

Powering Up: progress and learning report

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Chapter 1

Executive Summary

In June 2020, one year on from the launch of Power Up and its underpinning research, this interim learning report recognises the achievements of our fifteen grantee partners to date. With the financial support of the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation, and delivered by Good Things Foundation in England and Scotland, the programme aims to break new ground, using digital to address economic and social inequality and creating new practice that could inform policy and programme design across all sectors.

Delivered in areas of high deprivation in Bournemouth, East London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Power Up focuses on embedding digital confidence, motivation and skills within the jobs and skills, financial health and small business support of fifteen grantee partners. This report summarises the progress made seven months into the programme, and describes the impact of Covid-19 on grantees and the communities they support. The report has been compiled by Good Things Foundation and does not reflect the views of J.P. Morgan.

Key Learnings

- Digital confidence, motivation and skills are being embedded in different ways. Grantee partners are embedding digital within specific services, within individual support journeys, and across their entire organisations, and feedback is reinforcing that embedding digital requires a new way of thinking.
- Flexibility has been key to successful delivery. Giving grantee partners the freedom to adapt delivery to their own circumstances has helped to ensure projects are engaging and relevant for beneficiaries. Flexibility has been especially important since the beginning of Covid-19 lockdown, allowing grantee partners to respond rapidly to the crisis in ways that reflect local needs.
- Peer support is critically important for beneficiary retention and positive outcomes. Like embedding, peer support can take different forms. Volunteer digital champion tutors are being recruited from the same communities as the people they're supporting, and the opportunity to volunteer also provides a progression pathway for Power Up beneficiaries. Grantee partners have also worked to create a sense of community among beneficiaries, leading to new friendships and mutual support.
- Power Up provides a way for a wide range of local stakeholders to work in partnership. Through new as well as existing partnerships, grantee partners are adding value to their projects by improving referral pathways, increasing collaboration, and providing better integrated support journeys.

Key Impacts

- 556 beneficiaries have been engaged through the programme so far, with 213 completing impact surveys reporting positive outcomes across the three thematic pillars of jobs and skills, financial health, and small business support.
- 78% of beneficiaries are from households with an annual income below £24,000, with 35% from households earning less than £14,500; and 43% of beneficiaries are unemployed and looking for work.
- 76 volunteers are supporting grantee partner delivery, a range of new resources have been produced, and 21 beneficiary case studies have been generated.
- New partnerships have been forged which strengthen provision across local areas.
- Grantee partners have responded positively to the seven recommendations made in the research published when Power Up was launched.
- Grantee partners have responded to the Covid-19 crisis with innovation and creativity, maintaining beneficiary contact and finding new ways to deliver services.





Chapter 2

Introduction

When Power Up was launched in June 2019, it also launched a pioneering new approach to funding social impact, embedding digital confidence, motivation and skills within community pathways of support end-to-end. With the financial support of the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation, enabling a £1.5 million grant investment in local projects, and delivered by Good Things Foundation in England and Scotland, the programme aimed to break new ground, using digital to address economic and social inequality and creating best practice that could inform policy and programme design across all sectors.

Underpinned by dedicated research into the demand for Essential Digital Skills, and the interaction between a lack of these skills and other forms of economic and social exclusion, the programme concept has three core aims:

Power Up People - by building digital confidence, so that people are motivated to learn and keep on learning, and apply digital skills in their lives, businesses and at work.

Power Up Places - by connecting local organisations, service providers and others to provide individuals, businesses and communities with the joined up support they need to thrive.

Power Up Provision - by improving what is already offered by embedding digital into existing programmes so that digital skills support is not siloed or 'bolted on', drawing on what is already known about effective support, to improve tangible outcomes for individuals.

Guided by these aims, Power Up operates across three thematic pillars: jobs and skills, financial health, and small business support; reflecting both the scale and depth of need in these areas and the critical contribution of digital skills. The programme focuses on engaging and supporting individuals and businesses facing barriers to economic and social inclusion, including low income, unemployment, and business sustainability. A Theory of Change was developed for each thematic pillar, proposing relevant outputs and outcomes, and reviewed by a panel of national experts.

Power Up began in November 2019 following a process of application, assessment and grant award. Delivered in **Bournemouth, East London, Edinburgh** and **Glasgow**, it focuses on areas of high deprivation, working with 15 grantee partners to drive positive economic and social change for individuals and their communities.



The research carried out for Power Up also made seven recommendations, both as an input to national policymaking and to inform Power Up project design. By encouraging and guiding grantee partners to embed digital confidence, motivation and skills flexibly within their project design, Good Things Foundation has helped ensure that the seven recommendations have been followed, aligning project delivery to the overall objectives of the programme.

Seven Power Up Recommendations

1. Grantee partners are finding diverse ways to **embed digital skills and confidence building** within other forms of support, and this has involved even more innovation since the beginning of Covid-19 lockdown.
2. Projects are **promoting the benefits of the internet**, both internally and through partners, helping to engage people on low incomes and those seeking work, and a range of microbusinesses.
3. All provision is **free for beneficiaries**, so that people on low incomes are not excluded from the help they need.
4. Provision is **holistic, flexible and responds to the needs of socially excluded people**, helping them to remain engaged despite multiple barriers and complex lives.
5. Projects are **harnessing the power of peers** to build skills and motivation, and to create a sense of community among beneficiaries.
6. Grantee partners have **engaged with, and as, employers to support employment pathways** for people in or entering work.
7. The projects are providing opportunities to **catalyse collaboration locally**, building strategic partnerships to add value to and increase the reach of provision.

Since Power Up began, the Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally shifted the foundations of economic and social life in England and Scotland, as elsewhere in the world. It has become the new context for the programme, and Good Things Foundation and the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation are exploring the implications for design, approach and impact realisation going forward. Power Up grantees have risen to the challenge, responding to the crisis with innovation and creativity and finding ways to maintain relationships with both their beneficiaries and with partners, and continue to have impact. Some grantee partners have benefitted from emergency support put in place to respond to the new challenges of lockdown, including Connecting Scotland, mobilised by the Scottish Government and SCVO, and DevicesDotNow, mobilised by FutureDotNow and Good Things Foundation.

This report presents pen portraits of each grantee project, describing progress made to date; and examines the seven original Power Up recommendations, and how grantees have reflected these in their work. The report concludes with our future considerations.



Chapter 3

Grantee Pen Portraits

Ansbury Guidance

Ansbury Guidance (Bournemouth) is leading Bourne Digital, a consortium-based programme embedding digital within employment pathways across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. They have so far established a strong network of wider referral partners, delivered staff training, and met their ambition to create digital personal development plans and digital skills assessment tools, as well as collating wellbeing and job search resources to support integrated provision. Partners include BCHA, Help and Care, Wiseability, Pramalife, Bournemouth Libraries, Jobcentre Plus (for referrals), Dorset Community Action (for self-employment courses) and Routes to Inclusion (for digital champion volunteers). The partners have created an online Personal Development Plan and Skills Assessment tool to identify the clients most in need of online support. As part of their commitment to promoting the benefits of the internet they have created an online safety page with up-to-date links on scams and phishing. Covid-19 has led to the disruption of referral pathways, but also an increase in requests for support from a wider geographic area.

Castlemilk Law & Money Advice Centre

Castlemilk Law & Money Advice Centre (Glasgow) proposed creating a 'Digital Safety Net' project, to be delivered one-to-one as part of their legal support services. A Digital Adviser and part-time Support and Training Worker aimed to ensure that claimants were supported through the steps required to make and manage an online claim for Universal Credit, as the first step on a journey towards further development of digital skills for employment and financial health. Staff were undertaking digital set up 'for' clients for Universal Credit, and digital was positioned as a 'bolt on' rather than an embedded part of beneficiary support. Good Things Foundation has been working with Castlemilk in order to develop staff understanding of embedding digital and to develop a sustainable model of intervention. Subsequently an internal referral process for digital engagement is being developed. Advice is currently being offered by phone, and the Grant Manager continues to work closely with Castlemilk to help them develop the provision.



Community Renewal Trust

Community Renewal Trust (Edinburgh) is using Power Up to enhance their USE IT digital literacy programme, to improve job search and work readiness for jobseekers. The digital skills staff delivering the project are working closely with staff across the organisation, in particular employability caseworkers, and this integration has not only led to a better understanding across the organisation of the importance of digital skills for clients, but also to a significant increase in demand, which is creating further challenges. Alongside this Community Renewal Trust are encouraging digital learning and developing the confidence of their staff to cascade an enthusiasm for digital to clients. With face-to-face delivery halted since the beginning of lockdown, the Trust has developed a working plan to offer remote support to learners, caseworkers and staff, and is accessing support from DevicesDotNow and Connecting Scotland to procure devices for beneficiaries with no personal access to the internet.

East End Citizens' Advice Bureau

East End Citizens' Advice Bureau (East London) are using their Digital Money Coach project to embed digital into their debt advice and money management appointments. Currently a specialist debt advisor supports disadvantaged local residents on money management, debt and benefits advice to build their financial and digital confidence. Saving money has been found to be a great motivator to use digital. Digital skills are now being assessed using new tools as part of the debt appointment, which the advisor then uses to signpost appropriate information such as suitable online learning platforms or learning organisations. They also have created a directory of local digital skills provision in order to refer clients who need additional support. The Digital Money Coaches are an integral part of the project, but they are volunteers and retaining them can be challenging due to the length of the training programme, as many move on, enter employment, or leave for personal reasons. Covid-19 has also presented challenges in relation to remote working for volunteers due to confidentiality and access issues.



Family Fund

Family Fund (Glasgow and Edinburgh) is enhancing their digital skills provision for low income families with disabled children through Powering Up Families' Digital and Financial Health, by including a financial health module and online support resources. During a comprehensive delivery design phase, they have held focus groups with their established networks, gathered ideas to improve engagement, and developed a curriculum which reflects the specific financial health needs of the cohort. Alongside this they have established robust monitoring and measurement tools to track outcomes. With delivery due to begin in April, Covid-19 has delayed the rollout of group and one-to-one sessions in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and of home visit support for parents who can't attend sessions due to caring responsibilities. In the meantime they have been offering remote training and online resources including one-to-one video sessions. They are also capitalising on the change of focus in their 'Take a Break' grants scheme to enable families to access devices, and aim to engage with further families through this.

Generation

Generation (East London) is running practical, 12-week 'boot camps' for their AWS Re/Start East London project, for four cohorts of 25 young unemployed people, to develop their technical, behavioural skills and mindsets, and build their digital capability as Cloud Operations Engineers. Alongside this, an additional digital money management module has been incorporated into the jobs and skills course. Beneficiaries are also offered mentorship and pastoral support and there is a strong focus on pathways to employment through partnerships with corporate employers. Employers have promoted the benefits of careers in tech and have recruited graduates from the programme. However, a key challenge for Generation is the impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on the jobs market, they are planning to use information from employers to determine the best timing of future cohorts. Meanwhile, mentors have successfully moved to a remote model, and beneficiaries have been loaned devices to access a digital learning platform. The Power Up project has benefitted from match funding from the European Social Fund via the Greater London Authority, which has enabled improved delivery and resources.



Glasgow Life

Glasgow Life (Glasgow) is the only grantee focusing solely on supporting small businesses, via their Making Digital Work for Micro-business project. Through their Glasgow Business and IP Centre, they are targeting microbusinesses in deprived areas in order to raise awareness of local and online opportunities to develop business-specific digital skills, identify barriers to adoption, and match support to increase the use of digital. The project team have developed partnerships, including a new strategic partnership with Digital Strategy Glasgow, which has helped the project team to promote Power Up more widely and understand what other support is available locally. The Business and IP Centre delivery programme has been extended to include webinars on topics including intellectual property, resilience and winning new business during lockdown. An audit has been carried out of the digital technology and skills support landscape in Glasgow, informing the creation of a new online skills directory and supporting guides, and new Digital Meet Ups are facilitating peer learning. Work has commenced on upskilling community library staff to act as 'connectors' with their local business communities, and business and marketing experts are providing a programme of pro bono support through the 'Experts in Residence' initiative. Since lockdown the focus has been on supporting microbusinesses online by connecting them with courses featured in the directory, through webinars delivered by partners, and via email support.

One Parent Families Scotland

One Parent Families Scotland (Edinburgh) is delivering DigiParent, which is integrating digital into employability programme content and expanding the programme to include single parents currently in low paid work. A skilled Employability and Digital Skills officer has been recruited, and a survey of learning and equipment needs carried out with the target audience. This informed new digital skills content in the 'Preparing for the Future' employability course, building up basic digital and online competence, enhancing digital skills, introducing resources for online job searching, and promoting the potential of the internet to save single parents time and money. A strong emphasis is placed on peer support and creating a sense of community among beneficiaries. A weekly 'digital meet up' is now being held combining employability and digital skills with emotional support and a number of devices have also been loaned, allowing beneficiaries to remain connected and learning. Power Up has also enabled One Parent Families Scotland to leverage further support from the Scottish Government for devices.



Peter Bedford Housing Association

Peter Bedford Housing Association (East London) is delivering Power Up provision through their Digital Champions project. These volunteers undertake training in a range of topics including the use of IT in employment-related activities and money mentoring, incorporating digital literacy to support vulnerable adults to become more in control of their own money matters. The Digital Champions provide flexible 1:1 support to their peers in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney. During the implementation phase they have focused on networking and relationship management, and their partnership work has included joining the Supported Employment Network in Hackney and working with other charities to develop pathways to employment. This groundwork has helped to recruit both beneficiaries and Digital Champions. They have also redeveloped screening tools to identify beneficiary needs, and created and implemented outreach, marketing and communication plans. To strengthen local relations the team have also undertaken visits and held discussions with Crisis, Shelter, Scope, Mind and local authority supported employment teams.

Poplar HARCA

Poplar HARCA (East London) is enhancing their Digital Champions Network through their Digital Skills for Work project, targeting unemployed or low-paid adults, particularly women who have been out of work for some time; older workers who have not always had access to digital technology; and people with English as a second language. Through the additional resources Power Up provided, they have been able to allocate dedicated time into planning and structuring delivery. They have developed a new digital curriculum covering three levels of knowledge and skills, with pathways to accredited ICT qualifications. The Power Up project enabled them to look at how they embedded digital skills more systematically and consistently in all services. The project has been widely promoted internally to staff and volunteers, as well as externally in East London, with other teams and local housing associations aware of the offer and referral pathways. They adapted their Power Up delivery by piloting a tablet loan scheme to help digitally excluded people remain connected during lockdown, which has triggered a re-opening of discussions between their Communities and Neighbourhood Director, the heads of two local schools and the Borough Council, on how to get families in Poplar online. Being a Power Up grantee has also put their work in the limelight and consequently enabled them to attract the attention of other providers of services and social interventions, enabling opportunities for collaboration with new organisations including Community Fibre, Barclays Foundation, Quids In, Ideas Stores (libraries) who are all working towards the same goals.



People Know How

People Know How (Edinburgh) has extended their Re:connect project, providing innovative digital befriending to low income working age adults who lack digital skills and confidence. The project also provides digital support to microbusinesses enabling them to gain skills and improve digital communications through skilled digital champions and befrienders. The project has boosted the skills of their staff and improved induction and training for the large number of volunteers who support delivery, which led to the integration of Re:connect with People Know How's existing Positive Transitions Service. Microbusiness owners have accessed digital skills and communications support, helping them to apply what they have learned. Power Up has encouraged the organisation to examine how digital inclusion can be promoted across every aspect of their work and has empowered them to take a structured approach to digital training for staff. Delivery of the Power Up project and the subsequent Covid-19 crisis have expedited the organisations' development of their role as an area connector, developing their devices refurbishment programme and acting as a hub to distribute over 400 devices from DeviceDotNow to partners across the city.

Prospect Community Housing

Prospect Community Housing (Edinburgh) is the lead partner in the Wester Hailes Connects partnership project involving WHALE Arts, SCOREscotland, CHAI and Open Heavens Church, which enhances existing crisis management support services, embedding digital to join up local provision and create progression routes that improve employability and financial capability for beneficiaries. Taking a flexible and holistic approach to beneficiaries' needs and aspirations, the project team has adapted delivery by expanding its provision of drop-ins to additional community venues, thereby engaging people who would not normally seek out more formal support. Wester Hailes Connects partners deepened collaboration on another local initiative, the Wester Hailes Local Place Plan, and as part of the Power Up project have proposed to jointly develop an online platform that creates links between community groups through an interactive online map. The Local Place Plan is a response to new Scottish government legislation around planning, that invites community led proposals for the use of local land that developers and other agencies need to take into account. They have started working with seconded staff from the Scottish Government, and with Napier University, and utilising existing links with Creative Informatics at Edinburgh University, as well as connecting with Media Education. As part of the Wester Hailes Together partnership, during the Covid-19 crisis the team was able quickly to help three smaller community groups access devices and engage with a digital workspace for planning and sharing information. They have also received ten tablets through the DevicesDotNow initiative.



Quaker Social Action

Quaker Social Action (East London) is delivering Getting, Spending, Saving, Giving in partnership with the Bromley by Bow Centre. The project team have designed a curriculum which embeds digital elements into existing financial wellbeing programmes. They have created impact measurement tools, and raised awareness of the project through new promotional materials and existing partnerships. These partnerships have enabled them to identify and prioritise those facing multiple barriers, such as poverty, social isolation and lack of English language skills, and have helped to adapt delivery to overcome these. The project is unique within the Power Up portfolio, in that it successfully embeds financial capability into digital skills provision rather than the other way around. Their iterative approach to delivery has enabled them to adapt the initial curriculum to meet the needs and priorities of learners, particularly supporting those with little or no digital skills. In addition they have also built a pathway with EDF Trust to access vouchers for online learning in digital or financial skills to enable participants to continue to apply their learning. Whilst they have previously worked with a range of partners, particularly to source venues for delivery, Power Up has enabled them to develop new links with WiseAge who support people over 50 with digital skills, employment issues and social isolation. Covid-19 has led to the team switching to digital delivery, and they are testing three remote models: one-to-one support, group sessions and group drop-ins.

The Salvation Army East of Scotland

The Salvation Army East of Scotland (Edinburgh) had planned to deliver Edinburgh Employment & Digital Support at a new Digital Hub in Edinburgh, embedding digital into their existing employment support. When established, the Hub will provide formal training opportunities as well as informal support, helping to address people's digital confidence and motivation, improve access, and increase skills. The project has established a partnership with The Digital College to offer service users the opportunity to undertake accredited online training to assist in upskilling and progression towards employment, and has established a partnership with London Institute of Banking and Finance to become an accredited centre for the delivery of awards in Financial Education. They have also opened up their internal learning forum to allow access to service users. A key aim is to increase community activity and interaction, by providing a welcoming and socially inclusive environment, but due to Covid-19 the launch of the Hub has been delayed. The use of the facility for food distribution during the crisis does however, create opportunities for wider digital engagement, as the equipment purchased with Power Up funding is being used to connect with those who are socially isolated.



Spire View Housing Association

Spire View Housing Association (Glasgow) are working in partnership with Access Technology Scotland to establish a Aspire Digital Space, a community hub offering access to a drop-in tech bar for informal advice on how to make the most of digital; weekly digital skills learning sessions and an online learning resource have been developed to encourage community connectivity and cohesion. The project is based at the Association's new community centre, to better engage with the wider community and create increased learning and volunteering opportunities. Four hours of digital sessions have been held each week since November 2019, with initial sessions aimed at internal staff, to raise awareness of the benefits of the project and the internet. The new Digital Engagement Officer, appointed in December 2019, has been active within the Hub and beyond; their work has included improving internal and external referral pathways, the co-design of learning opportunities with potential beneficiaries, and a mapping exercise of local services to avoid duplication. They have also secured SCVO Cyber Essentials funding and Invest in Communities funding for a Volunteer Coordinator to align with the Power Up project and the wider needs of the hub. In response to lockdown, Access Technology Scotland have established a 'lending library' of tablets for volunteers and beneficiaries, and prepared a mix of online content including digital learning, health advice, financial support and entertainment to keep people connected. In addition, ten learners have received a device through the DevicesDotNow initiative.



Chapter 4

How Grantees are Implementing the Power Up

Recommendations

'Powering Up: How more people, communities and businesses can participate in a digital economy', the research report underpinning the programme, made seven key recommendations, which went on to shape the design of the Power Up programme.

These recommendations have been interpreted in different ways by grantee partners through project design, setup and delivery. Some interpretations have greater potential for impact and sustainability than others, but overall the impact of treating clear, research-based recommendations as an input to the project design process has been positive; equally, it has been helpful to give grantee partners the flexibility to interpret the recommendations, as it has created space for innovation, and allowed them to respond to the unique needs of their communities.

1. Embed digital inclusion in all major initiatives for jobs and skills, financial inclusion, and small business support. Digital should be an integral component, not a 'bolt-on'.

'Embedding' has been interpreted by the grantees in different ways: as embedding digital in an individual's life, embedding a digital service into an organisation, embedding a sense of the importance of digital in the organisation, embedding a digital focus across delivery, embedding knowledge of digital among staff volunteers, having consistent referrals into a digital service from across the organisation and its partners, and embedding the use of digital tools in an organisation. Overall, this diversity is a strength: it has allowed grantee partners to embed digital in ways that 'go with the grain' of social interventions, and in the process maintain holistic, flexible and responsive delivery which acknowledges the complex lives of those facing social and economic exclusion and the multiple barriers they face.

In a notable variation on the theme, Quaker Social Action decided to embed financial capability within digital, rather than the other way around, since for their delivery model and beneficiaries digital was the more engaging element:




People don't like talking about money, and certainly not in a group...Embedding is about working out which is the more motivational purpose to learn something, and people were really into the idea of improving their digital skills. If money was the bigger motivation, we'd have embedded digital skills into financial wellbeing courses. But it's the other way round for this one: digital skills is what people want to learn, so it made perfect sense to flip it."


Flexibility has made this kind of useful interpretation possible and, where grantees have felt more challenged by the concept of 'embedding' digital, service design support, provided by Good Things Foundation has enabled grantees to develop new ways of offering comprehensive digital support as part of their model.

2. Promote the Benefits of the Internet / 4. Support Holistic Approaches to Digital Capability that understand the Wider Needs of Individuals

Grantee partners have typically approached these recommendations in parallel, as part of creating the mental space for beneficiaries, where they are motivated and able to engage with digital and develop their skills and confidence:

 *It was important to us that we retain the promotion of positive wellbeing as a service outcome for Re:connect. We see this as being essential to offering support in a holistic way. We have found that many of the barriers to participation (motivation, confidence, anxiety) can be overcome with a service which has positive wellbeing as a central focus".* **People Know How**

For some people, a lack of confidence and motivation around digital learning are part of general low confidence and motivation, to the extent that they may feel powerless to improve their situation:

 *A lot of the young Universal Credit claimants I work with - up to the age of about 30 - are third generation unemployed. You can't change their attitudes overnight. It's a slow process to get them motivated, to get them to aspire, because they've never known it, they've never been taught it. It takes a lot more work."* - **Salvation Army East of Scotland**

Grantee partners have reflected that motivation is about identifying the right 'hook', developing trust and responding to immediate needs. Grantee partners have taken a range of person-centred approaches to engage beneficiaries, through coffee mornings, provision for parents whilst children attend after schools clubs, generating supportive relationships, and creating peer groups on Whatsapp.


 *N is a single mother with 3 children. She has joined the Power Up programme as a participant because she needed to learn how to use Excel and create a cash-flow plan for her self-employed business venture as a hairstylist. She hasn't got the time to attend a college course due to her commitments as a single mother, but also doesn't feel confident enough due to her dyslexia. The 1:1 sessions are ideal for her as they offer flexibility so that if she has a school or doctor appointment to attend she can re-arrange her session with her Digital Champion without missing out on her learning."* - **Peter Bedford Housing Association**

As part of Wester Hailes Connects, the outreach workers encourage attendance through building relationships, and even accompanying participants to their first session to increase their confidence.

 *They have worked closely with local organisations to encourage referrals but have also held outreach taster sessions at local events and in public places such as the library and the shopping centre to create engagement opportunities".* - **Prospect Community Housing**

Taking into consideration the wider needs of the individual has also presented some challenges; several grantee partners have indicated the additional challenge of finding ways to support people where English is a second language. Community Renewal Trust have discovered that some clients use their computer club to overcome isolation, or learn, but may not apply this to looking for work. They are developing signposting to alternative provisions to help create learner journeys that help beneficiaries to progress.

Family Fund have adapted their learner journey in response to focus group consultation, to be even more flexible and to offer emotional support. They are prepared for engagement to be sporadic and are providing ways for families to re-enter or continue the project if they have disengaged for any reason.


 *It became apparent that many people might have the knowledge to complete tasks using digital skills but they lacked the emotional support to do so. With many parents/carers highlighting how they would put off using their digital skills to improve their financial health as they found it emotionally draining.” - Family Fund*

However, in terms of learning digital skills specifically, Covid-19 has provided an unexpected and very powerful incentive, with everything from shopping to home schooling under lockdown relying heavily on personal access to the internet. Although this has created crisis situations, which grantees have had to respond to quickly, there is also a feeling that the conversation around the value of digital skills has changed, perhaps for the long term:

 *In terms of digital engagement, Covid-19 has definitely made it easier for us, not just in terms of motivating people to get online, but it’s also shown how much of a problem digital poverty is, and it’s enabled us to restart a discussion with the Council on how we can help local people get connected.” - Poplar HARCA*

3. Provide free essential digital skills support for everyone who needs it, prioritising those who are constrained by poverty.

All of the support provided through Power Up is free for beneficiaries, which is helping to ensure engagement of those on the lowest incomes: 78% of beneficiaries to date have a household income below the UK average, and 35% have an income below £14,500. In addition, the issue of ‘digital poverty’ mentioned above – a lack of access to digital devices, frequently coupled with data poverty – has led to the mobilisation of new initiatives that get devices and connectivity to households without access to the internet. Four of the Power Up grantees have so far applied to DevicesDotNow on behalf of clients facing poverty and social isolation, with ten devices allocated to each grantee; in addition, People Know How are refurbishing and distributing more than 700 laptops donated through the initiative, and Castlemilk, Family Fund and Community Renewal Trust have applied to Connecting Scotland for funding towards additional devices. Digital poverty is a critical and additional individual need, and has been exposed starkly by the Covid-19 pandemic; we will continue to work closely with all Power Up grantees to understand and address this as far as is possible throughout the remainder of the programme.

 *The majority of clients access IT equipment either at their Jobcentre, learning centre or Library. Many only have mobile phones and some do not have Wi-Fi connection, only data. We are conscious of not asking clients to complete tasks which may impact on their data usage”. - Ansbury Guidance*

5. Harness the power of peers to build skills and motivation, whether through peer support in communities or local business networks.

Peer support is already proving invaluable across Power Up projects. As with embedding digital confidence, motivation and skills, it takes a number of different forms, depending on delivery models: peers may be formal volunteers from the same background, or former beneficiaries themselves – sometimes both – or peer support may be provided through a general sense of community that is carefully cultivated by grantee partners. Enhancing the digital confidence, motivation and skills of peer volunteers is not a core KPI for Power Up, but adds considerable value in supporting achievement of the programme's outcomes for beneficiaries, from improving employment prospects and financial health to reducing isolation and tackling loneliness; it also creates a sustainable resource in the local community.

Peer volunteers share many of the same personal circumstances as the people they support, and/or have already been supported by grantee partners to improve their skills and prospects; giving them an understanding of the needs of the people they are helping, and of the value of remaining engaged. Volunteering also provides an additional progression pathway, and an important source of self-efficacy:

“The volunteers are local people themselves. For the volunteers it gives them a sense of belonging and responsibility. It allows us to draw on their strengths. If the volunteers are local it makes getting people involved easier. They might be more likely to engage if it is a local person they are comfortable with, than they would be if it was a stranger or someone coming from the outside.” – **Spire View Housing**

“VIPs [volunteers, interns and placement students] who have completed Learn My Way modules [digital skills training] soon become advocates for the benefits, and actively encourage and support new recruits as they make their way through the training. Recognising that VIPs are beneficiaries themselves, it is also satisfying to see VIPs progress to supporting our referrals, and enthusing about the impact of digital on their own lives.” – **People Know How**

Outside of volunteering, peer support requires an established relationship about more than just digital skills, so peer-supported digital skills training needs to be embedded in other forms of support and interaction. However, the sense of community and motivation required for peers to solve problems together is something that it takes time and effort to establish; like volunteering, peer support is incredibly valuable, but does not represent a ‘free’ resource:

“The Digiparent project thus far has been an extension of our commitment to holistic support that ‘overlaps’ different areas of provision within OPFS, as well as harnessing the power of peer support. As an organisation, we understand both the resilience and the isolation that is often a feature in the lives of single parents. We respond to those qualities and challenges by bringing parents together in as many ways as possible. The Digiparent Project has further confirmed this approach by generating supportive relationships and pairing beneficiaries who happily supported each other's learning in class and have gone on to develop WhatsApp groups and socialize outside of the course.” – **One Parent Families Scotland**

Of particular interest is the approach taken by Generation, which positions beneficiaries at the end of their journey as exemplars and advocates for those at the beginning:

“People that go through this journey become completely immersed in it, and it puts the alumni of this programme in a perfect position to go back and describe to people in their community that might be digitally excluded... Past alumni of these programmes are the best spokespeople for these programmes.” - **Generation**

Grantee partners Poplar HARCA and Generation are also working together on a reciprocal arrangement, whereby graduates are becoming role models and initiating talks in the community, which in turn introduces a pipeline of new recruits to Generation. We have also been working with East End CAB, Poplar HARCA and Family Fund, to help them measure outcomes for volunteers.

6. Encourage Employers to Support Basic Digital Skills

This recommendation was made at national, strategic level: encouraging employers to develop their workforces is not the aim of any of the Power Up projects. Grantees have, however, engaged a relatively high proportion of people in full or part-time employment, and several are working with local employers to provide pathways into work for people at the end of their support journey. Despite the disruption to programme delivery caused by Covid-19, lockdown has helped to raise employers' awareness of the importance of digital skills for their workforces; grantees are themselves local employers, and the shift to home working has provided an opportunity to fast track digital transformation across their organisations:

“The Covid-19 outbreak has changed a lot of our original plans...It has allowed us to be creative in our approach and has provided a strong motivation to improve digital skills for beneficiaries and staff... the crisis has highlighted a need for staff training to professionalise the online delivery.” - **Quaker Social Action**

One Parent Families Scotland's Edinburgh Team has had to become more dependent on digital skills and communication. The worker funded through Power Up has been essential in helping team members learn and get up to speed with new digital platforms while also taking an important role in improving their Facebook output to support parents.

7. Use Digital Inclusion to Catalyse Collaboration Locally

All Power Up projects have established or strengthened local strategic partnerships since the beginning of delivery, in order to identify need, extend provision, or improve referrals into services. Grantee partners have been clear that, whether recommended or not, these kinds of partnerships are crucial for the success of any local programme, especially one which tries to reach individuals facing multiple barriers to engagement. But the staff resource created by Power Up funding, and encouragement from Good Things Foundation, has allowed grantees to develop further their partnership building. The Power Up concept also helps here, as digital inclusion has a broad appeal both within grantee organisations and to a wide range of local stakeholders, and the importance of digital is even more obvious following the Covid-19 crisis:

GG *Good, strong, communicative partnerships have been crucial to the success we have had so far, not just the formal project partnership but also the less formal partnerships at a local level and beyond including with Jobcentre Plus, tenancy support officers, Glasgow life, and local schools.” - Spire View Housing Association*

GG *Up to Speed has been very well received by our partners. We have had a lot of interest in the project with ten courses already planned over the next six months. By working with trusted partners who are established in their community, we have been able to identify and prioritise those in the most need.” - Quaker Social Action*

GG *Partnerships are not always cash: we receive opportunities to collaborate and in-kind support, which we take as long as they are valuable for beneficiaries...We can see the added value of Power Up, as an entry point for others to work with us.” - Poplar HARCA*

Glasgow Life have acted as area connector for small business through running the Power Up project. They have established links and fed into the EU project – Digital Programme Glasgow, which is spreading practice on a wider basis and raising the profile of the citywide offer. They have also contributed to the Regional Economic Strategy which covers all aspects of life in the region.

An exciting development has been the formation of a ‘collective’ by the five grantees operating in Edinburgh, allowing them to share ideas and improve local support infrastructure; a longer-term aspiration is to advocate for the creation of a citywide digital skills strategy for Edinburgh, similar to that which already exists in Glasgow:

GG *The Edinburgh Power Up collective was created in order to drive digital change in the Edinburgh area, share good practise between professionals and promote collaboration between organisations...We are already collaborating by cross-referring*

clients to other services, thus providing more holistic support to those who need it. In the future, the collective, through their shared experience, will be able to influence digital policy in Edinburgh and become leaders to bring change to the area.” - One Parent Families Scotland

Good Things Foundation have been working closely with the Edinburgh collective to increase the impact of their partnership, and also to understand better how to support grantee partners in Glasgow to replicate the model. We had begun to provide the group with service design support, and had planned and prepared for a face-to-face workshop in March, which was unfortunately postponed due to Covid-19.

Successful partnership engagement depends in large part on having the right person in the right role at another organisation, something which is outside of grantees’ control:

GG *We’ve been fortunate in having a contact at our local Jobcentre who works with people who are claiming disability benefits, and she’s really keen on partnership working.” - Prospect Community Housing*

GG *The third sector is good at communicating with itself, but it’s been much more difficult to get national programmes involved. Jobcentres and Fair Start Scotland should be beating a path to our door, but they can be hard to engage with.” - One Parent Families Scotland*

There may be a further role for Good Things Foundation, as part of the capacity building support provided through Power Up, to help grantee partners break down these barriers, establishing better referral pathways and raising awareness of provision among those who need it most. We will be following this up as part of the next stage of work with grantees, and partnership models will be explored at a forthcoming webinar with grantees.



Chapter 5

The Future of Power Up

Power Up is an ambitious programme with a clear vision, and over the last year we have worked hard to share that vision with our grantee partners. The flexibility of the Power Up model means that they have been able to respond to our original recommendations, but in ways that draw on the strengths of their organisations and the needs of their communities. We have given them space to talk to and work with each other, and the Collective of grantee partners operating in Edinburgh shows just how valuable this kind of collaboration can be.

The Covid-19 pandemic arrived just as Power Up delivery was gaining momentum. It has disproportionately affected deprived communities, and permanently changed the national conversation about digital skills and inclusion. Digital and data poverty has been revealed as an acute problem for many, and continuing restrictions on work, education and social life mean the ability to afford a device or internet connection will remain critically important for a long time to come. But as well as huge challenges, Covid-19 has also created opportunities: by temporarily relaxing funding requirements, we have not only allowed grantee partners to meet the immediate, urgent needs of their communities, but also to try new ways of working and delivering services, which they believe will lead to positive change.

Covid-19 has also made us think hard about what Power Up is trying to achieve. Different funders come and go, with different goals, but grantee partners need to provide a permanent, stable service to their communities; we need to understand how what has come before is influencing Power Up delivery, make sure we add value to what is being delivered, and think about the legacy for the grantee partner. We want there to be a permanent change in the way all kinds of organisations think about and deal with digital inclusion and digital transformation, but this cannot come at the cost of disruption to the support which is so desperately needed by

disadvantaged people and businesses, especially at this extraordinary time.

As well as ensuring that people, places and provision all benefit from Power Up, we need to recognise and respond to the conditions that made the programme necessary in the first place. Our goal should be not only to help people move out of poverty, but to tackle the underlying issues which create poverty in their communities: a lack of local investment, infrastructure, decent housing, and good employment opportunities. We need to think about the kind of partnerships, funding requirements and ways of working which will help to create better opportunities within those communities, so that skills are retained within communities and can contribute to the growth and resilience of the 'place'.

Above all, we need to keep listening. In Power Up we have tried our best to create a programme based on evidence and the voices of those it is intended to help, but we can always do more. Co-creation of services, and involving beneficiaries in decision making processes, are an increasingly important part of programme delivery, and there are lessons here we can learn from our grantee partners, as well as the wide range of other community organisations that Good Things Foundation works with across the UK.



Salvation Army East of Scotland

“Coming from a contracted background, where outcomes were very rigid, I didn’t want hard outcomes for any funding opportunity, and to go down a route where we’d be pushing people into a situation for which they weren’t ready. That was one of the reasons why I was attracted to Power Up, because it was more flexible, and it was about embedding the skills, the confidence and the motivation that my service was focused on delivering. The whole point was about giving people practical digital skills that improved their lives, rather than delivering generic, classroom-based sessions. Power Up was the only one fund I’d seen over the past one or two years that I wanted to apply for.”

Quaker Social Action

“The response to the Covid-19 emergency has been perfect. We greatly appreciated the quickness of the response for the Grant Manager and Power Up, the flexibility and positivity, seeing the emergency as an opportunity to support beneficiaries with the issues that were and are arising. It gave us the confidence to be creative and work with partners and beneficiaries to offer services and the support people required. It has energised and focused our response to the local community not only as part of Power Up but for our wider services.”





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Ansbury Guidance
Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre
Community Renewal Trust
East End Citizens Advice Bureau
Family Fund
Generation
Glasgow Life
One Parent Families Scotland
People Know How
Peter Bedford Housing Association
Poplar HARCA
Prospect Community Housing
Quaker Social Action (with Bromley by Bow Centre)
Spire View Housing Association
The Salvation Army - East of Scotland Division

Special thanks also to J.P. Morgan for their ongoing financial support to the Power Up initiative.

Good Things Foundation is the UK's leading charity driving social change through digital. It supports people to grow their essential digital skills to overcome social challenges.

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J.P. Morgan's support for Power Up is part of its commitment to address the key drivers of inclusive growth through long-term investments that directly leverage the firm's talent and resources to create a lasting impact in its communities. This includes a \$350 million global five-year commitment to the future of work to help under-served populations develop critical skills for in-demand careers through new investments in education and training programs and building a future-ready workforce by forecasting emerging employee skillsets, career pathways and upskilling opportunities.



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