



Power Up 2.0

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

Research report for Good Things Foundation

Final Report: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024





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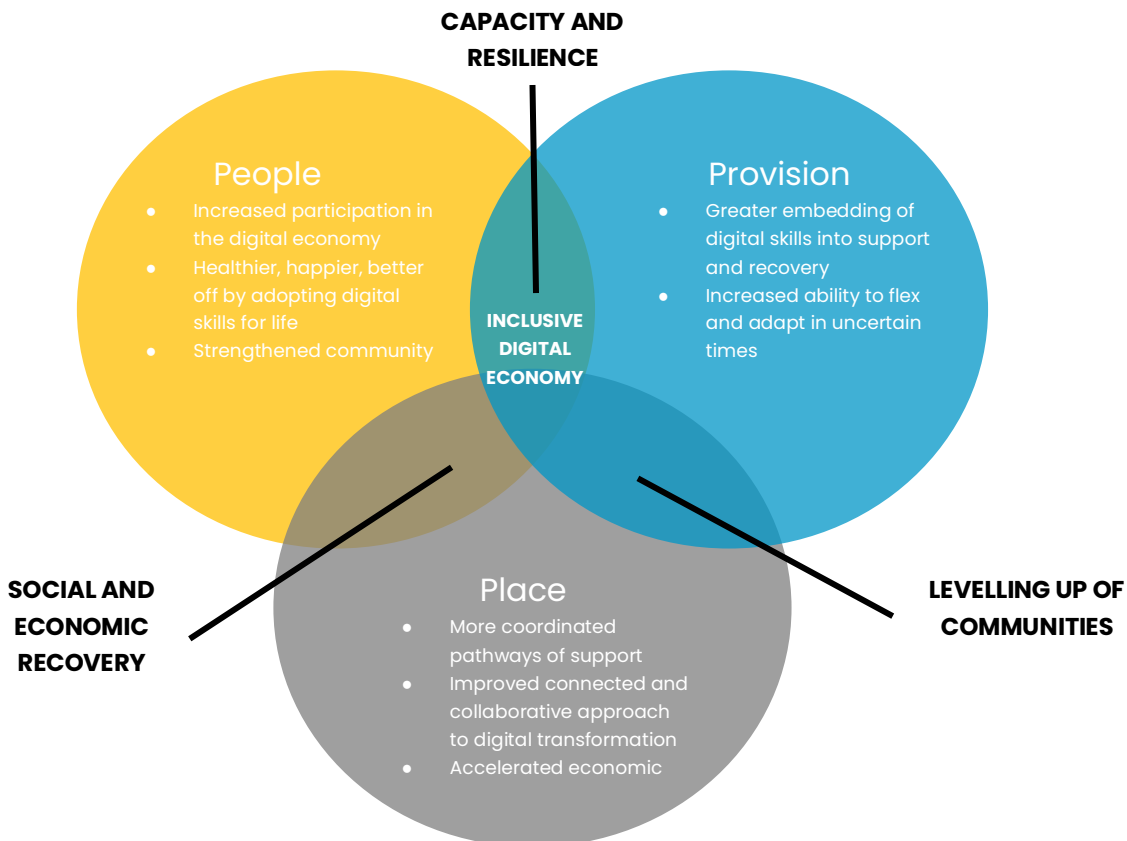
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Delivered by Good Things Foundation with the financial support of JP Morgan Chase Foundation, the Power Up programme aims drive economic inclusion and recovery by helping organisations embed digital skills into support for employability and financial inclusion.

Building on the success of the first phase of Power Up, Good Things Foundation launched Power Up 2.0. funding the diverse projects of nine grantees between March 2022 and April 2024. Compared to the first phase of the programme, Power Up 2.0 had a stronger focus on helping people achieve positive longer-term outcomes, i.e. to gain or progress within employment (Jobs and Skills) or 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.



## Powering Up People

The initial set-up stage encompassed staff recruitment, training, and provision development as well as – in some cases – research and beneficiary consultations and partnership-building activities. Following this, reaching beneficiaries was one of the key priorities and also one of the most common challenges for grantees. Understanding and assessing participants' needs was another important priority for most Power Up 2.0 grantees and for some organisations, this was an important development area.

### Key learnings about Powering Up People

- Outreach requires targeted communication emphasising the benefit to beneficiaries
- It takes time and effort to understand an individual's motivation and requirements for support
- Time is needed to achieve tangible long-term outcomes and this requires sustained motivation from beneficiaries and support from grantees
- Resolving digital access needs (hardware, software and broadband) is a prerequisite to providing effective digital skills support.

### Programme reach

Between the start of the programme activities in 2022 and the end of April 2024, **over 1900<sup>1</sup> people were supported through Power Up.**

More male than female participants accessed support through Power Up (61 and 38 per cent respectively), and this was particularly noted amongst grantees working with people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation. Power Up 2.0 was effective in helping Good Things Foundation to reach males in need of digital and other support, who were often under-represented within the organisation's other support offers.

44 per cent of people supported through Power Up were from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is considerably higher than the UK average figures<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This (N= 1921) is the number of the beneficiaries who completed baseline surveys.

<sup>2</sup> According to the latest (2021) census data, approximately 13 per cent of the UK population aged 16 and over was from a minority ethnic background.



People involved in the programme were vulnerable or living in challenging circumstances, including those who are homeless, have a disability or impairment or are affected by other learning barriers. Baseline beneficiary surveys showed that:

- 67 per cent were unemployed, with the majority looking for work. Most of those who were in work, were either in unskilled or semi-skilled manual roles or occupied junior roles in sales and services
- 62 per cent of people involved in the programme were in receipt of benefits
- 45 per cent of people reported having a disability, physical or mental health condition
- 46 per cent of people did not have training or qualifications beyond secondary level and a further 6 per cent said they had received no formal education.

## **Programme impact on Powering Up People**

### **Digital Skills and access**

The impact survey data showed positive changes in people's digital skills and access to devices and data as a result of their involvement in Power Up. **Around nine in ten people (91 per cent) highlighted positive changes in at least one aspect of digital inclusion** (skills, device and data).

Particularly impressive is the 83 per cent of people who commented on **improvements to their digital skills**.

More than three quarters of participants said they now have a **suitable device and enough data** to support their digital needs (78 and 76 per cent respectively), suggesting these two barriers to learning and using digital skills in their daily lives have mostly been overcome for these people.

Equally important to highlight is the 77 per cent of people who said they improved their ability to **stay safe online** as a result of the programme. This is a valuable outcome in its own right and also a way of removing another barrier to using the internet, particularly amongst older people.

Nearly four in five people (78 per cent) said they felt more **confident using the internet**. This is impressive given the additional support needs and barriers faced by many programme participants.

### **Employability (Jobs and Skills)**

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

People made impressive gains in key skills relating to finding work, such as creating or improving their CV (highlighted by 62 per cent), finding information about work and applying for jobs online (57 per cent), using recruitment websites and creating a personal profile on a networking site such as LinkedIn (51 per cent for both).

They also developed the digital skills they would be likely to need once they are employed: 57 per cent of participants engaged in online training or felt more confident to do so. They also improved their understanding of online safety at work (56 per cent) and learnt to use office software (50 per cent). A similar proportion improved their use of specific workplace software, their ability to organising information into files on devices or cloud and use social media for work. Alongside this, beneficiaries gained a better understanding of the transferrable skills valued by employers.

People then progressed into looking for work. It is highly encouraging to note that two thirds of people seeking employability support reported that they had applied for jobs and nearly half of participants (44 per cent) had been successful in securing an interview.

The programme evidence shows **70 per cent of people have either applied for a job, secured an interview or gained employment since taking part in the programme. Importantly, 44 per cent reported moving into employment or improving their employment situation.**

For other people supported through Power Up, moving straight into employment was unachievable (e.g. because of disabilities or lack of experience) or appropriate at that time (e.g. where they were looking to gain qualifications to move into a job that they aspired to do). A composite measure indicates that 76 per cent of people who were looking to improve their employability reported that they had **started informal learning, got involved in a formal training course or gained experience needed to move into or progress in their employment.**

Overall, 60 per cent felt their job or business prospects had improved since taking part in Power Up. Encouragingly, an overwhelming majority (82 per cent) of people supported through the programme said they felt motivated to continue learning.

### People's personal finance skills and financial situation (Financial Health)

Between 7-14 per cent of people reported carrying out various financial health actions (such as online banking, budgeting or using price comparison websites) for the first time, and further 21-36 per cent reported their improved confidence in carrying out these actions. Being able to use their digital skills to find help with money, debt or benefits was the most notable outcome in this area.

These skills have led to some notable longer-term financial outcomes following their involvement in the programme: a composite measure shows that **two thirds (67 per cent) 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. A notable achievement is that over half (57 per cent) of Power Up participants have been able to claim the benefits they are entitled to. This is all the more impressive given the cost-of-living crisis affecting the UK throughout the programme's duration.

Power Up gave people the tools and the know-how to improve their financial situation, with nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) saying 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 per cent, and nearly the same amount (46 per cent) managed to access this help.

### Other outcomes

Improvements to people's **confidence** as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 emerged as one of the strongest outcomes of the programme, with 84 per cent of respondents highlighting positive changes. Power Up also promoted participants' ability to **live independently** (reported by 75 per cent), and their social connections with friends and family, leading them to feel **less isolated** (67 per cent).

## Powering Up Provision

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.

### Key learnings about Powering Up Provision

A considerable proportion of grantees' learnings was to do with adapting and refining their provision so that it reflected their beneficiaries' needs and was as effective as possible. Examples included:

- Moving away from online-only delivery modes towards blended and in-person delivery to suit the preferences of beneficiaries
- Chunking their course content much more than originally planned, moving towards 'bite-size' learning

- Reflecting on course and session timings, considering the length and frequency of sessions on people's ability to learn and the practicalities of attending the sessions
- Combining group delivery with more bespoke support to encourage participants to get involved with the programme even if they were unsure or needed a lot of support
- Grantees working with people with disabilities and learning difficulties spoke about the importance of using 'their own language' within training and using different types of devices
- Identifying progression opportunities by looking into expanding their own digital inclusion offer and/or exploring if they could signpost people to existing provision in the area.
- Appreciating the value of embedding digital within a broader support offer, in order to maximise the effectiveness of that support.

## **Programme impact on Powering Up Provision**

All grantees reported achievements related to their provision development. These included:

- **New provision** being developed or pre-existing programmes or models being adapted, revived and refined.
- New or refined **content, resources, platforms and apps**
- Greater **reach and scale** of delivery
- Improved **quality** of provision, or provision becoming more accessible and inclusive.

Across the programme, there was evidence of the following features being visible in grantees' provision, described in wider research and evidence as best practice in learning and development:

- Recognising the importance of building trusting relationships between staff (sometimes multiple colleagues or even an 'entire centre') and beneficiaries, devoting time and resources to achieve this essential pre-requisite of engagement, learning and development.
- Opting for multi-input, often long-term and frequent support approaches (as opposed to one-off inputs)
- Combining group and one-to-one delivery mechanisms, drawing on their respective strengths
- Drawing on peer support to motivate and ensure the best possible outcomes
- Using hands-on, interactive delivery approaches, with numerous opportunities to practise skills and reinforce learning



- Ensuring learning is as relevant as possible and creating diverse opportunities to apply it in a range of contexts
- Actively using needs assessment and monitoring data in their provision and ensuring the learning journeys of individual participants and their cohorts are effective.

Strengthening and embedding these best practice elements within their delivery models was one of the key manifestations of Powering Up Provision.

## **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. Research and evaluation activities carried out as part of Power Up highlighted that embedding digital spans multiple dimensions – provision, organisational capacity and sustainability of digital inclusion and skills development work.

Evidence and data captured for the purposes of Power Up 2.0 evaluation, indicate that across the programme there was an improvement in all dimensions of embedding digital, with staff expertise and prioritisation of digital within the organisation emerging as the areas of greatest progress and development.

Considerable positive changes and developments related to embedding digital within their organisations were noticeable for around half of Power Up grantees. For example, one grantee’s digital inclusion practice and systems changed from being non-existent or ad hoc to holistic over the course of the programme and – according to this organisation itself – as a direct result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0.

Taking part in Power Up 2.0 also enabled grantees to appreciate the value of digital being embedded in their wider support provision, irrespective of whether this was something that was achieved as a result of them being involved in Power Up or if considerable elements of this were already in place at baseline. As the programme progressed, it was noted by the majority of grantees that digital learning was most effective when it was embedded in a wider programme of employability/personal finance skills or other support.

## **Programme impact on grantee organisations**

As outlined above, **embedding digital within their organisation’s work and systems** and **staff development** were two prominent areas of impact on the grantee organisations.

**Increased organisational capacity** as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 was mentioned by the majority of grantees. 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 increased or additional capacity enabled grantees to **increase their reach**, support a broader range of clients, ensure high **quality of their support** and in some cases **reduce demand** on other, overstretched parts of their services.

Some grantees 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 grantees 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 grantees spoke about **greater exposure** and their organisation becoming better known – to potential beneficiaries but also partners. This included attracting large organisations (such as multinational telecom companies) to become sponsors and partners.

Strengthening their relationships with existing **partners** and putting new valuable partnerships in place has been highlighted by the majority of grantees as one of the most important outcomes of Power Up 2.0 for their organisation. In a number of cases, this led them to secure additional or future funding in order to continue to deliver and develop their digital inclusion work.

## Powering Up Places

Powering Up Places refers to any activity undertaken by grantees which aims to provide joined-up digital provision across the local area.

Grantees' 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.



## Key learnings about Powering Up Places

- Many grantees highlighted the complexity of partnership-working, even where the ambitions behind it were a lot more modest than establishing a local area support offer
- Time and effort is required to build strong relationships with partners, particularly if the aims of the partnership are to achieve concrete outcomes together
- There is value in categorising partners, being clear about what might be achieved from working together and adjusting the approach accordingly. Specialist partners (including those providing data and devices) and specialist networks can be very useful in achieving specific outcomes.

## Programme impact on Powering Up Places

There were two dimensions where place-based working and its impact were strongest: local area support provision being put in place and impact for partner organisations.

Approximately half of Power Up 2.0 grantees were able to initiate or significantly contribute to the **establishment or strengthening of embedded digital support offer in their area**. In some cases, this took the form of creating support hubs for local people, with digital being a strong element within that. In others, it was about creating progression referral routes or progression pathways for their beneficiaries. There were also some impressive examples of grantees working effectively with their local authorities or Local Enterprise Partnership. As a result of grantees' partnership-working in particular, there was evidence of positive changes at the level of the local area and communities.

Examples of how **partner organisations benefited from Power Up** included partners receiving employer or customer training on how to support specific types of beneficiaries, as well as relieving capacity on partner organisations, where digital skills provision may not be part of their core offering.

## Sustainability

Power Up grantees highlighted that at least some of the programme outcomes, most notably around their provision and organisational development, would continue to benefit not only their own organisations but also their future beneficiaries and their partners.

Some of them had plans in place not only to continue their digital inclusion activity, even if slightly differently, but also to grow and develop it further, including by working with partners and co-designing provision development with their participants. Five out of nine grantees were able to

secure new, in some cases considerable, amounts of 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.

## Conclusions

Over the course of approximately two years, the nine organisations that were selected to become Power 2.0 grantees carried out an impressive volume of activity which resulted in reaching and providing support to some of the most vulnerable and digitally excluded people in the country - one of the programme's most notable achievements. Similar to the first phase of Power Up, the majority of people supported through the programme were unemployed, socially inactive or unable to work and in receipt of benefits. Power Up 2.0 was effective at reaching at scale two further groups that are particularly disadvantaged in our society – those who are homeless or in temporary accommodation and people with special needs and disabilities.

Our analysis of the programme evidence suggests Power UP 2.0 achieved its objectives, with some achievements being particularly impressive, as well as generating important learnings for the sector.

The outcomes that were achieved as part of Powering Up People is an example of the impact that organisations involved in delivering Power 2.0 can be particularly proud of. One of the key programme outcomes for its participants is digital inclusion: over 90 per cent of people taking part in the programme noted improvements in at least one dimension of digital inclusion, which comprises digital skills, access to an appropriate device and connectivity (access to data). Equally important to note as a considerable success of Power Up 2.0 are the long-term outcomes for people taking part: the majority<sup>3</sup> of the programme participants reported concrete positive changes to their employment situation or being better off financially, and sometimes both.

Alongside supporting people, Power Up 2.0 grantees worked hard to improve and develop their provision. Reported by *all* grantees, achievements in Powering Up Provision ranged from new provision, content and resources being developed, to increased reach and scale of delivery through to greater quality of provision. These and other organisational developments (such as staff development and volunteer training, new or improved systems and ways of working, new and stronger partnerships and greater exposure) were tightly linked with sustainability of Power Up. Power Up grantees highlighted that these organisational developments achieved as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 would continue to benefit not only their own organisations but also their future beneficiaries and their partners.

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<sup>3</sup> Around 54 per cent of all participants (Base 962), or 70 per cent of all respondents excluding those who stated 'prefer not to say' or 'not applicable' (Base 742).



There were also impressive achievements within Powering Places. Despite the well-known challenges associated with achieving any place-based change, approximately half of Power Up 2.0 grantees were able to initiate or significantly contribute to establishment or strengthening of embedded digital support offer in their area. All grantees were able to share their learning with others and positively impact their partners' work and in some cases also their provision and organisation.





# INTRODUCTION

## Background and context

Launched in 2018, Power Up is a programme which aims to drive economic inclusion and recovery, by helping organisations embed digital skills into their employability and financial support, for people they work with. It is delivered by Good Things Foundation, with the financial support of JP Morgan Chase Foundation.

At the core of the programme is its framework for local action:

- **Powering Up People:** helping people develop digital skills and confidence, so that they are motivated to learn and keep on learning, and apply digital skills in their lives, businesses and at work
- **Powering Up Provision:** embedding digital into existing programmes and equipping local organisations with the capacity and resources they need to help the people they work with to adopt and apply digital skills.
- **Powering Up Places:** connecting local organisations, service providers and others to provide individuals, businesses and communities with the joined-up support they need to thrive.

Phase One of the Power Up programme ran between February 2020 and June 2021 and involved 15 projects in Bournemouth, East London, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Together, they supported 2,330 people whilst also developing provision in their own and partner organisations and building foundations for place-based change and partnership-working to enable people in their communities to use digital access and skills to improve their employability and/or financial health. The latter two represent key Power Up themes and types of beneficiary outcomes: **Jobs and Skills** projects within the programme try and help people seeking jobs or job progression, whilst **Financial Health** projects aim to support those managing money on low incomes.

Building on the success of the first phase, Good Things Foundation launched the second phase of the programme, aiming to reach more people and enhance digital skills support within the participating and partner organisations and their communities. Compared to the first phase of the programme, Power Up 2.0 had a stronger focus on helping people achieve positive longer-term outcomes, i.e. to gain or progress within employment (Jobs and Skills) or maximise and stabilise their incomes (Financial Health).

Nine projects comprising Phase Two of the Power Up programme carried out their activities between March 2022 and April 2024. The nine grantees and the main groups of people they supported as part of their Power Up 2.0 activity are outlined in Table 1 below; further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

**Table 1 Grantees and people they support through Power Up**

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Core group of people grantee aimed to support through Power Up 2.0</b>
Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA)	Unemployed or socially inactive, on low or with no income
City Gateway	Young people who are NEET
CRUMBS Project	People who are disabled and those with impairments
Deaf Action	People who are disabled and those with impairments
Generation	People facing other barriers, e.g. caring commitments
Providence Row	Homeless people
Renaisi	Over 50s
Salvation Army	Unemployed or socially inactive, on low or with no income
Simon Community Scotland	Homeless people

The vast majority (eight out of nine) of Power Up grantees have been working to support their beneficiaries' employability outcomes alongside developing their digital skills (Jobs and Skills Theme). Three grantees have also been working to help their beneficiaries develop their personal finance skills and capabilities, with the aim of improving their financial situation in the long term (Financial Health Theme). One grantee has been only focusing on the financial health of the people they support.

## **This report and its evidence base**

This is a summative report for Phase Two of the programme. Its aim is to outline the programme's achievements, impact and learnings.



The main body of the report is structured in accordance with the programme's framework for local action – Powering Up People, Provision and Places.

The report was prepared by Chrysalis Research, the programme's external evaluator. It draws on a range of primary and secondary, quantitative and qualitative evidence. At its core is the evidence which was collected and assembled by Good Things Foundation working in partnership with the grantees:

- Datasets with beneficiary survey responses, submitted between the start of the programme activities and May 2024, comprising the following number of records:
  - Baseline survey – **1921** responses in total
  - Impact survey – **962** responses.
- Two sets of annual **reports submitted by all nine grantee organisations.**

In addition, Chrysalis Research carried out three waves of qualitative research activities, to supplement the beneficiary data and grantee reports. During the last year of the programme, the external evaluator team carried out case study data collection with all nine grantees. In all cases, this included interviews with a range of staff within the grantee organisation and several beneficiaries which were carried out when visiting the grantee organisations or locations of their outreach delivery. Where possible, the evaluation team also observed Power Up provision and spoke to volunteers involved in its delivery as well as partners involved in their provision development or Powering Up places activity.

## Reporting notes

Throughout this report, we present percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. This sometimes means that totals can appear to be one or two percentage points out. For example, the sum of 55.4% and 44.4% would appear as 55+44=100, since 99.8 rounds to 100. In charts, the text for small percentages (generally less than 3%) is not shown so that the chart can be read more easily.

## Acknowledgements

Chrysalis Research would like to thank Good Things Foundation and all grantee organisations, their staff, local partners and beneficiaries involved in the data collection activities, for their support of the external evaluation and giving their time to the evaluation activities.

# POWERING UP PEOPLE

## Overview of activities

In the initial year of Power Up activity, grantees focused on project setup, encompassing staff recruitment, training, and provision development. In several cases, grantees carried out research and beneficiary consultations, to shape their provision.

Some grantees also devoted time to forming effective partnerships, particularly where these were needed to reach and 'recruit' participants to take part in their Power Up delivery.

**Reaching beneficiaries** was one of the key priorities and also one of the most common challenges for grantees. In some cases, overcoming difficulties around beneficiary recruitment involved developing communication channels to ensure the target demographics are reached through the messaging and are motivated to access available support. More often though, it was about developing relationships with local and target-group-specialist partners, to put referral pathways in place and/or to enable project delivery closer to the beneficiaries' location.

Expanding and consolidating reach activity continued to be a focus for grantees across all three years of the programme. This included ramping up their in-house outreach to make contact with more potential beneficiaries or building up new or existing relationships with partners to consolidate engagement with clients:

*Maintaining the [partner] relationships we developed in Year 1 of Power Up, specifically by continuing to support more complex homeless clients through the many co-location sites where they were living. This helped ensure client engagement, as people were not engaging with our service as much before working in this way.*

**Power Up grantee**

**Understanding and assessing participants' needs** was another important priority for most Power Up 2.0 grantees and for some organisations, this was an important development area.

Most grantees used Power Up 2.0 baseline surveys and their own tools and instruments, reflecting the specific needs of their target groups, to comprehensively assess their participants' starting points and then later on to monitor their progress. Several grantees also used already existing tools,



such as the Outcome Star<sup>4</sup> or SCVO Essential Digital Skills Checklist<sup>5</sup>, to identify the support needs of their beneficiaries.

During years 2 and 3 of the programme, some grantees developed their needs identification activities based on their learnings from the initial phase of Power Up 2.0. This included triaging potential beneficiaries to ensure they received the maximum value out of a grantee's digital training offer:

*Sometimes after an initial conversation with a learner, it becomes apparent they are in need of help with one item, e.g. copying and pasting or some beginners Excel help. In this instance we would not place them on our course but offer them a one-to-one opportunity in our training suite.*

#### Power Up grantee

In some cases, grantees made their initial needs assessment more comprehensive, to tailor their support more effectively:

*Through a combination of observation, surveys, individual discussions, and assessment tools, we are able to gain a good understanding of each trainee's digital knowledge, skills, and ambitions and therefore what digital skills training units and support will be most beneficial for them.*

#### Power Up grantee

Following initial needs assessments and identification of starting points, grantees involved beneficiaries in their training and support activities, which are explored in the next section (Powering Up Provision).

## Learnings

Learnings related to Powering Up people reflected different beneficiary profiles and contexts. The key points can be summarised as:

- Outreach requires targeted communication emphasising the benefit to beneficiaries
- It takes time and effort to understand an individual's motivation and requirements for support
- Time is also required to achieve tangible long-term outcomes and this requires sustained motivation from beneficiaries
- The importance of digital skills and better understanding of digital divide.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> Essential digital skills - SCVO

## **Outreach requires targeted communication emphasising the benefit to beneficiaries**

When trying to encourage people to get involved in the programme activities through outreach (rather than partner referrals) it was important to communicate the benefits of such involvement clearly and in a way that appealed to beneficiaries. In cases where this was lacking, Power Up grantees faced participant recruitment challenges.

## **It takes time and effort to understand an individual's motivation and requirements for support**

For many grantees, this was the most common area of learning as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0. Some were noticing a change in the make-up of the cohorts they were supporting, with increase of those with more complex needs, often linked to the cost-of-living crisis.

Other grantees stressed the importance of avoiding assumptions about beneficiaries' digital skill set and being responsive to both their existing skill strengths and weaknesses, as well as each person's individual pace of learning:

*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**

In some cases, this improved understanding of their target group was linked to greater clarity about what would prompt engagement from their beneficiaries.

*We have found that routes to high/well-paid professions and target/potential salaries must be stressed in promotion: the rising cost of living has led to some learners/applicants unwilling to devote time to long courses during which time they generally cannot earn. The pay-off is average salaries in the mid to high £20ks in good jobs in cloud computing with the skills learnt on the course, however this investment of time can be hard and increasingly hard to stomach.*

### **Power Up grantee**

Acknowledging that learners may have very different attitudinal barriers dependent on life stage and life experiences, helped grantees to pitch their support accordingly:

*For those who are closer to being work ready, different attitudes play a huge part. We have school leavers seeking full time employment or further education who are both nervous and excited to get that initial interview, but also older clients who, due to multiple rejections though their working life, need more motivation to attend*



*appointments. We find that once they have had a chat and looked at opportunities and pathways available, they are more upbeat, feel more positive about applying for posts and are more receptive to learning with us.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Understanding other barriers to learning (such as language issues or difficulties applying learning in different contexts), prompted some grantees to use assistive technology and more practical learning environments to help beneficiaries progress with their learning.

*Removing obstacles for people, by introducing different tools or adapting teaching methods, can have a substantial impact on their confidence and self-belief. Practical application of training also makes a considerable difference to how learning takes place.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

### **Time is needed to achieve tangible long-term outcomes and this requires sustained motivation from beneficiaries**

Several grantees noted that achieving long-term employability-related outcomes required significant effort and time from their beneficiaries. Retaining their commitment was often challenging, where people were driven by quick wins.

In response to this challenge, grantees commented that it was often the positive influence of peers that was most important, as well as adjustments to their provision and support. One grantee explained how they went about this:

*The team has put a lot of effort into building effective peer relationships and classroom environments. For example, there are daily kudos sessions, where people give kudos to other people in the room. There are lots of peer working sessions, there are peer support sessions. [The learners] talk about often still being friends or still being connected [with their class] months and months later. Going through a massive and quite important job search journey together [is] very transformative.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*We found that when a participant in the group successfully gains employment this motivates others to do the same, further emphasising the importance [of] peer support [in] creating long-term positive outcomes.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Other grantees learnt that their beneficiaries' pace of digital skills learning was slower than originally anticipated and therefore provision had to be adapted accordingly, usually with longer delivery periods. These extended delivery formats enabled learners to better consolidate and practice the

skills they had learnt in class. However, this could have cost implications for delivery, particularly where one-to-one intensive support is required.

## **Resolving digital access needs is a prerequisite to providing effective digital skills support**

Some grantees faced challenges related to limited device and data access among their target group, which they attributed partly to the cost-of-living crisis amongst other factors. One grantee explained how being part of Power Up helped them to provide these essentials to their learners, so that they could access their remote course offering:

*We provided (free loans) of around 35 laptops to learners who did not have them in order to access our remotely delivered training, and around 15 internet connections/dongles/MiFis. Much of this was supported via the [National Device Bank and National Databank] accessed while [we have] been connected to Power Up and the Online Centres Network. This provision has been critical for widening access.*

### **Power Up grantee**

One grantee was aware that learners would not have been able to practise their newly-acquired digital skills at home very easily or to continue using them post-programme unless they had access to devices and data. To support people who were able to buy their own devices, often a second-hand ones, the grantee introduced a module giving advice on buying tech, to make sure that people are not mis-sold unsuitable tech equipment. The grantee also successfully advertised in the local community for tech donations.

*2023 saw us advertise across libraries [in the area] for any old Windows computers, that maybe we could salvage and loan to our course learners. As a result, we were gifted three laptops with several extras.*

### **Power Up grantee**

Grantees highlighted that the message about the importance of digital skills in achieving Jobs and Skills or Financial Health outcomes still needed to be made clear to some beneficiary groups.

*... our young people do not readily seek to engage with building their digital competencies. Attendance on our digital training is significantly lower than attendance for other critical skills i.e. math and English. This would suggest that young people still do not consider digital skills to be an equally significant area that requires their engagement. In addition, their overly generous self-assessment of their digital skills competency does not reflect the reality. Many judge their skills levels to be higher based on their use of technology products e.g., mobile phones, games consoles etc., but they have poor understanding of the functional digital skills that can contribute to enhancing their employment opportunities.*

### **Power Up grantee**





Nevertheless, there was consensus amongst grantees that bridging the digital divide was not only essential for improving employability and financial outcomes, but also in order to promote people's self-confidence and self-belief:

*Advocating digital tools and digital skills not only serves to bridge the digital divide amongst people with disabilities but there is a dual outcome of the increased confidence and self-belief they achieve and take with them outside of the training environment.*

**Power Up grantee**

## **Beneficiary reach**

Between the start of the programme activities in 2022 and the end of April 2024, over 1900<sup>6</sup> people were supported through Power Up.

More male than female participants accessed support through Power Up (61 and 38 per cent respectively, with the remainder preferring to describe themselves in other ways). Most grantees supported more men than women through their Power Up 2.0 activity; this was particularly prominent amongst grantees working with people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation. For one of them, four in five of their programme participants were male. The higher than average proportion of male participants is notable: Power Up 2.0 was effective at helping Good Things Foundation to reach males in need of digital and other support, who tend to be under-presented within the organisation's other support offer.

Almost half (44 per cent) of people supported through Power Up were from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is considerably higher than the UK average figures<sup>7</sup>.

People involved in the programme were vulnerable or living in challenging circumstances, including those who are homeless, have a disability or impairment or are affected by other barriers or life circumstances, such as caring commitments.

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<sup>6</sup> This (N= 1921) is the number of the beneficiaries who completed baseline surveys.

<sup>7</sup> According to the latest (2021) census data, approximately 13 per cent of the UK population aged 16 and over was from a minority ethnic background.

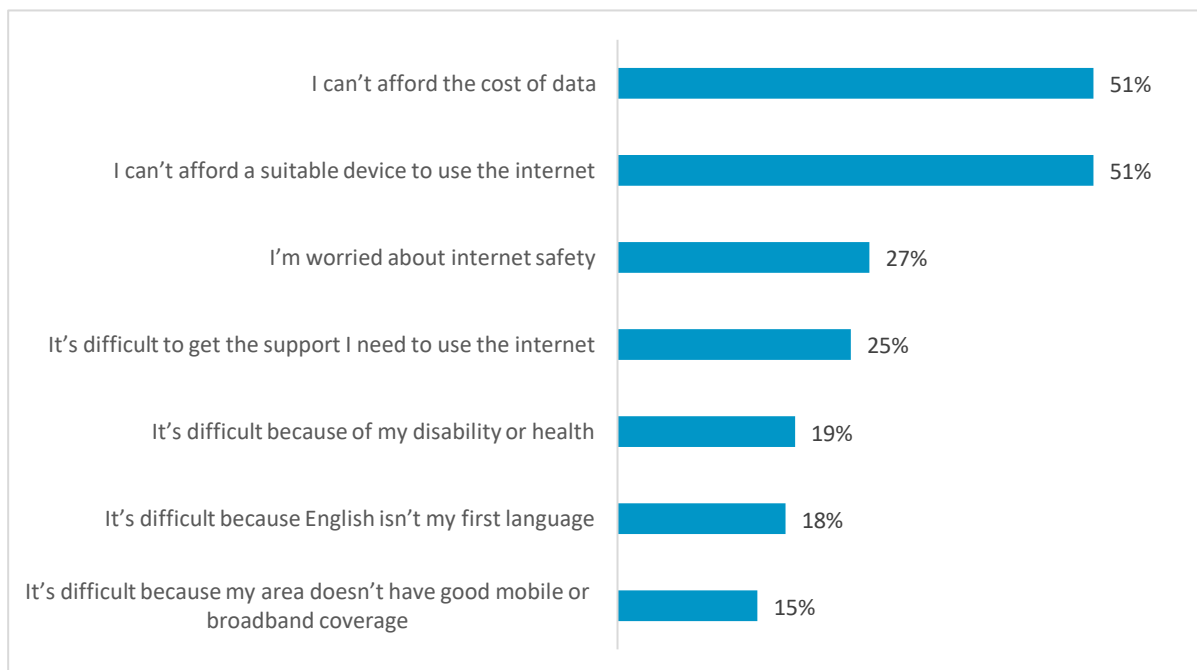
According to the data captured through the beneficiary surveys which they completed when joining the programme (baseline):

- Two thirds of people (67 per cent) were unemployed, with the majority<sup>8</sup>, but not all of them, looking for work. The majority of those who were in work, were either in unskilled or semi-skilled manual labour or semi-skilled roles or occupied junior roles in sales and services
- 62 per cent of people involved in the programme were in receipt of benefits
- 45 per cent of people reported having a disability, physical or mental health condition
- Almost half (46 per cent) of people supported through the programme did not have training or qualifications beyond secondary education and further six per cent said they either received no formal education or stated 'none' against all education options.

At the point of joining the programme, 70 per cent of people involved in Power 2.0 said that as well as their lack of digital skills, there were barriers preventing them from using the internet, most common of them being lack of devices and/or data. Many people reported being affected by multiple barriers.

**Figure 1 Barriers to using the internet, at baseline**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Base: 1722.



<sup>8</sup> 70 per cent of all those who reported being unemployed and 47 per cent of all beneficiaries who provided a response to the respective question.

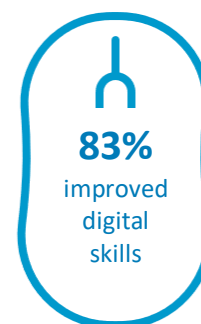


## Impact on People

The support offered by grantees was tailored to the needs of each individual, ensuring that they achieved outcomes that were relevant to their own personal situation. There was no expectation that beneficiaries would achieve the entire breadth of all possible outcomes within each category. The programme's central aim was to improve people's digital skills, as well as either their employability or financial capability. Some projects aimed to achieve all three for the people they worked with.

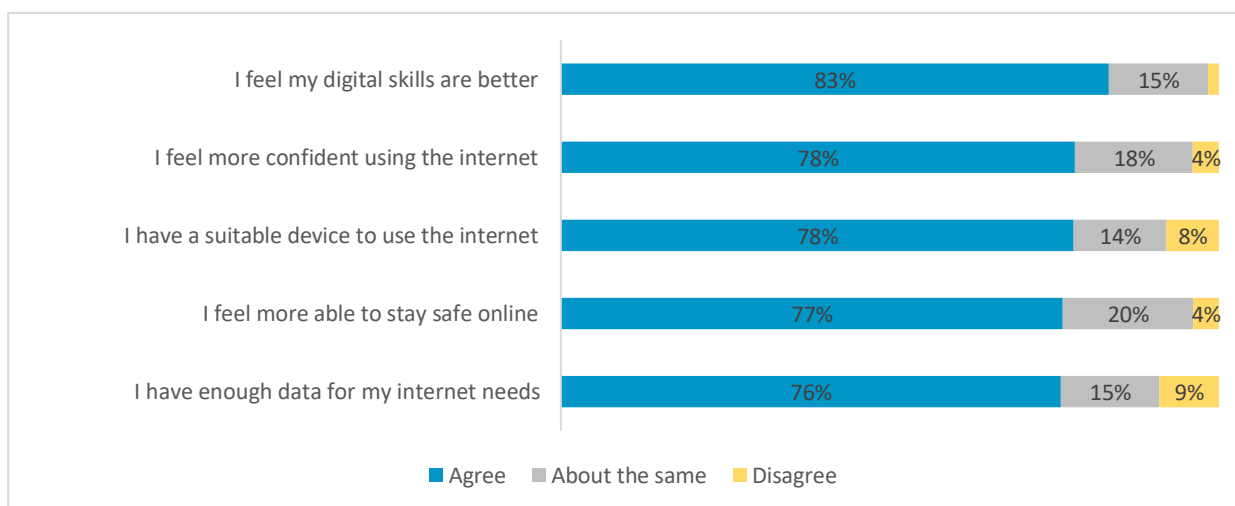
### Digital skills and access

The impact survey data was highly positive about the extent to which people were able to improve their digital skills and access to devices and data as a result of their involvement in Power Up. **Around nine in ten people (91 per cent) highlighted positive changes related to their digital skills and access**, i.e. they noted improvements in at least one of the metrics presented in Figure 2 below. When looking at individual metrics, the 83 per cent of people who commented on improvements to their digital skills overall is particularly impressive.



**Figure 2 Impact on people's digital access and skills**

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 802 and 768 for different statements.



78 per cent of people saying they have a suitable device and 76 per cent saying they have enough data to support their digital needs is similarly impressive, particularly given that lack of devices and data emerged as one of the key barriers preventing people from using the internet at home.

Grantees' ability to provide them with both was a determining factor in them being able to participate in digital provision. This was particularly true for those programme beneficiaries who were homeless. It is also in relation to this group of people where we could see some of the strongest examples in the programme's evidence set, illustrating the difference that having a device, with enough data to access the internet, can make to people's lives.

*I've had a client who was in homeless accommodation... He's autistic and used to be very anxious, thinking people were speaking about him... So, I said to him, 'We've got a phone and it's got unlimited data. You'll be able to play your music when you go outside and it can maybe get you out a bit more.' So, he was like, 'Alright, I'll try that.' So, it started getting him outside, [which really helped his mental health]. Then, I mentioned about going to college because he was quite a clever man and you could see that he was quite a clever man, just with the things he was saying, even though he was in a homeless accommodation. We looked at college and he [started a course in] Counselling. [We got him another device] because he was going to college but he was still needing that support...He didn't have the extra funds. So, that came in really useful for him, for college and doing his coursework.*

**Charity which received support with their provision, beneficiary devices and data from one of Power Up 2.0 grantees, provided as part of their programme activity**

The value of devices for people who are homeless and in temporary accommodation was also visible in the fact that very few devices that were gifted to them as part of their involvement in the programme, according to one Power Up grantee's own data, got lost. Some of the people being supported by this grantee faced a daily struggle to find a warm and safe place to spend a night and most of them did not know where their next meal was coming from, yet they chose to hold on to their devices, which provided them with a sense of normality and self-respect and became a means of connecting with people that were important to them and things they enjoyed in their life.

*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**


Rather than handing over devices to beneficiaries, some grantees chose to provide free access to digital devices/equipment and data either on their premises, or through their local partners. There were instances of them also joining related initiatives, such as Databank<sup>9</sup>, to be able to support their beneficiaries, particularly where they had not anticipated data or devices to be a barrier for the people they intended to support at the programme application stage.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/databank/>



Equally important to highlight is the 77 per cent of people who said they improved their ability to stay safe online as a result of the programme. As a result of internet safety interventions, people learned how to create strong passwords, identify phishing attempts, and recognise potential online scams. Additionally, they gained knowledge about privacy settings on various platforms and how to safeguard their personal information while engaging online.



**77%** felt  
safer going  
online

This is a valuable outcome in its own right and also a way of removing barriers to people using the internet to enable them to address their needs and achieve their goals. Whilst not a major concern to some groups of people supported through Power Up (only around a quarter, 27 per cent, of baseline survey respondents said that worries about internet safety prevented them from using the internet), it significantly affected the behaviour of others. In particular, this concern appears to be important for older age groups, and those with disabilities.

### **Beneficiary case study**

When **Linda\*** first joined the Power Up programme, she was concerned by the amount of spam and phishing emails she was receiving and was worried about being scammed.

Linda found the online security lesson offered by the grantee as part of her digital course very useful. During this session, a number of phishing exercises were undertaken, including how to report probable spam and phishing emails, reviewing various phishing example emails, and finally a check on phishing knowledge via this Google phishing quiz.

Upon completing her digital course, Linda remarked that she was confidently able to delete/report spam and phishing emails and spot some tell-tale signs of phishing emails.

Additionally, Linda wanted to gain confidence that her own Windows 10 laptop was set up correctly from a security point of view, and automatic updates were switched on. She was offered a follow-up one to one appointment with the grantee to go through her laptops settings and was signposted to their Windows 10 bitesize videos which gave her an overview of all aspects of Windows 10 security.

The importance of internet safety provision was underlined by several grantees, who remarked that although younger, more digitally confident learners had fewer concerns about going online, they were sometimes unaware of the risks they were exposing themselves to.

*There have been incidents that we have picked up via Safeguarding, of issues relating to online activity, typically related to social media platforms.*

**Power Up grantee, whose main focus is young people**

Nearly four in five people (78 per cent) taking part in Power Up said they felt more confident using the internet. This is another important achievement for Power Up, particularly given the additional support needs, disabilities and barriers faced by large numbers of the programme participants. For many, this led to them being able to pursue their interests and longer-term goals and achieve daily tasks easily and efficiently, but it also helped improve their independence, further explored later in this report. Improved confidence in using devices and the internet also prompted many of them to want to develop their digital skills further.

*I've learnt use a tablet to sign in, navigate around and sign out by myself. The next thing I want to know about is how to get onto Onefile from my tablet at home so I can upload photos of what I bake at home too.*

**Beneficiary supported by one of Power Up grantees (with Down syndrome and verbal communication difficulties)**

## **Employability (Jobs and Skills)**

When it comes to employability, we considered two dimensions: people applying their new or improved digital skills as a way of moving towards (better) employment and longer-term outcomes.

Firstly, it should be noted that through its choice of grantees, the Power Up programme supported learners on a very wide spectrum of digital competency. This ranged from people who were already comfortable using digital tools in various contexts but wanted to upskill in order to move into better jobs, to people who started off not knowing how to turn on a device or use it for the most basic tasks. Although the original intention of Power Up 2.0 was to support people further along their digital skills journey, many grantees discovered that in order to help individuals develop their employability, they needed to cover or revisit foundational digital skills first before they could think about introducing a more job-oriented digital skillset. As grantees were supporting some of the most vulnerable members of the community, there was also an added element of 'crisis management', for instance teaching them how to keep safe online after they had fallen victim to a scam. This all formed the basis of the grantees' person-centred approach to support.

*You find yourself in a situation where you are teaching someone who can't even download an app, and you thought you were going to be teaching them Word.*

### **Power Up Grantee**

Similarly, some learners faced multiple barriers preventing access to work (lack of digital skills being just one obstacle amongst others such as disability, homelessness, financial situation), whereas others were further down the employability pipeline, and were perhaps already employed or volunteering in some capacity. Employability outcomes varied accordingly, but grantees underlined the significant distance travelled by a great many of their learners.



### Beneficiary case study

**Kirsty\*** has autism and an auditory processing condition that results in her brain being overwhelmed by the sounds around her. Completing her university degree course led to severe chronic fatigue and burnout, and she was subsequently unable to find a suitable volunteering or work role as it impacted too much on her health. She was referred to one of the Power Up grantees by the DWP and received support from their employability officer to update her CV and find suitable volunteering opportunities for her. With their support, Kirsty found a volunteering role based on her needs and interests, which she hopes to develop into a career in the future.

*She helped me get the volunteering opportunity I'm doing now, which is working as a one-to-one volunteer tutor with the Volunteer Tutors Organisation - they are a charity that provides tutors to young people who need them but can't get them for whatever reason. So, that was a big thing for me.*

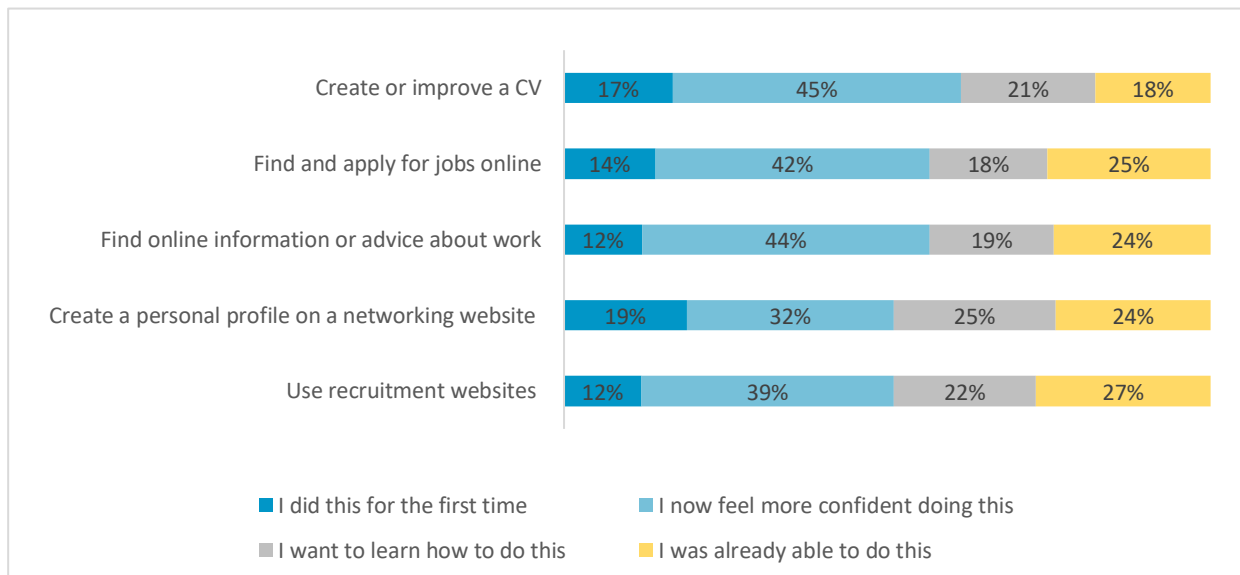
Importantly, Kirsty was able to find a role that was sustainable, without it being detrimental to her health; she says she now has a much better understanding of her capacity to work and what career paths her volunteering role might lead to, such as working part-time in a paid role as a tutor. Kirsty also received support from the grantee's Digital Inclusion Officer, who brought her up to speed on Excel and on working with shared documents. She was given advice on which laptop would best suit her digital needs, and how to set this up. She now feels confident that she has the digital skills and equipment she needs for today's workplace.

***Please note that in all instances, percentages are reported only for those people who stated that a particular metric was relevant to them. This can mean that base sizes for some statements are lower than others.***

People have made impressive gains in key areas such as creating or improving their CV (highlighted by 62 per cent), finding online information about work and applying for jobs online (57 per cent), using recruitment websites (51 per cent) and creating a personal profile on a networking site such as LinkedIn (51 per cent) – all essential to be able to succeed in finding work.

### Figure 3a People applying digital skills to improve their employability

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 547 and 454 for different statements.



People supported through the programme also developed skills they would need **to do well in a modern workplace**, once they move into employment. Whether operating in an office environment, in retail, warehousing or as a self-employed, the need for digital skills in today’s employment landscape is inescapable. Around half the people taking part (57 per cent) engaged in online training or felt more confident to do so. They also improved their understanding of online safety at work (56 per cent) and learnt to use office software (50 per cent). A similar proportion said they had seen improvements in their use of specific software for the workplace (48 per cent) organising information into files and folders on devices or cloud (48 per cent) and using social media for work (44 per cent).

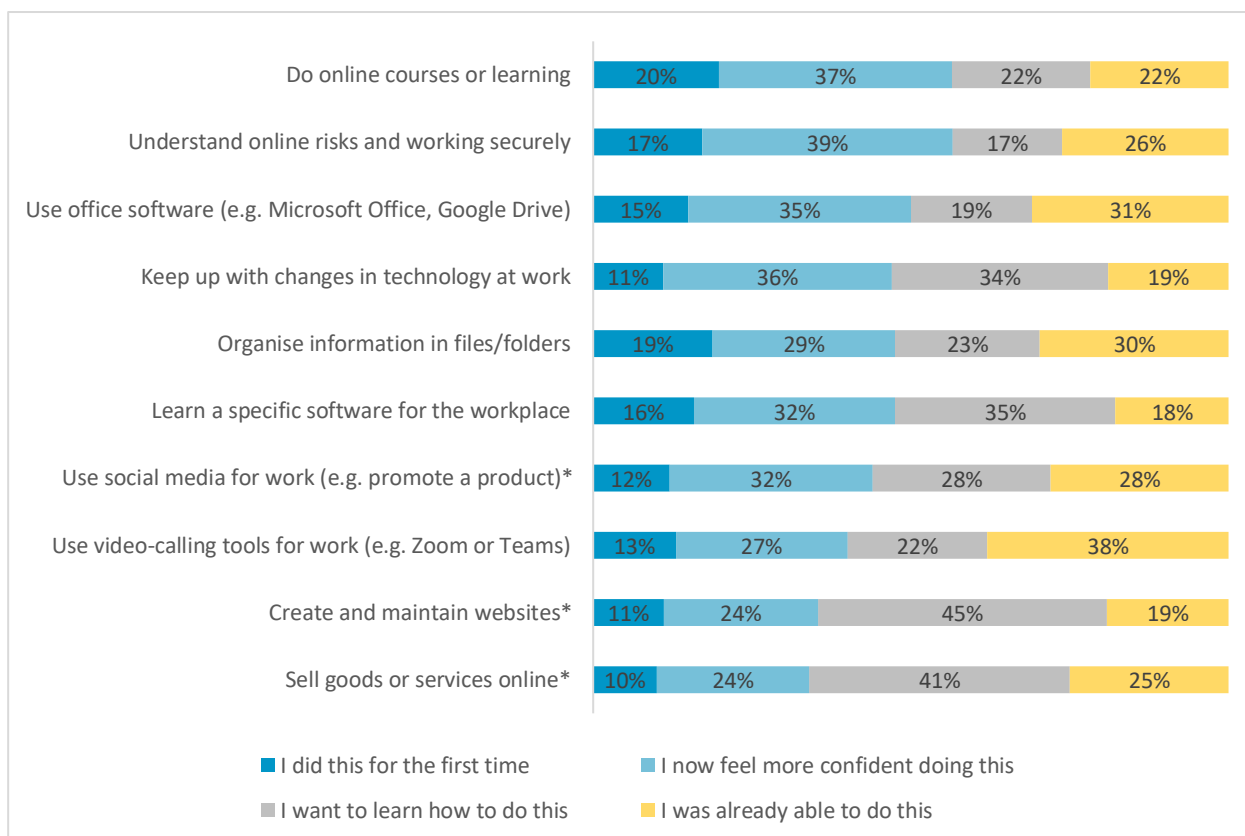
Whilst fewer people reported against the more advanced skill measures (for others this was not relevant), it was clear that by around a third of participants progress was made in areas such as creating and maintaining websites and selling goods and services online (35 and 34 per cent respectively).





### Figure 3b People applying digital skills to improve their employability

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 595 and 383 for different statements. Statements for which the number of responses was lower than average for this question are marked with \*.



Alongside this, beneficiaries gained a better understanding of the transferrable skills valued by employers, and how to evidence this based on their own personal journeys.

#### Beneficiary case study

**Kat\*** is 24 years old with learning disabilities. She lives at home with her parents, has few hobbies or interests and was referred to one of Power Up's grantees by a supported employment agency to broaden her skill set and employability. Kat was keen to develop her digital skills to help her to gain employment and to develop skills which would enable her to become more self-sufficient from family members.

As part of her training and development programme, she has independently completed nine Digital PATHS training units specifically designed for adults with learning disabilities. These eLearning modules have enabled her to develop important life skills for her future, such as budgeting and completing job applications.

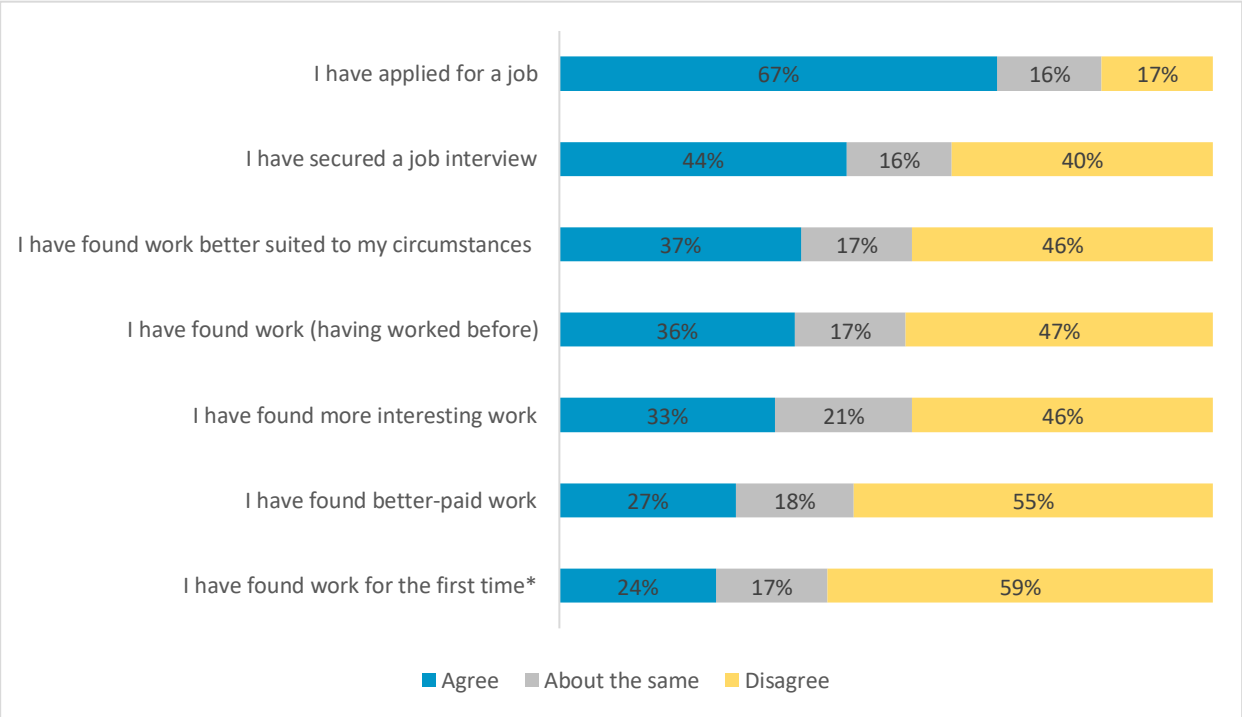
Kat lacked confidence being around people she doesn't know and can struggle to maintain eye contact. Her training on video conferencing skills helped her to develop more self-awareness and the skills to help her to overcome barriers to communicating confidently with others. She now asks more questions and is more comfortable being around others, choosing to join group lunches rather than sit on her own in a room away from everyone else, as she did before.

As part of her Hospitality training, she learnt how to use the e-Till within the grantee's training kitchen, which incorporated taking a card payment transaction. This was her first experience of using a till and taking a customer's payment and has enabled her to become familiar with how this technology is used within a process. These are skills Kat can take forward into employment and cite within job applications and interviews as part of her experience.

Having developed their digital skills in the context of work and employability, people then progressed into looking for work. It is highly encouraging to note that two thirds (67 per cent) of people seeking employability support reported that they had applied for jobs and nearly half of participants (44 per cent) had been successful in securing an interview (see Figure 4a below).

**Figure 4a Jobs and Skills: Longer-term outcomes (people moving into work)**

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 470 and 339 for different statements. Statements for which the number of responses was lower than average for this question are marked with \*.



It is all the more impressive that this has translated into 'hard employment outcomes'. Around a quarter of respondents said they had moved into employment for the very first time. Around a third reported that they



have moved into better employment, whether better suited to their personal circumstances (37 per cent), a more interesting job (33 per cent) or a better paid job (27 per cent). A composite measure based on participants agreeing to at least one of the statements in Figure 4a above indicates **70 per cent of people have either applied for a job, secured an interview or gained employment since taking part in the programme. Importantly, 44 per cent reported moving into employment or improving their employment situation<sup>10</sup>.**

### **Beneficiary case study**

After completing a baseline assessment, one grantee's staff identified that **Sam\*** required support with his employability and digital skills. He was introduced to the Learn My Way digital skills course and with some support, developed three CVs to help him look for jobs in the Hospitality, Cleaning and Sales sectors. He also took the opportunity to enrol on the grantee's in-house Catering Trainee Scheme. Whilst completing several online learning programmes, Sam was simultaneously applying for jobs online and successfully secured a part-time job working at Heathrow Airport in the hospitality industry. He is continuing to complete his Learn My Way digital skills course as well as the Catering Trainee Scheme and associated online Level 2 Food Hygiene course

In the case of one grantee, the support on offer allowed people to progress beyond common office software packages to earn a professional IT accreditation. Learners gained advanced skills in Cloud programming and IT helpdesk support, which enabled some of the cohorts to secure employment with London's key tech employers. Based on reported salaries, their new IT roles were estimated to bring in around two to three times their income prior to taking part in the programme, and this was against a backdrop of technology sector hiring freeze. This shows the great diversity of grantees (and hence beneficiaries) funded by Good Things Foundation to take part in the Power Up programme.

### **Beneficiary case study**

**Daniel\*** was referred to one of the Power Up grantees by the DWP. Although he held a degree in computer science, his lack of experience with Amazon Web Services (AWS) databases specifically meant he found it difficult to secure a permanent job in IT. Around the time of his referral, he worked in hospitality as a part-time chef.

*I'm glad I picked the part-time course because it allowed me to work. By the time I signed up, I was really counting my pennies, so I needed to keep working.*

<sup>10</sup> This is a composite measure based on people agreeing to any (one or more) of the five bottom statements displayed in Figure 4a, i.e. they have found work for the first time, moved back into work after a period of not working or being unemployed or found a better suited to their circumstances, more interesting or better paid job.

Daniel progressed through the 16-week course, achieved his AWS certification and is now employed as a Cloud Developer within an IT firm. He feels the support he received during his Power Up course and his AWS certification were instrumental in helping him to secure his new role:

*Everything I did at [Power Up grantee] is literally what I'm doing at work. It's so related, I'm using an AWS console all the time. If it wasn't for [Power Up grantee] I wouldn't be doing this job. It was literally a godsend.*

The support provided by this grantee developed both technical and employability skills, and it is this combination that made the provision so effective for Daniel.

*I realised I had a huge gap in my skill set for the jobs I wanted to get, so [my instructor] actually started from the fundamentals and, for me, it was really helpful.*

*When I came out of that, my CV was on another level. Before, my CV was decent, but she nitpicked it to a point where it was really, really good. And, I feel that made a difference. There was also a lot on finding your skill set, thinking about what you want to do outside of the course, finding your strengths, finding your weaknesses... I feel that was really helpful too.*

It is also worth noting that Power Up has also supported a minority of people to **start up their own businesses** or become self-employed and to learn to run it better (15 and 22 per cent respectively<sup>11</sup>).

### **Beneficiary case study**

Adanna\* is in her early sixties and has been looking for work for a while. She believes that being close to retirement made this harder as some employers are reluctant to take on older staff. While searching for work, she had to rely on her small business of making and selling jewellery and items of clothing at her local market for some income to supplement her benefits.

She was recommended one of Power Up 2.0 grantee organisations by her local Jobcentre; they explained that she can get help with her digital skills which she hadn't used for a while and gain employability support too.

After a few sessions, not only did Adanna learn how to use the Internet or software like Word, Excel and PowerPoint, she became a lot more confident too. Alongside actively using her improved digital skills for job-searching online, she spotted many opportunities to apply them to make her small business more effective. She started by having a go at sourcing and buying her materials online as opposed to travelling to purchase them in person, thanks to the skills she learnt when taking part in Power Up. This instantly increased the profit that she got from the new items she created and sold. Inspired by her success of learning new digital skills and how useful

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<sup>11</sup> Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Base=286.



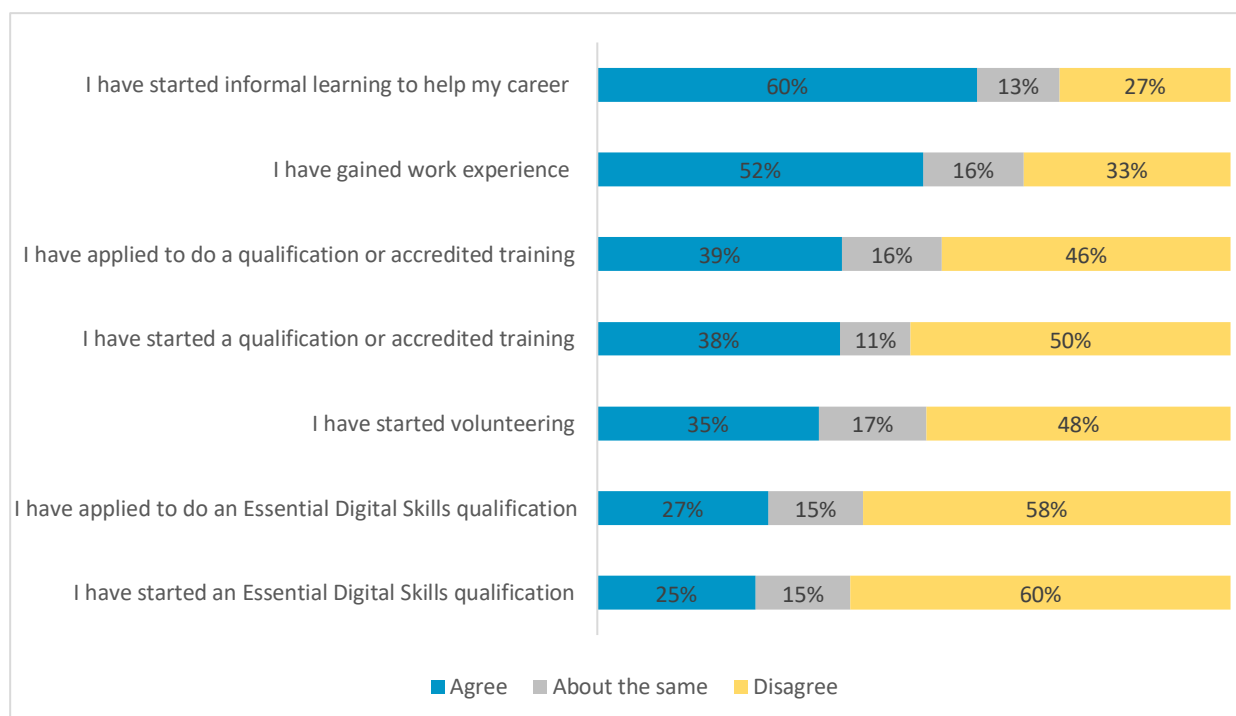
they turned out to be, she then decided to learn more about social media and websites so that she could sell her items online too.

Testimonials have also indicated that some used their new-found digital skills to access remote job opportunities and freelance work platforms.

For other people supported through Power Up, moving straight into employment was unachievable (for example because of the nature of their needs or disabilities or lack of experience) or not the right thing to do at that moment in time (where they were looking to get trained or gain qualifications to move into the jobs that they aspired to do). For these people, outcomes such as gaining work experience (mentioned by 52 per cent), beginning to do volunteering work (35 per cent) or applying and then starting a qualification or an accredited training course (39 and 38 per cent respectively) was particularly important.

#### Figure 4b Jobs and Skills: Longer-term outcomes (learning and qualifications)

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 415 and 389 for different statements.



**Almost four out of five people (76 per cent) looking to improve their employability reported that they had started informal learning or got involved in a formal training course or gained experience needed to move into employment.** This is a composite score based on participants agreeing to at least one of the statements in Figure 4b above.

Equally impressive, is the fact that two thirds (60 per cent<sup>12</sup>) felt their job or business prospects had improved since taking part in Power Up. Encouragingly, an overwhelming majority (82 per cent<sup>13</sup>) of people supported through the programme said they felt motivated to continue learning.

### **Beneficiary case study**

**John\*** was unable to work, due to a serious accident and prolonged ill health. He was keen to join a beginners' computer course offered by one of the Power Up grantees, as he felt this would be good for his confidence and motivation, and could help him to secure a potential volunteering role.

As John had already completed several beginners' computer courses before, his confidence grew from the very first lesson and he took it upon himself to help his fellow learners either side of him. Recognising John's helpful nature, the course tutor asked if he would be interested in becoming a Digital Champion (Volunteer). It was decided that John would continue on the course as a learner, so that he could familiarise himself with the course content. John noted that even though he'd been on several computer courses before, he still learnt plenty of new information, which he had not been taught previously.

John has since become a fully-fledged Digital Champion and has so far been present at more than 10 lessons, or approximately 30 hours. As part of the volunteer role he is undergoing additional Skills Gate online training, in modules such as health and safety, personal boundaries, diversity and inclusion and adult safeguarding.

### **People's personal finance skills and financial situation (Financial Health)**

Similar to employability, we considered two dimensions for this theme: people applying their new or improved digital skills as a way of improving their financial situation and longer-term outcomes.

*Please note that in all instances, percentages, noting changes or otherwise, are reported only for those people who stated that a particular metric was relevant to them. This can mean that base sizes for some statements are lower than others.*

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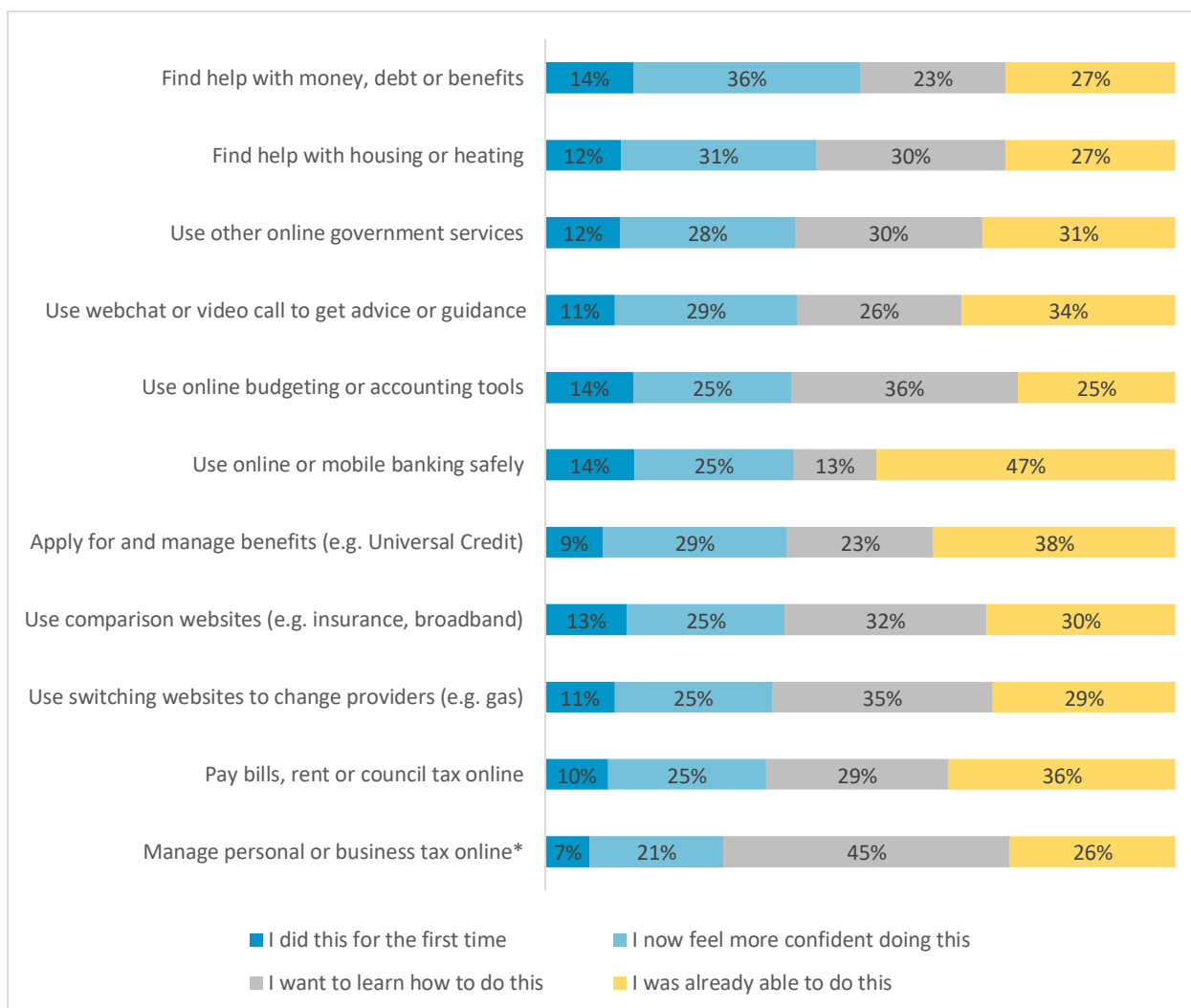
<sup>12</sup> Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Base=472.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Base=593.



### Figure 5 People applying digital skills to improve their financial health

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 649 and 357 for different statements. Statements for which the number of responses was lower than average for this question are marked with \*.



Overall, when it comes to the application of digital and personal finance skills, outcomes looked quite homogeneous: between 7-14 per cent reported performing financial health actions (such as online banking, budgeting or using price comparison websites) for the first time, and further 21-36 per cent reported their improved confidence in carrying out these actions. Being able to use their digital skills to find help with money, debt or benefits was the most notable outcome in this area, highlighted by half (50 per cent) of respondents to whom this was relevant. For instance, people sought grantees' support in setting up an online account with the DWP, as this is now the default route for Universal Credit applications.

It is also worth highlighting that almost one in six respondents said they used online budgeting or banking for the first time (mentioned by 14 per cent of people).

*I've really enjoyed learning new digital skills at [grantee]. I'm particularly enjoying learning about online shopping and budgeting. These are really useful skills for me to have, giving me more independence and a better understanding of managing my money.*

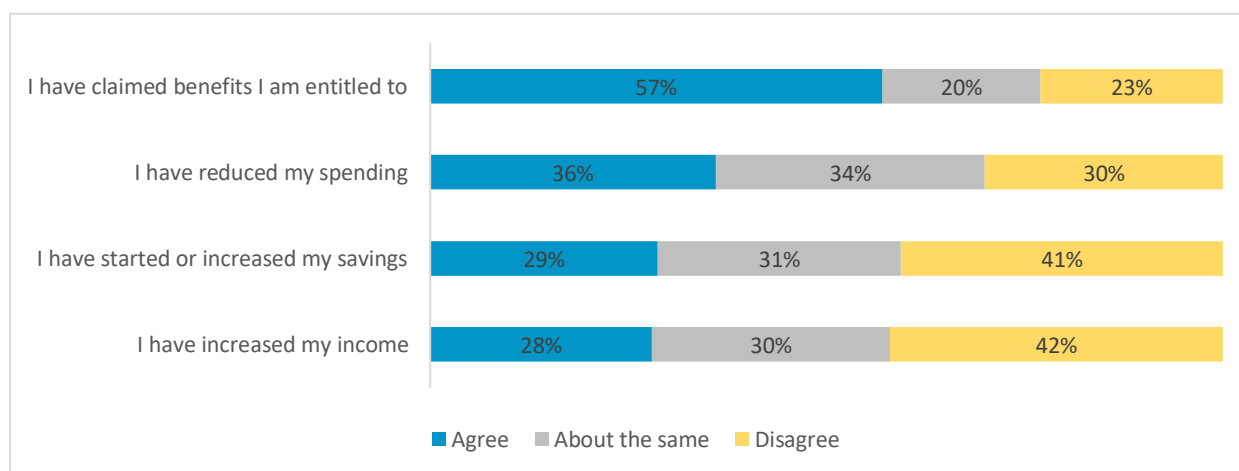
**Power Up beneficiary (24 years old with learning disabilities)**

Given that the improvements in Figure 5 relate to learnt *skills*, we would expect to see the positive changes in their financial situation being sustained or even built on in the future.

This seems to be the case when we look at the longer-term outcomes related to Financial Health (Figure 6a): the available evidence suggests that following their involvement in the programme around **two thirds (67 per cent) 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**. This is a composite score based on participants agreeing to at least one of the statements in Figure 6a below.

**Figure 6a Financial Health: Longer-term outcomes**

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant' or 'prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 612 and 562 for different statements.



Over half (57 per cent) of Power Up participants have been able to claim the benefits they are entitled to is a notable achievement. Whilst highlighted by lower proportions of people, the following outcomes are equally impressive, particularly given that they were achieved during the current cost of living crisis: 28 per cent of those who responded to the respective statements in the impact survey had *increased* their income (e.g. due to getting a job or being able to access benefits) and 29 per cent had started or increased their savings. For 36 per cent of participants, their improved financial situation was linked to *reducing* their costs (e.g. as a result of budgeting and using price-comparisons websites).





Reducing their debts, with the help of Power Up grantee organisations was an important factor for some people.

*To date, we have already successfully managed £127,000 of both 'essential' (e.g., HMRC) and 'nonessential' (e.g., credit cards) debt for 14 people via our Debt Advice Service ... This equates to an average of £9,000 per beneficiary. The longer-term outcomes for these clients speak for themselves as there are benefits not only to their financial circumstances but also to their mental health, their living circumstance, and their overall life progression. Tackling creditors is only part of the journey however and our service works in partnership with the digital team in developing tools for prevention, budgeting and managing finances online (e.g., online banking, paying bills, direct debits).*

#### Power Up grantee

### Beneficiary case study

**Jim\*** had been out of employment for a prolonged period when he was referred to one of the Power Up grantees for support with his employability and digital skills. In his own words, *'I was absolutely rubbish - I could google but that was about it'*. Jim had neither computer nor broadband access at home. Two of his more pressing tasks were to open an account with the DWP and upload a current CV, so that he could continue to receive his jobseekers' allowance.

The grantee team worked with Jim on his CV, helping him to update his details and work on his personal statement. Jim learnt how to send and receive emails and navigate Government websites, with support. He successfully opened an account with the DWP and maintained his DWP journal at home using a laptop and data provided to him by the grantee, rather than having to travel to the local library as he'd had to do in the past.

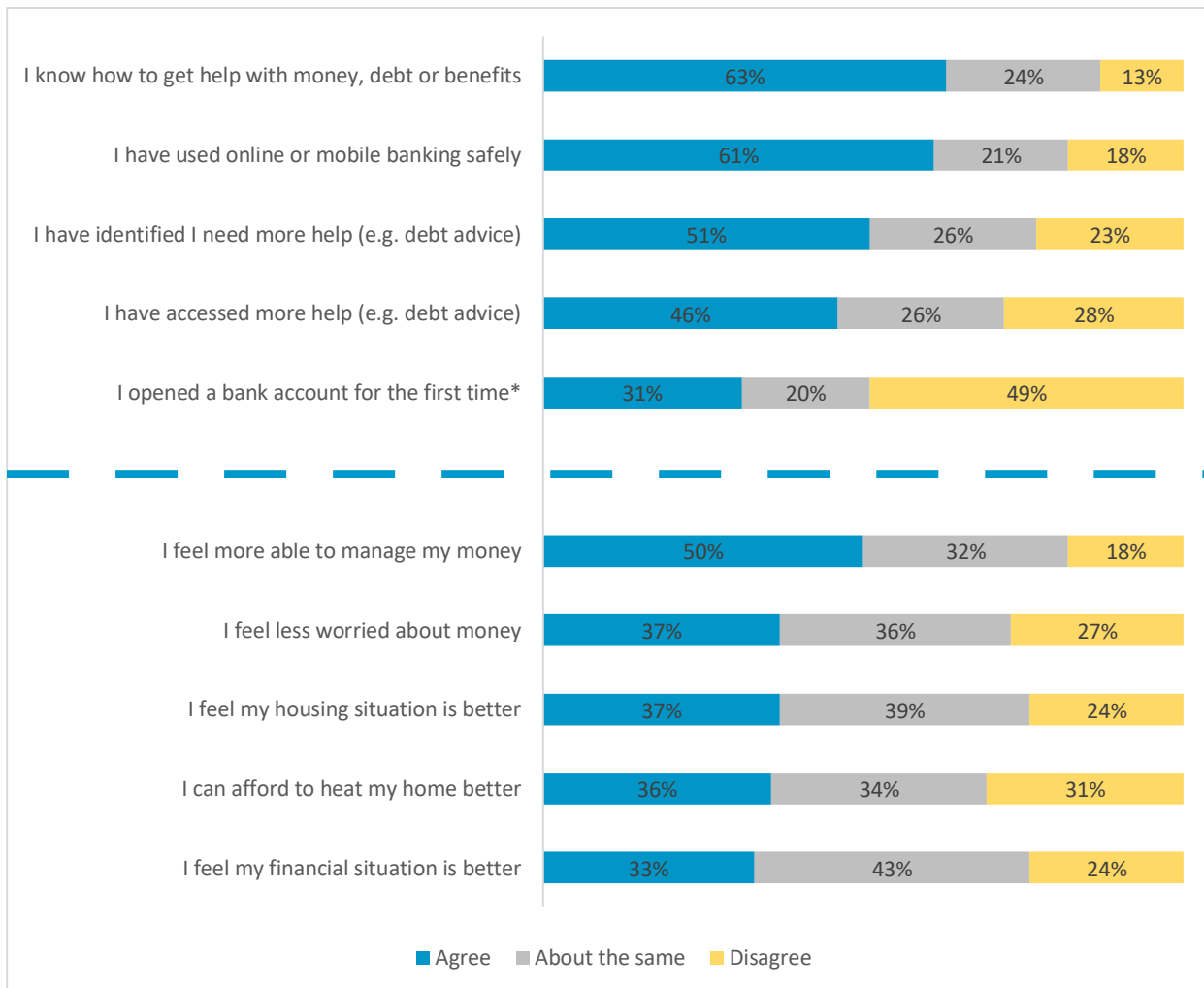
*It took me an hour and a half to sign up to the dole, but I did it by myself. So that was quite cool.*

With help, he uploaded his CV onto the DWP portal and was able to demonstrate the job training and searches he had completed, so that he was able to continue receiving his jobseekers' allowance.

Power Up gave people the tools and the know-how to improve their financial situation, with nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) saying they knew how to get help with money, debt or benefits as a result of taking part in the programme (Figure 6b below). Around half of participants had identified they needed more help with money (51 per cent), and nearly the same amount (46 per cent) had managed to access this help.

**Figure 6b Financial Health: Longer-term outcomes**

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated ‘not relevant’ or ‘prefer not to say’. Bases vary between 663 and 428 for different statements. Statements for which the number of responses was lower than average for this question are marked with \*.



People’s feelings about their financial situation and their ability to manage it are also worth noting (Figure 5b). Half (50 per cent) of the Power Up participants now felt they were better able to manage their money and over a third (37 per cent) commented that they felt less worried about money, the latter being important for people’s mental health and wellbeing.

**Other outcomes**

Whilst not an intended outcome in the original programme design, beneficiaries’ enhanced mental and emotional well-being was noted during the first iteration of Power Up and therefore several indicators relating to people’s mental and emotional wellbeing were included in the evaluation of Power Up 2.0.



As we saw before, improvements to **people's confidence as a result of their involvement in Power Up emerged as one of the strongest outcomes of the programme**, with 84 per cent of respondents highlighting positive changes.

*The support I received has helped me with my self-confidence.*

Improvements to people's ability to become or remain independent are similarly impressive, noted by three quarters of participants.

Finally, two thirds of respondents said that the support they received from grantees, and the digital skills and access they gained, enabled them to increase their connection with friends and family and feel less isolated.

*The best thing has been establishing links to my family and friends. I didn't have this before.*

#### **Power Up beneficiary**

It is worth noting that simply taking part in group activities within the context of Power Up could foster a sense of community and togetherness, which in turn positively impacted on motivation and confidence.

*Collaborative learning environments and peer support networks established during the program have increased participant confidence, motivation, and a sense of belonging. Qualitative feedback from beneficiaries highlights the positive impact of peer learning and mentorship on their personal and professional development.*

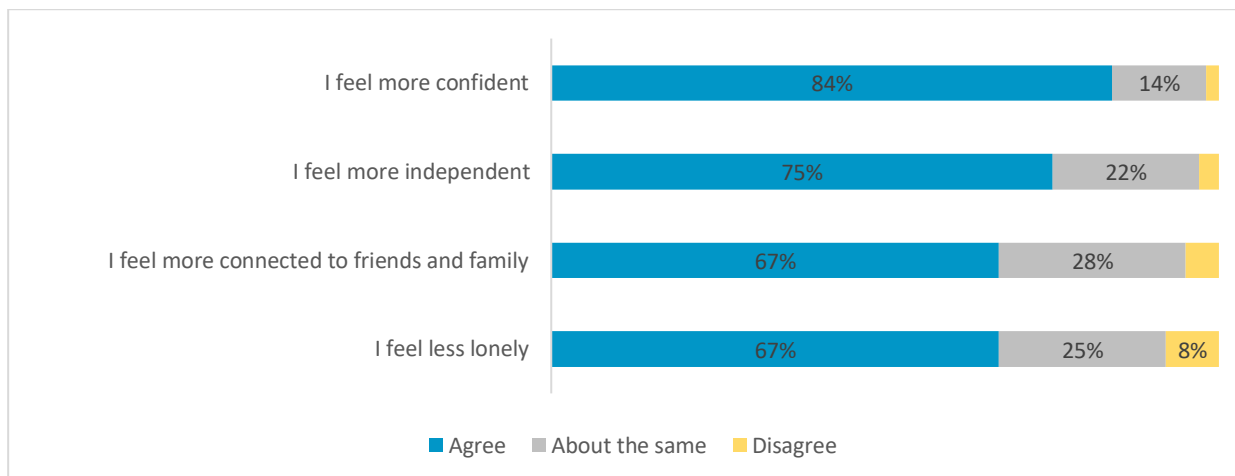
#### **Power Up grantee**

*I'm really happy to have digital skills training. I used to be really bad and now I am loads better and it makes me feel included like everyone else.*

#### **Power Up beneficiary**

### Figure 7 Impact on other outcomes – personal development and mental health and wellbeing

Source: beneficiary impact survey, all respondents who provided an answer to this question, excluding those who stated 'not relevant/prefer not to say'. Bases vary between 824 and 676 for different statements.



Our analysis also highlighted other outcomes that have not been captured quantitatively but emerged from stakeholder interviews and grantee reports.

Power Up 2.0 has enabled people to access a range of online services important for overall wellbeing that would otherwise have been out of reach or more difficult to access. This encompasses essentials such as access to healthcare and accommodation, as well as other things that help to make life easier and more enjoyable, such as participating in online communities, researching or engaging in a favourite past-time/interest, listening to music online and shopping online. The cumulative effect of all of these factors on a person's wellbeing can be considerable.

*I am now able to keep in touch with support agencies and not miss appointments as most of them are online.*

*I enjoy the access to wellbeing groups, and mental health in the community.*

*The digital skills training has made such a difference to me as I'm less scared and more confident about using things like my phone. I've downloaded a gym App on my phone and use it with the touchscreens at the gym to monitor my progress and health. It makes me feel more in control and I'm using the equipment like everyone else.*

#### Power Up beneficiaries

In the case of deaf beneficiaries or those with disabilities, advice on how to use specialist technology and software has enabled them to pursue their interests and hobbies and interact with people more effectively. Where English is not their mother tongue, some beneficiaries of the programme have either been able to improve their level of English and/or have learnt to use digital interpretation tools, as a result of their involvement in Power Up.

In short, participation in Power Up has empowered people to solve some of their challenges for themselves. It has helped them to feel valued, respected and part of society.



## Beneficiary case study

**Dev\*** has learning difficulties and cerebral palsy which impairs his coordination, and he has trouble concentrating and remembering things. Prior to taking part in Power Up, Dev had very few digital skills but recognised that they could help him to live more independently.

Completing eLearning modules on Basic Digital Skills and Safety Online were major achievements for Dev. Working in short training sessions of around 30-40 minutes with one or two targets suited his learning needs and personality.

Dev sometimes struggled to comprehend the difference between personal and private information and what is appropriate to share online. Completing his Security Awareness has taught him about cyber security, phishing, and the importance of being aware that some things appearing online cannot always be trusted. A simple visual tool, such as a padlock symbol on a website, helped him to recognise a safe internet site.

Despite Dev's low literacy skills, he has been able to use his new skills to navigate around a digital tablet or laptop, access text-to-speech tools and develop the confidence to be more actively engaged in Digital Skills training. During 2023, Dev moved into independent living for the first time. He can now use digital devices to research information online which helps his social development. For example, he learnt how to use a touchscreen laptop to search for Cinema listings and work out how much a ticket would cost. These exercises are enabling Dev to learn to use digital tools outside of the training environment to widen his life experiences.

# POWERING UP PROVISION

## Overview of activities

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.

The following are examples of some of the activities that grantees carried out as part of their Power Up provision development:

### **Beneficiary needs assessment and provision gap analysis**

Provision gaps identified by grantees differed considerably and included changes needed to content and resources, their delivery model or ways of supporting participants' access.

*We had a digital skills service prior to this project, but we identified some key gaps along the journey. The previous offer focused primarily on allowing clients to choose areas of interest, to use as a hook and then indirectly teaching skills identified as needing improvement, for example... downloading, signing up, resetting passwords, using menus and accepting permissions. This made it difficult to link clients together into groups due to differing interests and abilities. Whilst clients could come to learn work skills, the primary focus was on getting digital skills to those most isolated and with the least exposure to digital education. The age range was typically those over retirement age. We still offer the option of coming [to us] with any problems through our drop-in sessions, ... [but our] work skills provision [now has] a more step-by-step focus to achieve [employability] outcomes, designed around client's needs.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Needs identification included research activities with beneficiaries and trials of different assessment approaches, to identify those that would be best suited to their specific provision. There were instances when this process was challenging and grantees ended up trying different assessment approaches and tools before settling on one that gave them the evidence they needed.

### **Learning resource development**

Unlike the first Phase of Power Up, fewer grantees decided to develop their own resources. Many chose to use Learn My Way and other digital learning materials instead. It was typically those grantees who supported people with disabilities or those with very particular/narrow needs, for example people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation, that created new learning resources as part of Power Up 2.0.



## **Curriculum development**

Irrespective of whether they created their own resources or used existing ones, the majority of grantees developed a curriculum or a programme of study and support for their grantees. In some cases this took the form of a learning platform or an app, aimed directly at the programme beneficiaries, enabling them to engage with learning and support either in a guided (a recommended sequence of activities) or a flexible, needs-based/driven way.

## **Partnership-working to improve their support offer and its reach**

All grantees worked with a range of partners to strengthen their provision and its reach. For example, some developed links with employers to provide their participants with specialist inputs and placement opportunities. Others worked with local organisations, to increase their reach, by basing it on partner organisations' premises, so that it was closer to the people they tried to support.

In addition to the beneficiary-facing provision development activities, there were also organisational capacity-building activities which were essential for achieving grantees' aspirations related to their delivery work and supporting beneficiaries. Examples of these included:

- Frontline staff and volunteer training.
- Putting new systems and tools, such as a client management systems, in place within grantee organisations, reflecting more comprehensive support and greater prioritisation of digital and attention to monitoring and continuous improvement of digital skills development provision.

## **Learnings**

A considerable proportion of grantees' learnings was to do with adapting and refining their provision, so that it reflected their beneficiaries' needs and was as effective as possible in supporting them. Examples of this included:

### **Moving away from online-only delivery modes**

Transitioning from online-only delivery modes towards blended and in-person, responding to (potential) participant dislike of virtual learning after it was so prominent during the pandemic.

## **Breaking down course content**

Chunking their course content much more than originally planned, moving towards 'bite-size' learning, pairing it with numerous opportunities for reinforcing and practising new skills, prompted by recognising how challenging some participants found the programme content and learning of any kind.

*We have learnt not to create too large and complex modules and to ensure the basics are covered at the start of each training unit even when engaging learners with more digital knowledge and experience. Mixed-ability adults need to do the basics well before they can move onto more complex tasks, and expectations of what skills they have or how quickly they will be able to master certain tasks needs to vary according to the person's background and needs. Each of our [learning resource] units can be adapted to specifically meet the pace and language requirements of our trainees who need more support.*

**Power Up grantee**

## **Considering course and session timings**

Reflecting on course and session timings really carefully, bearing in mind the implications of the length and frequency of sessions on people's ability to learn but also trying to ensure practicality and convenience for participants.

*Our lessons [were] three hours long, although we [had] regular breaks. In the future, I'd have two-hour lessons, which helps in terms of concentration and remembering what you have done in a lesson.*

**Power Up grantee**

*Offering manageable, flexible learning tools is key when trying to engage and maintain the focus of our complex clients. Lengthier programmes requiring regular attendance are sometimes less appealing for some of our clients.*

**Power Up grantee**

In terms of convenience and practicality, offering course timings that fitted in with learners' lifestyles helped grantees attract a wider range of participants. Specifically, offering a shortened day (9.30am-2.30pm) on their intensive learning courses helped one grantee reach people with childcare, caring and part-time job commitments, previously struggling to access their provision.

## **Combining group delivery with more bespoke support**

Introducing elements of mentoring and one-to-one support alongside group approaches, to enable their participants to start their involvement in the programme if they were unsure or needed a lot of support, to 'catch up' on any learning they had missed or where there was too much variation between participants, with some of them requiring additional bespoke support, to enable them to achieve long term outcomes in particular.





*We have found it particularly effective to start [our participants' learning journeys with us] with short duration one-to-one training sessions before building up to longer sessions and involving group training sessions.*

**Power Up grantee**

Mentoring and coaching also included a more holistic, person-centred approach, and offered wellbeing and pastoral elements where this was needed by people, alongside digital skills and employability provision.

*[We have learnt how important it is to] provide personalised support tailored to each individual's unique needs, preferences, and circumstances. Important to coach with a more person-centred approach so beneficiaries can take accountability for achieving agreeable goals and actions. This caters to different learning styles and preferences, enhancing retention and engagement. [Where needed, we try to] incorporate mindfulness techniques and well-being practices to support individuals in managing stress, maintaining focus, and sustaining motivation. Encourage regular breaks, mindfulness meditation, physical activity, and other self-care activities to foster overall well-being and resilience.*

**Power Up grantee**

## **Speaking to beneficiaries 'in their own language'**

Grantees working with people with disabilities and learning difficulties also spoke about the importance of using 'their own language' within training and of using different types of devices, to suit their beneficiaries' needs. The latter was also reiterated by grantees working with other groups.

*People learn better in their native language, and this is an essential factor in supporting our clients. Unlike hearing people, our clients cannot passively listen while watching a slideshow or demonstration, they must look at us when we are using BSL. This is why video works so well, as they can go back and rewatch as many times as required.*

**Power Up grantee**

*We have also learnt the importance of [our programme participants] having access to different types of digital devices. As their learning disabilities and therefore learning needs and styles... vary, we find there is different appeal and use of devices such as laptops/tablets/PCs/smartphones. We have found our trainees respond better to touchscreen interactive devices than standard PCs and laptops.*

**Power Up grantee**

## **Identifying progression opportunities**

Several grantees mentioned that they identified a need for providing progression opportunities for their beneficiaries. Often, their desire to continue their learning and digital skills development was

highlighted by the programme participants themselves. To address this, grantees were looking into options of expanding their digital inclusion offer and/or exploring if they could signpost people to existing provision in the area.

One grantee identified a set of core issues such as financial literacy, confidence and workplace discrimination that needed to be addressed/integrated into their offer in order to increase the durability of positive outcomes from their digital skills programme:

*Support addressing these barriers and implementing supportive strategies, policymakers and stakeholders can help beneficiaries overcome obstacles and achieve lasting improvements in their employment status and financial well-being.*

**Power Up grantee**

### **Embedding digital within a broader support offer**

Another common thread of learnings articulated by grantees was to do with embedding digital within their broader support offer and the related organisational development that had taken place as part of Power Up.

Most often, grantees recognised the importance of having a member of staff or a team whose responsibility was to promote and enable digital inclusion. In most instances, these colleagues were responsible for learning resources and provision development and in many cases, they also carried out its delivery. The extent to which such colleagues were involved in partnership-working and other strategic activities differed between grantees: in some cases this was part of their responsibilities, in others, it was not.

When reflecting on buy-in internally, grantees spoke about the importance of support from the leadership of the organisation and securing that as soon as possible, ideally from the outset. Such support and buy-in were visible in the organisations that made the greatest progress in embedding digital as part of their involvement in Power Up.

*We recommend that any commitment to digital inclusion starts at the top of an organisation, with trustees and in the boardroom.*

**Power Up grantee**

*The Board and staff team were conscious if digital skills did not continue to be encouraged and developed amongst our community of trainees, they were at risk of the digital divide becoming greater and being left further behind. As a result, digital development became a strategic priority for [grantee organisation]'s mission to support adults with disabilities into employment and independent living.*

**Power Up grantee**



*... Leadership plays a crucial role in promoting digital inclusion. Our senior leaders champion initiatives aimed at upskilling older employees or service users and sends a clear message throughout the organisation that everyone's development is valued.*

#### Power Up grantee

They also highlighted the importance and value of working closely with internal teams 'to ensure wrap-around approach is taken to client support and service provision', being clear about the tangible benefits of dual – digital integrated within other – support to beneficiaries and their organisation, including its various teams and staff.

## Impact on Provision

All grantees reported achievements related to their provision development. These included:

- **New provision being developed or pre-existing programmes or models being adapted, revived and refined.** In all cases, grantees were delighted that they were able to not only carry out the development work but also to test and refine their programmes. Many of them stated that having a 'tried and tested' programme and evidence of its impact was one of the main Power Up outcomes for them. They were expecting to be able to use that and build on it post-programme.

*Our key achievements during the reporting period include the development of provision for underemployed people.*

#### Power Up grantee

- **New or refined content, resources, platforms and apps**

*Through the Power Up 2.0 initiative... we have been able to take significant steps in the development of our digital provision... A Digital Skills training programme has been created comprising 9 digitally focused training units to further encourage adults with disabilities into employment and independent living. In addition, five new eLearning modules have been created as part of the Digital Skills training units and are specifically designed for adults with learning disabilities (including bite-size topics and use of assistive technology including voiceovers) to help to make more logical connections and context beyond remembering factual information.*

#### Power Up grantee

- **Greater reach and scale of delivery.** Some grantees were able to increase their previous digital inclusion reach multi-fold. Others were able to embed themselves at numerous new outreach locations in their area.

*Participation in Power Up 2.0 ensured the opportunity to expand the service city-wide, delivering digital skills training from seven locations throughout [the city].*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*At the start of Power Up, we had begun delivering our project through one homeless hostel and in the IT suite at our own homeless day centre. We are now delivering our work in: our own on-site IT Suite; four homeless hostels (with client referrals also coming from several others); one Women's Refuge; and, a Forensic Hospital where we are now working with two separate client cohorts (their community group and their resident group).*

#### **Power Up grantee**

- Improved **quality of provision or it becoming more accessible and inclusive.**

*The introduction of new content and methodologies has led to increased engagement and participation among learners. They are more motivated to learn and actively participate in training sessions or workshops due to the relevance and of the content to their personal and professional development goals... There is [also] evidence of greater effectiveness in provision/support as seen through improved outcomes among beneficiaries, resulting in higher rates of job placements, successful career transitions, increased confidence in utilising digital tools, and positive feedback on the quality of support received.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Across the programme, there was evidence of the following features, described in wider research and evidence as best practice in learning and development, being visible in grantees' provision:

- Recognising the importance of building trusting relationships between staff (sometimes multiple colleagues or even the 'entire centre') and beneficiaries, devoting time and resources to achieve this essential pre-requisite of engagement and subsequent learning, development and growth
- Opting for multi-input, often long-term and frequent support approaches (as opposed to one-offs)
- Combining group and one-to-one delivery mechanisms, drawing on their respective strengths
- Drawing on peer support to motivate and ensure the best possible outcomes
- Using hands-on, interactive delivery approaches, with numerous opportunities to practise skills and reinforce learning
- Ensuring learning is as relevant as possible and creating diverse opportunities to apply it in a range of contexts
- Actively using needs assessment and progress monitoring data in their provision and ensuring learning journeys of individual participants and their cohorts are effective.



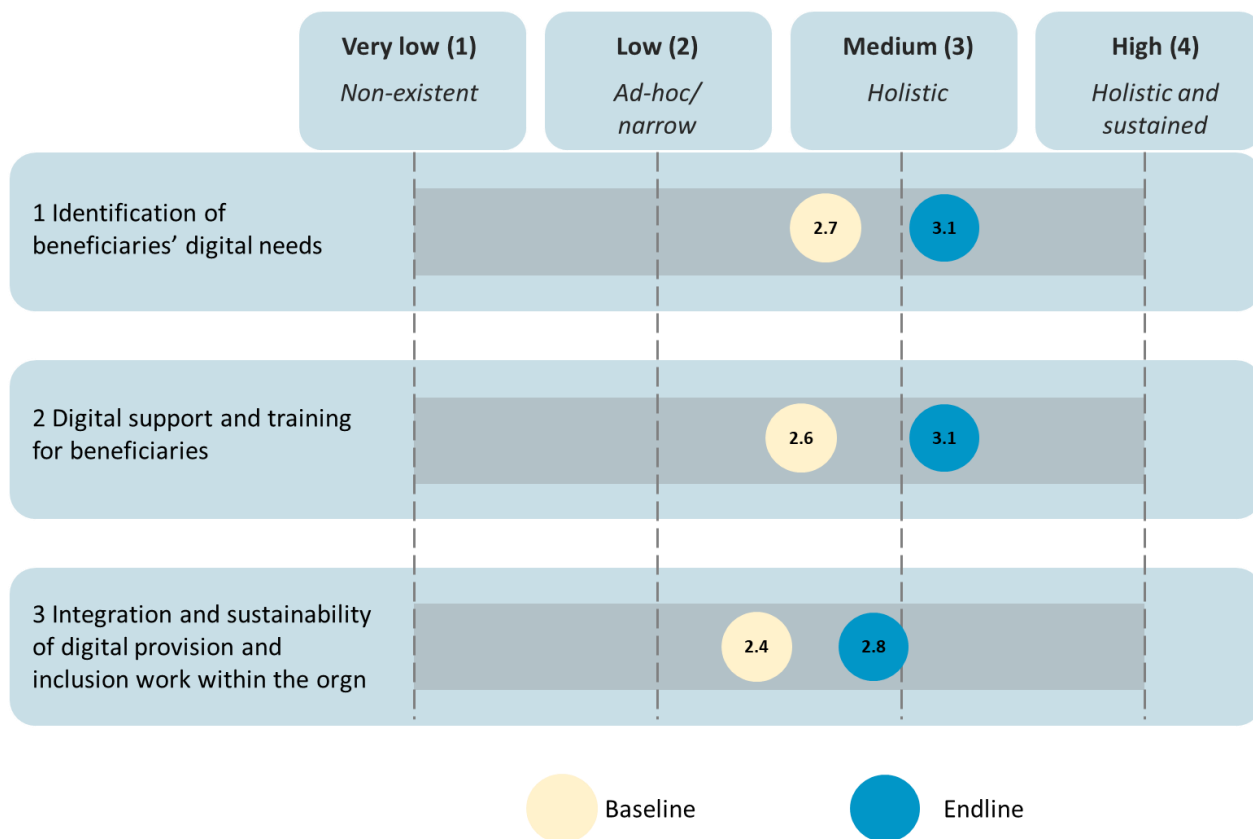
## Embedding digital

Within Power Up 2.0, Powering Up Provision was defined as embedding digital into existing programmes of support and equipping local organisations with the capacity and resources they need to help the people they work with adopt and apply digital skills. For this reason, in this section, we explicitly consider embedding digital and the extent to which it had been achieved by grantees as part of the programme.

Research and evaluation work completed during Phase One, highlighted that ‘embedding digital’ can be understood in a number of ways. Here, when referring to ‘embedding digital’, we mean embedding digital skills provision and inclusion within organisations providing employability, financial capability and other support to people and communities.

Earlier Power Up research and evaluation work also highlighted that embedding digital spans multiple dimensions – provision, organisational capacity and sustainability of digital inclusion and skills development work. In order to track that over the course of Power Up 2.0 and to improve grantees’ and other organisations’ clarity of understanding of what ‘embedding digital’ entails thus making it easier to facilitate the desired provision development and organisational change, with support from Good Things Foundation, Chrysalis Research developed a set of benchmarks, suggesting a progressive development trajectory for each dimension (See Appendix 3). Working with documentary evidence and grantee interview data, the evaluation team mapped out all Phase Two grantee organisation’s practice, ways of working and organisational priorities using the benchmarks and then assembled a programme-level overview, which is provided in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 8 Programme-level overview of the status of ‘embedding digital’ at baseline and endline, average scores per benchmark area, aggregated across all grantees.**



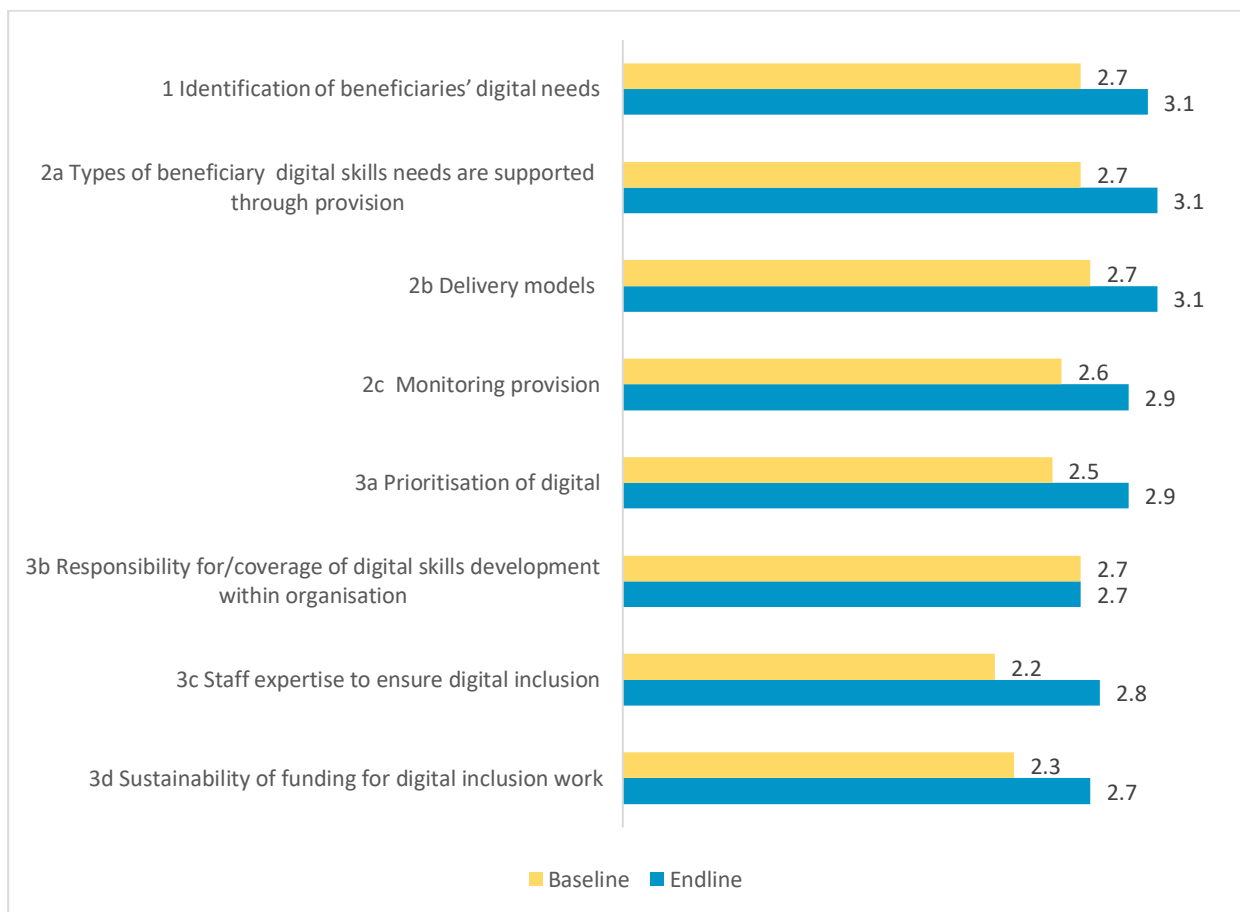
As can be seen from Figure 7, when aggregated across all grantees and dimensions of the Embedding Digital Benchmarks Framework, the scores for the programme as a whole at baseline were between ad hoc and narrow practices and those that are holistic and systematic (i.e. between low and medium levels). At the end of the programme, they were holistic and systematic for two out of the three areas and the latter was very close to achieving that medium level, with the level of progress over the lifetime of the programme being very similar for all benchmark areas.

Further analysis of individual descriptors comprising the three benchmark areas (Figure 8), reveals that:

- Identification of beneficiaries' digital needs, Types of beneficiary digital skills needs are supported through provision, Delivery models – emerged as the strongest (highest scoring at endline).
- Staff expertise and Prioritisation of digital within the organisation have emerged as the areas of greatest progress and development (biggest difference between baseline and endline scores)



**Figure 9 Average benchmark scores at baseline and endline, aggregated across all grantees**



It is important to note however, that applying the benchmarks to disaggregated (i.e. individual grantee) evidence, revealed considerable differences between grantees. For approximately half of all grantees, analysis of their practice and activity using the Benchmarks, suggested only a minimal amount of progress and development. Admittedly, two grantees within this group had the highest scores across the programme at baseline; with their practice being between medium and high levels, so the scope for further improvement was limited. For the other half, the change was considerable. In one particularly impressive case, the average benchmark score across all areas changed from 1.6 to 3.1. In other words, that grantee's digital inclusion practice and systems changed from being non-existent or ad hoc to holistic over the course of the programme and – according to this organisation itself – as a direct result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0. This organisation

*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**

This organisation's progress in embedding digital can be attributed to a combination of factors:

- Acute realisation that the people they support need digital skills in order to progress into employment and to be able to live independently at the same time as recognising the scale of the challenges, due to their beneficiaries' additional needs
- High quality and multi-faceted – digital as well as teaching – expertise being brought in which was essential to be able to design a new and effective curriculum
- Explicit and sustained commitment and buy-in at senior level, including the organisation's leaders and trustees of the
- Attention to upskilling (virtually all) existing staff
- The organisation being relatively small-size and homogenous in its activity.

Taking part in Power Up 2.0 also enabled grantees to appreciate the value of digital being embedded in their wider support provision, irrespective of whether this was something that was achieved as a result of them being involved in Power Up or if considerable elements of this were already in place at baseline. As the programme progressed, it was noted by the majority of grantees that digital learning was most effective when it was embedded in a wider programme of employability/personal finance skills or other support.

*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**

*There is also an acute awareness [within the organisation] that our beneficiaries... tend to require whole-person support to free up space, time, and capacity for learning, and to be receptive to the benefits of being digitally included.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*We can confidently say providing Digital Skills training has been beneficial for each of our trainees, has enabled them to participate more fully in their training and development programmes... and be happier and healthier as a result.*

#### **Power Up grantee**





## Impact on grantees' organisations

**Embedding digital within their organisations' work and systems**, as outlined in the previous section, and **staff development** were two prominent areas of impact on the grantee organisations. In terms of staff development, the majority of grantees reported that colleagues, including frontline workers, developed their digital skills.

*[Our Power Up project] has...catalysed the development of digital skills amongst our staff team. For example, prior to involvement in Power Up 2.0 [our staff responsible for vocation training] were only required to complete basic digital tasks as part of their roles, such as managing emails in Microsoft Outlook, [or using] Microsoft Word... [As a result of] introducing dedicated digital skills training along with Onefile learner management software... our professional trainers are now responsible for assigning and assessing training units through Onefile and supporting trainees to complete their activities using tablet devices... Therefore, their own digital journey has been accelerated in order to be able to keep up with the increasing digital skills and demands amongst our community of trainees.*

### Power Up grantee

A number of grantees 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.

In several cases, explicit attention was also paid to training people in digital inclusion, why it mattered and how staff could deliver it as part of their day jobs.

*[As Digital Inclusion Team] we now attend all staff inductions to facilitate a session around digital inclusion, getting in early, and raising awareness to ensure new staff understand the impact the work we do and the power digital inclusion can have for the supported person... We have seen a seed change in staff attitudes as a result of the work since the project started. [Now] staff come to talk to us on a daily basis about how they can help people they support to get connected, or opportunities to sustain connection. Every supported person is different when it comes to digital needs and these conversations are often transforming lives.*

### Power Up grantee

Around half of all grantees 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.

*[Our] systems have become more efficient as we have moved to embrace the technology and digital skills of staff. Improved use of existing platforms, i.e. Microsoft Teams, has enabled greater collaborative working and has improved communications across teams. This has helped with managing aspects of the learner journey that are critical e.g. attendance, where all staff are aware of actions being taken, and has reduced the over reliance on emails. Additionally, an existing database that was predominantly used for funding purposes has been increasingly*

*used for managing key administrative processes to support better information sharing and to enable centralisation of activities.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*Embedding digital into organisational workflows has significantly improved productivity and efficiency. Improvements to operations and using resources better by streamlining processes and automating repetitive tasks. For example, hard copies for gathering participants' feedback were replaced by [electronic surveys] which has facilitated the work of... evaluating provision.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

**Increased organisational capacity** as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 was also mentioned by the majority of grantees as an important aspect of the programme's value for them. 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**, including those who acted as digital champions.

*The funding we received from Power Up has also really begun to have a big impact on our ability to recruit volunteers from the local community and local businesses. This has been beneficial as these volunteers have helped supervise and support clients...*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*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**

The increased or additional capacity enabled grantees to **increase their reach**, supporting a broader range of clients, ensure high **quality of their support** and in some cases also **reduce demand** on other, overstretched parts of their services.

*Having our Digital and Employability services has been a huge benefit for other services in our organisation such as the Youth Service and Social Care team. We have been able to reach a broader range of clients through our work with these services and they have also seen the benefit of our shared [support for] clients... For example, some clients are no longer as reliant on the Social Care team to fill out online forms or contact utility companies for them. This has decreased some elements of their workload, allowing them to focus more on emergency or [complex] cases.*

#### **Power Up grantee**



Several grantees spoke about **greater exposure** and their organisation becoming better known – to potential beneficiaries but also partners. This included attracting large organisations (such as multinational telecom companies) to become sponsors and partners, providing support for their digital inclusion work, as a result of opportunities provided through the programme and created by Good Things Foundation (e.g. the House of Lords event).

Strengthening their relationships with existing **partners** and putting new valuable partnerships in place has been highlighted by the majority of grantees as one of the most important outcomes of Power Up 2.0 for their organisation. This included developing a strong connection with Good Things Foundation and its work. Grantees were particularly appreciative of the access to the National Device Bank and the National Databank that this provided as this meant that they could provide digital access to their beneficiaries most at risk of digital exclusion, both during and after the end of the programme.

Grantees also reported being able to provide digital support to the people that they supported through **other aspects of their service**, thus improving its quality and outcomes for the people they work with.

*Our tenants that have attended [the project workshops and training] have been provided with additional means of paying their rent (online), as well as the digital money saving skills they have learned, which has helped with ensuring they have not fallen into rent arrears. The course has allowed tenants to live more independently.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

All of the above, as well as their learnings and provision development that they were able to do as part of Power Up 2.0, which were highly valued by all grantees, enabled them to identify new **funding** streams and in a number of cases to secure additional or future funding in order to continue to deliver and develop their digital inclusion work (please see Sustainability section for further detail).

# POWERING UP PLACES

## Overview of activities

As was highlighted in our previous reports, compared to the first two dimensions of the framework for local action, Powering Up Places was considerably more challenging for the grantees. Powering Up places refers to any activity undertaken by grantees which aims to provide **joined-up digital provision** across the local area. Examples include expanding geographical coverage through the grantees' own operations or in partnership with other organisations, streamlining progression and support routes for beneficiaries or widening the range of digital support on offer.

There were several instances where, by their own admission, none of the grantee activities could be described as Powering Up Places. Typically, this was due to them being focused on provision development and/or reaching the target number of people during their involvement in Power Up. One grantee described their work as 'too niche', affecting a very specific and therefore relatively small group of people, making it hard for them to partner up with other local organisations to strengthen place-based digital inclusion provision in their area. One of the learnings for any future programme delivery noted by Good Things Foundation in relation to such grantees was the importance of helping them reach out to other organisations elsewhere in the UK, to connect them with national charities with similar remit, to achieve impact at a national level.

Overall, grantees' plans related to Powering Places could be grouped into three rough categories:

- 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.

Where Powering Up places activities had been carried out by grantees, they were broadly consistent with these. In particular, grantees working with people with disabilities or those affected by homelessness, i.e. a narrow set of beneficiaries, tended to carry out work within the first category described above. In contrast, grantees supporting diverse cohorts of people (e.g. unemployed, those with caring responsibilities, with mental health issues, older people) were more likely to carry out activities within the third category. Most grantees were involved in sharing learning with others.

**Partnership-working was the main approach to Powering Up Places.**



## Learnings

Many grantees highlighted the complexity of partnership-working, even where the ambitions behind it were a lot more modest than establishing local area support offer for people or achieving place-based change.

They commented about the time and effort that is required to build strong relationships with partners and particularly to achieve concrete outcomes together. In one case, a grantee commented that whilst there were some tangible achievements to their work within this phase of Power Up, its foundations were laid during the previous phase, referring to ‘three years of planning and development’.

When reflecting on their learning, grantees spoke about the value of categorising their partners, being clear about what might be achieved from working together and adjusting their approach accordingly. Some argued that specialist organisations, including those that can provide access to devices and data for beneficiaries, can be very useful partners in achieving specific priorities.

*There are returns to working with specific, prioritised partners for referring potential applicants/learners (beneficiaries). [Over the course of our Power Up project] we have adjusted our approach to work with these organisations from an approach where multiple organisations received similar attention, comms and focus to a prioritised/tiered approach. [Now, those] that are most likely to refer target applicants receive tailored communications and more devoted time [from us] compared to a more standardised approach for other/long list partners.*

### Power Up grantee

Some grantees found working with specialist networks more beneficial than working with local organisations. This was particularly true for those partners whose target groups of beneficiaries were quite narrow.

*We attended the [network] forums which have been very beneficial. [It is] a network of organisations who are helping people into employment. Their aims are to develop a new approach to employment, make a significant, positive contribution to tackling exclusion and disadvantage and to harness the co-operation of employers to do this. Everyone at this forum have the same aim – to get people into employment, and digital embedding is key to achieving this.*

### Power Up grantee

## Impact on Places

There were two dimensions where place-based working and its impact were strongest:

- Local area support provision being put in place by referral processes and (less often) progression pathways for beneficiaries in the local area being set up or strengthened
- Benefits for partner organisations, working on achieving (some of) the same outcomes for the target beneficiary groups as Power Up grantees.

### Local area support provision being put in place

Approximately half of Power Up 2.0 grantees were able to initiate or significantly contribute to the establishment or strengthening of embedded digital support offer in their area. In some cases, this took the form of creating support hubs for local people, with digital being a strong element within that. In others, it was about creating progression referral routes or progression pathways for their beneficiaries.

*Across the main areas [the city] which we have covered, we have created awareness and referral pathways for other organisations to refer [particular groups of] beneficiaries ... with low level digital skills to our provision, some beneficiaries supported who complex needs so at times can be furthest from the labour market people who have poor mental health, refugees and asylum seekers and those that might be consider marginalised.*

#### Power Up Grantee

It was common for grantees to try to add their capacity and specific expertise to the existing models of support aimed at different groups of people in their area, to strengthen them and embed digital within them. For example, one grantee's close working with their local DWP resulted in a clear and efficient pathway of support for those who come looking for work, where it emerges that people's lack of digital skills is holding them back. DWP identifies people who need digital skills support and Power Up grantee promptly provides such support. Similarly, by working with a local women's charity, this grantee helped it strengthen its support offer for vulnerable women, by adding digital and personal finance (e.g. online banking or budgeting) elements to that.

Another grantee took a similar approach in their attempts to improve support for homeless people in their area.

*The place-based and partnership approach we have taken, thanks largely to Power Up, has meant we have been able to develop some very strong relationships with organisations that are supporting a similar client cohort to us but do not have the capacity to offer the breadth of employability and digital/online support that we provide.*

#### Power Up grantee



There were also some impressive examples of grantees working effectively with their local authorities or LEP<sup>14</sup>s. In one instance, discussions between one of Power Up grantees, another digital skills provider in the area (offering more advanced provision) and the local Digital Skills Hub, which is linked to the local council and the LEP, resulted in a new progression pathway for Power Up participants being established, with the funding for it being provided by the Hub.

Even where attempts to establish effective partnerships were perceived (by grantees themselves) as less successful, these led to them being known for their support and expertise in the local area.

*Even though we have struggled to develop digital partnerships with local organisations, we have found that those we have interacted with are now much more aware of the other services we offer and can now signpost to us if they encounter a deaf client in need of support they cannot offer. This in itself is a great outcome, if not the originally intended one.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Overall however, according to several grantees, as a result of their Powering Up Places efforts and their partnership-working in particular, there was evidence of positive changes at the level of the local area and communities.

*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**

## **Impact for partner organisations**

Across the programme, there were numerous examples of Power Up activities carried out by grantees in their local area being beneficial to partner organisations and their work.

*The main partner who has benefited from our involvement in Power Up is [name of the partner organisation, which is a large retail shopping centre and residential development in their city]. We have been able to provide advice, guidance and support to enable them to serve and employ their deaf customers better. Many of the retailers established in the centre now have the knowledge and tools to access and support a section of the workforce previously not accessible to them, potentially increasing their organisational capacity and supporting their inclusivity*

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<sup>14</sup> Local Enterprise Partnership.

*practices. [The centre] have also been keen to create BSL videos to display on the interactive screens around the centre...*

#### **Power Up grantee**

*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**





## SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

Power Up grantees highlighted that at least some of the programme outcomes, most notably around their provision and organisational development, would continue to benefit not only their own organisations but also their future beneficiaries and their partners.

*Digital Skills training is now a fundamental part of what [name of grantee organisation] offers to people with disabilities from [town] and surrounding areas. All aspects of the work, structure, and resources put in place as a result of Power Up 2.0 will continue once the project period finishes.*

### Power Up grantee

*[All our learning resources and support materials including] a new section incorporating Health and Wellbeing [can now be accessed] though [our] app ... which can be pre-installed onto devices and provides resources for supported people and front line workers.*

### Power Up grantee

One grantee organisation is building on its work on Power Up 2.0, by rebranding it, making it more advanced, and continuing to deliver it in one location.

Some of them had plans in place not only to continue their digital inclusion activity, even if slightly differently, but also to grow and develop it further, including by working with partners and co-designing provision development with their participants.

*We will try to maintain the strong relationships with our co-location partners to enable our [employability support], and therefore our digital/online offer, to reach as many homeless people across [the city] as possible. To maintain and even grow the legacy of Power Up, if possible, we will seek to develop new co-location partnerships for the expanded reach of our service to more clients from more areas of [the city]. We will aim to continue delivering the scale of Learn My Way digital skills and financial health courses (both carrying strong online/digital elements to them) that we have managed to achieve through Power Up. We will also seek to maintain all other areas of digital/online delivery as part of our [Power Up] project...*

### Power Up grantee

*With support from existing and new partners and funders, we are able to expand the groups we serve and the number of people we can include.*

### Power Up grantee

Grantees were keen to make sure that their own support for their beneficiaries is sustainable too, particularly when it comes to digital access for the people they have supported.

*[During the last year of the programme, our focus has been] on sustainability. We wanted to focus on continued connectivity, ... to ensure participants can continue to stay connected after the scheme ends. This will be a multi-faceted approach to identify the most appropriate sustainability option for each person.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Importantly, five out of nine grantees were able to secure new, in some cases considerable, amounts of 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.

*We were thrilled to be awarded multi-year funding from the National Lottery to cover the continuation of our digital skills provision, which we will be incorporating work skills into moving forward. We will expand our programme with the things we've learnt from Power Up across the central belt of Scotland.*

#### **Power Up grantee**

Of the remaining four grantees, two had multi-pronged strategies in place to try and sustain their digital inclusion work and one further grantee was working on identifying appropriate funding opportunities. One grantee was unable to continue with their plans for continuing their Power Up work due to circumstances outside of their control. At the time of reporting, their organisation, comprising multiple divisions only one of which was involved in Power Up, went into administration and there was a change to its operating model.



## CONCLUSIONS

Building on the success of the first phase of the programme, in late 2021 Good Things Foundation launched Power Up 2.0, aiming to Power Up People, Provision and Places across the UK, this time with a greater emphasis on helping people achieve positive longer-term outcomes, i.e. to gain or progress within employment (Jobs and Skills) or maximise and stabilise their incomes (Financial Health).

Over the course of approximately two years, the nine organisations that were selected to become Power 2.0 grantees carried out an impressive volume of activity which resulted in reaching and providing support to some of the most vulnerable and digitally excluded people in the country - one of the programme's most notable achievements. Similar to the first phase of Power Up, the majority of people supported through the programme were unemployed, socially inactive or unable to work and in receipt of benefits. Power Up 2.0 was effective at reaching at scale two further groups that are particularly disadvantaged in our society – those who are homeless or in temporary accommodation and people with special needs and disabilities.

Our analysis of the programme evidence suggests Power UP 2.0 achieved its objectives, with some achievements being particularly impressive, as well as generating important learnings for the sector.

The outcomes that were achieved as part of Powering Up People is an example of the impact that organisations involved in delivering Power 2.0 can be particularly proud of. One of the key programme outcomes for its participants is digital inclusion: over 90 per cent of people taking part in the programme noted improvements in at least one dimension of digital inclusion, which comprises digital skills, access to an appropriate device and connectivity (access to data). Equally important to note as a considerable success of Power Up 2.0 are the long-term outcomes for people taking part: the majority<sup>15</sup> of the programme participants reported concrete positive changes to their employment situation or being better off financially, and sometimes both.

Alongside supporting people, Power Up 2.0 grantees worked hard to improve and develop their provision. Reported by *all* grantees, achievements in Powering Up Provision ranged from new provision, content and resources being developed, to increased reach and scale of delivery through to greater quality of provision. These and other organisational developments (such as staff

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<sup>15</sup> Around 54 per cent of all participants (Base 962), or 70 per cent of all respondents excluding those who stated 'prefer not to say' or 'not applicable' (Base 742).

development and volunteer training, new or improved systems and ways of working, new and stronger partnerships and greater exposure) were tightly linked with sustainability of Power Up. Power Up grantees highlighted that these organisational developments achieved as a result of their involvement in Power Up 2.0 would continue to benefit not only their own organisations but also their future beneficiaries and their partners.

There were also impressive achievements within Powering Places. Despite the well-known challenges associated with achieving any place-based change, approximately half of Power Up 2.0 grantees were able to initiate or significantly contribute to establishment or strengthening of embedded digital support offer in their area. All grantees were able to share their learning with others and positively impact their partners' work and in some cases also their provision and organisation.



## **APPENDIX 1: POWER UP GRANTEES**

### **Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA)**

BCHA is a South-West based housing association, founded over 50 years ago with a mission to meet housing needs and end homelessness through the provision of affordable homes and helping individuals to lead independent lives. Services include supporting people into safe housing, breaking down barriers to engagement, delivering skills development, and helping people take steps towards independent living. BCHA have been delivering employability and skills development in Bournemouth for 15 years. Customers include young people from 18-25, survivors of domestic abuse, people experiencing mental health challenges, survivors of human trafficking and modern day slavery, people experiencing rough sleeping, people with convictions, people experiencing Substance Misuse and alcohol dependency and individuals and families on low incomes and experiencing long term unemployment.

### **City Gateway**

City Gateway was established in 1999 and works with 16–24-year-old young people who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and have at least one disadvantage indicator such as mental health issues, learning difficulties or disabilities, being a member of a gang, a carer or a care-leaver. Tower Hamlets, where the charity is based, has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country with only 15% of local jobs held by residents, which particularly affects young people. City Gateway works to change this reality through its education and employability programme which supports learners to achieve qualifications, up-to-date work and employability skills and experience, alongside careers advice and industry insight, so that they can achieve sustainable employment and reach their full potential.

### **CRUMBS Project**

The CRUMBS Project is a charitable foundation dedicated to providing training and support to adults with a range of disabilities in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. The charity was founded in 1997 to address the need for those in long-stay care to have a structured programme of support to encourage their learning and professional development. From its training centre in Bournemouth, CRUMBS provides training and development programmes to develop a wide range of

professional and life skills, increase confidence and self-esteem and prepare for employment and independent living. Trainees gain professionally recognised qualifications in food production and service, housekeeping or administration to prepare for hospitality sector jobs. CRUMBS also supports those who are able to move on into employment or independent living with work placements and job trials.

## **Deaf Action**

Deaf Action is a charity whose central purpose is to celebrate and support deaf people. Founded in Edinburgh in 1835, it has been at the forefront of progress and positive change within the deaf community for over 185 years. It is the last remaining deaf centre in Scotland and provides a vital community hub where deaf people can access support. As well as a drop-in centre in Edinburgh, Deaf Action offers a range of support services (such as digital support, advice line, fuel advice) and runs care in the community for deaf people. It is also a big employer of deaf people in its own right; nearly half of its staff are deaf, and many more have grown up with deaf parents or siblings.

## **Generation**

Generation is a multinational organisation whose mission is to support people facing barriers to employment – particularly those who are NEET, unemployed, underemployed, from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups – into otherwise inaccessible, life-changing careers, through a ‘train and place’ bootcamp model. Their free 4-12 week bootcamps offer training in a range of digital professions such as cloud engineering, data engineering, software engineering and customer support. Bootcamps are built in collaboration with employers using ‘activity mapping’ to condense/synthesise the key technical skills, mindsets and behaviours needed for success in a specific role from day one. All bootcamps include matchmade interviews with employers and ongoing one-to-one mentoring/pastoral support. Generation works with unemployed or underemployed beneficiaries in London, Manchester, West Midlands and Leeds in England as well as in Scotland, and around the world.

## **Providence Row**

Providence Row is a charity which has been supporting homeless adults and those at risk of homelessness in East London since 1860. Through their day centre in Tower Hamlets, they provide a holistic range of services which take people from points of crisis to when support is no longer needed so they can get off, and stay off, the streets and begin their journey to recovery. Crisis programmes include outreach Psychotherapy and support with substance abuse and, when the time is right, recovery services such as their Employability and Progression programme so people can develop skills and confidence to move towards sustainable and independent lives. Employability



support includes job searching, CV writing, interview techniques, digital skills, money management and work placements.

## **Renaisi**

Renaisi is a London-based social enterprise founded by Hackney Council in 1998, supporting deprived neighbourhoods in Hackney, and those most disadvantaged within them, to thrive. Renaisi offers employment services to help individuals who are long-term unemployed and experiencing multiple, complex barriers to employment. In 2011, Renaisi's employment services became a fundamental part of their offer with the launch of the Work Programme by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Renaisi currently delivers five employment programmes for communities in East and South London which provide tailored one-to-one guidance to support people to either move into work or progress in their work.

## **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is a 160-year old UK church organisation which aims to combat inequality. Operationally, it is divided into territories that are relatively autonomous. The Edinburgh Employment Digital Support (EEDS) community hub in Granton, Edinburgh, was established with a grant from Power Up 1.0 in March 2020. EEDS provides face-to-face digital training, employment training and wellbeing services to support disadvantaged people to be successful in securing employment and increasing skills. Services are free and accessible to all. EEDS is the only dedicated digital service within the Salvation Army nationally. Services also include debt advice.

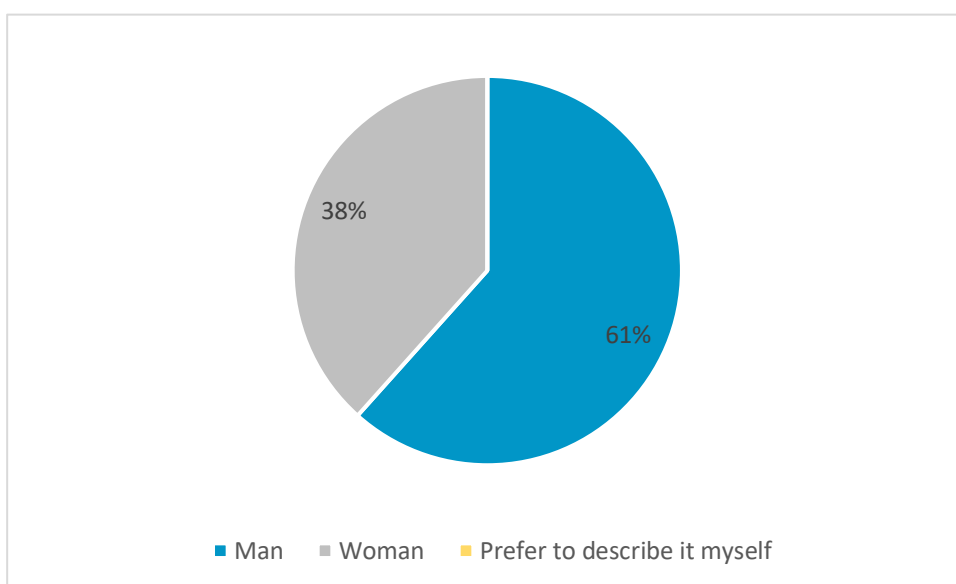
## **Simon Community Scotland**

Simon Community Scotland is a charity committed to combatting the causes and effects of homelessness. Originally formed in London in 1963, Simon Community Scotland has been established in Scotland since 1989 and includes hubs and supported accommodation in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, towns where most people who are experiencing homelessness in Scotland gravitate to. Simon Community's Get Digital Scotland Programme has been leading on digital inclusion within Scotland's homelessness sector for the past 4 years. During that time they have also developed the Get Connected Model - an approach to digital inclusion to help people experiencing homelessness to access the digital world.

## APPENDIX 2: BENEFICIARY DEMOGRAPHICS, FURTHER DETAIL

**Figure 10 Beneficiary gender breakdown**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1890.

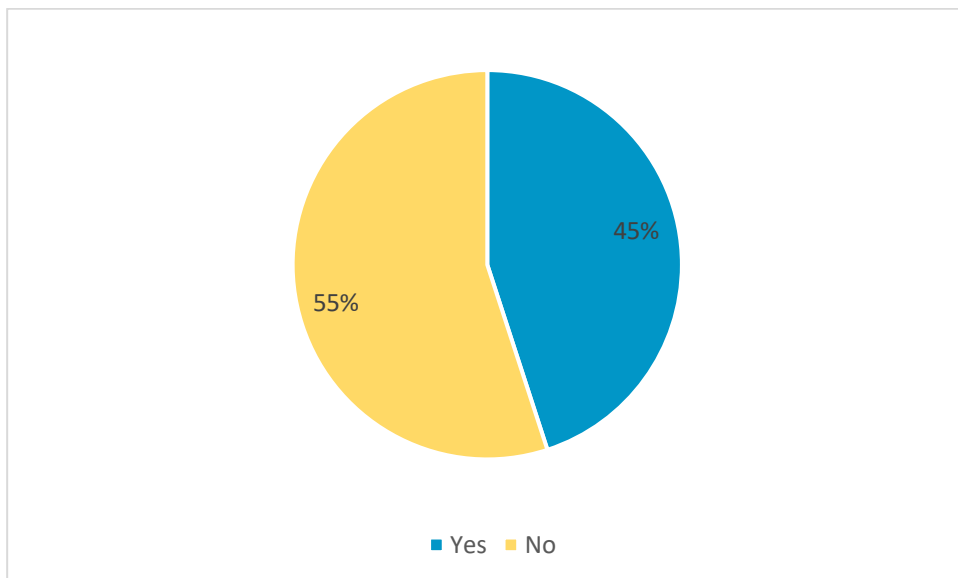






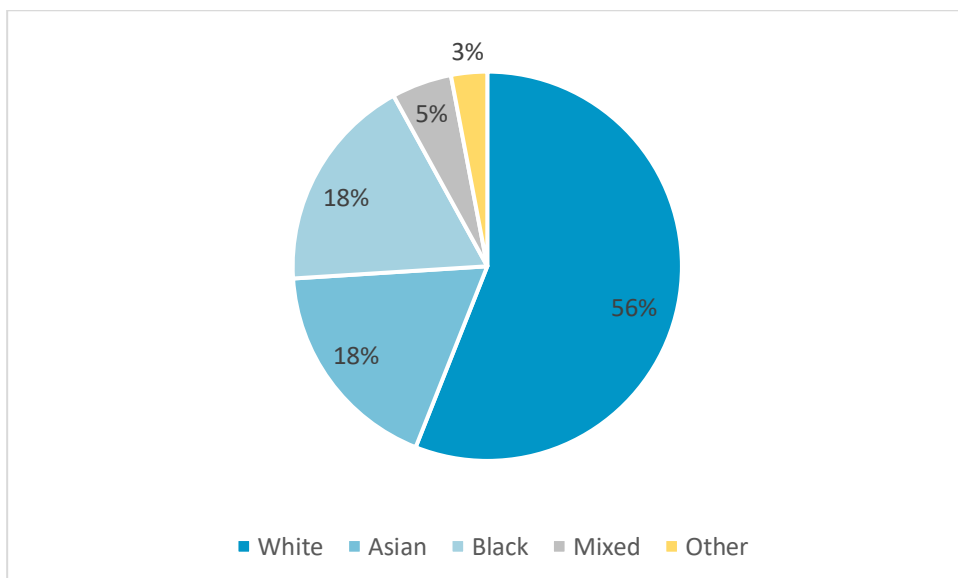
**Figure 11 Physical or mental condition or disability**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1730.



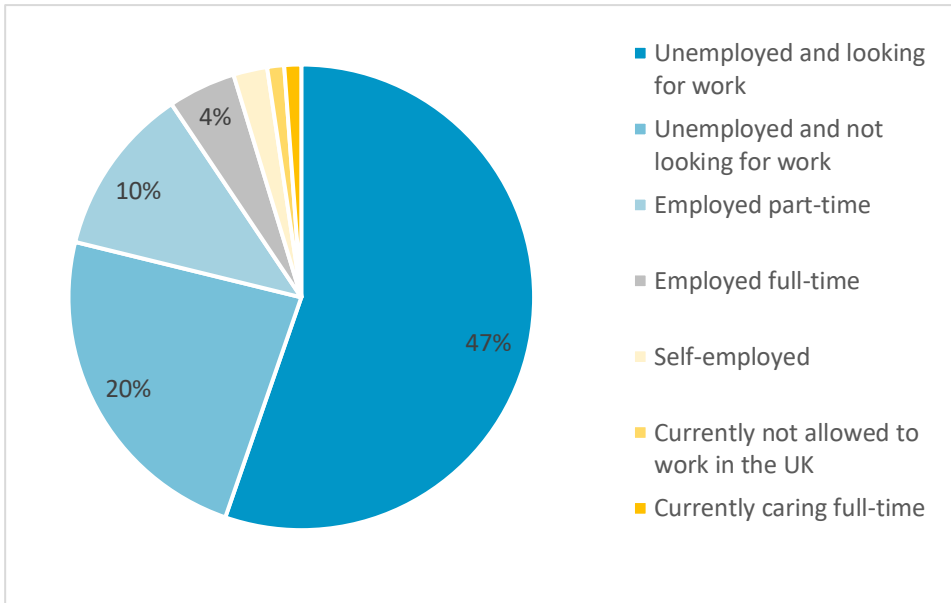
**Figure 12 Beneficiary ethnic background**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1860.



**Figure 13 Beneficiary employment status**

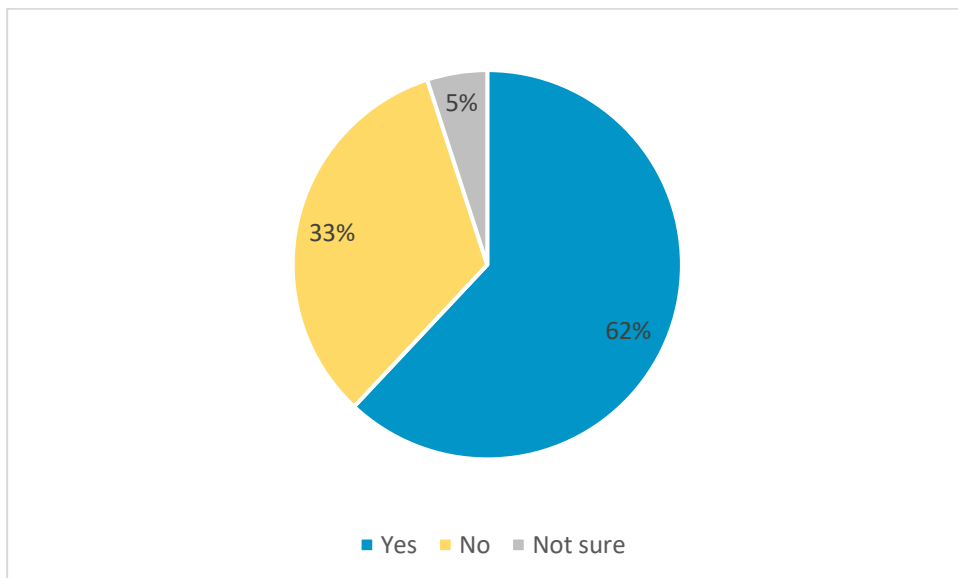
Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1864.





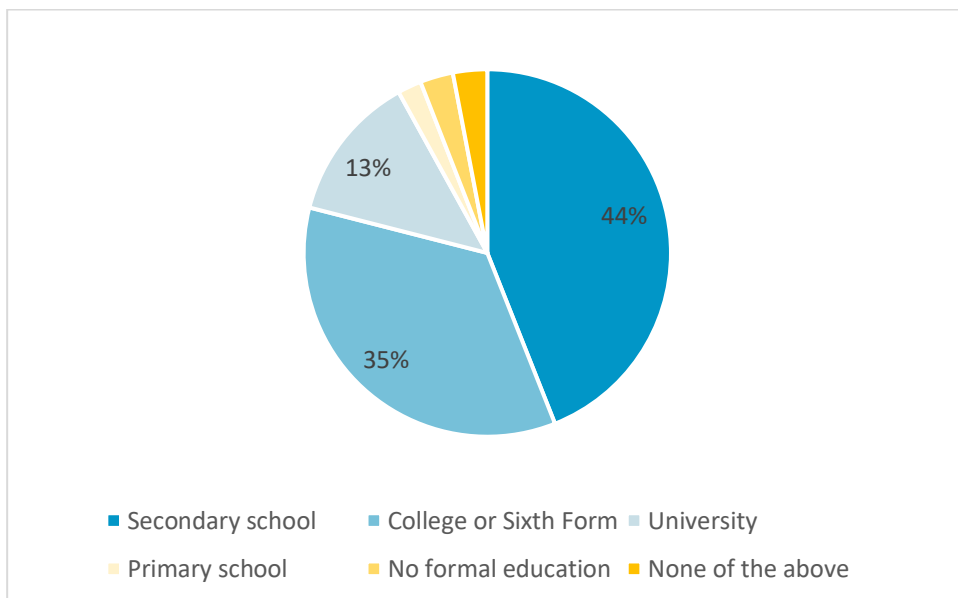
**Figure 14 In receipt of benefits**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1821.



**Figure 15 Beneficiary highest level of education**

Source: beneficiary baseline survey, all respondents who provided an answer. Base: 1754.



# APPENDIX 3 EMBEDDING DIGITAL BENCHMARKS

## Embedding digital skills provision and inclusion within organisations providing employability, financial capability and other support to people and communities

### 1 Identification of beneficiaries' digital needs

Very low (1) <i>Non-existent</i>	Low (2) <i>Ad-hoc/narrow</i>	Medium (3) <i>Holistic</i>	High (4) <i>Holistic and sustained</i>
No processes for identifying beneficiaries' digital needs are in place or needs occasionally spotted by individual frontline staff	Frontline staff are encouraged to spot where clients require digital skills development but there are no systems to ensure this is done consistently and comprehensively	Frontline staff are trained and/or guidance is provided to help make sure client digital needs are consistently picked up as part of employability/fin health support being offered	As in 3, plus systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure digital skills needs are identified for all clients requiring support (e.g. questions related to digital skills and access incorporated into the standard beneficiary needs audits or other assessment tools)



## 2 Digital support and training for beneficiaries

<b>Very low (1)</b> <i>Non-existent</i>	<b>Low (2)</b> <i>Ad-hoc/narrow</i>	<b>Medium (3)</b> <i>Holistic</i>	<b>High (4)</b> <i>Holistic and sustained</i>
<p>No mechanisms to support beneficiaries' digital needs are in place or support/signposting offered in some individual cases, typically where client situation is particularly challenging</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Digital is simply the mode of delivery, no attention paid to digital inclusion</p>	<b>2a Which digital skills needs are supported through provision</b>		
	<p>Mechanisms put in place to offer digital skills support to all or most beneficiaries with particularly urgent digital skills/access needs (e.g. don't have access to tech and/or internet, don't know how to switch the device on, etc.)</p>	<p>There are mechanisms and/or training offer that enable every beneficiary to develop their digital skills to the level that enables them to use tech and the internet to achieve immediate goals related to employment and fin health and/or feel confident and safe using the internet in their daily lives</p>	<p>As in 3, plus beneficiaries consistently encouraged and motivated through effective provision and needs identification to continue their digital skills leaning beyond their initial engagement.</p>
	<b>2b Delivery models – from one-offs to comprehensive programmes</b>		
	<p>Most provision tends to be in the form of one-offs or a small number of inputs</p>	<p>A mixture of delivery models, with all clients being able to access more formal/standardised skills development (a programme)</p>	<p>As in 3, plus clear pathways or other opportunities for beneficiaries to further engage in digital skills learning (progression within own or partner provision) or to continue their development through workplace learning or volunteering</p>

<b>2c – Monitoring provision</b>			
	Occasional or informal efforts to monitor/question one-two of these dimensions: accessibility, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of digital skills provision	Regular and explicit attention to multiple dimensions from the list below and/or thorough but infrequent reviews/audits focusing on (almost) all of them: accessibility, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of digital skills provision	Attention to accessibility, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of digital skills provision explicitly and routinely monitored as one of the key dimensions of the organisation's performance



### 3 Integration and sustainability of digital provision and inclusion work within the organisation

Very low (1) <i>Non-existent</i>	Low (2) <i>Ad-hoc/narrow</i>	Medium (3) <i>Holistic</i>	High (4) <i>Holistic and sustained</i>
<b>3a Prioritisation of digital</b>			
Prioritisation of digital inclusion is not visible or stated only by some staff within organisation	Prioritisation of digital inclusion is stated by staff at different levels and/or different parts of organisation	As in 2, plus prioritisation of digital is visible in some core strategic documents	As in 3, plus also visible in operational documents and ways of working, staff performance management
<b>3b Responsibility for/coverage of digital skills development within organisation</b>			
No digital inclusion/skills development support offered within/by the organisation	Digital skills provision/support limited to one part of the organisation OR it is perceived as something to be done by discrete colleague/staff	Digital skills provision/support offered in multiple parts of organisation, with many colleagues/teams being involved in digital inclusion work, alongside offering other types of support	Digital skills provision/support offered throughout the entire organisation or a significant proportion (e.g. its regional office) and is seen as everybody's job
<b>3c Staff expertise to ensure digital inclusion</b>			
Most staff lack digital inclusion expertise. There might be a single member of staff who is the only internal 'expert' and/or reliance on external 'experts'	Multiple members of have some digital inclusion expertise  There have been digital inclusion and/or skills development CPD inputs for staff	All staff have digital inclusion expertise, with there being dedicated colleagues with expertise to deliver digital skills training at different levels.  Occasional training opportunities for staff	As in 3, plus there are staff at senior level responsible for digital inclusion. There are regular and ongoing opportunities for staff to continue developing their digital inclusion and skills development expertise

<b>3d Sustainability of funding for digital inclusion work</b>			
No other (non-PU) funding supporting digital inclusion work and digital provision; fully dependent on PU funding	Some other funding (less than 50% of digital provision/inclusion work covered from other sources) and/or history of securing some funding for digital provision/inclusion work	Considerable other funding (more than 50% of digital provision/inclusion work covered from other sources), long term	Record of securing stable grant funding for digital provision or inclusion work, long-term and from multiple sources. Digital provision partially or fully has been moved into core funding





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