasing their confidence and improving their wellbeing.

> *Having the independence to look up information on their own has increase their confidence in life.* [Renfrewshire Council Housing Support Services, Golden Surfers]

> *Participants were able to build their personal capacity and problem-solving skills, as well as their digital skills."* [Linstone Housing Association, ConnectUp]

Employability skills and changing behaviours

3.46.   A number of organisations combined their digital focus with supporting people to enter the world of work. In some cases, as well as gaining EDS, participants in projects moved to more positive destinations such as entering further education or employment.

3.47.   In many cases, a combination of the above impacts have resulted in changed behaviours; end-users are more likely to embed digital in their day-to-day lives after gaining EDS. Projects gave examples of end-users using digital for tasks such as online grocery shopping, accessing local council online services at home, and job searches in their own time and outwith the projects. There were examples of changed attitudes leading to changed behaviours; "*Several of our older participants who were able to afford it, but had previously had no motivation to do so had broadband installed in their houses and*

now use their tablets regularly to skype with family, listen to the radio and watch TV programmes." [Pollokshaws Area Network, Pollokshaws Digital Skills]

Far reaching skills

3.48. Some projects reported that through interaction with their end-users they have discovered that people are passing their skills on to those in their wider circles such as family and friends. Big Hearts, Go Digital reported that people from their groups with Kinship Carers are teaching those in their care about internet security and safety.

Wider or organisational impacts

3.49. When reporting on the outcomes and day-to-day impacts of projects, there was often mention of a wider impact or change within an organisation resulting from the funded projects. This included expanding the reach of the organisation, EDS as a catalyst for continued engagement with end-users, increased digital skills of delivery staff, and greater understanding of end-users needs'.

3.50. In some cases, the projects interacted with new people through their activities. Whether this was through their own recruitment or referrals from partners, the organisations widened their reach in terms of engagement with new end-users.

3.51. Taking part in projects acted as a catalyst for further engagement among end-users with the organisation in a number of cases. The U Learn IT project from Support in Mind Scotland trained two of their end-users who lacked EDS to become digital volunteers. The following case study of Digital You from The Ridge, tells the story of two volunteers who started as end-users, became Digital Champions through the project, and have since gone on to run their own computer club:

The Ridge: Digital You

A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

See Appendix 1 to read more about Digital You, and how their volunteers have become champions.
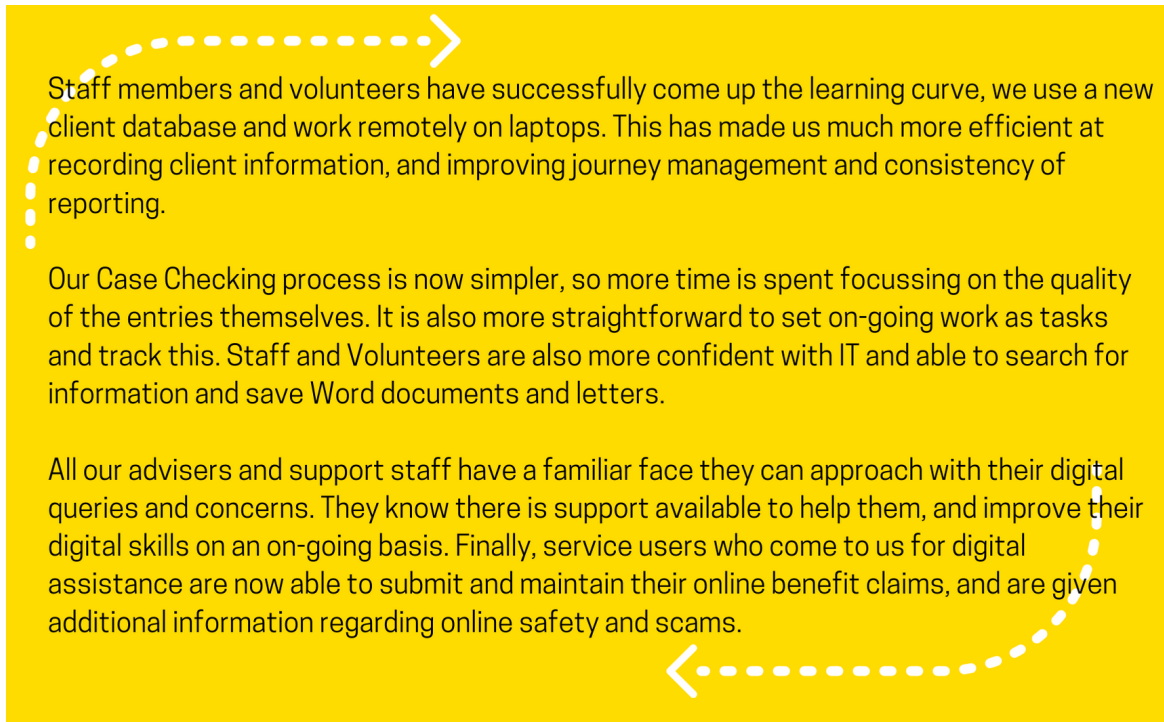
3.52. For further analysis of how training Digital Champions contributes to embedding digital within organisations, see Chapter 5.

3.53. Staff often reported increased confidence in their own digital skills as a result of delivering their projects. In many cases, staff went on to Digital Champion training as part of SCVO's One Digital programme; on average 16 Digital Champions were trained per project. Grant funding was often a stepping stone to interaction with the wider digital programme, which aims to create a more digitally able voluntary sector in Scotland.

> *A further outcome we achieved was to upskill the staff within North Ayrshire Women's Aid, not only to help them within their work and job role but also to enable them to support the women they support with their computer and digital skills.*
> [North Ayrshire Women's Aid, Universal Women]

3.54.   In some cases, upskilling staff has led to more efficient working. The following example comes from Parkhead CAB's Digi? Aye! Project;
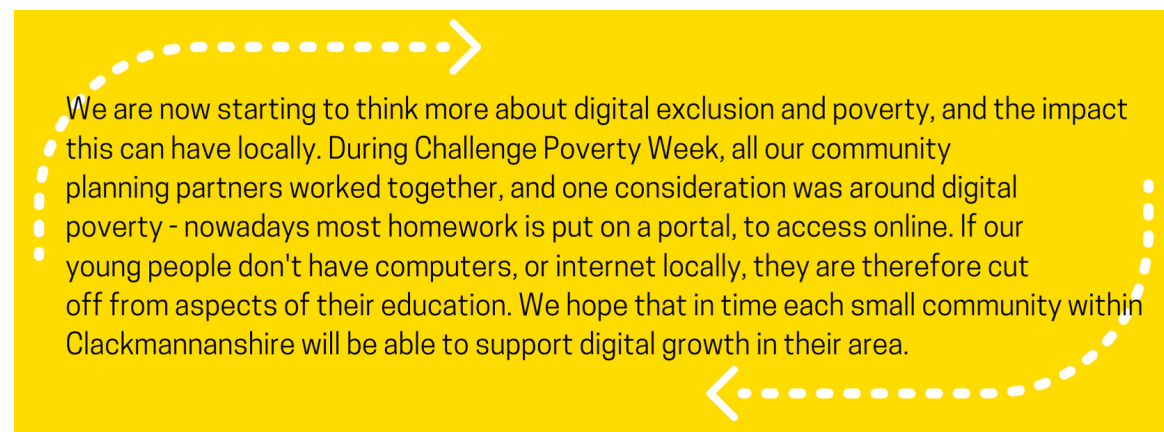
Staff members and volunteers have successfully come up the learning curve, we use a new client database and work remotely on laptops. This has made us much more efficient at recording client information, and improving journey management and consistency of reporting.

Our Case Checking process is now simpler, so more time is spent focussing on the quality of the entries themselves. It is also more straightforward to set on-going work as tasks and track this. Staff and Volunteers are also more confident with IT and able to search for information and save Word documents and letters.

All our advisers and support staff have a familiar face they can approach with their digital queries and concerns. They know there is support available to help them, and improve their digital skills on an on-going basis. Finally, service users who come to us for digital assistance are now able to submit and maintain their online benefit claims, and are given additional information regarding online safety and scams.

3.55.   In reaching new end-users, or engaging with existing end-users in a different way, some projects developed a better understanding of the issues they face. In turn, this acted as a catalyst for further action in addressing other issues. For example, Digital & Signposting Volunteers' Training Project by Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface described a greater understanding of Digital at a local level:

We are now starting to think more about digital exclusion and poverty, and the impact this can have locally. During Challenge Poverty Week, all our community planning partners worked together, and one consideration was around digital poverty - nowadays most homework is put on a portal, to access online. If our young people don't have computers, or internet locally, they are therefore cut off from aspects of their education. We hope that in time each small community within Clackmannanshire will be able to support digital growth in their area.

4. Successes and challenges

4.1. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of what worked well in the funded projects. We then examine the challenges encountered by the projects and their reflections on what could be done differently in future.

Successes

Informal and person-led delivery approaches

4.2. Projects were asked to report on what worked well within their activity. A number of themes arose but the most common was a one-to-one or small group support approach to delivery. This approach has been referenced throughout this review as key to projects interacting with people, especially in the early stages of engagement.

4.3. SCVO has previously described this style of delivery approach as the most likely to enable people to gain EDS; it is stated in the Essential Digital Skills Framework that evidence has shown that people learn best from repeated, informal, face-to-face and one-to-one support. The below example from Cassiltoun Housing Association describes how a project can follow this delivery approach with success; person-led, informal and convenient for the end-user, providing a safe space for them to explore their needs.

> Our attendees and regulars really enjoyed the informal approach to their learning. This was demonstrated particularly through our Friday Feed approach, where we offer a light lunch to our attendees, with the digital inclusion worker being present there to offer informal support - with a cup of tea and soup! Furthermore, our 'Stables: Online Security session' was popular, and attendees also reported that they benefited from a relaxed approach to learning. This has led to an environment where people feel they can ask for support without any judgement and where certain barriers are removed, for example, the drop-in approach means participants do not need to make an appointment, wait long periods of time without their learning needs being met, and where they can receive almost immediate support.

Other examples of what worked for projects

Organisational buy-in

4.4. Some projects noted that organisational buy-in was integral to the success of the EDS training. This drove interest and enthusiasm from delivery staff and volunteers about the need for the project. In some cases this led on to wider strategic changes towards embedding digital into organisational culture.

Delivery staff

4.5. A few projects discussed the importance of an informal style to delivery. The following example describes how this particular tutor was integral to the success of the project:

> *We were fortunate to have a very experienced, knowledgeable and flexible tutor, who was also a former resident of the area. She was universally liked by our*

participants, who found her to be patient, pleasant, non-judgmental and very positive. She was very knowledgeable of the differing needs of the two target groups and designed the classes appropriately. [Pollokshaws Area Network, Pollokshaws Digital Skills]

High attendance rates

4.6.   Projects that were successful with their delivery approaches discussed their consistently high rates of attendance, particularly with drop-ins. Dips at certain times of year were observed at holiday times, for example - but overall most reported being pleased with their attendance rates. A few projects referred to their more formal course style approaches as remaining consistently subscribed. It would seem that this approach works best when people have a specific aim and focus for gaining EDS so more likely to continue to engage until their goal is achieved.

Safe spaces

4.7.   Some projects felt the host location for their projects as key to the success of their activity. A well-known venue, with catering facilities, WIFI and appropriate access to devices were highlighted as important features. The following example from Inverness Foodstuff, IF Digital Skills Project, describes why this worked;

> *The informal environment and set up of the project where people could drop in and stay as long as they liked, where they were able to make their own hot drinks and where there was space to interact and socialise with others as well as space for workstations and laptops. Also, the project took place in a building well known to the local community which was easy to access and a comfortable, airy and large space. We encouraged the participants to feel that the space was theirs and they were free to use it how they liked as long as they acted responsibly and with respect to others.*

Length and pace of project delivery

4.8.   Staff reflected on the value of understanding the pace that someone liked to learn. This was especially important for people who had not yet gained foundation level digital skills as shown in this example from Changeworks, Switch to Save project;

> *The workshops were delivered with a very friendly, informal atmosphere where people were made to feel comfortable to work at their own pace. These sessions were aimed at older people with varying degrees of computer literacy some had never touched a computer. What we know from previous experience, is that many novices are frustrated with computer tutors (even well-meaning family members) who go at too quick a pace. So they were pleased to see that we were taking things very slowly and that session were very much tailored to suit the groups.*
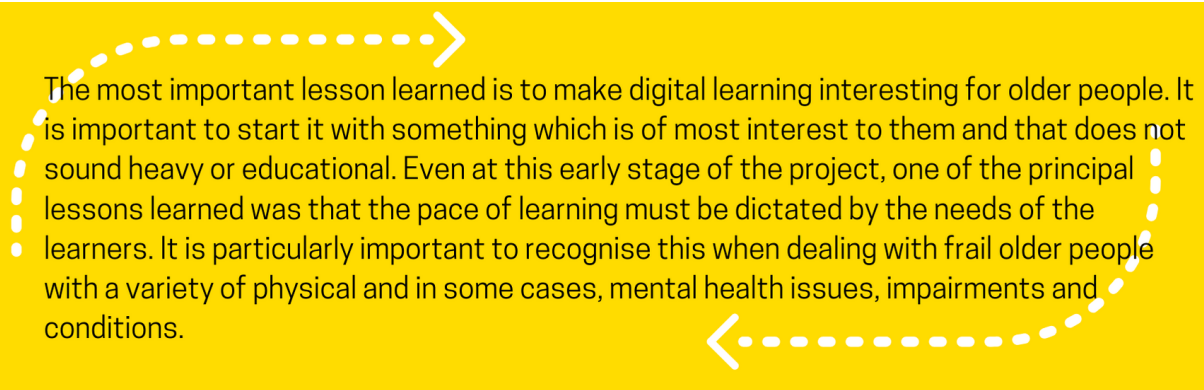
Challenges

Challenges highlighted by projects can be grouped into three areas (1) Recruitment, reach and engagement, (2) Organizational resource and capacity and (3) Barriers to participation for end-users.

Recruitment, reach and engagement

4.9.   Many projects discussed issues in relation to initial recruitment and then maintaining engagement. This was often the case for organisations who did not have an established presence in the target area for their projects. Some had to rely on partners or local networks for referring people to the project and there was disappointment when this did not produce the volume of attendance anticipated.

4.10.   This also links to the challenges around capacity, which are discussed in more detail below. Some projects had not anticipated the amount of time and effort that would go into initial recruitment phases and so, in a few cases, projects were delayed in starting.

4.11.   Projects also reflected on the importance of a hook to encourage engagement at the early stages of an activity and to use this as an opportunity to gauge someone's needs. Trust Housing Association's Opening Digital Doors project gave the following example:

> The most important lesson learned is to make digital learning interesting for older people. It is important to start it with something which is of most interest to them and that does not sound heavy or educational. Even at this early stage of the project, one of the principal lessons learned was that the pace of learning must be dictated by the needs of the learners. It is particularly important to recognise this when dealing with frail older people with a variety of physical and in some cases, mental health issues, impairments and conditions.

4.12.   Publicity and marketing were also highlighted as areas of learning. Some reflected that they had initially described their projects as digital learning sessions, or IT sessions and that this may have discouraged attendance. Potential participants may have found these descriptions intimidating or seen it as 'not for them'.

4.13.   Going forward they discussed referring to the sessions as more social in nature, but with a digital element. Or even not mentioning digital at all. The Digital Rural Challenge project from the Libertie Project described occasions where they engaged people by asking what they would do with an extra £800 – as this is often the amount a household who is not digitally active loses per year. People were then able to see how gaining Essential Digital Skills could benefit them financially and were more invested in learning the skills.

4.14.   Connect@Cothrom described adapting their outreach tactics at the early stages of their project as they realised workshop style sessions were not going to work for their end-users. They initially advertised one-off sessions for a wide group including young adults, parents and retirees, that did not have high attendance initially. As word spread that they offered digital skills training, they were contacted by people within their target groups who wanted to come in for one-to-one sessions. At the stage of writing their final evaluation, the project was gaining more momentum following the shift in approach to meet these needs.

Organisational resource and capacity

4.15. There were reflections about the time and resource required to see projects through to their full potential. Where projects sat within a range of other activity, some staff said they would have liked to prioritise their EDS projects more. This was particularly pertinent in initial stages.

4.16. Resource was also discussed in relation to staff capacity. Some would have liked more 'hands on deck' for project delivery, and one indicated that they would have recruited volunteers in the initial project phases to build capacity into the staff team.

4.17. In a few instances the importance of training staff in EDS before their projects started was highlighted. This was more evident in projects who had eventually trained staff with the SCVO Digital Champion resource, but at later stages of project delivery. Linked to this, others discussed the importance of staff buy-in at early stages;

> *The role of an adviser in Citizens Advice is wide and varied with many competing agendas on a daily basis. It is often a big ask of our volunteer workforce to undertake such projects alongside their day to day delivery. In terms of addressing this, I believe there is organisational learning for us in ensuring that volunteers are part of the discussions at the earliest opportunity to gain a higher level of "buy-in" from those who will be delivering.* [Citizens Advice and Rights Fife, Develop a habit with a Tablet]

4.18. Others mentioned that greater funding would have enabled them to invest more staff time and capacity to mitigate some of the challenges discussed above.

> *With additional capacity for outreach we believe could replicate and extend the impacts we've seen to other isolated older people in our community. This is an area we will now explore as an organisation and as part of our planning for 2020, and beyond* [Big Hearts Community Trust, Go Digital]

Barriers to participation for end-users

4.19. The majority of projects discussed the complex nature of working with people with varying needs or life circumstances. These sometimes resulted in barriers to engagement initially or the ability to see through a project. Barriers included:

- Practical barriers including transport, childcare or other commitments.

- Language or communication issues; for some, English was a second language and for others, taking on new information was challenging.

- Chaotic lives; this was prevalent for those seeking digital skills to access Universal Credit or to seek employment. Often gaining EDS was not their highest priority.

4.20. Projects acknowledged that these are ever-present barriers. They discussed the importance of responding to each individual and offering a person-centred service that was understanding, providing tailored support to address their own specific barrier.

4.21. A few staff reflected on the challenge of the variation in digital skills among their cohort. Some addressed this in the early stages of their project by adapting their delivery approach from group sessions to one-to-one tailored support. Others noted that they would have benefitted from offering more person-centred delivery. This was especially true for projects targeting older people.

5. Embedding digital

5.1. The self-evaluations asked projects to describe any plans to embed digital into their ongoing work or practice after funding ended. They outlined a range of planned activity, some of which is already underway. This chapter details the range of ways organisations have or are embedding digital into their practice for the benefit of creating a digitally able workforce, while also supporting end-users in gaining Essential Digital Skills.

Digitally capable delivery staff

5.2. Organisations funded by the Digital Participation Charter Fund are asked to sign up to the Digital Participation Charter. In describing organisational changes stemming from projects and plans to embed digital into wider work, the digital upskilling of delivery staff– reflected in pledges 1 and 2 - was discussed most frequently. Part of this involves training Digital Champions, who are trained as part of SCVO's wider digital participation work[10].

5.3. Figure 2 shows that the number of Digital Champions trained over the three rounds of funding was significant (698 trained over rounds 4-6), on average each project trained 16 Digital Champions. This links to the wider ecosystem of SCVO's digital programme, as funded projects are made aware of opportunities like Digital Champion training, access to resources and other opportunities. By training Digital Champions, organisations are more likely to embed digital practice into their work outside of the projects.

698 Digital Champions trained over rounds 4-6

1,492 People reached by Digital Champions

16 Average Digital Champions trained per project

33 Average number of people reached by Digital Champions per project

Figure 3: Digital Champions

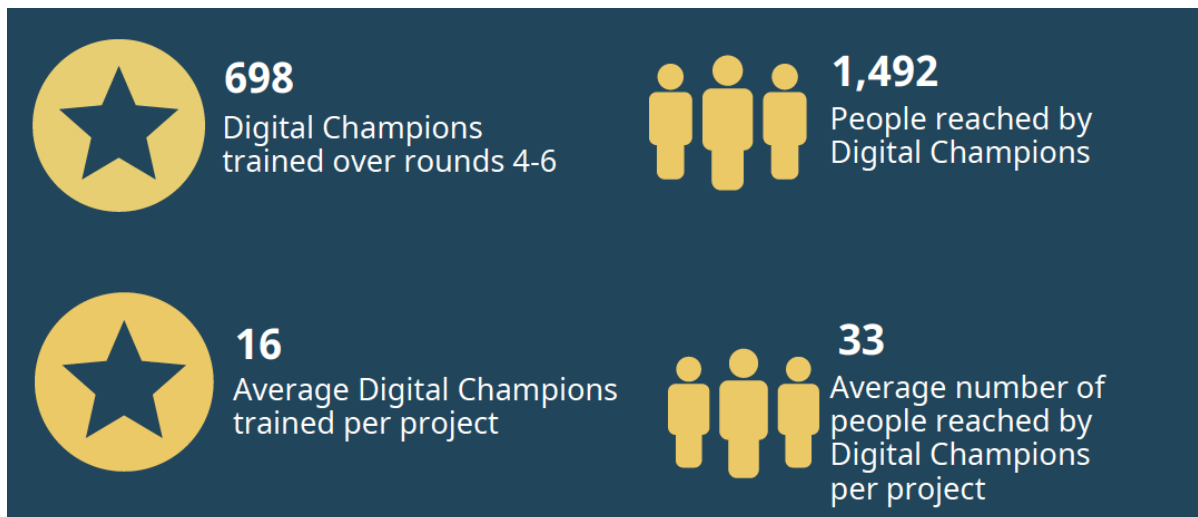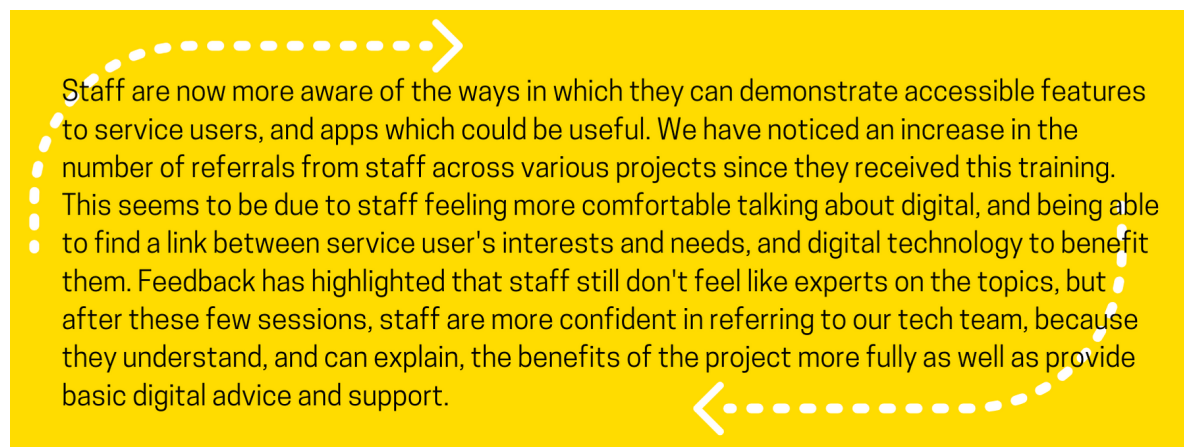5.4. The many examples of how upskilling delivery staff enabled organisations to embed digital into their practice include:

- Streamlining services; for example, switching from paper files to digital files and creating client databases so case files can be accessed remotely. For Community

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[10] These are key agents working in the voluntary sector in Scotland to support people to develop EDS.

Food Initiatives North East, this was utilising digital collaborative tools such as cloud based services, which they report has greatly enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of teams.

- Creating a digital strategy, including ensuring some services are available to end-users online.

- Building digital into starter packs for staff and volunteers. An example from Parkhead CAB's Digi? Aye! Project introduced a digital participation module into their Adviser Training Programme by delivering a PowerPoint presentation on "Digital Awareness" to all new volunteers and staff members.

- Expanding organisational activity. An example from The Libertie Project's Digital Rural Challenge Project details that they created a Co-working space in Inverness Library, and linked it digitally with their office using a digital rota shared through a shared online Outlook calendar. They now consider community digital outreach to be a core function of their work.

5.5. As demonstrated in Figure 2, on average and over the three rounds, 33 people from each project were supported by Digital Champions. An example from Visibility's Let's get Digital project details the benefits to both staff and end-users of the training.

Staff are now more aware of the ways in which they can demonstrate accessible features to service users, and apps which could be useful. We have noticed an increase in the number of referrals from staff across various projects since they received this training. This seems to be due to staff feeling more comfortable talking about digital, and being able to find a link between service user's interests and needs, and digital technology to benefit them. Feedback has highlighted that staff still don't feel like experts on the topics, but after these few sessions, staff are more confident in referring to our tech team, because they understand, and can explain, the benefits of the project more fully as well as provide basic digital advice and support.

Wider support offered to end-users

5.6. It was not always explicitly stated in the self-evaluations whether all changes towards embedding digital in practice were directly linked to the training of Digital Champions. However, in most cases, organisations noted their projects had acted as a catalyst to embedding digital further and expanding their offering to end-users. Some examples of this included:

- Buy-in from more senior staff members; some of which attended SCVO's Senior Leaders training Programme.

- Appointing new staff with an explicitly digital remit, such as Digital Participation Officers or IT staff.

- Purchasing more devices to increase access for end-users.

- The installation of Wifi in all organisational locations.

5.7. The example from Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface below demonstrates how their project acted as a catalyst for embedding digital while providing further support to end-users:

I think the project has helped us to see the bigger picture with digital demands locally, and how digital links in with many areas of our work. When the funding came to an end, we knew that the local need didn't, and so we have brought 5 hours of our IT and Employability Officer's time in to our core work each week. This has allowed him to continuing supporting our Digital Champions, and run one class at a time.

Defining the approach to training

5.8. Some organisations reported their projects had allowed them to define their approach to digital training. These were often projects who had success in their delivery approach, either from the beginning of their digital journey or had adapted their approach part way through the project. Charter Fund resource allowed projects to try approaches and assess what worked for them and their end-users in the context of digital.

Continuation of the project with new funding

5.9. In some cases, having a successful and completed project has allowed organisations to explore other resources, including other funding avenues. This may be to continue with the same activity, or to expand on ideas generated as a result of their projects. For example, as a result of Switch to Save project, Changeworks hope to create more digitally interactive and accessible services. They are seeking funding to digitise their advice packs so that they are accessible online, and funding for a web-chat facility.

5.10. The following example from Airdrie Citizens Advice Bureau also describes how a new funding stream has enabled them to continue work in upskilling and online safety:

> *We have successfully received funding and have just completed the first quarter of a year's project - Tech your Finance. We continue to deliver workshops, training, advice, support and with an emphasis on online safety, ensuring to keep the community safe.*

Collaboration

5.11. Many projects collaborated with other stakeholders in their community to achieve their goals. In some cases this created long-lasting partnerships, where aims of increasing digital participation have aligned and all partners can contribute to that cause.

5.12. The most common form of partnership was between a project and a community centre or library. This was often to allow a central and familiar meeting point for

end-users, as these spaces hosted the activity. They also often provided access to computers or devices. An example from the Connect@Cothrom project describes such a partnership;

> *We work with the Claddach Kirkibost Centre to deliver outreach sessions in North Uist. One of these sessions also involved a local church group, which brought eight people to a session. We are also looking to partner with Leabharlannan nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Libraries) to provide digital skills services at the branch in Lionacleit, Benbecula.*

5.13.   Projects also collaborated with employment services, schools and colleges, housing associations, and other third sector organisations. The projects acted as a way of connecting separate stakeholders. This may help to act as a foundation for further activity in the future. The following example demonstrates the positive repercussions of a partnership between local primary schools and older members of the community:

> *The intergenerational learning worked really well. Digital skills were developed, friendships were formed and links between the schools and day services will continue beyond the project. We have had a number of enquiries from other day services who would like to take part in this type of work beyond the project. To quote the pupils 'we were really surprised how much the older people enjoyed using the iPads and how much they enjoyed coding'* [North Ayrshire Council, DabbleGen]

5.14.   However, in some cases, there was mention of activity that can be directly linked to these partnerships. The following example describes a new working group, established by Parkhead CAB:

We pulled together a new working group who are working together to make better use of the IT facilities in the local area. We are aiming to share and publicise those facilities that are available, and ultimately organise IT workshops for those clients who have indicated via their SCVO questionnaire that they wish to improve their IT skills.

Commitment to action

5.15.   The self-evaluation reports asked projects to make a commitment to furthering the digital participation agenda. In response, many organisations referenced their commitment to the Digital Participation Charter, and noted that they would continue to work to increase the digital skills of their end-users and staff. In some instances, this opportunity was used to describe concrete plans for further developing organisational practice in relation to digital. Examples of projects' commitment to action included: staff training, accessing more funding, purchasing devices or continuing the project.

6. Key insights and learnings

6.1   This chapter identifies the key insights from the review and recommendations to consider in any future iterations of The Digital Participation Charter Fund.

Overall impact of the Fund

6.2   The Digital Participation Charter Fund has made a significant contribution to tackling digital exclusion in Scotland. This has been achieved by providing projects with funding to engage with a range of people with diverse needs, who are supported to gain Essential Digital Skills. It has also enabled organisations to embed digital participation into their practice.

6.3   Further to this, those who receive funding are likely to become part of a wider movement, led by SCVO, with the shared goal of ensuring all citizens in Scotland are digitally capable.

Reach

6.4   Thousands of people have been offered a chance to gain EDS. This has been achieved through a programme of funding community-based organisations who are best placed to support those most likely to experience digital exclusion.

6.5   The fund has been wide reaching – distributed throughout communities in Scotland, and focussed particularly in areas of multiple deprivation. It has engaged with a range of groups; from older people to younger people, and staff working in organisations to those claiming Universal Credit.

6.6   A similar approach in future rounds, of granting funding to organisations across Scotland and targeting those in areas of Multiple Deprivation, should achieve at least the same level of reach and engagement. Learning from this review indicates that projects who target specific groups may have better success in retaining engagement from their end-users as they can adapt their approaches to the needs of the group.

6.7   Applicants for future funding could be encouraged to think about specifying a target group to ensure they can easily adapt to the needs of their end-users and therefore maximise the chances of continued engagement.

Informal and person-led delivery approaches

6.8   It is clear that engaging people through their areas of interest, or 'hooks', is key to encouraging learning.

6.9   Most require an initial hook to spark their interest in gaining digital skills; for example, beginning their digital interaction with an activity that interests them, or by informing them of the benefits of online activity, like saving money on household bills. Some were ready to gain Essential Digital Skills because of a need or drive, for example, claiming Universal Credit and the need to access an online account.

6.10   Once interest is established it is easier to engage end-users further and maintain that engagement, and delivery approaches can be tailored to their needs. This could

be through beginning the project with a specific workshop or offering one-to-one tailored support with an issue of importance or relevance to the person.

6.11 Effective digital inclusion is meaningful, relevant and consistent with a person's overall needs and motivations. If the aim of the project is to upskill those who seek employment, need to access Universal Credit, or are aiming to reduce their household bills, a workshop style session could be more suitable. People have a specific aim and focus through improving their digital skills and therefore are more likely to continue to engage until their goal is achieved. For example, projects aimed at teaching EDS to older people are more likely to succeed if the learning style is informal and of personal interest to the end-user.

Adapting

6.12 It is important for organisations to have a clear aim and delivery approach for their projects. However, flexible delivery models are recognised as beneficial to retaining engagement. Projects which initially began with courses or training and adapted their delivery approach to a more person-centred, one-to-one style, have seen a steady level of engagement. A capacity to adapt and change if required, is valuable.

6.13 In future funding rounds SCVO should continue to ensure that applicants can explain why their delivery approach is appropriate and funding that is given to those who plan to adopt the most relevant method for their audience. Organisations should be encouraged to take a person-led approach to delivery. SCVO should continue to be flexible with their funded projects, encouraging them to adapt their delivery approaches if necessary.

Enabling successful projects

6.14 The challenges faced by organisations were centred around three areas, the first of which was recruitment, reach and engagement. Many projects discussed issues in relation to initially recruiting people and then maintaining their engagement.

6.15 It will be important for projects to consider this potential challenge before starting their activity, to avoid delays in uptake. This includes giving careful thought to recruitment and the use of marketing materials that can be adapted to the needs of a target group.

6.16 Internal resource and capacity also presented limitations for projects. Organisations would have liked to commit more time to their projects but in some cases other activities needed to be considered within priorities. Some projects also struggled with capacity in terms of staff and funding.

6.17 At the initial stages of projects, organisations should be encouraged to assess how much staff time can be dedicated to project activity. As part of this it could be important to consider how volunteers could be utilised to expand project capacity. SCVO could also consider how to best support organisations at these early stages.

6.18 Finally, end-users may experience a range of barriers that preventing them from fully engaging with projects. Offering a person-centred service that is understanding of

the needs of each individual, offering them tailored support or means to address their own specific barrier is key to enabling everyone to engage.

A common goal is key to embedding a digital culture for Scotland

6.19 The evidence suggests that projects supported by the Digital Participation Charter Fund, are likely to engage in further work to embed a culture of digital within their organisations and go on to take part in other activity that supports end-users with gaining Essential Digital Skills.

6.20 Through SCVO's administration of the fund, organisations are connected to an ecosystem of support and resources to develop their own digital practice, for example, training Digital Champions. This connection contributes to further embedding digital within organisations.

6.21 Being a signatory to the Digital Participation Charter encourages organisations to share a common language in relation to digital such as the Essential Digital Skills, while also creating digitally capable delivery staff including Digital Champions.

6.22 Continued promotion of the fund and encouraging organisations to be active in engaging with Essential Digital Skills Framework, wider SCVO ecosystem including training Digital Champions is likely to further develop the confidence and capacity of the voluntary sector in Scotland.

Appendix 1: Case studies

The Big Hearts Community Trust: Go Digital

A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

41 individuals were supported by this project to develop Essential Digital Skills. It was delivered as part of an existing programme of activity that offered support for kinship carers and reminiscence activities for isolated older people.

> *Project participants often come with a list of song names or artists they remember, but maybe haven't listened to for a while. These classic songs often result in a sing-along. Older participants now pick up an iPad and flick through photos, having seen how volunteers use them. It's great to see them happy as well as learning new things.*

The Lines Between — Accessible Social Research

SCVO

Craig Wilson, General Manager at Big Hearts describes 'Go Digital's' success in their person-led approach to delivery, enabling different groups to gain Essential Digital Skills through activities that were meaningful to them.

Participants from the Football Memories group used iPads to look for images, play music and search online. Having multiple iPads allowed volunteers to spend time with each person, to focus on their needs and the way that they learned.

We purchased 5 iPads, which have been used extensively in our Football Memories sessions to encourage older participants to become more familiar with browsing and searching for images and content. For example, finding images of Hearts FC team photos from the 1960s, or old stadiums, completing interactive quizzes and completing web searches on points of interest which come up in conversation.

With our Kinship Carer group, we knew there was a real need to develop confidence and Essential Digital Skills. We ran a session during the Easter holidays while the kids were on a day excursion. The workshop was designed around carer's needs, specifically looking at how the digital world could help reduce their isolation as well as receiving tailored advice around online safety.

" *They wanted the skills and experience to help young people use the internet safely which we know is a big challenge in their lives*

The session was very hands on and interactive with positive feedback from carers. Our Family Support Worker has since spent time following up with carers in the home to provide further support specifically around setting up parental controls.

Volunteers led the training for both the groups; they were equipped with Digital Champion training enabling them to be responsive to the needs of participants and confident when introducing new ideas and concepts to the groups.

We're always encouraging the volunteers to think of different ideas about what they can do to make sessions more engaging and to give older folk who come here the best possible experience. The fund gave us a wider resource reach, allowing volunteers to take more ownership of sessions.

Digital Champions are on hand to help and guide participants, and have benefited from increased confidence and skills. Our Champions have also brought their own digital innovations, with one volunteer presenting a virtual version of Heart of Midlothian's Heritage Tour, which is usually a bus tour, and others using digital cameras to project newspaper clippings onto a big screen.

The Charter Fund was a catalyst for embedding digital into the work of Big Hearts.

" *The funding has opened our eyes to a need for us to integrate digital skills training and capacity building into all areas of Big Hearts work*

While this project was targeted specifically at isolated older people, we have seen wider benefits and impacts particularly with disadvantaged young people in our other projects. We believe adding these digital aspects has kept the groups and the content fresh and engaging and we will continue to innovate and embed digital skills training and participation into everything we do.

Camphill Blair Drummond: Go on Learning Zone

A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

28 average hours of one to one support each individual received as part of this project

> " We've been able to translate the graphics they are creating into making products that we can sell as part of our funds, which is great for people with learning disabilities, to see the things they've made being bought.

The Accessible Social Research Lines Between

SCVO

Camphill Blair Drummond offers a home, meaningful activities and opportunities for personal development to adults with learning disabilities and other special needs. They used their funding to purchase IT equipment including computers and iPads to furnish a dedicated learning suite that would be primarily used by the communities' residents and day students, and then set up a workshop for the students to use the devices. Here, Angela Flaws, Learning and Development Leader, shares a story about Ryan, who has gained Essential Digital Skills from taking part in the workshops and goes on to discuss the wider impacts of the project.

We created a workshop where people could take and edit photographs, make packaging for the produce from the workshops and make posters. This meant that people were focussed on doing activities that they enjoyed and were able to pick up digital skills along the way.

It's moved them out of their comfort zone, we support a lot of people with autism, so quite a lot of people with autism don't like getting their hands dirty or won't engage in traditional crafts, because of the paint or clay, but they might colour in on an iPad.

You'll often see even people, residents and day students going walking around the community with their iPads and taking photographs with staff, which is a new thing. And then we'll use that to share with parents and show what they're doing.

"

People can be involved at their level of ability, it might just be going onto Google images and picking a picture that they like, and that might be their input, and another might create a design themselves.

The organisation produces a weekly diary sheet and distributes it throughout the community. The diary sheet is normally produced by the office staff in written form which means that it is not accessible to all of the residents and day students. Ryan has been supported by Gyongyi a Digital Champion, to produce an accessible diary sheet. As a direct result of this, Ryan has gained self-esteem, confidence and skills

in using the internet. He said: "At home I play games on my X-box but I don't have a computer. I have been learning new things to do on the computer. It's fun to do the picture diary sheet and I feel good helping other students and residents. We work hard but I enjoy being part of the group. When we finish the work, we use the iPads to play games and listen to music."

The 'Go On Learning Zone' project was the first of many steps taken by Camphill towards a more digitally thriving organisation. The SCVO digital team has offered the organisation access to support and resources to realise their digital potential.

This year our organisation will be commissioning a learning management system which will be used to record, book and deliver staff and volunteer training within the community. Just one example of a move towards the use of technology for many business processes. Next steps for our organisation include identifying and addressing these skills gaps. The SCVO Essential Digital Skills Toolkit will be a useful starting point for this work.

" *The project has had a much wider effect. Alongside training 12 Digital Champions, we have found the various events we attended extremely useful. Hearing about other organisations' experiences helps introduce new possibilities for the use of technology to enhance the quality of life for everyone in our community.*

Craig Wilson, General Manager at Big Hearts describes 'Go Digital's' success in their person-led approach to delivery, enabling different groups to gain Essential Digital Skills through activities that were meaningful to them.

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The Libertie Project: Digital Rural Challenge

A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study
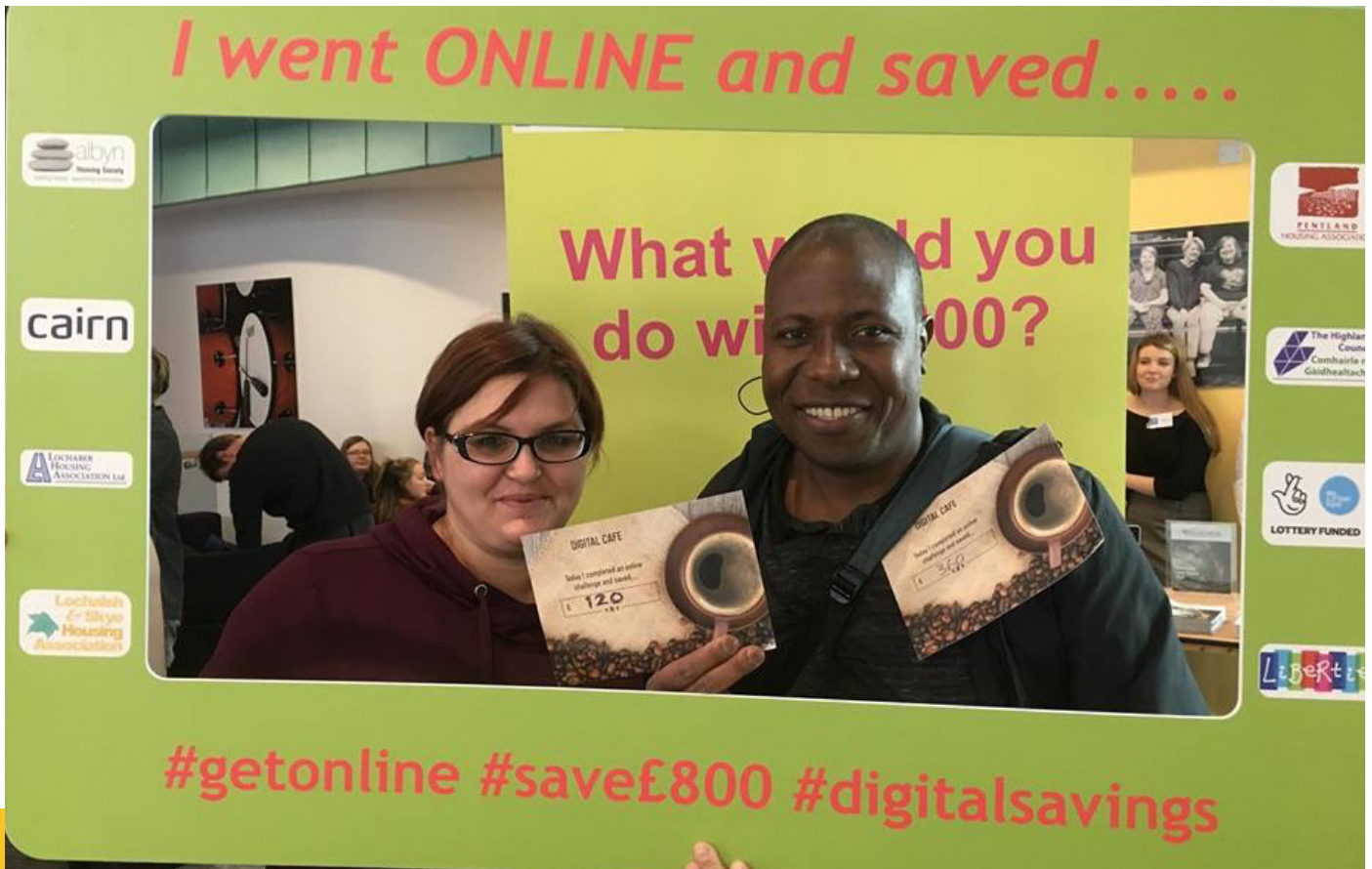
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individuals directly supported by the Digital Rural Challenge project, across the Highlands in both rural and urban locations.

The Digital Rural Challenge project worked take digital to radically rural and remote communities and communities with shared lived experiences. Particularly those that were hard to reach, like those in prison settings. Here, Libby Bligh, Chief Executive of the Libertie Project describes the tangible impacts of going digital to the lives of those they engaged with. She also describes how they used and adapted SCVO's Essential Digital Skills Toolkit to evidence a need for digital within a particularly hard to reach group.

The Accessible Social Research **Lines Between**

SCVO

We discovered we could work best by training up those already in communities as they were able to reach more people in more remote settings than we could on our own. We went into places that people were comfortable, and the engagement was far better.

By supporting these groups to gain Essential Digital Skills, we've managed to see some tangible impacts on their lives. Some have saved enough money to go on their first family holiday, or not had to worry about heating their home in winter, they've overcome social isolation by connecting with online self-help and peer led groups.

We managed to engage with many people by asking them what they would be able to do with an extra £800? We call it the Digital Poverty Premium, it means that by not getting online, the average person is over £800 a year worse off. In Highlands however, we've discovered that it can sometimes be as much as £2,200. So far we've helped 137 people save over £15,000.

" *There was an older couple that saved £1,200 a year, the amount they saved was enough to take them out of fuel poverty, because they were finding it difficult to heat the house.*

The Libertie Project used SCVO's Essential Digital Skills Toolkit as a basis to carry out an exploratory piece of work in a prison setting in the Highlands. They wanted to understand the digital issues for prisoners, and how having Essential Digital Skills could potentially mitigate the risks of reoffending.

" *We do lots of work in prisons, and we're very aware that there is no digital access in the prison, but that the potential benefits for this community in gaining Essential Digital Skills is huge; we know through examples shared with us that having online access in prison would have prevented problems such as debt, unemployment, family stress and chaos on release, therefore leading to a reduced risk of reoffending.*

To do more work with this community, we needed to evidence that need first, we needed to find out what they could and couldn't do and what they would like to do. What we found was online banking, cancelling contracts, not putting the family into debt, they came up as the big issues, as well as safety.

SCVO's Essential Digital Skills toolkit was incredibly useful when carrying out this piece, especially the checklist. We slightly adapted the Checklist; visually we made more differentiation between work skills and life skills, so we could then take out that data and look at employability, in terms of home life and income maximisation. This work has provided an evidence base for more work in the future. We are combining our findings with some more in depth research we are doing with Edinburgh University. Digital Skills for offenders is coming out as a huge emerging issue.

The Ridge: Digital You

A Digital Participation Charter Fund Case Study

'Digital You' is a hyper local and accessible service, that is embedded within the existing activities of The Ridge, a community based Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Here, Maggie McCole, Managing Director at The Ridge discusses the benefits of accessing SCVO's Essential Digital Skills Toolkit, a sense of empowerment and community within the people 'Digital You' engages with, and how they are maximising the impact of the project in their ongoing activity.

> "
> *'Digital You' came about to help those lacking in the digital skills necessary to do day to day tasks online, often where an 'offline' alternative no longer exists. Imagine not knowing how, or being able to afford, to get online. The geographical, social, professional and financial isolation that a lack of digital skills creates for so many in society today. These are the people that Digital You strives to reach.*

The Accessible Social Research Lines Between

SCVO

SCVO's Essential Digital Skills Toolkit, especially the Checklist, proved useful for Digital You when introducing the idea of digital upskilling to new participants.

When 'M' was first introduced to the idea of upskilling digitally, we were met with a 'wall', a blanket - "I don't need the internet", " no use to me". Completing the Checklist was a big step for 'M' on many levels. It allowed him to see that he did have skills, that he would not be starting from ground zero and that there were areas on their that he WOULD like to know more about and that he could see the benefit of learning about. Working through our Digital You programme has validated and bolstered 'M's skill set and opened paths to further skills and a more resilient digital citizenship. It was important that we used the Checklist as a tool that allowed him to realise his own strengths and to see how he would like to take his digital journey forward.

Digital You helped people interact with others breaking down barriers between themselves and others in the community.

Reaching out to those individuals that normally exist on the very edges of the community gave them a chance to connect that can lead to increased self-awareness, a sense of belonging and the ability to empathise with and relate to others within the community. Mitigating the effects of social isolation and loneliness.

"

Gaining Essential Digital Skills proved to be empowering, allowing people to come together to share experiences and learning breaking down complex barriers of social isolation and exclusion which exacerbate mental health issues.

We were able to reach and provide support to local people, in particular those facing specific barriers like; unemployed males, those with a criminal justice background, those with mental health issues and care experienced people.

Moving forward and maximising impact; The Ridge is pursuing digital through many avenues.

"

The funding from this round has long reaching effects past the year. We have the devices to continue to help people who don't have access to their own hardware.

Haddington Citizens Advice Bureau ran out of funding to offer a digital service, so we have taken it on. We're using the same hardware that we purchased with Charter Fund funding, and hosting it in the local library. We have a volunteer who is running it who did Digital Champion training with SCVO, we provide flexibility and support to him so that he can dip in and out of it as he struggles with his mental health. He is just buzzing after computer club though, it's really fantastic for his self-confidence.

We were recently successful in attaining another bit of SCVO funding; the next round of the Community Capacity Resilience fund which we will use for an income advice worker, so she'll be using our hardware and weaving digital into the way that she offers income advice and income optimisation; helping people with their Universal Credit accounts, making them familiar with their computer, using the laptops… She'll then be able to refer anyone she encounters to the computer club or to our Digital Champions for some one to one if they need more help. So, we have almost put those two bits of funding together to maximise the impact.

Appendix 2: Further analysis of projects and reach

- The first page of the infographic provides an overview of rounds 4-6. Across this period 86 projects were funded; around half of these (42) in round 4; 17 in round 5 and 26 in round 6. The variation in the number of projects funded depended on the amount of funding available for each round. Round 4 saw the largest amount of investment from the Scottish Government and partners, therefore more projects received funding.

- In total, £721,131 was awarded over the three rounds. This was distributed roughly in proportion with the number of projects funded per round.

- The average grant across rounds 4-6 was £8,794. This average was broadly consistent across each individual round. The greatest variation in the size of grants awarded occurred during round 4, with the smallest grant of £2,040 and the largest of £15,552. This could be due to the larger number of projects granted funding. In rounds 5 and 6 however, the largest grant was £10,000 and the smallest was £4,991 in round 5 and £3,650 in round 6.

Location of projects funded

- Categorisation of locations of projects was based on the geographical location of the projects included in the final self-evaluation reports. Projects provided details of the area or a town where their activity took place and these were grouped together into broad geographical regions for analysis purposes.

- Almost three quarters of funded projects (73%) were located in central Scotland; this includes both urban and rural areas across the central belt. Just over one in ten (11%) were located in the north and 5% in the south. As such, the distribution of projects was broadly in line with the general population. A further 11% of projects operated across multiple locations and have not been classed as any specific region.

- When providing detail of the location of their projects, a number of projects explicitly stated that they operated in areas of multiple deprivation. For those who did not state this explicitly, our evaluation team matched the most detailed location information given against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Based on this analysis, 70% of projects operated in areas of multiple deprivation.

Groups supported

- Our analysis of the groups supported is based on the project updates given in the final self-evaluations. These detailed the intended audience and delivery approach for the project activity. Not all projects completed every part of the final self-evaluation. For this reason, analysis of delivery approach is based only on those who provided this information.

- Projects funded in rounds 4-6 have reached a range of different groups. At 22%, older people were the most common group targeted by funded projects. Beyond this there was a relatively even split between the other groups who engaged with the projects.

- Second largest in terms of targeted groups were Universal Credit claimants (14%). This is may be driven Citizens Advice Bureaux projects, who identified the need for action to support people to access their online journals as part of the Universal Credit process.

- Less than a sixth (14%) of projects engaged with people with disabilities and 7% with those from minority communities.

- The 'Other' category (14%) includes a number of different groups which were the focus of a small number of organisations such as those who engaged with people of a specific gender, carers or those affected by homelessness.

- A minority of projects (13%) did not set out to engage with a specific target group and aimed to support anyone within their community to gain Essential Digital Skills.

- Some (12%) had a more internal focus, engaging with their own employees and volunteers with a view to embedding digital participation into the delivery of day-to-day services.

Reach of engagement

- Infographic page two details the overall number of people supported, the average number of people supported per project and the average hours of support or training provided to each unique individual over the three rounds of funding.