



## Digital Lifeline Fund report March 2022

### Our aim



To support 5,000 adults with learning disabilities in England to have their own tablet and get online



To use digital inclusion to help people with learning disabilities be more connected and less lonely during Covid



### What we gave people

- Lenovo M10 tablet
- 24GB of data
- Case and stylus
- Support to use the tablet

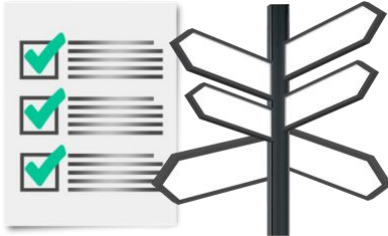
We gave these to people for free, as a gift



We also gave people access to other resources, including



- An assessment by AbilityNet
- Other special equipment to help people use their tablet



## Support for partners

- Access to free support and resources



- Money for time spent doing set-up and support

## What Digital Lifeline achieved



- We supported **5,500** people in under 4 months



- We worked with **146** community partners



- We gave out more than **2000** pieces of extra equipment for special needs

## The impact of Covid and the need for Digital Lifeline



People with learning disabilities are more likely to find it hard to get online than people without learning disabilities



During **Covid**, digital barriers made it hard for many people with learning disabilities to



- Connect with others



- Access support



- Access health services



This increased social isolation and feelings of loneliness

Digital Lifeline was an emergency response to an urgent problem

## Reducing barriers



The things that most often stopped people from using the internet at home were



- Having a disability or health condition



- Not being able to afford a device

**Digital Lifeline** helped with this by giving people



- A tablet



- Access to the internet



- Access to specialist support

## Good digital support means...



- A long term, affordable way to get online
- A free device
- Support from families and carers
- 1 to 1 person centred support in early stages of digital learning
- Ongoing support to repeat and build learning
- Using things like hobbies or interests as a way in
- Using specialist support and equipment
- Encouraging people to take ownership of their learning
- Support to help people to stay safe online
- Including families, carers and support workers in digital skills training



## How people use their devices



Most people were using their tablet regularly

Over half were using it at least once a day

People were mainly using their tablet for



- **Connection** - video calls and social media



- **Hobbies and interests** - online activities



- **Keeping active** - online classes



- **Learning** - digital skills and searching for information

## Digital inclusion



Digital Lifeline has given people with learning disabilities and their support networks



- Better digital access



- Better digital skills



- More motivation and confidence to get online, and do more things online



Community partners can now use the tablets alongside face-to-face support

## Other ways Digital Lifeline helped



Digital Lifeline has also helped people with learning disabilities



- To feel less lonely



- To improve their health and wellbeing



- To feel more independent and more able to take part in society



## What we think should happen



- Make digital inclusion a government priority



- Promote digital inclusion for disabled people and people with learning disabilities



- Support community-based learning and make sure Digital Lifeline participants can continue to develop their skills



- Pay for digital inclusion programmes to support people with learning disabilities



- Support staff, families and carers to be confident in helping people to explore all the useful and fun things we can do on the internet



- Have easy read information about what digital support there is for people



- Raise awareness of free and specialist support available for people with learning disabilities

## What worked well



- Working together in a joined-up way



- Partnering with community and specialist providers



- **Good Things Foundation** made sure public money was well spent



- Partners liked that the new tablets were gifts



- Partners welcomed the grant of £100 per person towards cost of support

## What needs to change



- **24GB** of data not enough for everyone
- Have virtual workshops for setting up devices
- More time to set up devices before giving them out
- More time to follow up with participants
- Improve online resources for people with learning disabilities
- Bigger grants to cover extra time needed to support people with complex needs



**A big thank you to our community partners and to all our staff and volunteers who have made Digital Lifeline such a success!**



To find out more, email [research@goodthingsfoundation.org](mailto:research@goodthingsfoundation.org)

