

Basic Information Technology Programme



Lessons Learnt Evaluation August 2015

Basic Information and Technology (Basic IT) learning programme January 2015 – July 2015

Introduction

In December 2014 Inspiring Communities Together (ICT) was approached by Salix Homes to develop and deliver a ten week programme of Basic IT sessions across the neighbourhoods of Central Salford. The approach was to support individuals with limited digital knowledge to be able to improve their skills and access information on line which would improve their life chances, as outlined below 37% of individuals who are currently digitally excluded live in social housing.

The national agenda - Government Digital Inclusion Strategy 2014

2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the World Wide Web. The web has 2.4 billion users worldwide. In 2013, 89% of young people used a smartphone or tablet to go online, up from 43% in 2010.

The web has transformed almost every aspect of public, private and work life. It has underpinned our new economy; from changing the way every workplace communicates to creating entire new industries. It is reshaping government through improved public services and improving transparency through open data. It has improved people's lives, whether through cutting household bills, finding a job or maintaining contact with distant friends and relatives. The internet also provides broader benefits, by helping to address wider social and economic issues like reducing isolation and improving health.

However recent research published by the BBC has found that 21% of Britain's population lacks the basic digital skills and capabilities required to realise the benefits of the internet. There is a lot of great work going on across the public, private and voluntary sectors to help people and organisations go online, but digital exclusion remains a big issue.

The government through their user research and consultation has identified 4 main kinds of challenge that people face to going online:

- *access - the ability to actually go online and connect to the internet*
- *skills - to be able to use the internet*
- *motivation - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing*
- *trust - a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online*

In 2013, [36 million adults \(73%\) in Britain accessed the internet every day](#). Those who are offline and not capable of using the internet risk missing out on the benefits that the internet can offer including:

- **Reduced costs of living.** *Households offline are missing out on savings of [£560 per year](#) from shopping and paying bills online, or being able to keep in touch with family members and friends.*
- **Improved job prospects** - [being digitally capable is critical in finding and securing a job](#).

- **Wider equality, social, health and wellbeing issues such as isolation.** - [81% of people over 55 say being online makes them feel part of modern society](#)

Digital exclusion affects some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society:

- **Those in social housing** - [37% of those who are digitally excluded are social housing tenants](#)
- **Those on lower wages, or unemployed** - [17% of people earning less than £20,000 never use the internet, as opposed to 2% of people earning more than £40,000. 44% of people without basic digital skills are on lower wages or are unemployed](#)
- **Those with disabilities** - [33% of people with registered disabilities have never used the internet. This is 54% of the total number of people who have never used the internet](#)
- **Older people** - [over 53% of people who lack basic digital skills are aged over 65, and 69% are over 55](#)

For all of these groups, adult digital and literacy skills are a sizeable challenge. Being able to improve adult digital and literacy skills is at the heart of reducing digital exclusion and helping people go online.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/government-digital-inclusion-strategy>

About Inspiring Communities Together (ICT)

<p>Mission – We will achieve positive outcomes for local people based on the knowledge understanding and information that the community have about their area, through empowering individuals and groups to release their potential to develop their own solutions.</p> <p>Vision – We will embed approaches which have worked locally in particular maintaining a culture of partnership working and working to retain specific interventions or activities where they have provided positive outcomes for local people based on the knowledge and information the community have about the area</p> <p>Values –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be accountable to and representative of the local community • We will be innovative and provide value for money in our approach to deliver of every-thing we do • We will value all volunteers, staff and members of the organisation 	
<p>How do we know we are making a difference</p> <p>Specific aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve capacity and skills to feel more confident to try new things • Improve self-confidence to get involved and make a difference • Nurture networking and share experiences 	<p>what is the difference we are making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening local Voices • Improving peoples' lives • Creating better places to live

ICT is a neighbourhood based Charity with a mission to support the local residents of Charlestown and Lower Kersal (CHALK) which is located within the Salford boundaries of Charlestown and Lower Kersal. ICT use the learning from their activity in CHALK to sell products across Salford and other surrounding neighbourhoods of Great Manchester.

Basic IT is part of ICT wider digital programme of learning which aims to **improve peoples' lives**. The digital learning programme includes the following activity delivered by staff employed by ICT:

Learning programme	activity	Outcomes
Tech and tea	Support individuals with no experience or very limited skills of using digital technology. This programme of learning is very informal and aim at older residents	To improving social isolation and better manage own health and well being
Basic IT	Support individuals with limited digital skills to be able to improve their skills and	To enable individuals to be able to access information on line which improve their life chances such as being able to register to vote or set up an account to enable individuals to pay for services on line
Basic It Plus	Support individuals who have some knowledge and skills of digital technology – they may have already completed a tech and tea and/ or basic IT course and are looking to develop their skills further.	To identify what Community Reporting is and practice the skills required. To apply skills learned in Basic IT (surfing the web, word processing) and prepare content as community reporters such as taking and uploading pictures

This lesson learnt report sets out the learning from the Basic IT course funded by Salix Homes to support residents across Central Salford. As with all activity delivered by ICT the community outcomes star was used as an evaluation tool. All those taking part in the course were asked the same questions at the start of the learning programme and again at week ten.

Getting started

The Basis IT programme was developed building on the tech and tea model which had been delivered by Inspiring Communities Together working with Salix Homes. Tech and Tea was focused on individual's particularly older people with no experience of using technology. Basic IT was however designed for individuals of any age with limited experience of technology or who had previously attended a computer course but found the class room delivery approach not suitable for their personal learning style.

The approach used was very informal with talking to group members to understand their fears and help them overcome them. Throughout the ten weeks participants were able to use both lap tops and tablet technology and explore the benefits of using digital skills. The programme included safe surfing of the internet, creating and sending e mail (for most this included setting up an e mail address), exploring the variety of applications available and have these can provide access to information of interest to the individual.

Basic IT - Sessions Outline in detail

Week	Objectives	Outcomes
Week 1	Hopes and Fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on technology and benefits • Using apps on tablets • Getting to know each other
Week 2	The Basics of a computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to turn our tech on and off safely. • basics of opening and closing programmes • how to create/delete folders and copying and pasting
Week 3	Surfing the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to surf the internet by learning how to do a Google search. Each person learns how to conduct a google search on their chosen piece of tech and begins to surf the internet.
Week 4	Surfing the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore useful websites • Explore Skype and Facetime as a way of keeping in contact with people
Week 5	E-Mails and Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set everyone up with an email address and learn how to send • Facebook and Twitter and consider whether we want to set up an account on these
Week 6	Advanced email skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to reply and forward emails. • How to attach documents to emails.
Week 7	Microsoft Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening and typing words. • Manipulating text. (size, colour)
Week 8	Microsoft Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving word documents. • Putting documents in folders. • Attaching documents to emails.
Week 9	Using websites to save money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research useful money saving websites. • Create (free) accounts with a website of choice. • Practice using sites such as Salix Homes/Salford personal account
Week 10	Troubleshooting – What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through any parts again and discuss future opportunities

Salix Homes identified the locations and recruited the individuals who wished to take part in the basic IT courses. In total four locations were identified: Lark Hill, Cheshill Court, St Sebastian's Community Centre and Duchy Pod (this programme is due to be delivered in September 2015). In total six men and eleven women took part in the sessions over the three venues between January and July 2015 (two from BME communities).

As part of the programme all those who completed the course were offered the opportunity to purchase a low cost lap top through Salix Homes and also engage in further learning through more advanced courses being offered by Inspiring Communities Together.

Skill level and confidence at start of programme

Because the programme was promoted by the Salix Homes Neighbourhood Workers working along-side Inspiring Communities Together Development Worker (Training) it was possible to sign post individuals to either tech and tea or Basic IT. This meant that the majority of those who attended the Basic IT sessions were of a similar level of skill and knowledge. Most had limited skill and knowledge and had spent very little time using digital technology. A few individuals had previously attended courses but found them difficult to follow as they were based on a class room approach and working to the skills of the majority - Many of those attending the Basic IT programme needed more 1-1 support and confidence building along-side support to develop their digital and literacy skills.

Individuals were quiet anxious about using computers at the start of the programme and a number of factors were identified and fit with the government research and consultation which has identified 4 main kinds of challenge that people face to going online(outlined in brackets):

- A previous negative learning experience or had tried to teach themselves and found this difficult. (**motivation**)
- Some experience of using computers but had been given tablets as presents and were unsure how to use them (**Skills**)
- Resentment that individuals were being forced to use digital technology as more services were only accessible through the internet (**Trust**)
- Unsure of the benefits of being able to use digital technology (**access**)

Addressing the challenges

- **Motivation and access** – By the end of the programme individuals reported that they felt much more confident and aware of the benefits of using technology to improve their lives. Six individuals took up the opportunity to purchase their own lap tops through the Salix Homes low cost scheme and three individuals are attended the basic IT plus course being delivered by ICT.

Case study

Lady in her late 50's. Got involved from a flyer being dropped through her letterbox by Salix Homes Neighbourhood Worker. She had been on a computer course before but had found it not that useful. The teacher had sat at the front of the class reading instructions from a sheet of paper and didn't provide individual support.

The individual wanted to gain confidence and develop her skills having bought a tablet but was struggling with moving and touching the tablet. She didn't realise quite how responsive the tablet was. By the end of the programme she was comfortable using her tablet and had also decided to take up the Salix Homes offer to purchase a lap top along-side joining the Basic IT plus course. She has also made some new friends as there were individuals on the course who lived close to her and they have remained friends.

The individual had received a letter from the council asking her to register to vote online:

“I got a letter through from the council asking to register my vote and for the first time ever, I felt confident to be able to register online.”

“I think it' is confidence. That is what I've got the most out of this. I feel more comfortable with my tablet now.”

Skills and trust – Every-one who took part in the programme was able to set up their own e mail address and felt confident in sending e mails. All reported feeling more able to search the internet for information. By the final session all participants could create a word document and save to their desktop, they were also able to copy, paste, create new folders and click and drag documents around the computer. Through-out the programme work sheets were provided which became a useful tool for individuals to use at home to practise the skills learnt during the session.

Case study

Male, early 50's. Became involved after seeing a flyer in the local community centre. Individual was not at all confident with his laptop but was keen to learn so he could use it for practical things in his life. Initially he struggled and became very frustrated with himself when he could not do what he thought he should be able to. By the end of the programme he was able to set up and use his own email account as well as confidently surf the internet.

So much so, that he was able to submit a complaint to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) about a recent holiday he had been on. The CAA had asked for lots of information to be submitted online and he was unable to do this. Through coming to Basic IT, he was able to learn how to submit his forms. He was successful, and received £160 in compensation.

“ I received my letter back from the CAA, they said I've been successful!

The individual also became friends with two ladies on the same programme who he found out lived near his house. The ladies had complimented his wife's gardening to each other. His wife is currently housebound and unwell and they have discussed the idea of the four of them meeting up.

Improving peoples' lives

Participant Numbers - 5 men, 8 women, 2 BME

Learning new things

100% of participants scored 4 or 5 after the course saying they felt that they were learning and doing interesting things in their community. At the start of the course 100% scored between 1 and 3.

Meeting new people

100% of participants scored 4 or 5 after the course saying that they felt that they had made more social contacts with people in their community. At the start of the course 100% of participants scored between 1 and 3.

Case Study

Lady in her late thirties. Became involved because she was part of a parents forum at Lark Hill Primary School. She wanted to learn how to use computers more efficiently to help with her job hunting online.

By the end of the course she was able to use her email address comfortably and confidently (the one the job centre had set up for her) and had been able to send out 2 CVs for potential jobs. She along with her partner has also signed up to start the Community Reporter course in September.

“I never knew how to send emails.... But I can now.”

How people rated the quality of their experience of learning

100% of participants rated their experience of the activity as Good or Excellent.

13 out of the 15 participants also rated the venues we used as Excellent or Good.

Our social impact

ICT use the community outcomes star model to evaluate all their activity. This includes an annual community consultation month in October when we go out into the neighbourhood and ask as many people of all ages the community outcome star questions.

Based on the feed-back collected by the individuals who attended the basic IT programme we can show that the following social impact has been achieved.

As with all our activity we work with individuals to create a short video which tells the story of their learning journey. The basic IT video can be seen by following the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uuy6c6b3nHQ>

Social – The programme of learning not only provided individuals with a safe environment to learn new skills it also provided space for individuals to make new friends and build relationships with others in their neighbourhoods

Economic – Individuals were able to demonstrate that by improving their digital skills they were able to increase the amount of income they have to spend

Things we learnt and can improve on:

- Quite often, if the group gel from the first session, they are more willing to stick with it when it gets tough later on.
- Some tasks people got quicker than others, so need to make sure we add extension activities for people to keep them engaged.
- Some participants have moved on to the Community Reporter course, we need to make sure we talk about that course as a possible next step right from the start.
- Make sure we have time in the final session for the group to learn anything new they want to learn as well as have time to go over previous weeks.
- Bringing the Neighbourhood member of staff to the sessions towards the end meant that some of the group were given opportunities to volunteer after the course finished.
- Having staff from the Salix Homes on hand was great because often participants would ask us about queries to do with their own accommodation. So they could directly answer the questions.

For further information about the type of work ICT do please check out our website www.inspiringcommunitiestogether.co.uk or contact:

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