

Power Up 2.0

Impactful digital inclusion: People, provision, and place

November 2024



Foreword



7.9 million adults lack the digital basics to participate in a digital economy.

Many are not working, have no formal qualifications, and live with a long-term health condition or disability.

As an initiative by Good Things Foundation with the support of JPMorganChase, Power Up 2.0 invested in nine organisations across four places over 26 months to deliver impact for people's employability and financial health underpinned by digital skills. This has enabled these organisations to innovate, upskill and evolve their provision and place-based partnerships; it also enabled Good Things Foundation to steer and support them, and to learn more about what works.

The investment and model has been transformative. Over 1,900 people - facing significant challenges in their lives - were supported through Power Up 2.0, with 70% progressing towards work and 67% feeling financially better off. Partner organisations have evolved

their approaches to delivering digital inclusion and evolving local ecosystems of support. This is vital work that is often hampered by lack of time, resources, and reinventing the wheel. This is where Good Things Foundation's nationally available resources and expertise on digital inclusion has added significant value.

This report is a timely reminder for policy makers, commissioners, and service providers that embedding digital inclusion in employability and financial support is effective, and it is essential. If we want to Get Britain Working, we must invest in digital inclusion - an investment in people, provision, and places.

**Helen Milner OBE, Group Chief Executive,
Good Things Foundation**

This report was supported by JPMorganChase. The views expressed in this report should not be taken to reflect the official position of JPMorganChase or any of its affiliates.

Headlines

Powering Up People:



90%



felt more **digitally included**

83% improved their digital skills.

78% felt more confident using the internet.

77% felt more able to stay safe online.

78% now have a suitable device.

76% now have enough data connectivity.

70%



achieved **job related outcomes**

67% seeking employability support reported that they had applied for jobs.

44% had been successful in securing an interview.

44% reported moving into employment or improving their employment situation.

60%



felt **their job or business prospects had improved.** Many gained key skills relating to finding work, such as:

62% creating or improving their CV.

57% finding information about work and applying for jobs online.

51% using recruitment websites.

51% creating a personal profile on a networking site such as LinkedIn.

67%



felt **better off financially**

63% now knew how to get help with money, debt or benefits .

57% claimed the benefits they are entitled to.

51% identified that they needed more help with money, 46 per cent managed to access this help.

Between 7-14% carried out a variety of financial health actions (such as online banking, budgeting or using price comparison websites).

82% felt **motivated to continue learning**



Powering Up Provision:



Improved resources, structures and processes to meet the needs of their local populations.

Powering Up Places:



Built partnerships, helped more people that were stuck and created referral routes. Some accessed additional funding.

“Power-up has empowered people to solve some of their challenges for themselves. It has helped them feel valued, respected and part of society”

“Digital learning was most effective when it was embedded in a wider programme of employability, personal financial skill or other support”

About Power Up 2.0

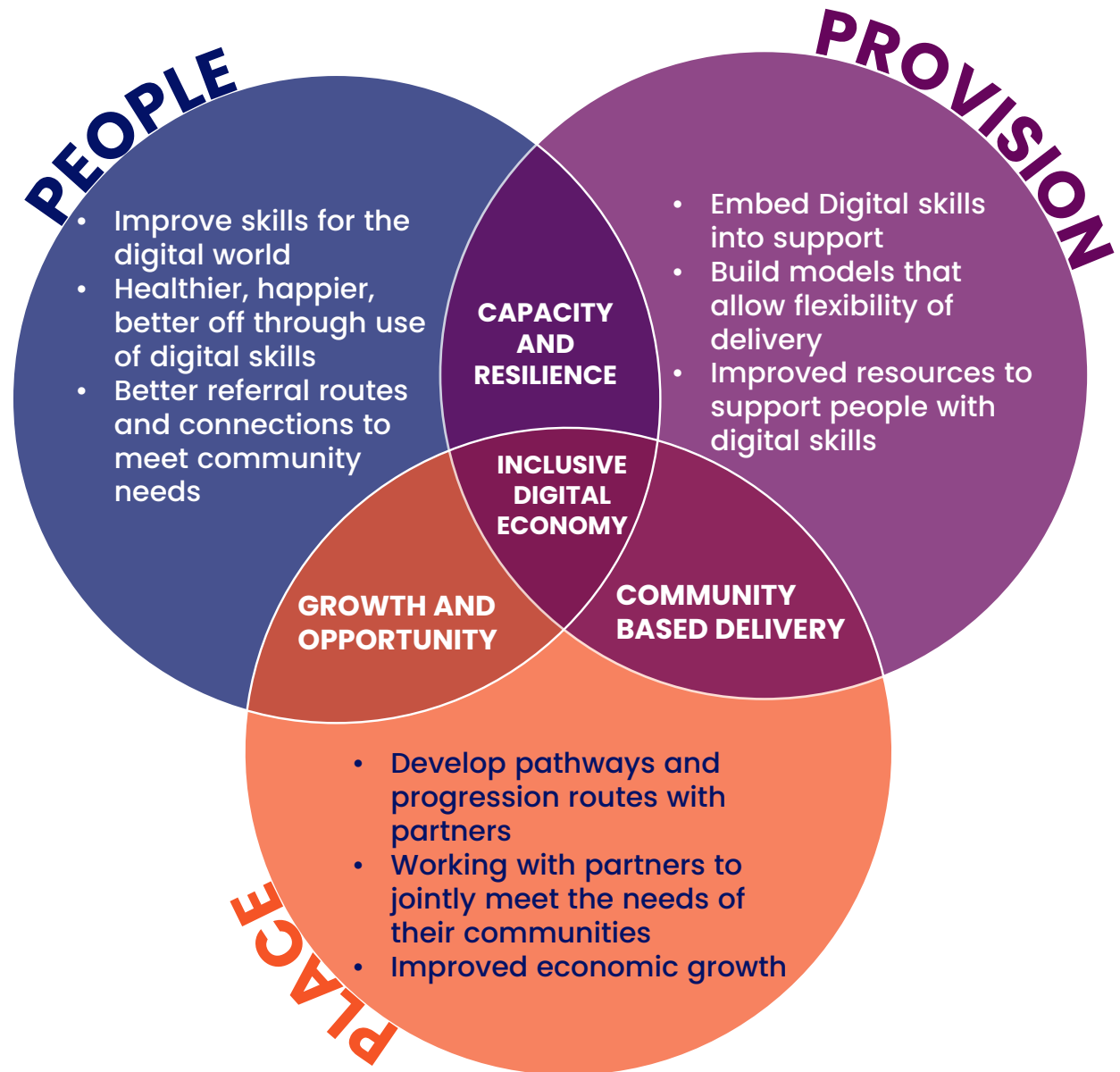
Power Up is a model for embedding digital inclusion support within existing employability and financial health support. It aims to create a step change in the way support is designed and delivered and uses a framework for local action to drive activity and impact:

- **Powering Up People**
- **Powering Up Provision and**
- **Powering Up Places**

An initiative by Good Things Foundation, with the support of JPMorganChase, Power Up set out to deliver initially for 18 months between 2019 and 2021. Building on success, Power Up 2.0 was launched - investing in nine providers between March 2022 and April 2024, with greater focus on helping people achieve longer-term outcomes around employment (Jobs and Skills) or to maximise and stabilise their incomes (Financial Health).

At the core of Power Up is its framework for local action: Powering Up People, Provision and Places.

Good Things Foundation commissioned Chrysalis Research in March 2022 to do a full evaluation. Each Power Up provider conducted baseline and impact surveys with people they supported and submitted two annual reports. In addition, there were three waves of qualitative interviews with staff and people supported, and case studies were collated. The full report is on Good Things Foundation's website.





Powering Up People

Helping people to learn basic digital skills and keep on learning

As part of setting up the programme, community organisations prioritised reaching people who needed support and the understanding and assessing their needs. To enable this they carried out the following activities:

- Staff recruitment and training
- Provision development
- Research and beneficiary consultations and
- Partnership-building activities.

“Through our experiences of supporting digital skills training for adults with disabilities, we have learnt about the importance of assessing each individual’s level of understanding and not making assumptions about their knowledge. Despite all of the beneficiaries of our programme having disabilities, they are all different and there is considerable variation in the level of understanding and speed of uptake of digital skills training.”

Power Up grantee

What works: Powering Up People

- **Outreach**
 - Go to where people are
 - Targeted communications – speak directly to those who you are trying to engage
 - Emphasise the benefits of taking part
- **Systematic assessment of needs**
 - Triage
 - Address immediate needs first, e.g. crisis management
 - Remove barriers, e.g. digital access
- **Make course and content relevant – revisit the basics**
- **Allow time to provide support and enable outcomes**



Impact on Access and Basic Digital Skills

Given the many additional support needs and barriers faced by participants, the positive changes in people's digital skills and access to devices and data as a result of Power Up are impressive.

- **Nine in ten people (91%) highlighted positive changes in at least one aspect of digital inclusion** (skills, safety, devices, data).
- 83% **improved their digital skills**
- 78% felt more **confident using the internet**
- 77% felt more able to **stay safe online**
- 78% now have a **suitable device**
- 76% now have **enough data connectivity**

“For the people [we support], the devices, their smartphones... are a gateway to everything. Everything that matters to them - gateway to food, communications, friends, family, social, children. Everything. So, the subjective value is huge.”

Power Up grantee

Impact on Employability (Jobs and Skills)¹

70% of people either applied for a job, secured an interview, or gained employment since taking part in the programme

- Two thirds of people (67%) seeking employability support reported that they had applied for jobs
- Nearly half of participants (44%) had been successful in securing an interview.
- **44% reported moving into employment or improving their employment situation.**

60% felt their job or business prospects had improved since taking part in Power Up. Many gained key skills relating to finding work, such as:

- Creating or improving their CV (62%),
- Finding information about work and applying for jobs online (57%)
- Using recruitment websites and (51%)
- Creating a personal profile on a networking site such as LinkedIn (51%).

Encouragingly, **82% of people supported through the programme said they felt motivated to continue learning.** This is particularly important for those for whom moving straight to employment was unachievable (e.g. related to disabilities or lack of experience) or those looking for a more aspirational role.

¹Please note that percentages below are only reported for those people who stated that a particular metric was relevant to them.



Impact on personal finance skills and financial situation

Two thirds (67%) of people who took part in Power Up 2.0 were better off financially due to increasing their income, reducing their spending or being able to put money away as savings.

- Over half (57%) of Power Up participants have been able to claim the benefits they are entitled to.
- Two-thirds (63%) said they knew how to get help with money, debt or benefits as a result of taking part in the programme.
- Around half of participants identified they needed more help with money (51%) and nearly the same amount (46%) managed to access this help.
- Between 7-14% of people reported carrying out various financial health actions (such as online banking, budgeting or using price comparison websites) for the first time

Power Up gave people the tools and the know-how to improve their financial situation.

Other outcomes in people's lives

- 84% of people felt more **confident** as a result of taking part
- 75% of people felt more able to **live independently**
- 67% of people felt **less isolated** through improved social connections with friends and family

Reaching people who most need support

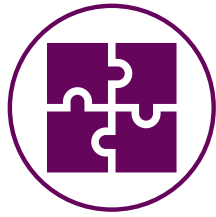
Between the start of the programme activities in 2022 and the end of April 2024, **over 1900² people were supported** through Power Up 2.0.

The Power Up programme was successful at reaching people who may be under-represented in other Digital Inclusion programmes³, vulnerable, and living in challenging circumstances.

- 61% of people supported identified as male
- 38% of people supported identified as female
- 44% of people identified as from minority ethnic backgrounds
- 67% were unemployed, with the majority looking for work.
- 62% of people were in receipt of benefits
- 45% of people reported having a disability, physical or mental health condition
- 46% of people did not have training or qualifications beyond secondary level
- 6% of people said they had received no formal education

²This (N= 1921) is the number of the beneficiaries who completed baseline surveys.

³Across many of the other programmes run by Good Things foundation we tend to see a higher proportion of women than men supported across our programmes - for example [Digital skills Pathway for Shared prosperity](#)



Powering Up Provision

Building new provision to embed digital learning or refining and adapting existing content

Two main types of projects were funded via Power Up 2.0: those that sought to put **new** provision in place and those that were planning to refine/adapt their **existing** support offer or take it to scale. In all cases, some of the activities carried out as part of Power Up provision development were:

- Beneficiary needs assessment and provision gap analysis
- Learning resource development
- Curriculum development
- Partnership-working to improve their support offer and reach.

“As a result of being involved in the Power Up 2.0 initiative, Digital has now become part of everyday activities and conversations at [our organisation]. The scope and breadth of the training we provide has expanded through the inclusion of Digital Skills training units developed through [our Power Up 2.0] project. In addition to the new training programme, investment in staff roles and digital equipment has also substantially improved organisational capability and capacity.”

Power Up grantee

What works: learnings about Powering Up Provision

Focus on adapting and refining provision so that it reflects participants needs:

- Assess beneficiary needs against provision
- Develop learning resources – use existing where possible – adapt for some specific audiences
- Build curriculum or programmes for people to follow
- Map progression opportunities and foster them
- Blend learning (f2f & online, individual & group)
- Make sure it is someone’s role to build content, market and enable partnerships



Impact on Provision

All providers taking part in Power Up 2.0 reported achievements related to their provision development. These included:

- **New or evolved provision** being developed or pre-existing programmes or models being adapted, revived and refined.
- New or refined **content, resources, platforms and tools**
- Increased **reach, scale and capacity** of delivery
- Improved **accessibility** of provision

“Those who have an existing relationship of support are best placed to offer digital tools and companionship to help someone become more digitally included. When individuals receive this model of support it can be best aligned to their unique needs, and they can achieve remarkable outcomes that enhance their lives.”

Power Up grantee

Embedding Digital

A fundamental principle of Power Up and a key dimension of provision development, ‘embedding digital’ means embedding digital skills provision and inclusion within organisations providing employability, financial capability and other support to people and communities.

Providers recognised the value of embedding digital into their broader support no matter where they started. They found that digital learning was most effective when integrated into wider programs of employability, personal finance, or other support. Half of the providers experienced substantial changes, with some organisations moving from ad hoc to holistic digital inclusion practices.





Building Providers Capacity and Capability

Increased organisational capacity as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 was mentioned by the majority of providers and proved a key enabler for the programme. Not only did this relate to new staff members, responsible for coordination and/or delivery of digital inclusion and skills development work, whose posts were funded through the programme, it also applied to attracting, training and retaining **volunteers**.

“The service’s ability to recruit, train and retain volunteers has also been greatly supported via [our Power Up project], with 14 volunteers over the past two years benefitting from regular digital training and skills development [as well as formal training and certification [we were able to provide through our project-related partnership-working] which will support them both in role and for future employment opportunities post-volunteering.”

Power Up grantee

Some providers also reported that taking part in Power Up 2.0 enabled them to **identify gaps in the digital skills and expertise of their staff**, and to tackle them by providing support and training.

Around half of all providers highlighted that they were able to digitise their systems and ways of working or use new/better platforms and applications, making them more efficient and promoting greater collaboration and learning within their organisation.

Several providers spoke about **greater exposure** and their organisation becoming better known – to potential beneficiaries but also partners to become sponsors and partners.





Powering Up Place

Providing joined up digital provision across a local area

Provider activities related to Powering Places could be grouped into three rough categories:

- Through their Power Up project activity, filling in a gap in the local support and provision for a particular group of beneficiaries and where possible also achieving system/society level change for or related to this group
- Distilling and sharing learning
- Strengthening local provision and support offer for beneficiaries.

All three were implemented through partnership-working, which was the main approach to Powering Up Places.

What works: Learnings about Powering Up Places

KEY ENABLER: PARTNERSHIPS (Difficult to establish, takes time and effort):

- **Needs flexibility from the provider to adapt to make relationships easier**
- **Mutually agreed beneficial goals**
- **Develop progression pathways that deal with blockers/ barriers identified by partner**
- **Be clear on referral pathways**
- **Even when formal relationships not established, meeting and knowing each other enables referral**



Powering Up Place

Powering Up Places: Programme impact

As a result of providers partnership-working, there was evidence of positive changes at the level of the local area and communities.

“One of the main benefits of [our] project, was found in local libraries. Traditionally library staff have also had to provide tech help to users of its libraries, which has been an additional strain on staff resource. With the emergence of [our project], libraries staff can refer anyone that needs additional computer help, to an expert service. [Our Power Up work] in the area also provides our partners with a further referral path for their own outcomes, additionally giving their clients an avenue to continue learning digital skills.”

Power Up grantee

Local area support provision

Local area provision in place – joined up partnership working enabled a comprehensive support provision across a wider area

Referrals and progression pathways – Through building partnerships some providers created clear referral routes and progression pathways which made supporting individuals on the journey that was right for them easier

Support people to progress who were previously ‘stuck’ – This approach allowed the networked provision move people on who may have been stuck with one provider or one issue for a while

Ease of pressure for other services by being able to refer – working together enabled services that were resource was limited to refer individuals to places where digital skills provision may not be part of their core offering.

Partner organisations

Partner organisations benefited through the following activities:

Referrals – being able to pass recipients between them so that individuals received the most appropriate support in a place that was right for them.

Raising their profile and credibility – providers become well known in their communities and the relationships that they built enhanced their profile and credibility.

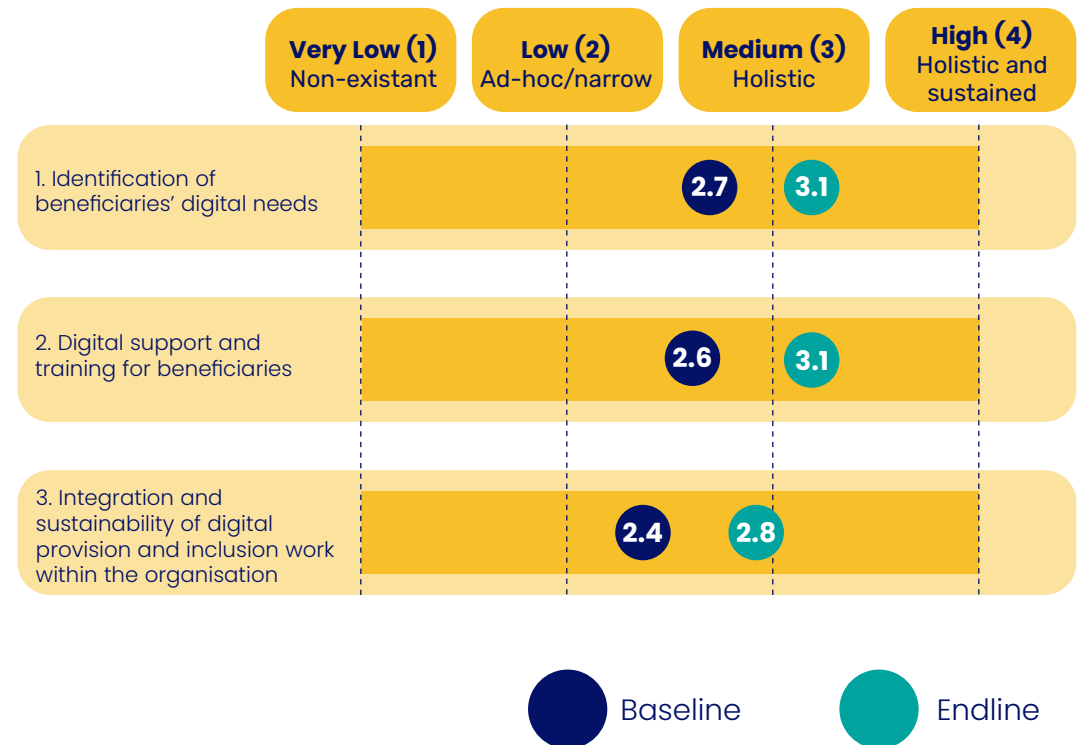
Achieving outcomes for the people they support – joined up working and relationships enabled better outcome for individuals ensuring that they got the support they needed in a time and place that was appropriate for them

Sustainability

Providers highlighted that at least some of the programme outcomes, most notably around their provision and organisational development, would continue to benefit their own organisations and also future participants and partners.

Some had plans in place not only to continue their digital inclusion activity, and to grow and develop it further, including by working with partners and co-designing provision development with their participants. Five out of nine providers were able to secure new, in some cases considerable, funding, to be able to continue their digital inclusion work after the end of Power Up 2.0. They commented that their involvement in Power Up was instrumental to being able to secure that funding.

Not all providers were as successful in sustaining their provision. Sadly, one community provider had to close due to lack of funding and the challenging environment faced by many charities and social enterprises.



Conclusions

Power Up 2.0 successfully reached and supported some of the most vulnerable and digitally excluded people in the UK.

The programme achieved its goals, delivering positive digital inclusion outcomes for over 90% of participants, with a majority also reporting positive changes in their employment or financial situations.

Providers made significant strides in their provision, developing new resources, increasing reach, and enhancing quality. They also focused on staff development, system improvements, and stronger partnerships to ensure the sustainability of their work.

Half of the providers were able to start or strengthen their approach to embedding digital support across their model and provision. Many also evolved their local relationships and referral networks. All providers shared their learning with partners, positively impacting their own - and others' - work and provision.

“By participating in Power Up, [our] project has brought engagement, learning and, most importantly, empowerment to the [local] community..., and beyond. The digital skills service delivers skills city-wide at various locations, but [name of the centre] is home. Participation in Power Up 2.0 ensured the opportunity to grow, develop and promote the service, which now hosts beneficiaries from 17 different electoral wards throughout the city, whilst embedding digital into the service offer in [the local community].”

Power Up grantee



Thank you!

Thank you to all the community organisations who took part in this research and shared their experience and views; to the research team at Chrysalis; and to JPMorganChase for their support for the Power Up 2.0 programme.

Find out more:

You can find out more about the work of Good Things Foundation and our offer via this link:
www.goodthingsfoundation.org

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