

# Evaluation of One Digital

For Age UK

May 2020



RESEARCH

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Project number:	HEALT02-8302
Title:	Evaluation of One Digital
Location:	S:\ProjectFiles\A\Age_UK\HEALT02-8302_One Digital_eval\Reports\Report_V3.doc
Date:	May 2020
Report status:	Final Draft
Approved by:	Kay Silversides
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This research has been carried out in compliance with the International standard ISO 20252, (the International Standard for Market and Social research), The Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and UK Data Protection law

## **1. Introduction**

In February 2019 Age UK commissioned Qa Research to undertake a qualitative evaluation of their One Digital programme which has been working to inspire, engage and support older people to develop their digital skills via a network of volunteer Digital Champions.

The Age UK One Digital project has been part of a three-year collaboration programme between SCVO, Age UK, Citizens Online, Digital Unite and Clarion Futures, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (formerly The Big Lottery Fund). The programme ran from June 2017 – May 2020. The One Digital project has involved using Digital Champions (trained and supported trusted intermediaries) to engage digitally excluded people and provide them with support to develop basic digital skills. The Age UK One Digital projects have been facilitated by seven local Age UKs.

## **2. Aims and objectives**

Age UK commissioned a qualitative evaluation in order to help explore how effective the One Digital programme has been in engaging with digitally excluded older people and encouraging their continued learning.

The evaluation findings will help inform future guidance on services and approaches to supporting digitally excluded older people.

### 3. Methodology

Age UK required a qualitative evaluation of One Digital whereby individuals who have received support via One Digital could be consulted over a period of time in order to provide a richness of information on the experiences of those that have been supported.

Initially it was hoped that it would be possible to speak to 20 individuals at three different points in time in order to explore changing impact, motivation and barriers to digital learning over time (resulting in 60 interviews).

Four local Age UKs were sampled for the work:

- Age UK Blackburn with Darwen;
- Age UK Leeds;
- Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire;
- Age UK South Lakeland.

Introductory telephone interviews were completed with Area Co-ordinators in each of the sampled areas, each were then asked to recruit ten participants that were willing to take part in the evaluation via depth telephone interviews with Qa Research. Co-ordinators were provided with information sheets for both them and potential participants as well as consent forms. The aim was for all those recruited to the evaluation to have begun/had their One Digital learning through Age UK around four weeks ago. By tasking each area with recruiting ten people it was hoped this would cover likely attrition between the different waves of research as well as lack of uptake once contacted by Qa.

The recruitment process proved more challenging than anticipated. There were various factors at play including staff turnover in the sampled areas and recruitment not being a priority task for co-ordinators (supporting the evaluation was not built into the local grant agreements with Age UK). It took much longer than originally anticipated for participant contact information to reach Qa. When this did arrive, it did not always fully match the sampling criteria, i.e. some people had been attending/or had attended One Digital sessions many months ago rather than four weeks previously as intended.

This has meant that the evaluation is much more limited than originally envisaged and is based on fewer interviews; changing to just one follow-up interview per person (due to timescales) and with people that had started receiving support via One Digital at varying points in time. The following sample<sup>1</sup> was achieved:

**Figure 1: Sample**

Area	Interview 1	Interview 2
Age UK Blackburn with Darwen	5	2
Age UK Leeds	6	6
Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>1</sup> Age UK South Lakeland were unable to support the evaluation.

Initial interviews were completed between August 2019 and January 2020. Follow-up interviews were completed between January and March 2020. Whilst the aim was to leave a three-month window between interviews, this had to be extended to allow some people to participate in follow-up and had to be reduced in a small number of cases to allow interviews to be completed within March 2020. Whilst an original plan was to ask people to complete a diary between interviews, this was abandoned as feedback from Area Co-ordinators suggested that it was potentially a barrier to participation, so the decision was taken to focus solely on recruiting participants for the depth interviews.

It is important to note that several of the follow-up interviews were completed towards the end of March 2020 when those aged 70+ had recently been told by the government to go into quarantine at home for twelve weeks as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, some responses were shaped by early experiences of this quarantine and the use of technology within this.

Each participant was provided with an incentive of £20 of high street vouchers per interview to thank them for their time. Interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes. Most participants consented to their interviews being audio-recorded to ensure accuracy of analysis.

Please note that the results of qualitative research cannot be projected onto the overall population, due to the sample selection, interviewing methods and sample size. Whilst the report aims to draw out some findings by area, this is limited due to the number of interviews completed in each area and also due to the fact that several participants in a given area (all Leeds participants) were attending the same sessions as one another so exposure to different forms of digital learning was limited across the sample.

## 4. Key findings

### 4.1 Profile of Participants

The age of interviewees ranged from 65 to 90. Of the 13 people contributing to the evaluation ten were female and three were male. In a majority of cases, people were living alone. Most of those interviewed were active and mobile individuals, most had hobbies and interests (including volunteering for some) and appeared to have strong social connections with family, friends or neighbours. In many cases, interviewees had family that didn't live in their immediate vicinity. Most were in good health overall. All participants already owned a smartphone, tablet or laptop prior to participating in One Digital.

When asked how they felt about technology prior to embarking on digital learning, it is clear that for some individuals, there was a sense of fear, frustration, as well as a level of curiosity regarding the potential of this learning. Confidence was generally low amongst those interviewed, particularly if they had no real prior experience of current technology. A minority had engaged in previous digital learning classes (through other providers) or had used technology as part of their jobs prior to retirement although these people still lacked confidence in the context of fast-changing technology.

*"I do have a smartphone but I'm a bit wary of it, I don't really use it to its full capacity. I could make telephone calls, text and use YouTube and that was about it really." (Jim, 65, Blackburn with Darwen)*

*"Well, it's a necessity 'cos everything is online and it drives me crackers. You see, if I was a few years older I could say, 'I don't want to do it, I don't want to know', but I'm in the bit that does need it to carry out my life, really." (Ruth, 77, Leeds)*

### 4.2 Triggers to Digital Learning

A key trigger to digital learning appears to be related to the purchase or gifting or upgrading of technology by family members that are keen for their loved ones to be able to use technology to keep in touch. In these cases, older people have wanted to (or felt they should) learn to use basic functioning of smart phones and tablets to maintain contact with others, for others the main motivation was not to feel wanting to 'left behind' or to use technology as a way to maintain independence.

*"I'd just got a new mobile phone so it was kind of handy." (Julia, 85, Leeds)*

*"One of the biggest things is independence. Not having to go to someone and say, 'could you just look on the internet to see what this means'. The information on it is important." (Emily, 84, Blackburn with Darwen)*

Some attendees have wanted to use their devices for wider purposes, such as search for information on services or related to a particular interest or hobby. A minority wanted to learn about how to do online banking/bill paying and grocery shopping. In some cases, people wanted to better understand internet safety to be more informed and reassured about this prior to using technology for these purposes. However, most did not want to take this extra step.

*"Because I wanted to find out a bit more about technology, [it helps] you feel more comfortable" (Kathy, 84, Leeds)*

A further trigger relates to the opportunity to interact socially with others and keep themselves busy – with the topic of digital learning almost being negligible which was evident by a lack of clear learning goals in some cases. This included residents living in sheltered housing accommodation who mentioned they would embrace all opportunities presented to them, with the added incentive of this learning being available on their doorstep meaning it is simple for them to take-up.

*“[I got involved] to see if there was a little more knowledge I could gain that I could use without causing me too much stress” (Carole, 82, Herefordshire & Worcestershire)*

It is important to note that many people had learnt of the opportunity to participate in One Digital learning through Age UK by chance, e.g. through interactions with Age UK office staff on other matters, or through hearing a piece on their regional TV news programme. For these people, they would have been unlikely to have sought out digital learning opportunities themselves as a priority, therefore they simply took up the opportunity when this presented itself. Most didn't feel there were other digital learning opportunities open to them, e.g. some felt such opportunities, via local libraries for example, had diminished in recent years. Others had learnt of the opportunity through information posted at their supported housing provider.

### 4.3 Experiences of Digital Learning

All of those interviewed had positive experiences of digital learning through Age UK.

In most cases, people had experienced consistency in terms of the Digital Champions who supported their learning which is considered a strength. Some were unaware whether the Digital Champions who had supported them had been paid members of staff or volunteers. Regardless, the Digital Champions were praised for their approach to teaching. Participants found them to be kind, patient, relatable and motivating with good people skills. Champions appear to pitch learning at the right level, breaking down learning step by step and those attending group sessions discussed how Champions have done their best to meet everyone's needs and skill levels. Keeping learning informal, inviting questions, listening, and minimising use of jargon have been key to the success of digital learning and people's experiences of it.

*“They [Champions] were both really nice, really pleasant, helpful, talkative, made you feel welcome there.” (Julia, 85, Leeds)*

*“[The Champions were] very good at putting people at ease, so I didn't feel quite as bad, and I think they were all at the same stage as I was.” (Jim, 65, Blackburn with Darwen)*

Those interviewed had participated in a range of learning, group-sessions and one-to-one learning with a small number of people having taken part in both. Regardless of the format of learning, attendees had found it useful although those that had taken part in group-sessions and gone on to one-to-one learning with hindsight found the one-to-one support most valuable in terms of skill and knowledge development. In these cases, people reflected that within group sessions Champions did their best to navigate all individual needs and queries but this could be a challenge, whereas one-to-one support enabled individuals to ask more questions and receive tailored support.

*“Sometimes he [Digital Champion] was talking to the group because we all had different mobiles and he was showing us all the different functions, then if we wanted anything particular he’d come round one to one to show us how to do it.” (Jim, 65, Blackburn)*

*“Everybody wants to know something different, he tells you and you forget, but we really enjoy it. When I started, I didn’t even know how to turn it [the tablet] on but I’m using WhatsApp now.” (Kathy, 84, Leeds)*

*“When there’s a group of you, you all want to learn different things, so I think it’s better to have a one-to-one when you’re learning technology. They’re very good but they can’t be with everyone at the same time.” (Eileen, 90, Blackburn with Darwen)*

*“I got enough out of it as I had no idea about the phone but obviously you have to give others a chance to find out what they want to know. It’s not like having someone sat next to you saying ‘this is what you do’, you have five or ten minutes then someone else has a turn.” (Jennifer, 72, Leeds)*

The flexibility of One Digital is also considered to be a strength. People are able to attend when they feel able to and wish to, and there is no charge (one person mentioned a nominal cost which they were happy to pay). The informal path of learning appears to suit many older people who are generally happy for sessions to evolve according to the interests and queries which attendees present, whilst promoting learning of key topics at the same time.

Whilst as outlined in the profile section, those interviewed were mobile and as such travelling to a central venue to attend learning was not a barrier. For those living in sheltered accommodation the learning being brought to them was a bonus, it is doubtful whether these participants would have travelled further afield or made any enquiries to seek digital learning had the opportunity to take part in learning where they already lived not presented itself.

*“Because it was brought to me, it was made easier and more comfortable, the fact that you don’t have to think “oh I’ve got to get on the bus or get in the car”... it was here, they came to us and I think that made it far better.” (Carole, 82, Herefordshire & Worcestershire)*

There were mixed opinions as to whether it was important that the learning was facilitated by Age UK. For some, the familiarity and trust in the Age UK brand was reassuring, indeed some would not have learnt about the opportunity for digital learning without entering their local Age UK office. Some would have happily attended digital training elsewhere, for example a local library, although the importance of having an empathetic tutor was emphasised and for some, the familiarity of Age UK premises was important in helping them to feel comfortable.

*“[I feel] a lot more relaxed, you’re more inclined to learn when you’re relaxed.” (Rosemary, 71, Leeds)*

## 4.4 Impact of Digital Learning

The impact of attending One Digital learning has been wide-ranging for individuals. Skills and knowledge have been developed and there is evidence of wider impact in terms of social impact - there is evidence of people feeling less isolated and more socially connected as a result of their involvement.

*“It’s a really big help and we’ve made lots of friends.” (Kathy, 84, Leeds)*

*“I wouldn’t say I’m isolated but other than [volunteering role] I don’t meet too many people, I suppose I spend most of my time alone so it’s nice to get out and interact. I enjoyed the interaction.” (Jim, 65, Blackburn with Darwen)*

Taking part in learning has often resulted in increased confidence when using technology. Most would admit that their confidence is still not overly high, but nevertheless there has often been a stark change in how people feel about using technology when compared to their starting points.

*“I feel more confident really, if somebody says something, I have a rough idea of what they’re talking about.” (Kathy, 84, Leeds)*

*“I’m much more positive about it, I still can’t say I love it but I feel more receptive to learning new things.” (Rosemary, 71, Leeds)*

The learning has often also changed how people are using technology, with people using more functions and apps on their devices, both for sourcing information and for staying connected with others. Many people had learnt how to use WhatsApp through their learning and other forms of social media. Learning how to share photos and use calendar functions were also repeatedly mentioned. Whilst people saw value in using such functions to keep in touch anyway, people who were now in quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic were clear about how important this learning would be in the near future. Members of the Leeds group were continuing to stay in touch via a WhatsApp group. This group included a Champion who had offered to continue supporting people if they had technology queries during this difficult time.

*“What I really wanted to know was how to send photographs, but it really helped me in a lot of other ways, how to send WhatsApp messages [son had installed this app for her]. It was also good to meet people on the course.” (Julia, 85, Leeds)*

*“Well, it’s certainly made communication easier, instead of just texting family I can show them what I’m doing by video or by WhatsApp.” (Jim, 65, Blackburn with Darwen)*

*“I am still in touch with people on the course, especially now when we are isolated, we know each other well, it has been helpful that way as well, I’m so grateful we have something like WhatsApp to get in touch with each other, we would be a lot more lonely without it.” (Kathy, 84, Leeds)*

*“It’s perhaps become more important for us all to be on this sort of technology now, to have learnt something. Really it’s an absolute godsend now that we’re all isolated, most of us are widowed people or on their own, and to be able to communicate with one another in WhatsApp and things like that is absolutely wonderful.” (Rosemary, 71, Leeds)*

Whilst the impact is positive, there appears to be a limit for many people in what purposes they are willing to use technology for. Few were open to online shopping or banking due to a fear of being hacked, but also due to some people feeling it simply wasn’t a necessity for them. In the

context of the current pandemic however, there are positive signs that in some cases, the confidence that they have built up in using technology thus far means they are perhaps more open to wider use of technology for such purposes if there is a need in the future.

*“[The support from One Digital] has had a big impact, especially since people my age have been told to stay in. Also, my granddaughter has told me how to shop online which will be a big help won’t it?” (Julia, 85, Leeds)*

## 4.5 Sustained Learning

### 4.5.1 Motivators for Continuing Learning

It is positive to note that a majority of those interviewed had continued their learning journey, or hoped to resume learning (in some format) in the future. Formal learning through a tutor (even if delivered informally) wasn't for everyone and a small number of people planned to continue their learning independently at home, with support of family and friends as required. Some were not keen on the group format whereby everyone wanted to know different things and it could be challenging for volunteers to meet everyone's needs/answer everyone's questions. Some had been on courses before in a classroom setting and just had a preference for learning in this way. Generally, these people had entered digital learning with either no particular learning goals or clear goals and didn't look beyond these.

A motivating factor for continuing to learn was that people were regularly using their devices and as such they would often encounter difficulties or things they would welcome learning about. It is these ad hoc everyday queries that would often mean there is a reason to attend sessions regularly. In some cases, interests had been piqued via the learning (e.g. genealogy) and people simply wanted to maximise what they could use their devices for, improve their skills, and troubleshoot problems. Whilst people could often tap into support from family or friends, the way Champions conveyed information was important for their learning.

*"I'm just trying to put into practice [what I've learnt] because [Champion] said if I don't put it into practice I'll forget it, and it's given me the incentive to spur me on to do other things as well. I might even get myself a laptop and do more."* (Jim, 65, Blackburn with Darwen)

Those interviewed in West Yorkshire were all attending the same weekly session and had been for a number of months. The social side of these sessions appears to be a key factor in motivating continued attendance and learning. Whilst these people found it difficult to recall the range of skills and knowledge gained over the months, all were very animated about the impact and importance to them of the friendships formed within the group. This camaraderie influenced people to attend each week.

*"I think we've thoroughly enjoyed one another's company, we're able to laugh about it, we're laughing about our inadequacies which is good because we don't feel silly, we don't feel intimidated by the group at all. We've become good pals and because of that, we're happy to say 'oh god I don't know what I'm doing here do you?' and [Champion] is obviously helping us all the time. What's motivated us? it's a real supportive group."* (Rosemary, 71, Leeds)

*"Well, I met some new people, made friends, we have a good laugh. We even go out socially (...) we went out at Christmas and we have started going out for a lunch after we've been to the class. We try and make it a regular thing to go out for a meal."* (Dawn, 69, Leeds)

#### 4.5.2 Reasons for not Continuing Learning

As mentioned above, most people were interested in continuing their learning even if independently, although this simply hadn't been possible for everyone. In some cases, illness and other life events had meant people had not been able to pursue further learning between evaluation interviews. Some felt that their current skill levels were adequate for how they planned to use technology and a small number of people mentioned they were unlikely to develop skills much further due to their age.

*"I fully intended to go back every week although I don't think it's really necessary to go back every week, you can pick up things quickly. It would be handy to know how to shop online, I never got round to that."* (Julia, 85, Leeds)

*"I would say that at this point in time I'm comfortable with what I'm doing."* (Carole, 82, Herefordshire & Worcestershire)

One person interviewed at follow-up was not interested or planning to continue their digital learning journey. This was because their identified learning needs had been fully met through the learning (attending a small number of drop-in sessions) they had attended. This person was clear about what they would and wouldn't use technology for, and did not wish to expand their knowledge further.

*"The things I do now are no real different...the questions I asked which I just wanted confirmation on ...how can I put it..i didn't want to fill my head with a lot of knowledge that I probably wasn't going to use. I wanted to be clear what I knew and that I was doing the correct things which helped a lot."* (Carole, 82, Hereford & Worcestershire)

In one case, someone was somewhat interested in continuing their learning (albeit with no particular learning goals) although they had not heard anything about the Champions returning to the sheltered accommodation since they last attended in the autumn time. They had expected they would resume after Christmas, therefore they didn't know why this had not happened. This raises the question of whether people could be kept better informed about likely support to continue One Digital provision.

One further person did not find the group-session they were attending useful in meeting their individual learning needs, therefore decided to not continue their learning.

*"I felt like I needed more individual support, when there is a few people you don't get time to ask the questions you want or time for them to go through it with you."* (Jennifer, 72, Leeds)

Further comments made by this person (and some of their fellow session attendees) suggest that there were perhaps not enough digital champions (volunteers) available locally to provide one to one support as an alternative. It is not known whether this was the actual case or not.

Although some participants had decided not to return to One Digital, some had continued to learn and develop their skills with the support of family members.

## 4.6 Improvements

It is positive to note that those interviewed were satisfied with their experiences and found it difficult to think of areas for improvement. They considered that the main thing Age UK could do to further support older people with digital learning is to more widely advertise the opportunities available. This was set in the context of many people stumbling across the opportunity to learn by chance.

Other suggestions included helping to support older people to consolidate their learning better by providing handouts/notebooks/perhaps exercises to practise between sessions to encourage continued learning – ‘forgetting’ information between sessions was a concern for several participants. Another suggestion was to introduce more ‘themed’ sessions where topics are focussed on in more detail, such as internet safety.

Whilst most people attending group sessions found enough opportunity to ask individual questions, this wasn’t always the case, through no fault of the Champions involved. It was therefore questioned how individual needs and interests could best be met – for some this might be purely through one-to-one learning, for others it could be allocated individual time with a Champion within a session (or opportunity for follow-up questions after or between sessions). This is important for motivation and maximising what people take away from the learning.

*“As you can imagine with older people, they all have their individual problems they wanted sorting out, some of them are hard of hearing, in the end they split us up which was very convenient – they took people and sorted out their individual problems on a one-to-one.” (William, 83, Herefordshire & Worcestershire)*

In a similar vein it was also suggested that it is important for learners to be able to progress their learning, that there could be more consideration of different competency levels amongst learners within sessions.

*“I think these courses are nearly always beginners. So when you’ve sort of learnt how to switch it on and you know to do this and that, so I’m not going to go to a beginners’ class again. They don’t think to have the intermediate where you can sort of boost your knowledge up a bit. It always seems to be for beginners. This is where I think they’ve fallen down, but that’s just my opinion.” (Joanna, 84, Blackburn with Darwen)*

Some also wondered whether more could be made of the social element of sessions, in terms of drawing interest from people, facilitating social connections amongst attendees, and in turn sustaining continued learning. Whether Champions could suggest tea/cake or lunch after sessions was mooted (as often happens for the Leeds group which attendees instigated themselves).

## 5. Conclusions

The evaluation has identified how valued One Digital learning has been for individuals supported through Age UK. The fact that few individuals could cite any areas for improvement is testament to a programme of learning that has met most people's needs.

In some cases, One Digital has exceeded needs beyond learning, not only by having a positive impact in terms of digital skill competency but for some (particularly the cohort of Leeds attendees), there have clearly been social benefits to participation which have in turn encouraged continued attendance and learning. It is clear that the learning and friendships formed are going to be important in upcoming months when older people are physically isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Older people that have been supported with digital learning can now face this unprecedented period differently to how they may have done a year ago – they can be digitally connected to one another, and their family and friends, and are more comfortable with the skills needed to do so.

One Digital has delivered a person-centred approach to digital learning amongst older people, tapping into interests and individual goals as a basis for this learning amongst a group without recent experience of learning, and with low levels of confidence around technology. The Champions have tried to be as responsive and learner-led as possible in identifying topics. However, some participants were concerned that in group sessions, it could be difficult for everyone to be supported with their different requirements and this did dissuade some individuals from continuing to attend the sessions, particularly those with prior experience of conventional 'lesson' formats whereby the group focusses on the same topic.

It is evident that a good rapport and relationship with a preferably consistent number of Digital Champions has been important in encouraging continued learning. Keeping learning informal, inviting questions, listening, and minimising the use of jargon have been key to the success of digital learning and people's experiences of it. Attending the sessions in a familiar 'Age UK' location has also been important for some individuals.

It was apparent that some Champions were actively encouraging participants to put their skills into use outside of the sessions with a clear message of 'use it or lose it'. However, despite best intentions, some individuals found it difficult to remember what they had learnt in a session and could find themselves revisiting tasks a number of times.

In terms of enabling continued learning, it is important to note that some individuals had clear limits on how far they wanted to take their learning, either due to specific barriers or just a wanting to learn about one specific topic. Several interviewees noted that they were happy to learn new skills in terms of social media or communication tools but drew a firm line when it came to online banking or shopping. Learning about internet safety is clearly an important element of One Digital, however it may be useful to strengthen this element and dedicate a number of sessions specifically to this so that participants have a better chance of overcoming their fears.

It is noted that all of those interviewed as part of this evaluation already owned some form of gadget prior to taking part in digital learning. Whether this reflects the wider population of those attending One Digital learning is unclear. It perhaps raises the question of how those without gadgets can be encouraged and supported to be involved in digital learning, particularly given these individuals are likely to be digitally excluded in the truest sense. Many of those interviewed as part of the evaluation had some basic awareness (despite lacking confidence) of how to use gadgets to some extent through family/friend support or through self-initiated learning. Indeed several people discussed whether there needed to be both wider advertising of opportunities to

learn and develop digital skills and some also raised the question of whether there could be opportunities for older people to try different devices and possibly borrow these for a period to inform any decisions on purchasing items for themselves.

## 6. Recommendations

- Whenever possible, models of digital learning should provide different opportunities to learn given different motivating factors for embracing learning and specific learning needs and preferred learning styles. The availability of group sessions **and** one-to-one learning opportunities are considered important.
- There is indication some settings for learning have not been ideal due to learning taking place within Age UK office space which is open to people walking in with queries, rather than taking place in a separate room. Whilst this hasn't been a significant issue for participants (the venue itself is itself accessible to people and familiar to most), it raises the question of whether there could be further efforts to offer training within partner offices going forward. Of course, it is hard to say whether uptake would change for the better or worse if this was the case.
- Consider dedicating more time to tackling barriers to accessing online services. Concerns about internet safety seem to be hard to overcome and more time spent on this may enable participants to overcome their fears.
- It seems there has been potential to expand the size of group sessions but that this has perhaps not been possible due to a lack of Digital Champion availability. When groups are well-attended and people tell friends about it, interest is stirred – this could perhaps be better harnessed by increasing the offer.
- Consider what resources are available for learners in between sessions to act as a reminder of what was learnt and to help with retaining information.
- It has been useful for people to have access to follow-up support once formal learning ends. This enables people to check and consolidate their learning which is important in supporting individual digital use/self-supported learning. Whenever possible, people should be provided with information/contact information where people can access ad hoc support.
- Consider how the most digitally excluded can be supported with digital learning. Can opportunities be introduced for people to try/test and loan devices? Or could there be community initiatives for sharing old handsets/tablets with Age UK for this purpose?

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Interview 1 – Discussion Guide



#### Age UK – One Digital Evaluation Interview 1 Guide

My name is XXXX and I work for Qa Research and we have been asked by Age UK to evaluate their 'One Digital' programme which you have been involved in. As part of this we are hoping to speak to people at three different points in time to talk about their digital learning and continued learning (or not). *Recap if needed: information about how we will use the information can be found in the participation information sheet you should have been given already.*

As you know the interviews should take about half an hour depending on how much people have to say, you can stop the interview at any time if you wish. When we have finished all of the interviews we will be writing a report for Age UK which will contain quotes and anonymised case studies, but we won't use anybody's real name.

I would like to record the interview if that's ok, this is just so I don't have to make notes and for me to listen back to before we write the report, the recording will not be passed on to Age UK. Is that ok? The only time we would need to share information with someone else is in the unlikely event of someone we interview indicating they or someone else is at risk of significant harm; in that case we would be obliged to notify a safeguarding lead. We may touch on your health and wellbeing within the interview. You will receive £20 of high street vouchers to thank you for your time today. Can I confirm you are happy to take part on this basis? Y/N *(if no thank and close)*  
Do you have any questions before we begin?



## Section 1: Introductions

- 1.1 To begin with, as a bit of background can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- Age
  - Who they live with
  - Location – urban/rural
  - Job/former job/length of retirement
  - Health – how is this
- 1.2 What would a typical week be like for you?
- Social connections
  - Services accessed
  - Hobbies/interests
- 1.3 How often would you say you usually take part in some kind of learning?
- Try to establish if they frequently take up social/learning opportunities or if this a one-off

## Section 2: 'Before' feelings & knowledge

- 2.1 So, we'll talk about the learning you've done through Age UK shortly. It would be good if you can tell me a bit about your experience with computers, technology and the internet prior to starting this learning?

Areas to probe:

- Do they/did they use technology in their work?
  - Experience of using devices (PC's; laptops; tablets; smart phones; digital assistants)
  - Experience of the internet (web browsing; email; social networking, Facebook, Twitter; online banking/payments/purchases etc.)
  - Experience of digital photographic, audio, video and games technologies
  - If non-users themselves had they seen friends/family use/talk about these/help them with these?
- 2.2 And before you started this learning how would you describe your feelings towards technology? *What made you feel this way?*

## Section 3: Triggers

- 3.1 Can you tell me a little bit about how you found out about the opportunity to access this support?
- 3.2 What were your reasons for wanting to access this support?
- Did they have particular learning goals?
  - How did they hope/expect this learning to impact on their life?
  - Were there any alternative routes to learning they'd come across?

- 3.3 Did you have any reservations or worries when thinking about signing up?
- What helped overcome these?

## Section 4: Digital Learning

- 4.1 Could you now tell me a little bit about the learning you undertook through Age UK?
- Format (information session/training course/one to one support? Fixed times? Drop-in?)
  - Location
  - Who (do they know if the 'digital champion' is a volunteer or professional/their background?)
  - Frequency
  - Content – what did they learn – everything they hoped to? More? Less?
- 4.2 How did you find the session/learning/support?
- Probe for things they liked/enjoyed and anything they didn't like or could be improved
  - Has the pace of learning/information given been ok for them?
- 4.3 How did you feel after undertaking this learning?
- Inspired/motivated to learn more? Tease out contributing factors –personnel? Format? Group?
  - If not - why not?
- 4.4 Now you're a few weeks down the line – have these feelings changed at all?
- Do they still feel inspired or set things in motion to pursue further learning through Age UK or elsewhere? *What are their learning plans/goals? Do they have the equipment to continue learning?*
  - If not why not – competing priorities? Health? Opportunities to progress?
- 4.5 Overall how would you say the learning has made a difference to your life and use of technology?
- Tease out skills developed and attitude changes
  - Are they doing anything now that they weren't before? What wider impact is this having on them?
  - If none – or temporary shift – why is this? Barriers to continued progression.
  - Any indirect benefits of taking part – new friendships/opportunity to socialise?
- 4.6 Could anything have been done differently to:
- Support older people with digital learning?
  - Encourage and support people to continually develop these skills rather than attending a one-off/short course/few sessions?

## Section 5: Close

5.1 Is there anything you wanted to mention today that we haven't already covered?

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with me today. I would like to call you again in around three months' time if that's ok to see how things may have changed and developed for you? Even if you don't continue to develop your digital skills it would still be useful to speak to you. You would receive a further incentive of £20 of high street vouchers as a thank you for your time.

## 7.2 Interview 2 – Discussion Guide



### Age UK – One Digital Evaluation Interview 2 Guide

My name is XXXX and I work for Qa Research, you may remember I spoke to you about three months ago as part of an evaluation we're completing for Age UK of their 'One Digital' programme. You may recall that we are hoping to complete a second telephone interview with you to talk about any further digital learning you've completed since we last spoke. It doesn't matter if you have or haven't continued learning, Age UK are still keen for us to speak to people to talk about the reasons for this.

The interview would again take up to half an hour depending on how much you have to say. We would once again send you £20 of high street vouchers as a thank you for your time. When we have finished all of the interviews we will be writing a report for Age UK which will contain quotes and anonymised case studies, but we won't use anybody's real name. Are you happy to take part? *Recap if needed: information about how we will use the information can be found in the participation information sheet you should have been given already.*

I would like to record the interview if that's ok, this is just so I don't have to make notes and for me to listen back to before we write the report, the recording will not be passed on to Age UK. Is that ok? The only time we would need to share information with someone else is in the unlikely event of someone we interview indicating they or someone else is at risk of significant harm; in that case we would be obliged to notify a safeguarding lead. We may touch on your health and wellbeing within the interview. Can I confirm you are happy to take part on this basis? Y/N (*if no thank and close*)

Do you have any questions before we begin?



## Section 1: Introductions

- 1.1 Last time we spoke you were [recap basic information] – has anything changed in your circumstances since we last spoke?

*Prompt: particularly any changes to their health*

- 1.2 Last time we spoke [summarise what they mentioned about social connections/services/hobbies] has anything changed in terms of these in the past three months?

*Prompts:*

- *developed any new interests?*
- *Accessing anything new?*
- *Any further limitations on what they access/who they have contact with?*

- 1.3 How often would you say you usually take part in some kind of learning?

*Prompt: establish if this has changed since the last time we spoke to them.*

## Section 2: Change in feelings & knowledge

- 2.1 At the moment how do you feel about using computers, technology and the internet?

*Prompts:*

- *What words would they use to describe how they feel? Are they comfortable? Scared?*
- *What makes them feel this way?*

- 2.2 Would you say your feelings towards technology have changed since we last spoke?

*Prompts:*

- *how?*
- *Can they pinpoint reasons for any change/no change?*

- 2.3 Would you say your digital skills have developed since we last spoke?

*Prompts:*

- *if yes – what skills have you developed?*
- *Has how they use technology/particular devices changed?*
- *If no – why would you say this is? (Finite learning need which was met? No further learning? Other priorities?)*

- 2.4 Do you have experience of:
- Using different devices (PC's; laptops; tablets; smart phones; digital assistants)
  - Using the internet for different purposes (web browsing; email; social networking, Facebook, Twitter; online banking/payments/purchases etc.)
  - Using digital photographic, audio, video and games technologies

Prompts:

- *trying to explore if breadth of experience has changed.*
- *How often do they use technology for different purposes?*
- *Any barriers to using technology for the above?*

### Section 3: One Digital

- 3.1 Have you undertaken any further digital learning through Age UK since we last spoke?  
[was it a one-off session? Block of session?]

Prompts: *If yes:*

- *how long for – was it continual or a break in-between learning?*
- *What skills and knowledge have they developed further?*
- *Explore format of learning.*

Prompts: *If no:*

- *can you tell me more about why this is?*
- *Learning needs met already?*
- *Opportunity to develop further skills through Age UK?*
- *Were they aware of opportunities to learn further? Would more pro-active communication have made a difference?*

- 3.2 [For those that have continued learning] You've continued to develop your skills, can you tell me what made you want to carry on learning through Age UK?

Prompts:

- *Try to tease out trigger factors for continued learning.*
- *particular learning goals?*
- *Opportunity?*
- *Accessibility?*
- *Availability?*
- *Welcome format?*
- *Champion?*
- *Familiarity?*
- *Social aspect?*
- *Was contacted regarding opportunity?*
- *How important was it that this was offered through Age UK?*

3.3 [All] Overall what difference has the learning you've undertaken through Age UK made to your life and use of technology?

Prompts:

- Tease out skills developed and attitude changes
- Are they doing anything now that they weren't before?
- What wider impact is this having on them?
- Any indirect benefits of taking part – new friendships/opportunity to socialise?
- If none – or temporary shift – why was this? Barriers to continued progression

## Section 4: Wider Learning

4.1 Have you developed your digital skills further since we last spoke through:

- Support from another organisation?
- Support from family/friends?
- Independent learning?

Prompts:

- Has this been an option to them?
- What motivated them to develop their learning?
- Have they experienced any challenges in continued learning using this format?

4.2 Do you hope to continue to develop your digital skills further in the future?

Prompts:

- If not – why not? Try and establish barriers to continued learning
- If yes – how soon? What skills? What factors will shape whether this happens or not? Learning provider or self?

## Section 5: Supporting Digital Skill Development

5.1 Could anything have been done differently to:

- Support older people with digital learning?
- Encourage and support people to continually develop these skills rather than attending a one-off/short course/few sessions? What would inspire more people to develop their digital skills further?

## Section 6: Close

6.1 Is there anything you wanted to mention today that we haven't already covered?

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with me today. The interviews will help Age UK to consider how it supports older people with developing digital skills in the future. You will receive a further incentive of £20 of high street vouchers as a thank you for your time.

**Take details for administering the incentive, fill in this sheet and share with finance:** [..\Recruitment>ContactData Incentive admin template V1.xlsx](#).

**Thank you so much for contributing to what will be a useful piece of research for Age UK.**