



One Place East  
Where disability matters

# Tech Assistance Project (TAP)

Impact Report – April 2024

**Success**  
Real impact tackling digital exclusion

Funded By



## Impact Summary

The Tech Assistance Project (TAP) was a 12-month One Place East (OPE) project funded by The [Access Foundation](#). It aimed to tackle the digital and technological exclusion experienced by disabled people and those with lived experience of mental ill-health.

### We helped more Disabled People benefit from technology and the digital world

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**TAP engaged over 2,000 people**

**65 Deaf and Disabled People received intensive direct support**

**117 people received face to face information, and equipment trials**

**548 people accessed digital support**



### We reduced barriers to using digital technology for Disabled People

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**65 had a needs assessment**

**171 tried assistive technology and adaptive equipment**

**548 accessed digital support**

**12 in financial hardship were given a tablet or laptop**

**29 people experiencing data poverty got data bundles**

## **We increased the skills, confidence, and safety of Disabled People using the internet**

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**53 people received 244.5 hours of one-to-one support**

**58 people benefitted from 1,392 teaching hours in group settings**

**77 personalised support sessions were delivered for 26 people attending Digital Drop-Ins**



## **We delivered a quality service**

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**84% said the service they received was excellent**

**14% said the service was good**

**100% said they would recommend TAP service**

## **We enabled more people to use assistive technology to live independently**

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**80% know more about assistive technology now than a year ago**

**73% are more aware of how technology use in the home can make life easier**

**60% use technology in the home more now**

**43% are making financial savings due to technology use**



## We increased Disabled People's ability to use technology



**93% can use a computer, smart phone or tablet**

**73% know how to access public services online**

**53% are aware of how to access online banking**

**60% can apply for and manage benefits online**

**94% feel confident to deal with tech challenges**

**73% have sufficient data**

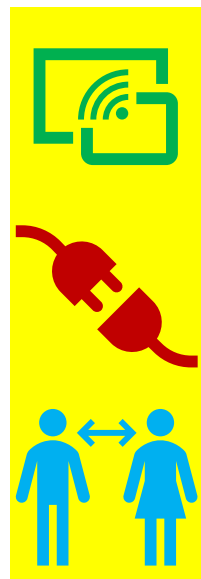
## We supported Disabled People to be less isolated and better connected

**73% use technology to communicate and connect with others more now than one year ago**

**53% feel less isolated and lonely than a year ago**

**73% use their phone, computer, or tablet more now than a year ago**

**80% are able to access support through their phone, computer or tablet**



**success**



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## Introduction

One Place East (OPE) secured a grant of £27,449 from the Access Foundation for The Tech Assistance Project (TAP). The one-year project focused on addressing the digital and technological exclusion experienced by disabled people and those with lived experience of mental ill-health. This report shares the work completed and its impact on Deaf and Disabled People. We have also included our learning from delivering the project and data evidencing continuing needs.

The pandemic stimulated interest and increased motivation to use technology. OPE wanted to maximise this opportunity and pilot work that would strategically and operationally help shape our future. TAP had two aims:

1. To help more Disabled People benefit from technology and the digital world.
2. To research and pilot the potential technology offers our community to support independent living.

The grant funded a Tech Support Officer working 17.5 hours per week, volunteer expenses, tablets, assistive technology, and data bundles for beneficiaries experiencing financial hardship. Some of this equipment was specifically targeted at people with sightloss. A few small items of equipment were purchased for the OPE Resource Hub, so Disabled People could see and try technology now available to support independent living.

OPE are proud to have employed a non-sighted project officer to lead and deliver this project. After careful assessment and planning a tailored wraparound practical support package was put in place for the new employee. As a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) the successful delivery of this quality service is a good practice exemplar. It evidences the potential of Disabled People and how other employers can harness the workforce assets in this community with sufficient planning and the use of technology to overcome presenting barriers.

The project inspired an OPE supporter to run an online Tech Support Hub Fundraiser in November 2023. This achieved 147% of the target, raising

£221 to fund further equipment and technology for the TAP service and its beneficiaries.

To achieve the project aims, TAP had three objectives:

- a) Identify the profile of need to maximise use of digital technology and adapted equipment for the home.
- b) Reduce the barriers to using digital technology for disabled people.
- c) Increase the skills, confidence, and safety for disabled people to use the internet.

The Access Foundation funded project was working towards three outcomes for Deaf and Disabled People and those with lived experience of mental ill-health.

**Outcome 1.** People will be able to live independently at home supported by the increased use of assistive technology and equipment.

**Outcome 2.** Increased ability to use technology and the benefits this offers.

**Outcome 3.** Disabled people are less isolated and better connected.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

All OPE projects have a structured monitoring and evaluation framework. These are developed and adopted during the mobilisation phase of new initiatives. As a growing DPO, we are a learning organisation. This means many of our systems are evolving as we strive to make best use of the technology available. For us, it's crucial we utilise monitoring and evaluation systems proportionate to the size of grant and our organisational capability.

For this project we used a range of methods to gather data that helped us evaluate the quality of delivery and its impact on beneficiaries. Where required, people were provided with additional support to contribute to the evaluation and monitoring processes, overcoming any presenting barriers.

Methods used to gather data included:

- TAP comprehensive I.T. and Assistive Technology Assessment completed in-person, by telephone or online.
- I.T. needs assessment completed in-person.
- Online Centre's Network Learn My Way assessment completed when creating an account with TAP support.
- Online technology survey (May 2023 – September 2024).
- Workshop and support session evaluation questionnaire.
- Online Centres Network (OCN) CaptureIT learning progress reports.
- Standard project impact question asked before and after every intervention.

As well as the quantitative measures outlined above, we used people's stories and lived experience to both demonstrate the challenges digital exclusion presents; and the impact this project had. There are presented in the form of short case studies.

All questionnaires and evaluation forms included opportunities for beneficiaries to add comments too if they so wish. These are included in this impact report.

## **Reporting and Dissemination**

Project performance was reported to the OPE Board of Trustees quarterly with a mid-term monitoring report submitted to The Access Foundation in line with their requirements.

This Impact Report acts as our final monitoring submission to The Access Foundation. OPE will also use it to support our strategic planning, so future activities tackling digital exclusion build on the learning from this project.

## **Project Sustainability**

OPE have secured three-year funding from the NHS in Northeast London, through the Health Inequalities Fund. This investment has enabled TAP to be continued with reduced capacity (1 day per week) after the Access Foundation grant ended. A positive outcome that enables OPE to build on



this funding base, using the data and research to build a case for support with funders.

## **Delivery and Performance**

TAP has been a successful and well evaluated service for OPE. Analysis of the data collected shows that TAP overperformed in the delivery of the service, and number of beneficiaries. To accommodate presenting needs and overcome a few challenges, the profile of delivery ended up being slightly different to projections in the grant application. We are confident that the data outlined in this section of the report truly evidences the volume of work completed, providing The Access Foundation with a very strong return on investment.

The amazing beneficiary evaluation of the support and service received reflects the skill, care and commitment of the staff and volunteers involved. High demand for the service has at times felt overwhelming, especially with only 17.5 weekly hours of paid project staff. With flexibility, creativity and a focus on the end user we are immensely proud of TAP achievements.

Products created through the Access Foundation grant will have value long after the funding ends. We have created assets in the form of digital content, factsheets, workshop session plans and materials that will benefit more people over the next two years. One legacy of this investment in OPE.

The TAP team and wider OPE management strive to be as creative as possible when delivering new services. To ensure maximum reach and impact a range of delivery methods were utilised, including digital content creation and a new profile of outreach pop-ups.

In total **65 Deaf and Disabled People received intensive direct support** individually or in a group setting over the 12-month project, 18% above projected target. This was in the form of training, workshops, one to one assessment and support sessions or through the provision of equipment and data bundles.

**117 people received face to face information, advice, and equipment trials** of digital and assistive technology through workshops, festivals and the support of our partners.

**331 people got face to face TAP information and an equipment showcase** at pop-up outreach events.

**548 people accessed digital support** in the form of factsheets available 24/7.

**1,420 people received project specific information** through newsletters and digital new bulletins.

**Over 2,000 people engaged with TAP** through its presence at the Disability Festival in the Park.

### Reporting on Delivery Targets

Project activities and output targets were structured around three objectives.

**Objective 1. Identify the profile of need to maximise use of digital technology and adapted equipment for the home.**

Target	Actual	Performance
Conduct 25 home-based equipment assessments	3	12%
Conduct 30 I.T. needs assessments	33	110%

Despite these headline figures reporting against grant targets, in total **65 people had a completed needs assessment** over the project duration. This is a **performance output of 118%**.

During the mobilisation of the project, a detailed needs assessment template was developed based on our existing data, online research of other similar templates, and service user input through coproduction events. This was a comprehensive assessment that included IT needs as well as home-based equipment.

**33 people had a comprehensive needs assessment**

We experienced real problems in our aspiration to conduct 25 assessments in people's homes. This target was included as we thought

it would help overcome many of the access barriers preventing the most isolated and vulnerable get support. It soon became apparent that the COVID pandemic had heightened people’s fear of social contact, especially in their own home. There was resistance to home visits, so eventually we abandoned this target. Instead, we carried out the assessments in the OPE office, over the phone or online using Zoom.

We ended up being far more flexible in the types of assessments used when accessing the TAP service from September 2023 onwards, due to several reasons.

- a) The assessment template we developed was also time and labour intensive for both staff and the service user. For beneficiaries just wanting ad hoc support and help problem solving it was disproportionate and unnecessary.
- b) Beneficiaries accessing Learn My Way courses through the Online Centre’s Network complete an assessment when registering and creating an account, duplicating our assessment again.
- c) We also had a small group of users assessed through our HMRC Advice and Digital Assistance Service (HADAS) that closed in 2022. We had been unable to address their needs until the Access Foundation grant was awarded.

**21 people had eligibility assessments for hardware and data bundles**

**11 people completed Learn My Way assessments**

Our flexibility and person-centred approach ensured we identified and met needs, just not quite with the rigid approach we had planned before launching the service.

Conduct an online survey focused on use of assistive technology at home for independent living	1	100%
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The Access Foundation grant has enabled OPE to identify the profile of need in several ways. Our goal is to support Deaf and Disabled People to maximise their use of digital technology and adapted equipment.

We **conducted 1 online survey** that ran from June to September 2023. The survey helped map current usage and barriers, identify potential need for support and training, help shape the TAP service and recruit service users following completion of the questionnaire.

By using completed assessments and analysing the profile of advice, support and training delivered, OPE is in a much stronger position to understand and evidence future demand.

We conducted a **TAP end of project survey**, which alongside the OPE annual user survey provides other valuable data to help profile need and required support for the future.

Together this quantitative and qualitative data will be used to help shape OPE future strategy and business plan as well as evidence need in funding applications, tenders and general fundraising activities.

## **Objective 2: Reduce the barriers to using digital technology for disabled people**

Reducing barriers to using digital and assistive technology was an area we massively overperformed our grant targets. The volume of activities conducted over the year to engage, raise awareness and allow people to physically try equipment far outstretched original ambitions. It is also an indicator of the demand for support and work still needed to tackle digital exclusion and disadvantage experienced by Deaf and Disabled People.

The TAP project assessment identified beneficiaries struggling to afford digital equipment and those in data poverty. All awards were made to people meeting one or both criteria.

<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Provide 15 disabled people with a tablet	12	80%

The profile of hardware provided to beneficiaries varied from the funding application to the Access Foundation. 5 out of the 15 tablets were to be issued to people with a visual impairment. However, after assessing eligible people with a visual impairment, it was found laptops would be

better and easier to use. The laptops were more expensive, so only 2 could be purchased from the project budget.

**10 people received a tablet**

**1 person with a visual impairment received a laptop**

**1 laptop was purchased for use by the new OPE Sight Loss Group**

The Sight Loss Group has a growing membership and regularly secure an attendance of 30 people at their monthly meetings. They use the laptop to plan group activities, access information and communicate with members. So currently this **laptop is benefitting 32 people with sight loss.**

All beneficiaries who received hardware also received basic training in how to use their tablet or laptop. In total **36 hours of individual training and support** was delivered to beneficiaries of new equipment.

Target	Actual	Performance
Support 10 people with a data bundle	29	290%

**10 people received a data bundle** funded by The Access Foundation following a project assessment showed they were experiencing data poverty.

OPE distributed a **further 19 donated Vodafone data bundles** to beneficiaries of the CreateAbles project.

CreateAbles was a peer-led group meeting monthly aiming to improve health and wellbeing through creative and cultural activities. Disabled people and those with lived experience of mental ill-health were trained to plan and run the groups themselves. The project leader identified 19 people struggling to afford data. This was creating barriers to full participation in CreateAbles activities, so the awards were given.

Target	Actual	Performance
Support a minimum of 5 people to source and trial assistive technology	171	3420%
Support a minimum of 5 people to source and trial adaptive equipment to aid independent living	171	3420%
<p><b>171 people tried assistive technology and adaptive equipment.</b></p> <p><b>331 people got TAP information and an equipment showcase</b> at pop-up outreach events.</p> <p><b>6 TAP factsheets</b> were produced with <b>50 hard copies given away</b> at events and <b>548 viewed on the website</b> and <b>258 downloaded</b>.</p> <p>There were <b>9 TAP articles in OPE newsletters</b> over the year. Each newsletter has a digital circulation of <b>871 people and 238 receive hard copies</b> in the post.</p> <p><b>TAP reports featured in 2 digital news bulletins</b> during the year. <b>Broadcast 15 having 311 views</b> and <b>Broadcast 19 securing 305 views</b>.</p> <p>One aspect of key learning from this 12-month project was how little Deaf and Disabled People know about the range of assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and software packages now available to help overcome barriers to inclusion in everyday life. This lack of awareness and knowledge was also a factor in the low level of home-based assessments conducted.</p> <p>In today’s rapidly evolving digital landscape, technology has become an integral part of daily life. For Disabled People, especially visually impaired individuals, technological advancements have the potential to open up a world of opportunities, breaking down barriers and enhancing independence. However, lack of awareness, fear and reliance on long-standing coping mechanisms restricts people’s ability to explore it.</p>		

The Access Foundation grant and individual donations from OPE supporters enabled TAP to purchase a few items of assistive technology and digital equipment. This small resource hub was used for events and outreach activities. Having physical resources attracted people to come and find out more.

The Redbridge Disability Festival in August 2023 was attended by over 2,000 people and became our largest showcase.

Between October 2023 and February 2024 TAP held a weekly pop-up outreach session at Redbridge Central Library, every Tuesday 11.00am-1.00pm. This gave the opportunity to let the community know all about TAP and the services it offers and showcase equipment.

By collaborating with Sight and Sound, Ilford Shopmobility and the RNIB, TAP was able to offer information about a wide range of equipment (including new advanced wheelchairs), assistive technology and household equipment including a talking microwave and the chance to trial them before purchasing.

For those struggling to afford new equipment and technology, we produced a factsheet on grants available to help people live more independently. OPE's advocacy service helped those requiring additional support when applying for grants. This is where OPE's holistic, person centred approach adds real value to specific projects.

### **Case Study 1 - G**

**One workshop attendee was G, a 70-year-old man with a visual impairment. G lives alone and is currently in poor health. G attended the workshop as he needed some guidance and wanted to try out JAWS software, a screen reader and be confident they would work for him before purchasing.**

**Attending the event, meant G was able to also ask questions and find out where to get the current best deals. G purchased the JAWS software which enables him to use his computer better, read documents, respond to emails, go onto the internet, and stay connected with his friends.**

**These outcomes reduce his isolation, increase connection with events and news, improve access to services and generally improve his sense of wellbeing.**

**Objective 3: Increase the skills, confidence and safety for disabled people to use the internet**

Target	Actual	Performance
Deliver 60 individual technology training and support sessions	163	270%
<p><b>53 individuals</b> received a total of <b>163 individual technology training and support sessions</b>. On average this equates to <b>3 sessions per person</b> and a total of <b>244.5 hours of one-to-one support</b> provided over the year.</p> <p>These sessions included support with mobile phones, laptops, scanning documents, using the internet, navigating various websites, accessing public services online, accessing communication platforms, virus problem solving and using screen readers.</p> <p>This method of delivering support was by far the most requested and necessary. Many of the beneficiaries had a learning disability and/or autism, presenting challenges delivering support and training in a group setting. This was especially the case in the early stages of the project while users got to know the staff and trust developed.</p> <p>Many Deaf and Disabled people experience real inclusion challenges at school or college. As a result, there is fear and resistance to participating in group teaching/training environments. It was notable that engagement in and enjoyment of the Learn My Way group classes increased in the latter part of the year. Trust, confidence and willingness to try new things all identified as factors explaining the increase in group classes towards the end of the year.</p>		



Target	Actual	Performance
Hold 12 training workshops	8	66%
<p>In total <b>8 training workshops</b> were delivered, benefiting <b>58 individuals</b>. Some of those using the Learn My Way online learning platform were also able to continue their courses at home, through learner directed learning. All workshops lasted 3 hours, making <b>24 hours of tutor-led learning</b> delivered and <b>1,392 of individual teaching hours</b> received.</p> <p><b>5 Learn My Way Training sessions</b> covering modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ using your device</li> <li>■ using email</li> <li>■ working with office programs</li> <li>■ introduction to the internet</li> </ul> <p><b>Digital Skills Workshop</b></p> <p>This workshop explored essential digital skills needed when looking for work and in the workplace. It was a skills for life and skills for work active workshop that helped participants identify learning and development goals.</p> <p><b>Cost-of-living Event</b></p> <p>This event was held in collaboration with Redbridge Council and aimed to support Disabled People cope with the cost-of-living crisis. TAP provided information and advice how to best use technology to save money and cut costs in everyday life.</p> <p>TAP leaflets and accessible factsheets for digital circulation were available covering various topics including how to save money by going online highlighting affordable broadband, what grants are available, how to get a lifeline and useful apps. The factsheets also gave beneficiaries the opportunity to download them if needed. Having factsheets highlighting affordable internet connection addressed one of the biggest barriers to someone getting online.</p> <p><b>Sight and Sound Event</b></p> <p>Sight and Sound training workshop raised awareness of assistive technology and equipment. The tutor enabled Disabled People to try new assistive technology and taught them how to use it effectively. The tech</p>		

included electronic magnifier/readers, wearables such as a smart glass with an integrated camera and built in speakers, OrCam My Eye that attaches to glasses, Omni READER that reads printed text, and a range of software solutions. The highlight was the recognition that assistive technology removes many access barriers for people who are visually impaired and can give them more independence in their day-to-day life.

Target	Actual	Performance
5 Digital Saturday Tech Support Drop-ins	5	100%

The drop-ins are unpredictable, as the staff and volunteers never know who will attend or the profile of support in advance. **26 beneficiaries** attended the 5 drop-in sessions. In total there were **77 attendances**, as on average **beneficiaries came to 3 of the 5 sessions**. This is an indicator of the frequency some Disabled People experience problems with technology and need ad hoc support to solve it.

Support provided included researching smart phones; iPhones & android mobile phones including emailing, adding pre-text, sending emojis, texting, adding contacts, symbols search, voice-over, searching the internet, using WhatsApp, downloading apps, videos, and pictures. Motorola phone and kindle support.

Support with tablets included uninstalling apps, placing emails in different folders, changing delivery address on amazon account and, accessing wi-fi on an iPad.

Laptop support included saving to hard drive, photos, and documents, making space, and creating folders, installing Microsoft Word onto Chromebook, completing online transport forms and applying for an online TV License.

## Other related project output

OPE's experience of supporting neurodiverse adults, especially those with autism and learning difficulties, highlights an massive interest in computer gaming. We see this in requests for social activities and for some, an ambition to work in the gaming industry.

By working together with OPE's employment service The Talent Network, TAP was able to support the delivery of a workshop on The Gaming Industry. The workshop was hosted by a Video Games Ambassador, supported by UKIE the trade body for the UK Games and Interactive Entertainment Industry. The workshop was filmed and is now available through OPE digital channels to widen its reach and benefit.

**1 workshop on careers in the gaming industry**

**1 film on careers in gaming industry**

[https://youtu.be/81qfDSaAP7I?si=Z\\_NcUHoEd0mX3NHY](https://youtu.be/81qfDSaAP7I?si=Z_NcUHoEd0mX3NHY)

## ***Case study 2 - J***

**One beneficiary supported through one-to-one sessions was J, who had a comprehensive needs assessment.**

**J is 60-year-old with lived experience of mental ill-health and has been unemployed for a while. J had been offered a volunteering role with a local charity. They had requested attendance at an online meeting using Zoom as part of the induction and training programme. J had never used Zoom and was worried this could lead to the volunteering opportunity being withdrawn.**

**TAP provided 3 individual support/training sessions to help J load Zoom on the laptop and understand how to schedule or join an online event using the App.**

**After receiving this technological support, J has kept his volunteering role, regularly attends online meetings, and has met new friends. This has led to an increase in his knowledge and skills using the computer, internet, and especially Zoom. He states he now feels there is a sense of purpose, has improved self-esteem and is looking forward to potential future job prospects. This is all thanks to TAP which gave him**

**the opportunity and the skills needed to be able to be fully independent.**

## **Delivery Challenges**

Although the issues around conducting home based assessments were a challenge, our flexible and creative response meant the needs of beneficiaries were never neglected. However, we experienced two real challenges during the delivery of the one-year project that limited our service capacity and capability.

- A) Throughout the lifetime of the project, we struggled to recruit volunteers for the Digital Saturday Drop-In events and to be Digital Buddies. Along with high demand, this occasionally led to longer wait times for support at the Drop-Ins than we would have liked. 100% of users attending the drop-ins received support though, even if there was a wait.
  
- B) When planning the project, we underestimated demand and the staffing capacity required for the development and delivery of all aspects of the project. We now recognise that service development, outreach, frontline service delivery, the recruitment, support, and training of volunteers all within 17.5 hours of project officer time was a big ask. To address this challenge there were pinch points over the year where other OPE staff helped out. This relieved pressure and ensured no one went without their service.

As of January 2024, OPE now has a full-time Befriending and Volunteer Lead funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This dedicated resource is already impacting our ability to recruit and train volunteers.

## **Quality of Service Delivered**

Throughout the project we have requested service users complete a short evaluation questionnaire, either on paper or online. This was after every course, workshop, or individual support session. Using our CRM system, we have been able to pull the results of those evaluations together to provide summative results.

**84% said the service they received was excellent**

**14% said the service was good**

## 2% said the service was OK

## 100% said they would tell other people about the TAP service.

When breaking down analysis by the method of service delivery, the Digital Drop-Ins receive a slightly less favourable evaluation than everything else. The drop-in format means predicting demand and profile of support is exceptionally challenging. We have struggled to recruit a pool of volunteers to support the drop-ins too. These two factors have meant that at some events there have been longer waiting times than we would like. The evaluation results and comments correlate with these factors.

### Comments submitted on evaluation forms:

- It was very good 10/10.
- Fantastic service. Service was very user friendly. Felt very comfortable in the support given.
- Had to wait a long time today! Maybe do online next time?
- I am happy with the service I received because the service is specialised to my disability.
- I would tell other people about the project to help them get a better understanding of their equipment. There is no other service like this exists.
- I appreciate you giving me the tablet 😊
- I would appreciate more sessions regular - once a month.
- Learnt a lot. Very informative. Hope that I remember it all when I get home but I have it written down. Thank you to Owais. The older folks need to learn otherwise we will be left behind. Would like to return, if possible, when I encounter problems.
- The Tech Service is a very good idea for people that need support with things. Carol is a good person on things and is a very good support person.
- The service received was excellent and very helpful. Owais and Jack were first class - thank you so much!
- The service was great and beneficial. What you are offering is essential in the disabled community!
- Very accommodating!
- Very helpful, didn't make me feel like an idiot.
- We need to have more digital drop-ins.

- Yes, the team was very friendly. I would tell other people about the project because your team is very efficient.
- You are good people. You helped me download and sort out my games. There are a lot of people with learning disabilities who often need help. This is a very good project.

This project was the first time OPE used the *Learn My Way* platform as part of our membership of The Online Centres Network. It was well evaluated by those who used it, with only 1 person needing larger text size than was available. This word cloud best represents people’s views on the platform.



### **Case Study 3 - Y**

**Y, a 39-year-old male has learning disabilities and very limited digital skills. He is an active member of local user groups. The lack of digital skills has meant that Y was unable to attend various meetings and speak up on behalf of others with a learning disability.**

**TAP provided Y with support to use a tablet and shown various apps such as how to make calls, save contacts, how do carry out searches on the internet and to use the video conference platform, Zoom. After receiving support, Y now researches various topics in relation to the work of the user group.**

**His increased digital skills which have enabled Y to sustain and expand his commitments with the user group and given him a stronger voice. Y**

also keeps in contact with his colleagues as well as sharing important information now using his tablet. This has resulted in a positive impact on his mental health and wellbeing. Y also stays in contact with family and friends via Zoom now, making him very happy being able to see as well as hear them. Overall Y reports an improved quality of life and wellbeing.

## Project Impact

When the project launched, we created an impact measurement framework. This helped project staff and the wider OPE management team have a clear focus for data collection. The framework contained a set of indicators that we used to evidence progress and success in achieving the stated project outcomes.

We utilised a range of methods to collect impact data:

- Impact question all participants were asked before and after receiving support.
- Research questionnaire (in-person, telephone or online) conducted for first 4 months of project.
- Assessments.
- Completed evaluation forms.
- CaptureIT tool on the Learn My Way system.
- End of Project Survey (online, telephone and in-person).

### **Outcome 1. People will be able to live independently at home supported by the increased use of assistive technology and equipment.**

Indicator	Result
Greater awareness of assistive technology	80% state they know more about assistive technology now than a year ago

Greater awareness of how technology use in the home can make life easier	73% state they are more aware now of how technology use in the home can make life easier
Access to and use of new equipment in the home	60% state they use technology in the home more now than a year ago
Financial savings as a result of using technology	43% state they are making financial savings because of using technology more now  36% are not making savings through using technology

**Outcome 2. Increased ability to use technology and the benefits this offers**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Result</b>
Be able to use a computer or other device	93% can use a computer, smart phone or tablet  7% still not able to use a computer, smart phone or tablet
Know how to access public services online	73% know how to access public services like the NHS, DWP and council online  20% do not know how to access public services
Have an awareness of how to manage their money and access banking online	53% aware of how to access online banking  20% do not know how to access online banking  27% not interested in accessing online banking



Greater understanding of securing benefits and entitlements online	60% know how to apply for and manage benefits online 27% do not know how to do this 13% not applicable
Accessibility challenges for disabled people solved	94% feel confident to deal with challenges posed by technology themselves
Sufficient data to meet need and usage	73% have sufficient data on their phone or through Wi-Fi to meet need 27% do not have enough data

### Outcome 3. Disabled are less isolated and better connected

Indicator	Result
Increase use of technology to communicate and connect with others	73% are using technology to communicate and connect with others more now than one year ago 27% report no change in their use of technology than one year ago
Reduced loneliness and isolation	53% feel less isolated and lonely than a year ago 33% report no change in these feelings 14% state it was never an issue
Increased use of technology for social, creative and recreational purposes	73% use their phone, computer, or tablet more now than a year ago 20% report no change in use
Able to access support (formal and informal)	80% able to access support (formal and informal) through their phone, computer or tablet

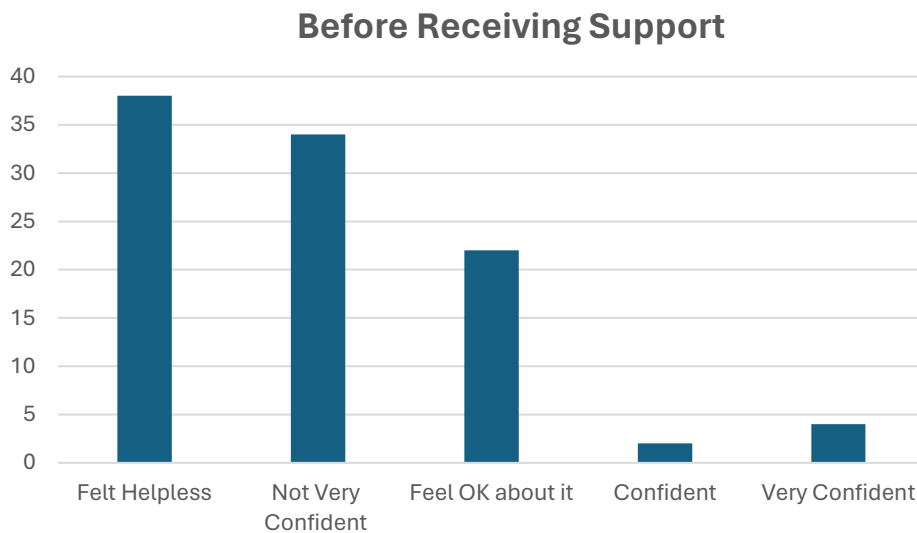
Promoting independence and supporting Deaf and Disabled People to have the skills and confidence needed to be fully included in wider society is core to OPE’s work. So, it is important to us to demonstrate how our work impacts on people’s ability to live independently but also have the resilience to cope when things do not go to plan.

For the entire project we asked beneficiaries receiving individual and group support the same question before receiving support and then again afterwards. We have collated and analysed the results at the end of the year to see the outcomes. The question was:

***How confident do you feel to do this by yourself?***

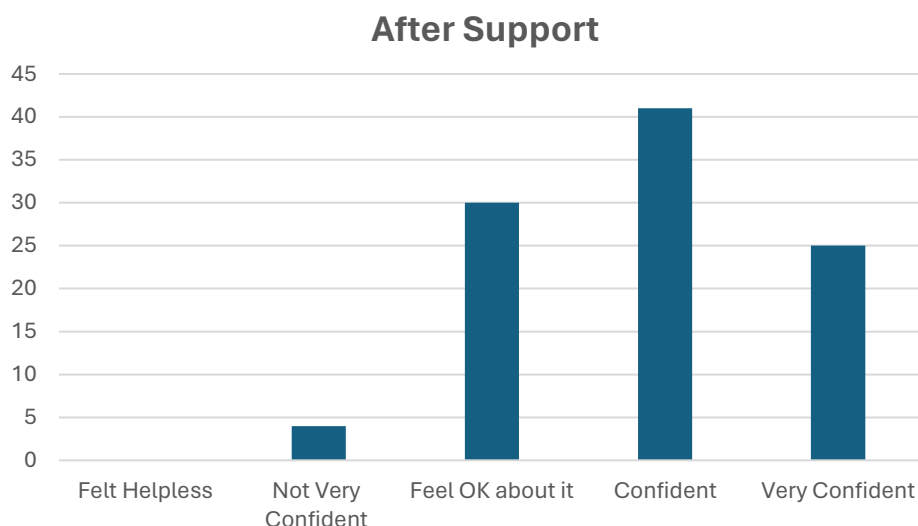
The responses to the question before support was provided show that 72% are not confident in their ability of which 38% feeling helpless.

Only 6% are confident in their ability to deal with technology in the way required.



After our support intervention a very different and more positive outcome is evident.

- 66% feel confident or very confident in their abilities, compared to only 6% before our intervention.
- There has been a 68% positive shift towards feeling confident in their abilities to use technology effectively.



We believe these statistics alone demonstrate the impact and distance travelled following an intervention by TAP and the wider OPE team.

#### **Case Study 4 - W**

**W is a 45-year-old man who has learning and physical disabilities and, lived experience of mental ill health. He lives in an East London Borough and contacted TAP by attending one of the Digital Saturday Drop-ins.**

**He initially presented with a range of issues that were overwhelming him. He did not know how to use Excel, Word or Outlook and as a result was unable to send emails. He had purchased a laptop with all these applications installed but was really struggling to use the technology effectively. This was affecting his mental health and causing him a lot of stress. Being unable to do this had become a huge issue for him.**

**W attended one of our Saturday Digital Drop-ins and received a lot of one-to-one support from the project to enable him to use the applications independently. In total W received 14 hours of support from TAP.**

**He now reports feeling more confident when it comes to technology and has developed a new skill set. W now regularly uses these applications on a regular basis and feels it has increased his independence. He is now looking to develop his skills further to access services and leisure activities. He is interested in taking courses to develop his IT skills more.**

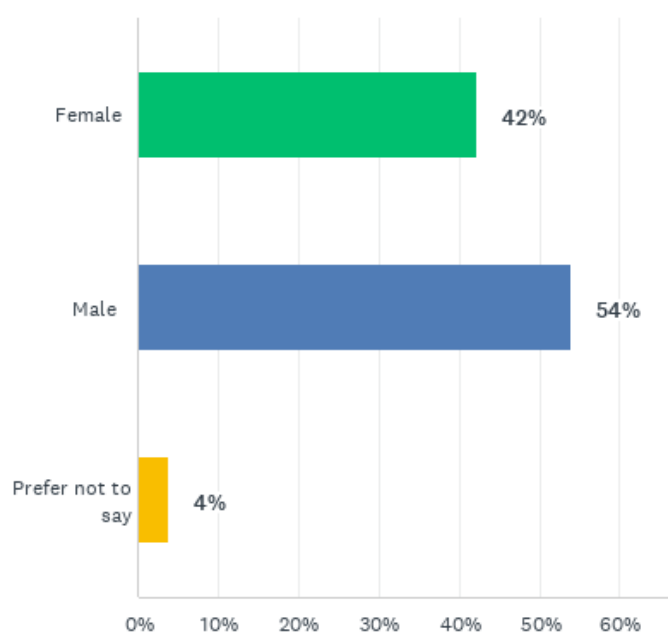
## Future Profile of Need

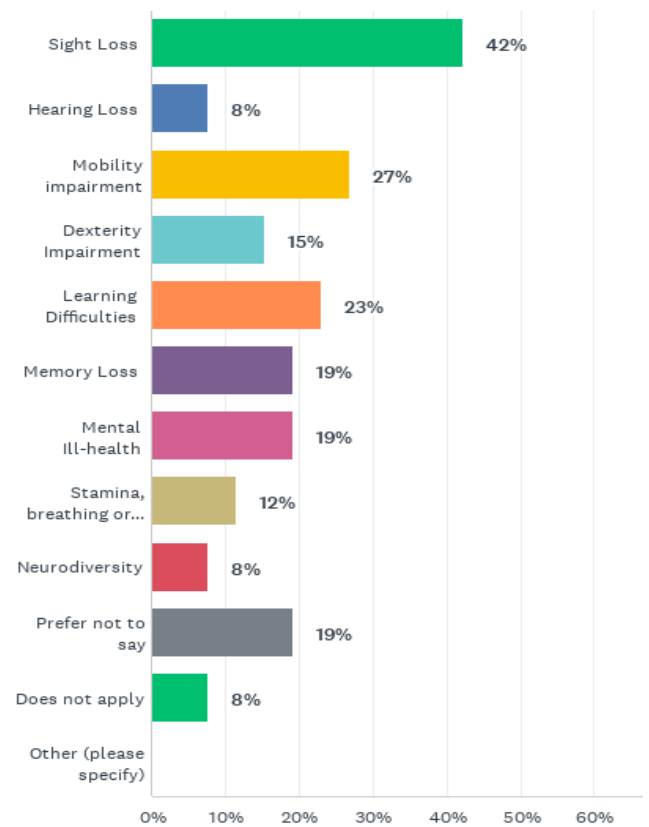
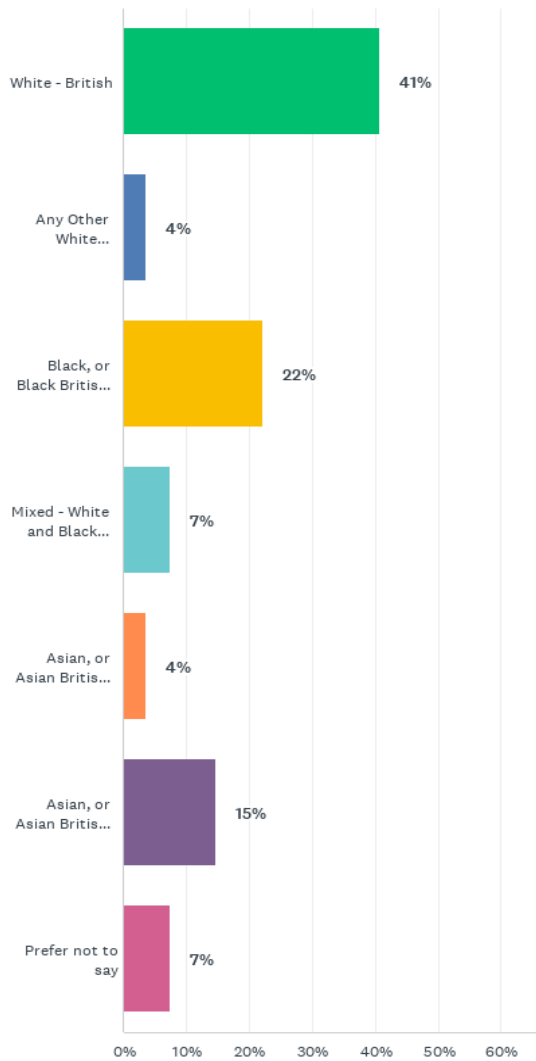
As well as directly supporting Deaf and Disabled People, the Access Foundation grant helped One Place East map need to tackle digital exclusion in Redbridge and across Northeast London. It also helped us explore the take up and challenges associated with Assistive Technology use to support independent living.

In total **224 Deaf and Disabled People contributed to our research** mapping future needs. This was through our digital survey, project assessments, analysis of issues presenting at Digital Drop-Ins and the end of project survey. The OPE team have contributed too by sharing insights gleaned from delivery of other services.

We are confident that our engagement methods and long track record of delivery helped secure a research sample representative of local demography.

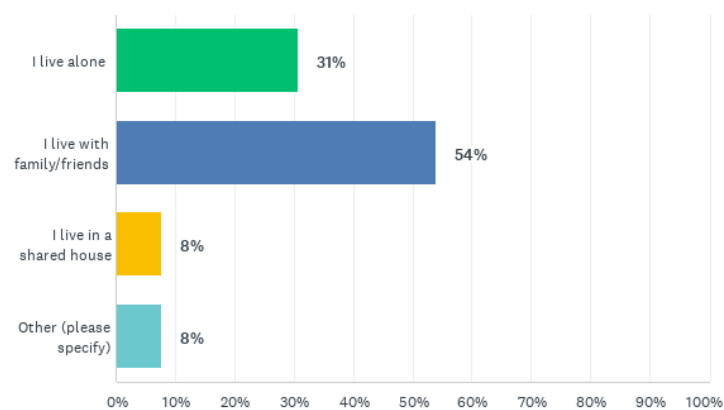
The following charts highlight the profile of people we engaged, segmented by gender, ethnicity, disability, impairment or health condition.





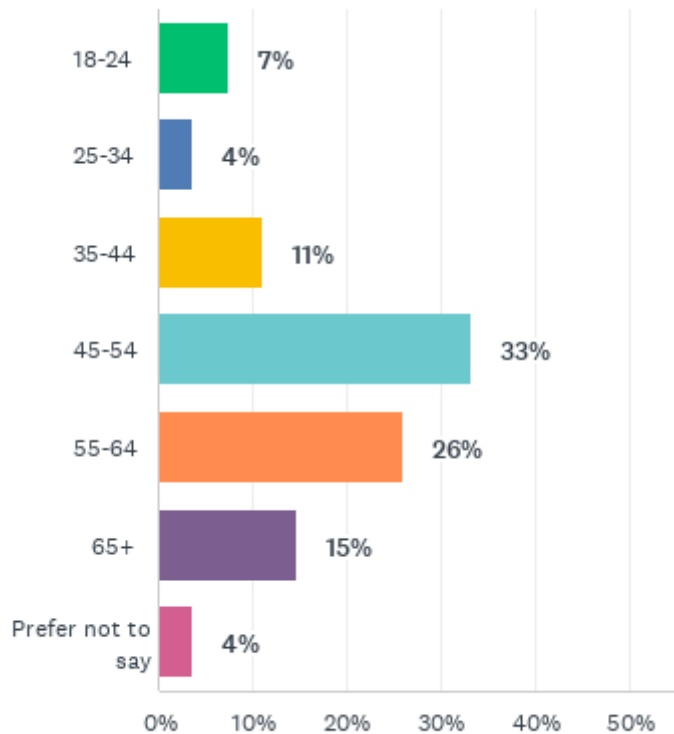
One of our goals was to support participation in the research of people with higher care needs and diverse living situations, we were successful.

54% of participants have help or support with their care needs daily; 15% more than once a day.



81% stated where they live meets their needs to live independently, 19% would benefit from some form of support to increase their ability to live independently.

We managed to secure a good spread of age groups engaged in the research, 81% being of working age.



Our research and support profile identified that only 7% of people do not have a smartphone, tablet, laptop or PC. This mirrors the data showing 7% are still not able to use a computer, smart phone or tablet. It is hard to evidence if this group simply do not want to utilise technology, or if lack of access and skills leads to these statistics.

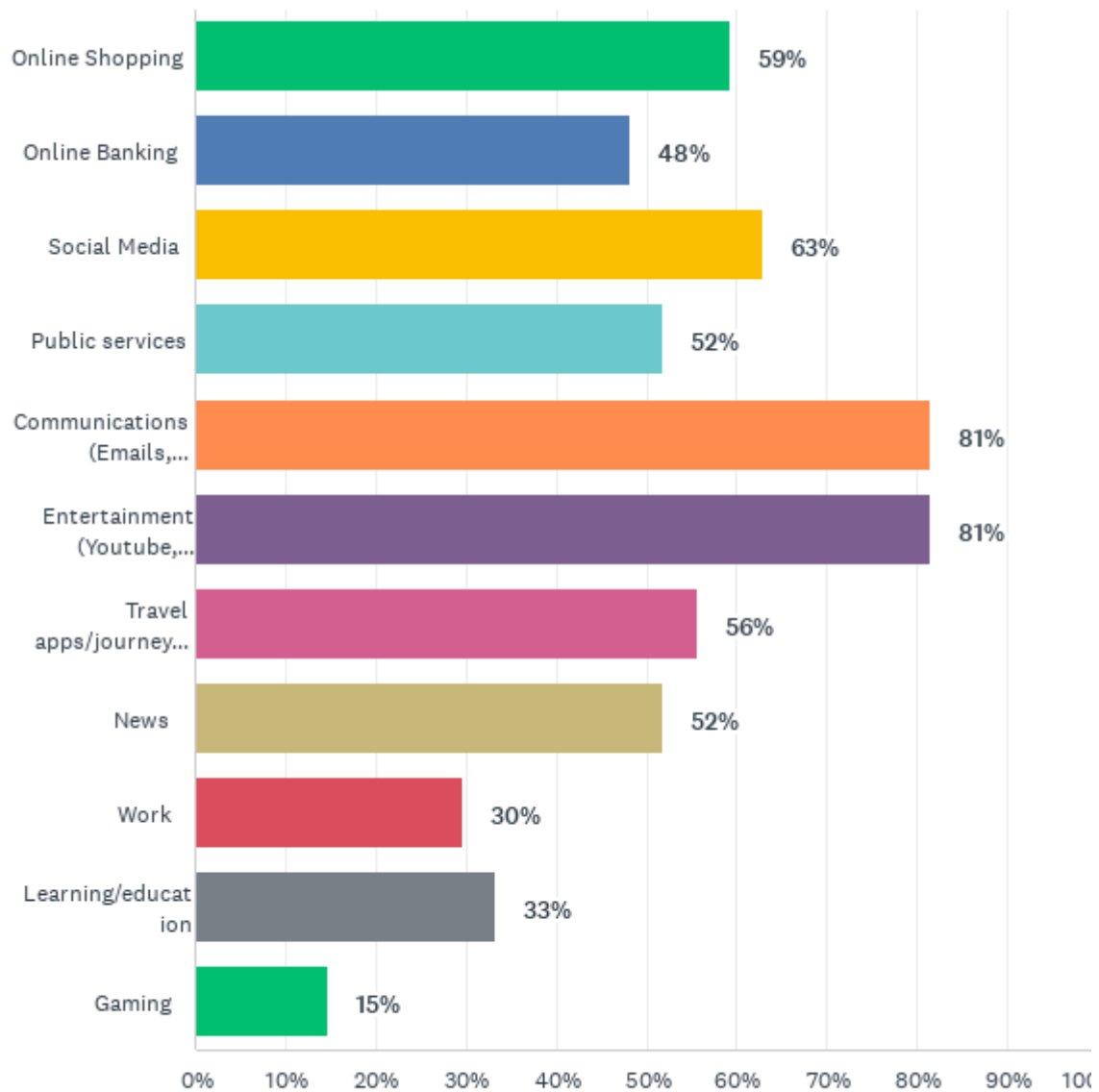
There is a small group of people who want to use technology but face challenges. Evidenced by the 19% of people who do not have access to the internet and 27% struggle with sufficient data to meet their needs.

### Technology Use

The research demonstrates the diverse range of uses Disabled People see for digital and assistive technology.

Despite the success of TAP, there were still 20% not able to access public services at the end of the year. As more health, education, council and

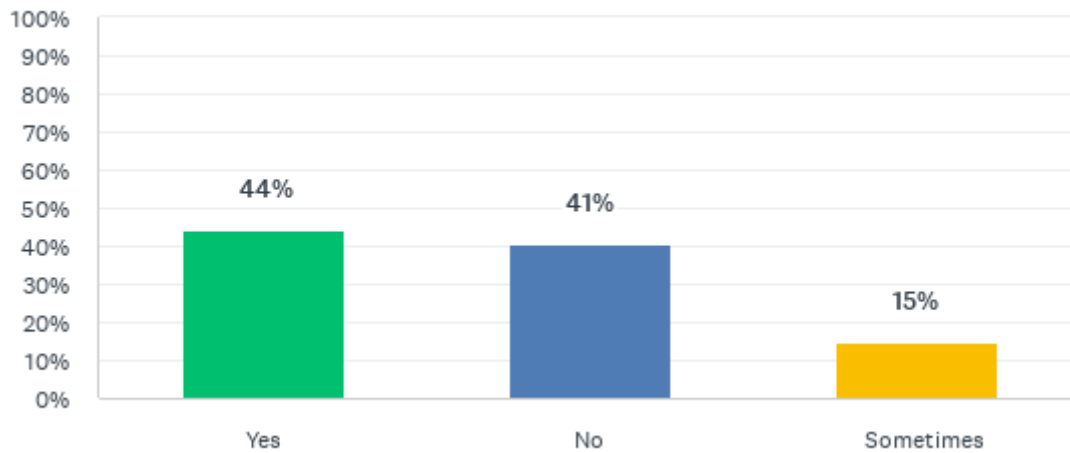
policing services move online, it is essential we support people to have access to needed services. Without this support they face exclusion, increasing existing inequalities.



## Barriers

59% stated that disability, impairment, or long-term illness impacts their ability to use technology.

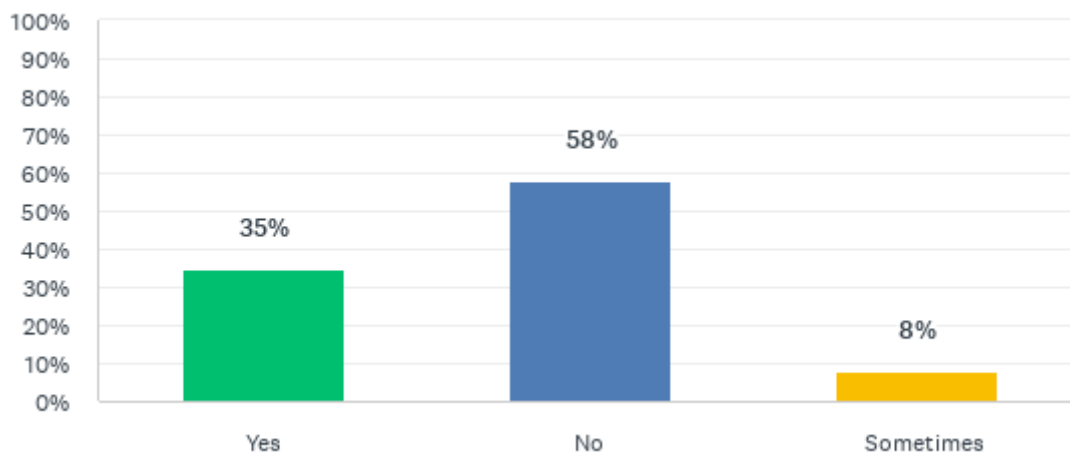
Learning disability was the most common challenge to using technology. Having a visual impairment making many websites inaccessible was the second most common barrier.



43% stated that disability, impairment, or long-term illness impacts their ability to use Assistive Technology.

There were a range of reasons given to explain the challenges when using Assistive Technology. The most common included:

- Low motivation and energy associated with depression.
- Struggling to navigate and remember how things work.
- Being overwhelmed by advances in technology and feeling left behind.



54% are not confident in using IT effectively and safely

The most common reasons given for this lack of confidence were:

- Scared of being scammed.
- Worried about bad apps or virus getting onto computer.
- Experience of abuse on social media.



- Constant changes that can't keep up with.
- Need more support.

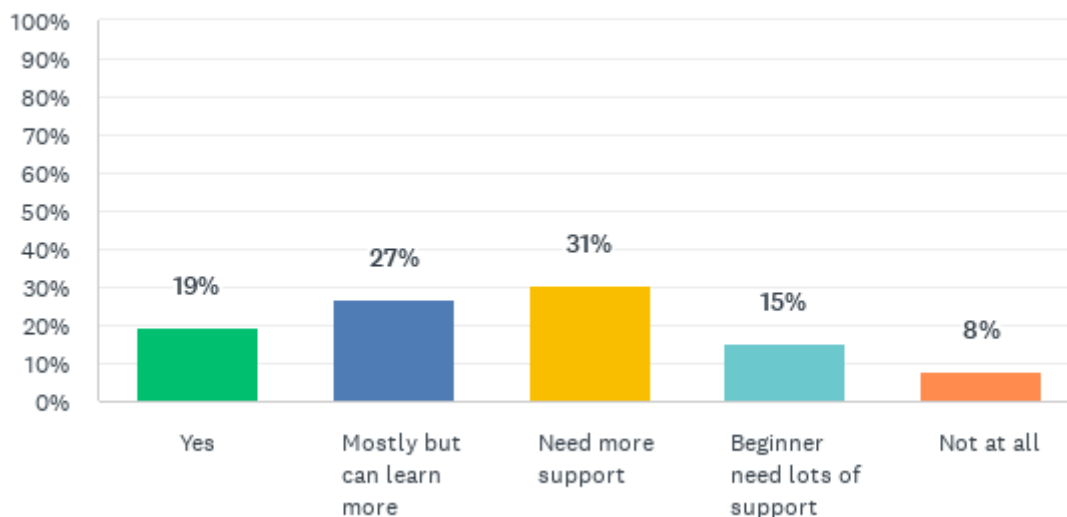
**46% struggle to make best use of their I.T.**

The speed of change and advancements in technology present real challenges to many people. Without support, people get left behind. The causes of people struggling to make best of I.T. can be clustered under four headings.

- Finding it harder to keep up with developments, new apps, and software.
- Believe smartphone has loads of features that are never used.
- Making most of software on computer or tablet. Believing hardly use any of the helpful functions.
- Sometimes accessibility functions like voiceover often cannot help.

**54% state they have not got the knowledge and skills to use IT effectively**

Nearly a quarter (23%) are beginners or have no skills at all. A further 31% need more support to develop their skills to use I.T. better. A reflection of the work required.



**On 22% are aware of the range of technology and gadgets now available to support independent living and overcome barriers.**

59% have conditions or illnesses that impair their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

60% have had this disability or impairment for 1 year or longer.

## **High Demand Areas of Support**

Analysis of the Digital Drop-in interventions, individual support delivery and completed assessments has helped profile the areas TAP continually experienced high demand for assistance.

### **Smartphones**

Equal support requests for iPhones and android mobile phones including:

- ✓ Setting up and sending emails
- ✓ Adding predictive text
- ✓ Using and sending emojis
- ✓ Texting
- ✓ Adding contacts
- ✓ Symbols search
- ✓ Voice-over
- ✓ Searching the internet
- ✓ Using WhatsApp
- ✓ Downloading apps, videos and pictures
- ✓ Motorola phone and kindle support

### **Tablets**

- ✓ Uninstalling apps
- ✓ Placing emails in different folders
- ✓ Changing delivery address on amazon account
- ✓ Accessing wi-fi in different locations

### **Laptops**

- ✓ Saving to hard drive
- ✓ Saving and filing photos and documents
- ✓ Making space and cleaning up hard drive
- ✓ Creating folders
- ✓ Installing software
- ✓ Completing online forms and applying for things such as tv license, transport pass, garden waste collection permit

## **Focus of Future Services and Delivery Methods**

Analysis of all the data has helped us profile the support we need to deliver in the medium term, subject to funding.

### **Phone, Internet and Equipment Access**

With the analogue phone network planned to end in 2025, OPE needs to ensure our community are aware and plan for this change. Accessible and trusted information provision can be linked to supporting people who do not have access to the internet (19%) or struggle to have sufficient data (27%).

- OPE should continue to promote the support available for those people experiencing hardship as a barrier to accessing equipment and data.

### **Financial Exclusion**

The project demonstrated that 43% were making financial savings because of using technology more. The increasing exclusion technology presents in accessing financial services, rights and entitlements needs to be countered. This can be achieved through:

- Supporting people to complete online training through Learn My Way, especially the modules on banking, shopping and accessing benefits.
- More targeted work practically helping people identify how savings can be achieved and then supporting them to secure those benefits.
- Offering workshops and individual support sessions on accessing online banking, benefits and using price comparison sites. All supported by an associated factsheet.
- Support the creation of a Digital Champions Network and recruitment of more Digital Buddies providing personal support and mentoring on a voluntary basis.
- Sustain the Digital Drop-ins to help people overcome small tech issues and/or accessing services.

## **Exclusion from Public Services**

The survey demonstrated that 53% of people want to be able to access services online. Of project beneficiaries only 20% did not know how to access public services online at the end of the project.

As more public sector bodies increase the use of digital technology as a means to access services, make appointments, report crime, order prescriptions and have a say in the local area there will be a need to keep people up to date and supported to overcome barriers. This can be achieved by:

- Hosting workshops with guest speakers/trainers from the police, NHS, council explaining advancements in digital usage and how to access services, information, have your say and pay bills etc.

## **Supporting Independent Living**

Our data demonstrates how this 12-month project positively impacted Deaf and Disabled People both in terms of awareness (80%) and use (60%) of technology to support independent living. However, continuous and faced paced advances in technology risks leaving people behind. To counter this challenge the following provision is needed locally:

- Accessible information keeping people up to date about technological developments, its benefits and potential.
- Individual assessments helping people understand how technology can support independent living.
- For those experiencing hardship and data poverty, support sourcing hardware and applying for grants to purchase needed equipment and identifying the best deals.
- Opportunities to see and try technology to better understand its potential.

## **Skills Development**

Only 19% of those engaged felt they had sufficient skills and knowledge to use technology effectively. As 59% have conditions or illnesses that impair

their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, our experience from this project demonstrated the need for flexible delivery methods. Future provision will need to:

- Offer more intensive one to one support for those with additional needs.
- Maximise the use of volunteers, peer support and buddies to ensure this support is cost-effective and affordable.
- Recruit and train a range of volunteers with an understanding and ability to train and support Disabled People with a range of needs, impairments and health conditions.
- Make better use of Learn My Way Platform.

## Conclusion

OPE have created and delivered an outstanding service through the support of the Access Foundation. This is evidenced by the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation data included in this report.

Employing a non-sighted project officer to lead and deliver this project has had secondary benefits too. He has developed in confidence and skills throughout the year, creating strong local networks built on mutual respect and support.

For TAP to sustain its impact, continuing to expand the events and collaborations utilised can only be beneficial.

Our flexibility and person-centred approach ensured we identified and met the needs of a wide range of Disabled People. Many new to our organisation.

Our research and analysis of service demand helped map need and the best methods to address them in the future. Investment from the NHS through the Health Inequalities Fund (HIF) has supported OPE to sustain TAP but further funding is required to really develop the service.

Products created through the Access Foundation grant will have value long after the funding ends. We have created assets in the form of digital content, factsheets, workshop session plans and materials that will have

benefit more people over the next two years. One legacy of this investment in OPE.

## **Learning from Experience**

When breaking down analysis by the method of service delivery, the Digital Drop-Ins receive a slightly less favourable evaluation than everything else. The drop-in format means predicting demand and profile of support is exceptionally challenging. We have struggled to recruit a pool of volunteers to support the drop-ins too. We need to ensure the drop-ins operate well in the future, as they are a popular route to support.

Although the issues around conducting home based assessments were a challenge, our flexible and creative response meant the needs of beneficiaries were never neglected. However, we experienced two real challenges during the delivery of the one-year project that limited our service capacity and capability.

- A) Throughout the lifetime of the project, we struggled to recruit volunteers for the Digital Saturday Drop-In events and to be Digital Buddies. Along with high demand, this occasionally led to longer wait times for support at the Drop-Ins than we would have liked. 100% of users attending the drop-ins received support though, even if there was a wait.
- B) When planning the project, we underestimated demand and the staffing capacity required for the development and delivery of all aspects of the project. We now recognise that service development, outreach, frontline service delivery, the recruitment, support, and training of volunteers all within 17.5 hours of project officer time was a big ask. To address this challenge there were pinch points over the year where other OPE staff helped out. This relieved pressure and ensured no one went without their service.

As of January 2024, OPE now has a full-time Befriending and Volunteer Lead funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This dedicated resource is already impacting our ability to recruit and train volunteers. HIF funding enables us to also create a Digital Champions Network, popular with the NHS and local authority.

## **Next Steps**

Using the 3-year HIF funding as a foundation, we now plan to scope out a service model for the medium term, applying for funding to ensure we can meet demand and grow the developed service.