Insights Report

One Digital Evaluation Findings

For more detail please see the One Digital Evaluation Report or contact Vinal K Karania at Vinal.Karania@ageuk.org.uk

Age UK delivered the One Digital Project, as part of a wider programme involving six organisations, that was funded by The Big Lottery Fund with the premise that empowering, supporting and inspiring trusted intermediaries to be Digital Champions is a highly effective and sustainable way of delivering digital skills.

The One Digital Programme ran between November 2015 and December 2016, with the aim of understanding if Digital Champions are an effective approach to motivate older people and equip them with the skills and confidence to safely use digital technology. It was delivered in Leicestershire and Oxfordshire.

The project engaged 95 intermediary organisations, recruited and trained 160 Digital Champions who promoted the benefits of digital technology to 3858 older people and supported 1274 older people to learn new digital skills.

Digital Champions are individuals who register to be members of the Digital Champions Network, who undertake the required online courses and who volunteer to engage, support and encourage older people to develop their digital skills and confidence. This can involve attending events to promote the benefits of digital technology to older people, supporting an older person on a one-to-one basis or leading or helping at drop-in sessions or extended support classes.

Intermediaries are organisations that interact with older people and are able to provide an avenue to reach older people, space to host sessions, people as Digital Champions and deliver the sessions themselves.

The concept of Digital Champions can be helpful to develop a network of community based digital sessions embedded in the community; and it is delivering sessions in the community that is most engaging for older people.

The use of non-standard technology (such as Virtual Reality Handsets) can be more effective in engaging older people into the world of digital technology; and one to one sessions tend to be more beneficial but also require more resources.

The different roles Digital Champions can play supports having Digital Champions with varying levels of skills and experience. Digital Champions benefit (to varying extent depending on their role) from being able to connect and develop a conversation with an older person (empathy and engaging skills), having the patience to be repetitive until an older person understands, being able to articulate using simple everyday language and having a working knowledge of various digital technology or the inquisitiveness and ability to find solutions to digital related problems.

Older people benefit more from support when they are able to lead the contents of the session and learn at their own pace, are reassured they will not do any damage and are instilled with confidence to try things on their own and learn using their own device.

Further research is required to understand what motivates older people to want to (and then continue to) learn or develop their digital skills, how this learning is incorporated into everyday activity and what difference this makes, and what motivates Digital Champions to begin (and to continue) to support older people.