

# Digital Inclusion



Superfast Cornwall's pioneering digital inclusion programme has helped more than 3,000 people develop their online skills. The programme has delivered beginner IT sessions and worked with organisations to provide train the trainer support, lend IT equipment or signpost learners. It has also enabled a number of digital volunteers to help create a self-sustaining network of community IT support.



# Superfast Digital Inclusion

**The Cornwall project was the first project to commence as part of the wider Get IT Together programme in the UK, a partnership between BT and national charity Citizens Online.**

Since Cornwall Get IT Together ended in January 2014, following 3 successful years of delivery, Superfast Cornwall has maintained the momentum of the digital inclusion programme. This has reached individuals and groups who are both digitally excluded and rurally isolated and who want to use IT to keep in touch with friends and family, save money online, research interests or find work or new opportunities.

During the past 18 months, the programme has worked with a range of community venues across Cornwall in locations such as **Pendeen, Penzance, Carnon Downs, Perranporth, St Mawes, St Breward, Treknow, St Dennis, Gorran Haven, Bodmin, Wadebridge and Stoke Climsland.**

Many people across these locations have been helped to develop their online skills. A recent study<sup>1</sup> shows that, UK-wide, the social return for someone using the Internet for the first time is £1,064 per annum. This comes from a combination of benefits ranging from financial savings and improved employment opportunities to reduced feelings of isolation and improved confidence.

## Individual learner stories

### Gwen

*Gwen is 87 years of age and joined a Beginner IT class. She is a constant carer for her husband who is 91 and wanted to be able to shop online and to use skype and email. Gwen has learnt so much and loves the social interaction and finds the time a welcome release and great fun. Due to high demand, the project started workshops at her local community venue which enable people from the basic IT classes to improve their skills and ask questions and develop their skills further. Gwen has joined this group and has also purchased her own laptop, having researched price comparison websites as part of the IT lessons.*

<sup>1</sup><http://www.citizensonline.org.uk/2014/07/new-research-reveals-social-value-of-being-online-is-worth-more-than-1000-a-year/>

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## Sue

*Sue is 66 and came to class worried that she was going to do something wrong and then would not be able to understand how to rectify a problem. The course has given her confidence and she is now buying online with safety – something that she would never have done before. Learning within a friendly, interactive group has helped her to discuss how to tackle various computer issues. She has now bought an iPad to continue her computer skills and is hoping to volunteer to help other new IT learners at forthcoming workshops.*

## Richard

*Richard joined basic IT courses in Penzance with the aim of improving his knowledge of IT. Attending the sessions has enabled him to learn more about shopping safely online, as well as increasing his email skills. He found the detail of the course and the social interaction wonderful, so much so that he encouraged his wife also to take part in the courses. Richard is now volunteering to help other learners at the Penzance sessions.*



## Bob

*Bob is in his 70s and came to the class not knowing anything – he had never used a computer before and did not know how to switch one on. Recognising that more and more things are moving to the Internet, he wanted to learn how to use IT to avoid being left behind. After starting the Beginner IT sessions as a complete novice, his confidence increased each week, and in week three he appeared with a new laptop! Our tutors helped him set this up and he has not looked back since.*



# Partnership Working

The success of the programme has been largely a result of close partnership working with a range of partner organisations, including Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC), Cornwall Library Service and Job Centre Plus. During 2014 the programme began working alongside CRCC's 'Get F+IT' Project, which has helped people to directly save money online.



In one case, this was up to £700 for an annual energy bill. Jane Morgan, CRCC Project Worker said: "Working with Superfast Cornwall has enabled CRCC to gain further access to rurally isolated communities and to provide information, advice and guidance to help people build their digital skills and learn more about saving money online".

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## Legacy



In preparing for the close of the Superfast Cornwall Digital Inclusion Programme, the team has been working with local partners to support the creation of localized digital hubs, which will be managed and supported by village hall committees. Two special events, held in March and June 2015, brought together

various venues to network and share ideas about helping get their local communities online. It is anticipated that these 'talk and share' forums will continue as part of the legacy of the programme. Other legacies include loaning IT equipment to CRCC, who will continue to deliver digital inclusion activities through the Get F+IT project, and providing practical support to Cornwall Council to enable and maintain connections with our community contacts.

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# Case Study

## Beginners IT Training at Carnon Downs Village Hall, 2014—2015

To coincide with the re-opening of the Village Hall after major rebuilding and refurbishment work, including a new Meeting Room with access to Superfast Broadband, four one-off 'Taster Sessions' were offered in November 2014 with a total of 36 people attending.



The demand for further training was evident from these sessions, and from January 2015, Beginner IT Training Courses were provided and attended by nearly 60 local residents of the village. Following on from this, two Improver IT Courses were offered in April and May with 20 people attending.

### Future Plans

A Community IT Group is starting in June for all those who have already attended the Beginners and Improvers Courses. To meet the ongoing demand, another Improvers Course has been planned for July 2015 with a further Beginners Course starting in November.

*"This has been a fantastic project for our Community. It has been lovely to see our attendees growing in confidence and having fun while learning new skills. We are indebted to the tutors for their professionalism, enthusiasm, sense of humour and support which has given us the confidence and inspiration to try and run our own Community IT sessions in the future. We would never have got this project off the ground without their help."*

*Sue Felton Chair of Trustees, Carnon Downs Village Hall*

[superfastcornwall.org](http://superfastcornwall.org)

Superfast Cornwall is the ground breaking EU, BT and Cornwall Development Company partnership to bring superfast broadband to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, making it one of the best connected places in the world.

