

# Include-IT Mersey



DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT



# THE FACTS & FIGURES

as of February 2023



**2084**

LEARNERS



**232**

INTO EMPLOYMENT



**493**

INTO FURTHER EDUCATION



**259**

INTO 'JOB-SEARCH'

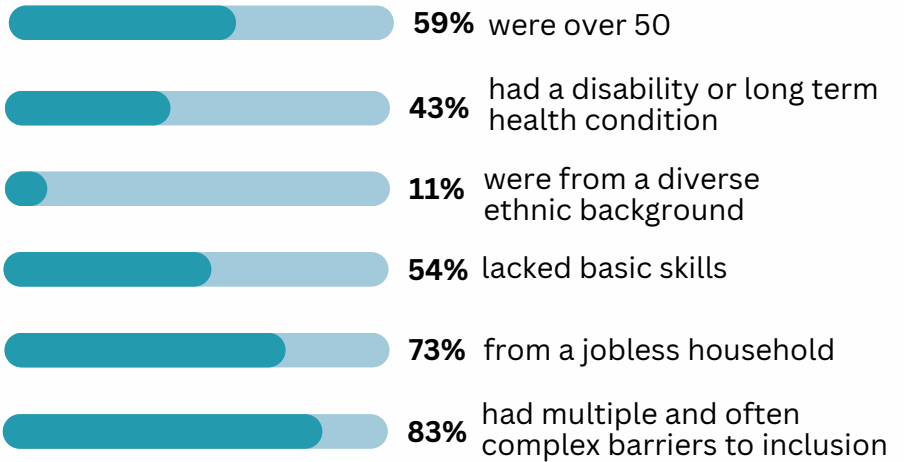


**224**

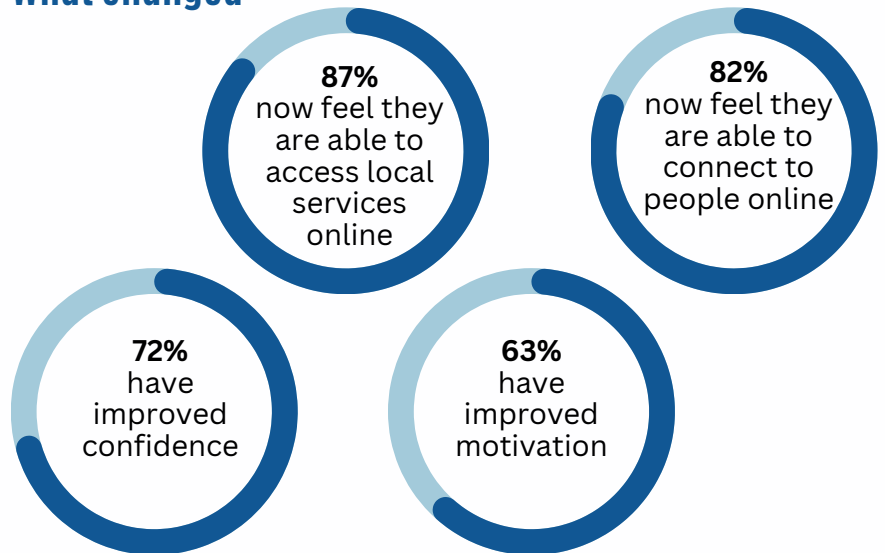
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED



## Who we helped



## What changed



## Digital Champions



**25** Volunteer Digital Champions moved into work while volunteering



**86%** feel they have gained new skills as a result of volunteering



**81%** have shown an improvement in their confidence

Find out more at:

[WWW.INCLUDEITMERSEY.ORG.UK](http://WWW.INCLUDEITMERSEY.ORG.UK)



# LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



**Steve Rotheram**

Mayor of the Liverpool City Region

"The past few years have shown just how important high quality, digital connectivity has increasingly become in all our lives - from home working, to virtual GP appointments and keeping in touch with loved ones - the world is moving faster than ever, and we have a responsibility to help our residents keep up to speed."

"Projects like Include-IT Mersey are helping us to do just that, by supporting thousands of local people to develop their digital skills and gain the confidence to go on to progress into many of the good, high value jobs and training opportunities that we're creating in our area. Its work has seen grassroots community organisations deliver digital skills within communities across our area - and we're not content with stopping there."

"Thanks to devolution, we're investing in infrastructure that will serve our region for years to come, like LCR Connect, which will give our residents access to the fastest internet speeds in the country and ensure that we'll stay at the front of the pack. It's because of the investments we're making now that I believe our area is on its way to becoming the most digitally connected area in the country - where no one is left behind."



# LEO VOLUNTEER



Leo has been volunteering as a Digital Champion with Include-IT Mersey since 2018. He had recently retired from Scottish Power, where part of his role included training staff to use digitised meter reading equipment. As a volunteer he has put this experience to good use! He runs a weekly, 2 hour digital drop-in at the Life Rooms in Bootle.

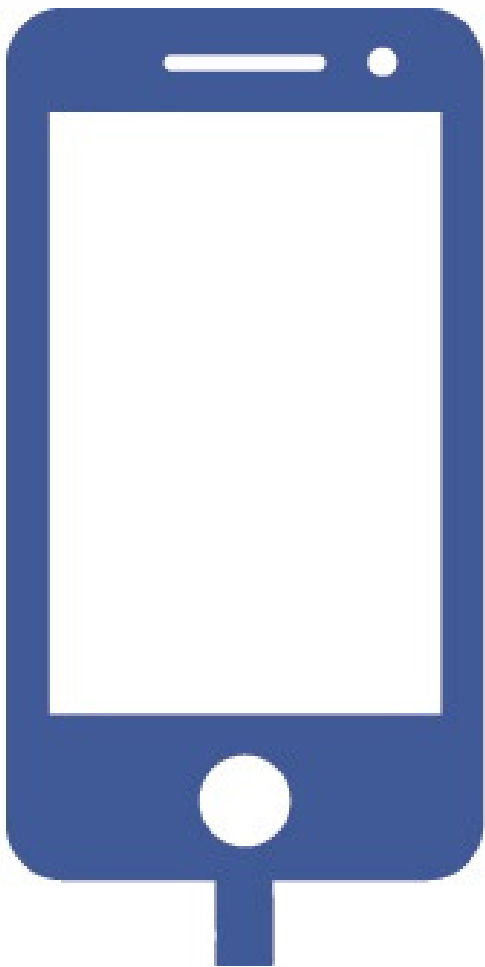
At Life Rooms, people can use the booking system to access computers, to learn and practice new IT skills, as well as request support from Leo to sort out any specific challenges they have with IT equipment.

A common request is for assistance to unlock computer and phone passwords – a big problem for many.



As a volunteer he has supported hundreds of people learn how to use a keyboard, to get online, learn new digital skills (including word processing), get to grips with Excel, download and use Apps on their mobiles; and help them set up new laptops, tablets and phones.

*"I'm enjoying it – it keeps me busy. I'm giving something back and helping people develop their IT skills – from very basic ones to more advanced. It also helps me keep my own digital skills up to date since retiring – as people bring all sorts of devices in that I get to grips with. People do appreciate it and I'm glad to pass my skills on to help them learn something."*



# CATHY



Cathy had no previous IT experience or qualifications before she started the course. She is a Special Guardian for her great nephew (aged 7) and had to give up her previous job in a café about 3 years ago to care for him full-time. COVID lockdown motivated Cathy to enrol on the Include-IT course, which she heard about through JobCentre Plus.

Cathy found the course very enjoyable: both in terms of learning IT skills for the first time and also in making new friends who she has stayed in contact with since completing the course a year ago. New IT skills she learned included basic word processing, learning how to send and receive emails (including attachments) and registration with Online Job Search websites.



*"I can actually use a laptop now, that's down to the course tutors at Age UK Wirral."*

Since completing the course, Cathy has started part-time work at a local primary school as a Midday Assistant and is volunteering at the school as well. She is using her new digital skills at work and in her role as a Special Guardian – being able to complete a range of online training courses such as Safeguarding and online forms for NHS hospital appointments.

*"If I hadn't done the course after lockdown, I would have been left behind – I wasn't really bothered about technology – if I didn't have to use it I wouldn't – I was a bit old school! But everyone has to now. It's massively opened up everything for me."*





# MRS K

Mrs K from Halton came out of lockdown with severe anxiety and depression. She got to the point where she couldn't speak on the phone and lost much of her confidence. Attending the Include-IT Mersey course delivered by the Workers Education Association (WEA) has helped her wellbeing and moved her closer to the job market. Mrs K heard about the course when she attended the local VENUS course and saw a leaflet. Tutors supported her in a wide range of ways: sorting out her computer; building her confidence and coaching her through the Include-IT course. She claims Universal Credit and has 2 children in primary school and another at senior school and is starting to consider ways of returning to work part-time, including the option of working from home:

*"COVID did my head in! I was stressed out because there was only me and the kids. At the end of lockdown we lost my mum. My anxiety was really bad - I saw this course and thought this will get me out of the house. The best bit of it was being able to refresh my brain about what to do on a computer. My sister asked for help on my computer the other day - I helped her with it and that felt good. My anxiety has calmed down now - I can go out in the car on my own, go to the shops and not be scared anymore."*



*"I'm starting to think about work and I've got the job site Indeed on my phone now. I'm working with my adviser on the Households into Work programme now as well. All of these are building my confidence up - doing courses like Include-IT - I've loved it. I couldn't even speak on the phone before I did that."*



# RICHARD & JAMES



Richard and his son James enrolled on the Include-IT course with Speke Training and Education Centre in March 2022.

With the tutor's support, they realised that this IT training would put them in a good position to become taxi drivers. The Include-IT course has helped them in gaining confidence and they completed the online courses required for their taxi driver training, which was delivered through the trade union, Unite. Both have now also passed their taxi exams and are now fully-qualified taxi drivers in full-time self-employment. Father and son told us that this wouldn't have been possible without the Include-IT course:

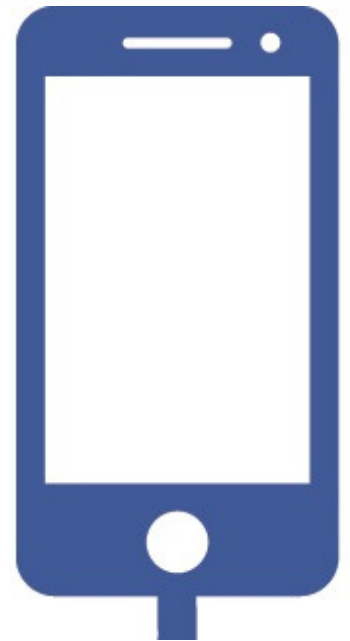


*"We were involved with the Include-IT course from March to June 2022 and it has been really beneficial. It meant I could get a job as a taxi driver which I have been doing for 6 weeks now. We use what we learnt on the course on PDAs and SatNavs too. The course has also helped me with online banking and creating strong passwords for cyber security. I also use it for online shopping and playing fantasy football (currently top in my FF league)!"*

James [24]

*"It's ok for people who use IT every day in their work, or have grown up with it. But I have always been involved in engineering, that was my work for years, so I never used any of it. The course has changed all that for me and opened up other opportunities. I was reluctant at first but it worked out really well for both of us."*

Richard [61]



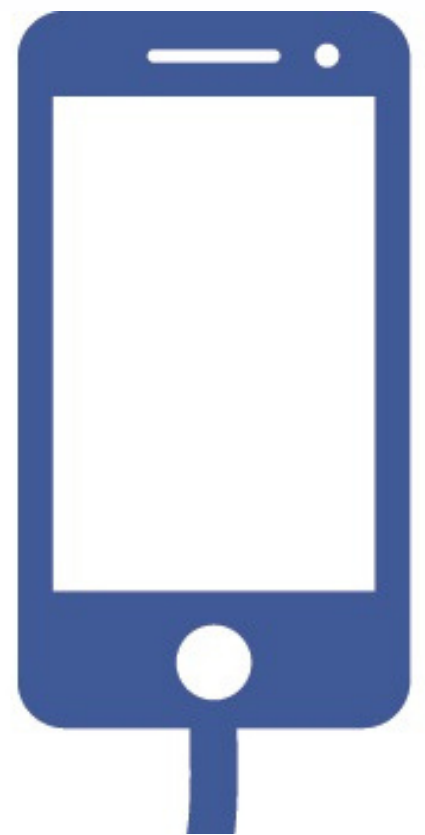
# STEPHEN VOLUNTEER

Ste is a Digital Champion with Torus, volunteering twice a week at St Helens Central. Originally a participant on the Include-IT Mersey course, Ste got involved to refresh his IT skills, after a long period of unemployment due to anxiety and depression. He found the course useful in developing his IT skills and building his confidence, helping him structure his week, and get out and about. On completing the course, his tutor James suggested he volunteered with Include-IT Mersey:

*"When I finished the Include-IT course, I thought it would be a shame to go back to my old routine, so I became a volunteer. It was nerve-racking at first – I couldn't have done that in the past. And James (the tutor at Torus) is a fantastic support, I can't praise him enough really."*

Volunteering, and attending the volunteer socials which Include-IT offer, has built his self-confidence, reduced his anxiety and enabled him to start thinking about applying for IT or admin jobs in the near future:

*"I feel a lot better in myself – I have a lot of structure in my week now, I get out and about a lot more. Previously I didn't like public transport, I've got over that now. Volunteering has improved my wellbeing massively. It's really rewarding to help other people and share a bit of knowledge, and it's benefitting me at the same time – I love it."*






# MONIRA

Monira has been living in Liverpool since arriving 6 months ago from Afghanistan.

As an English Language graduate in her 20s, Monira joined the Include-IT Mersey course in October 2022, wanting to improve her IT skills and also her English language skills. Monira was pleased to be able to practice her new skills and press ahead with job searches, as she has received a tablet and data. She has found the employability element of the course particularly useful including drafting a CV, learning about job search techniques and the IT elements related to spreadsheets and data management.

Through support from the Include-IT Mersey project, Monira now has direction and a plan to develop her new skills as she is looking to access a Teaching Assistant training course and work in a school setting in the future. The course has not only been valuable in terms of IT and employability skills, but also to develop her language skills and to meet other learners on the course.



*"I have been able to meet other people – to meet local people and to understand the accent a bit more – Liverpudlians speak so fast! This course has opened a door for my future. It works well for me – by joining this I have also expanded my own networks and learned so much more – especially how to get into training and search for jobs."*

# JANETTE



With few IT skills, Janette joined the Include-IT course at Everton Development Trust (EDT) in Spring 2019 after realising she needed to develop these skills when looking for new employment opportunities and in her voluntary work. She found the course tutors at EDT supportive and patient, commenting:

*"I felt relaxed and comfortable attending. The tutors were very patient and having the one to one support was great, as I was able to work at my own pace. This approach was great for older people - it made me feel more confident, gave me more structure to my week. I have also met new people."*

Completing the course in late 2019 has made her feel more confident in general as well as specifically in her IT capabilities.

Janette found COVID lockdown very socially isolating but she was able to purchase a laptop and started to use Zoom to make contact with both friends and with other volunteers.

The course has enabled her to get involved in many activities which were previously not possible – Janette told us:

*"I feel much more competent now with the computer than I did and obviously the way things are going - everything is online. I've really encouraged others to do the course as well. Zoom has connected me with volunteers I wouldn't have met otherwise. It takes a lot of courage, certainly when you're older. Just being able to access information on the internet is so useful."*

Janette is keen to do further IT courses, especially to develop her skills in Powerpoint presentations and Excel.





# THANK YOU

It has been a rewarding opportunity for Sefton CVS to manage the Include-IT Mersey project over the last six years. I would like to thank Stuart McGrory and the team for their diligence and commitment over that period. The project couldn't have been as successful as it has been without the hard work and commitment of our amazing partners who have utilised their knowledge, experience and connections to provide grassroots support, tailored to the needs of local communities across the city region."

"The importance of digital skills was never as apparent as during the COVID pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns of 2020-21. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank our project partners, staff and volunteers for how tirelessly they have supported over two thousand people who have engaged with the project. A massive thank you also to our funders The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions. Delivering a European Social Fund (ESF) funded project comes with some unique challenges and the support of our funding advisors at TNLCF has been invaluable. The funding provided has made a real difference to the thousands of individuals who took part in the project. We look forward to continuing to support digital connectivity in our communities across the Liverpool City Region as we transition from ESF funding to the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund."



**Angela White OBE**

CEO - Sefton CVS

# CONTACT

## US



0151 920 0726 ext 213



[includeitmersey@seftoncvcs.org.uk](mailto:includeitmersey@seftoncvcs.org.uk)



3rd Floor Burlington House,  
Crosby Road North, Waterloo L22 0LG



[includeitmersey.org.uk](http://includeitmersey.org.uk)



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