

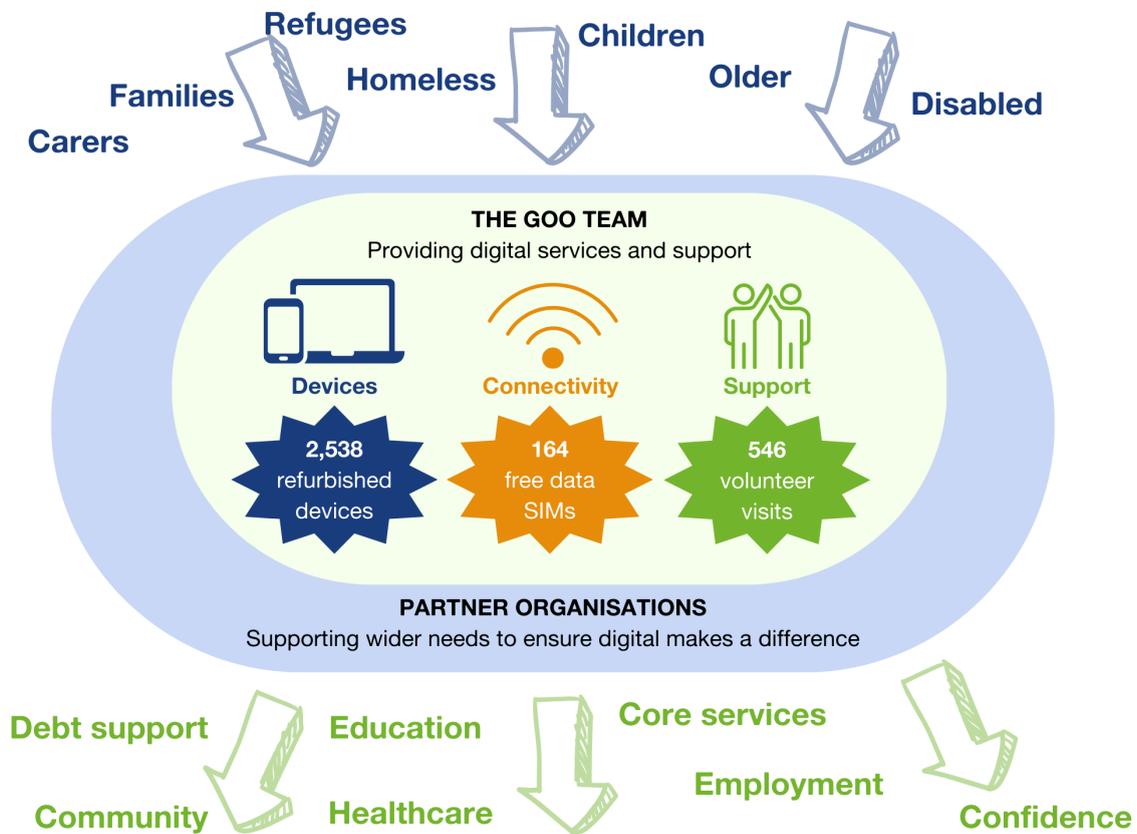
Impact Report 2023

Reporting to 31 October 2023

v1.1, 23 Feb 2024

Introduction

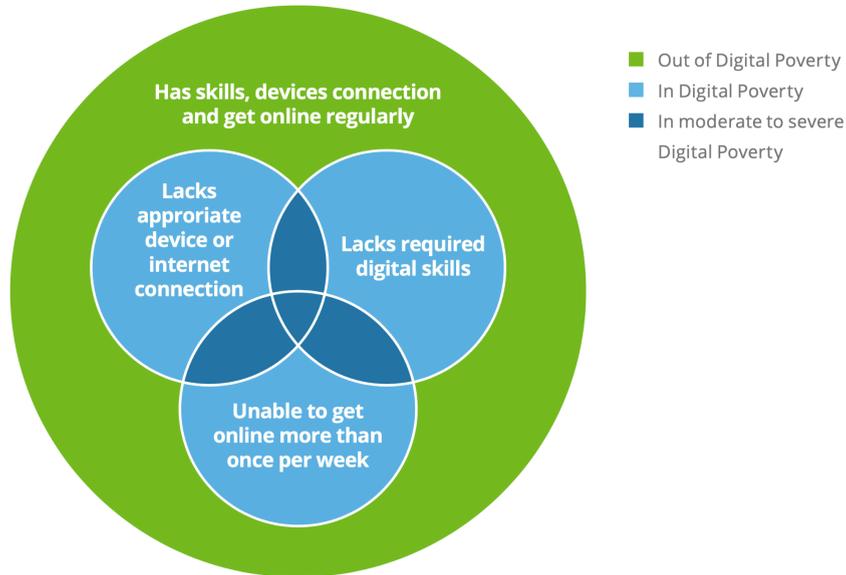
At the end of our second full year providing devices, connectivity and support to help people across the county to get online, we've built a solid platform for digital support and are building a stronger understanding of the difference we're making to people's lives.



In this report, we'll explore the background to digital inequalities in Oxfordshire, explain our approach and Theory of Change, look at the nuts and bolts of what we do, and our findings on the impact we're having.

Background

According to Deloitte’s recent paper “[A socio-economic assessment of the implications of digital poverty in the UK](#)”, an estimated 13-19m people aged 16+ (24-34% of this population in the UK) are suffering digital poverty, defined as lacking digital skills, devices or ability to get online regularly. 20% of children are also estimated to be impacted by digital poverty. In the graph below, one in seven of these people are deprived across more than one dimension.

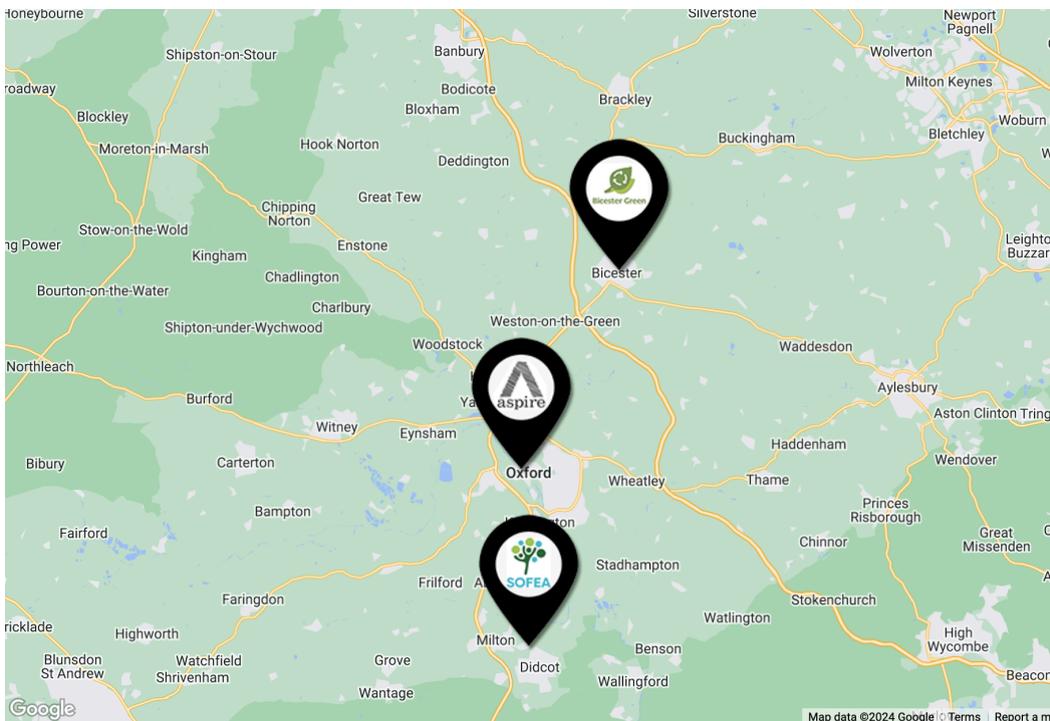


In our increasingly digital world, tackling digital poverty is key to overcoming barriers preventing people from getting on in their lives. This includes accessing education, finding employment, reducing isolation (particularly for older people) and reducing inequality, with a strong correlation between socio-economic circumstance and digital poverty.

Despite Oxfordshire being a wealthy county, [according to the 2021 census](#), 10 of Oxford’s neighbourhood areas are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, and 29% of children in the county live below the poverty line. Applying the lower-end of the Deloitte figures to Oxfordshire’s [population](#) of 614,000 people aged 20 or over, more than 147,000 people in the county are estimated to be suffering one or more of the dimensions of digital poverty above.

The GOO team

We are a partnership of four charities, providing three device refurbishment hubs across the county and the Connect! volunteer 1-2-1 support service. We also act as a network for “all things digital” in Oxfordshire, helping community groups, charities, public and private sector work effectively to improve digital inclusion.



Our theory of change

Digital exclusion has a wide variety of causes, and impacts on diverse groups of people across our community.

To reach as many as possible, we are building GOO as a strong “technical layer” for the community:

- For referrers, trusted charities, community groups and public services working with those in need, we offer a referral process which is as “lightweight” and simple as possible.
- For device donors, we offer a robust process for secure device erasure and traceability, building confidence to support the programme.

TARGET AUDIENCE

families • children • older people • carers • disabled people • homeless people • refugees



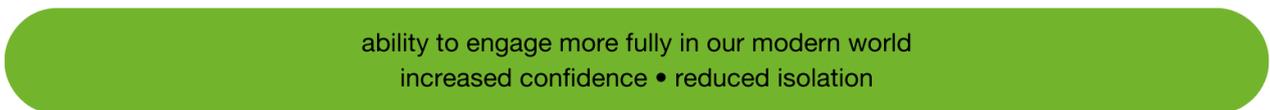
GOO TEAM OUTPUTS LOCAL COMMUNITY



..... OUTCOMES



..... IMPACT



ASSUMPTIONS

donations and support • community reaches vulnerable people • keep up with technical change

Achievements so far

Headline figures

Here are the headline numbers since we started operations in autumn 2021 through to 31 October 2023:



We've been growing quickly, delivering 1415 devices from Nov-22 to Oct-23, up from 1005 in the previous 12 months.

Behind the scenes - device refurbishment and data

Our three device refurbishment hubs have invested in our teams, processes and tools to track devices from donor to recipient and ensure trusted secure device erase, providing certificates if required. We are set up to handle as wide a variety of laptops, tablets and phones as possible, as well as accessories such as printers and monitors where requested.

We are a member of [Good Things Foundation's](#) National Databank to provide SIM cards with 6-month free data, ensuring we can offer connectivity alongside devices.

The team have learned increasingly advanced repairs, from basics of swapping batteries and keyboards, to more delicate mobile phone screens, laptop cooling systems and handling adhesives etc in modern devices.



Support visits

Connect! have built a dedicated team of more than 20 volunteers who visit clients across the county to help them with their technology. Volunteers are screened and DBS checked and go through basic training to ensure they are up to speed with best practice, particularly in how to stay safe online. As well as helping clients to access online resources, Connect! helps Citizens Advice support people who are unable to reach an advisor. Read more in [this case study on our website](#).

The Connect! team is in the process of developing a volunteer matching and scheduling app, which will help them scale the service to manage a large pool of volunteers and support more people.

Partners

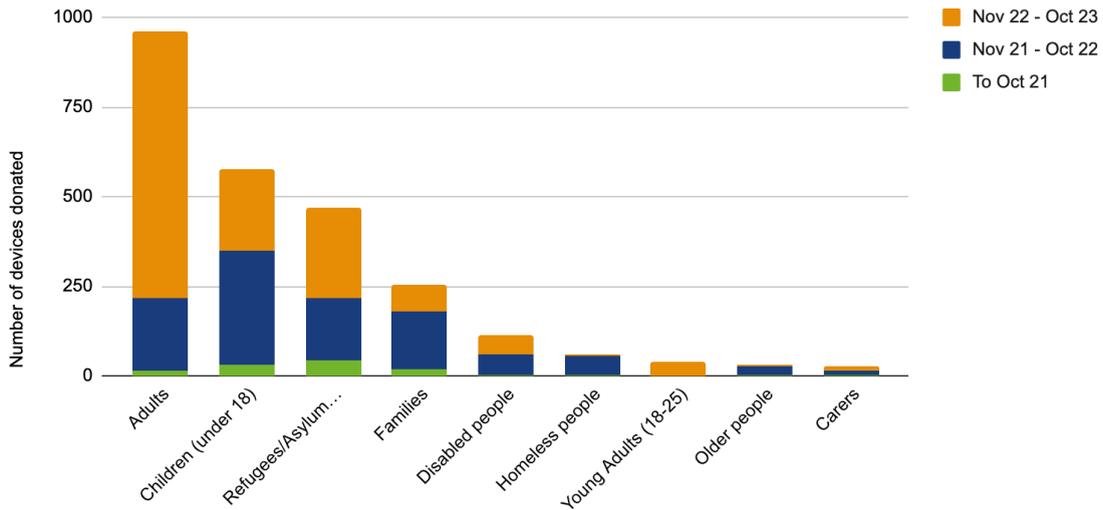
We've built strong relationships with more than 200 organisations across the county, supporting different communities and groups of people with particular needs. Here are the top 20 in terms of numbers of devices donated up to the end of October.

Organisation	Devices donated
No Limits Employability Programme	404
Asylum Welcome	233
Aspire Oxford	165
Oxfordshire County Council	145
Oxford Community Action	139
Homeless Oxfordshire	120
SOFEA	62
Oxfordshire MIND	62
Elmore Community Services	55
Connection Support	48
Connect!	36
The Oxford Academy	32
Carers Oxfordshire	32
Syrian Community Oxfordshire	29
Salvation Army	29
The Bicester School	28
Ukrainian Host	25
Restore	25
OFCA	25
Shaw Ridge Primary school	24

Who we've supported

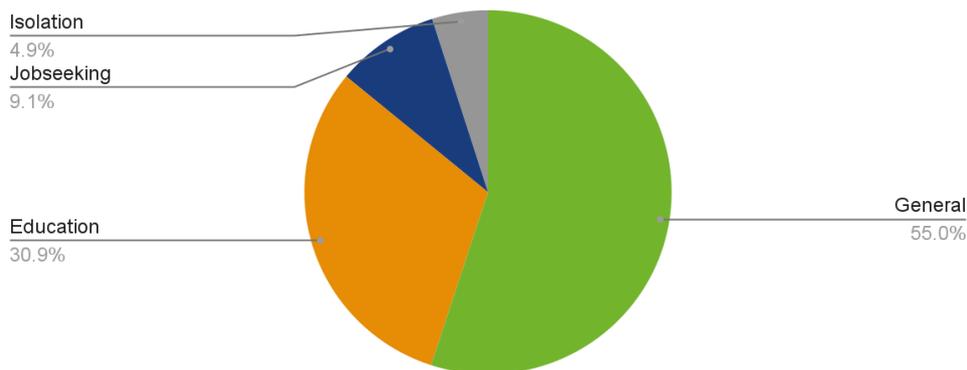
When we accept a referral, we ask organisations to give a few basic details about the beneficiaries. Whilst this data isn't perfect, (eg where we've sent batches of devices to one organisation to distribute), you can see in the chart below how the initial strong focus on schoolchildren during the pandemic has shifted and we've seen more activity from groups supporting adults into work, for example. We have seen continued growth in demand from organisations supporting refugees both on initial arrival and when they're settled from their hotels. [The "young adults" category has only recently been added and many adult referrals are for people in this group].

Beneficiary Categories



We also ask if there is any "primary purpose" for the devices being requested. This has given an initial indication of how important "general" access to services and community was, as well as the value of education and online training.

Device request purpose



Understanding Impact

We worked with the team at [impact inFocus](#) who helped us develop our theory of change and a set of questions for two groups:

- **recipient organisations** - partner organisations (for example those in the list above) who received devices or connectivity from us to support their clients
- **Connect! support clients** - individuals who received 1-2-1 support from the Connect! volunteer service

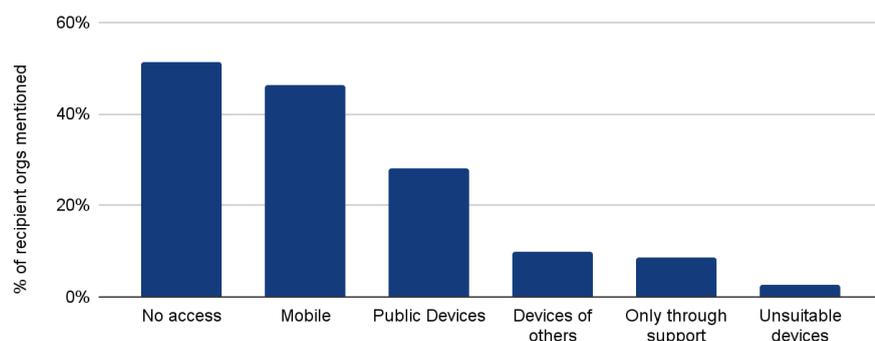
Recipient organisations results

82 organisations responded: a good portion of the 200 who we have supported so far, representing more than 1200 clients.

Getting online before GOO

We asked how clients got online before we provided devices or support. It was sobering to read how many organisations reported some or all clients were unable to get online at all.

How clients got online before receiving support



51%
of organisations had clients who weren't able to get online at all before we supported them

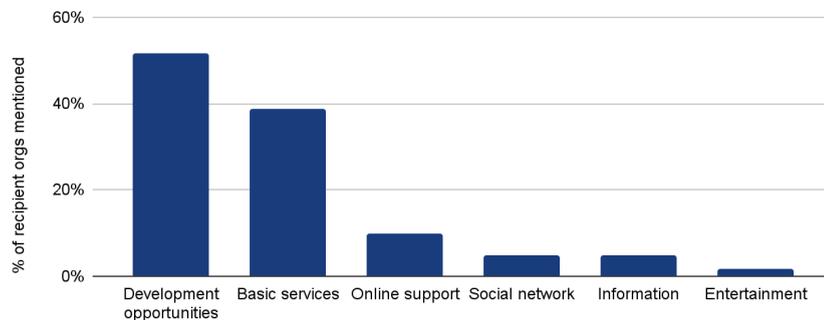
Here are some of the common issues that people faced:

- they stopped accessing the internet when unable to replace broken devices due to cost
- they had a loan device from school but this was removed
- she relied on her daughter for support
- many clients not comfortable using the library or too chaotic, unable to implement the structure needed
- data was limited so they could only access bare minimum functions online
- they were able to do little with their very basic smart phone
- where we could, we (staff) helped sharing our devices with them

Impact of initial level of access

Organisations explained how this lack of reliable internet access affected their clients:

Initial difficulty getting online hindered clients access to...



52%
of organisations mentioned
that poor online access
hindered development
opportunities for their clients

Here are some of the many challenges poor online access caused:

- clients were unable to receive their benefits, due to not having access to their universal credit journals or struggling to maintain them without support, missing important messages from the UC team.
- clients struggled to manage their money effectively as they were unable to access online banking and their universal credit portal.
- clients would have to call a helpline or customer services and then would be on hold for a long time, often giving up after a while and not accessing what they need.
- our sessions with clients were impaired or cancelled due to poor connection and drop-outs
- a carer had to go into the library to get online and work, leaving her cared-for at home - not ideal
- a carer was unable to work when her device broke. This impacted on her financially, causing stress
- clients were unable to complete forms or receive emails of important appointments
- being unable to access services to help themselves took clients' agency away from them and made them feel helpless.
- It has been very challenging for clients to undertake English lesson via mobile phones
- Not getting online caused clients stress and limited their ability to access support for their mental health as post lockdown most support groups and educational courses i.e. mind groups and recovery college courses were online.
- for people rough sleeping, a phone is essential to contact outreach to communicate changing sleep sites and ensure successful verification.
- clients missed job opportunities, through inability to update CVs, inability to respond quickly to emails and lack of digital access for next stages, such as online assessments or application forms.
- they were impacted in looking for work: the library is really out of the way from where they are living, and it has its restrictions around confidentiality, not being able to attend online workshops and training in a private, quiet space
- being unable to use internet and feeling unable to learn how made them feel more isolated
- they had to miss out doing their homework and weren't able to join friends online

Assistance we provided

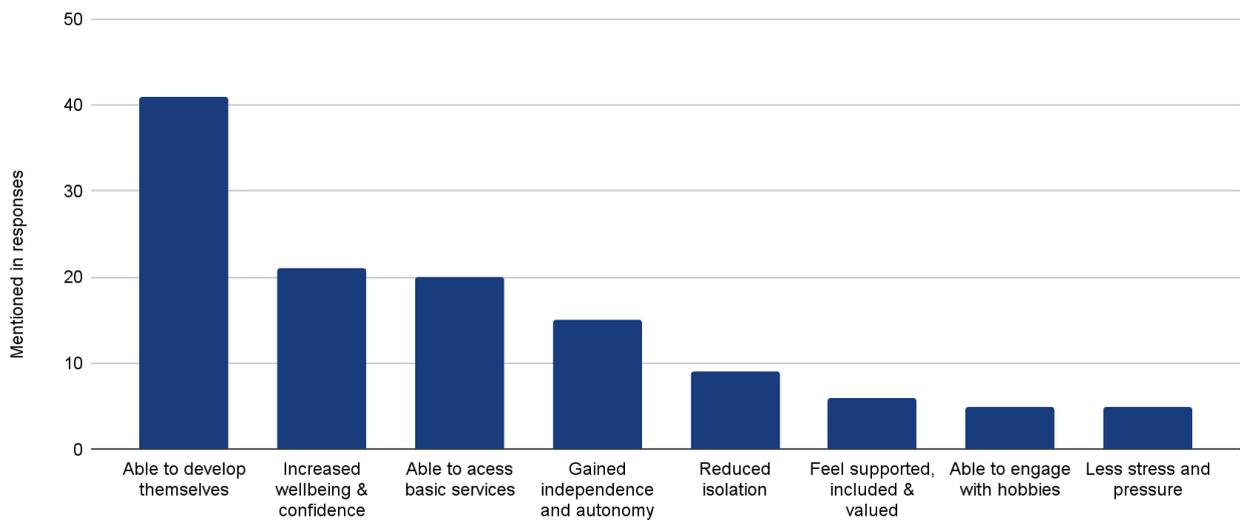
We asked about headlines on what support was given:

- 44% of organisations mentioned receiving laptops
- 12% mentioned SIM cards or internet connectivity
- 11% mentioned receiving smartphones
- 6% mentioned tablets
- 7% mentioned desktops, printers or other accessories eg TVs

94%
Of organisations receiving devices rated their performance as good or excellent

Impact of devices, connectivity or support

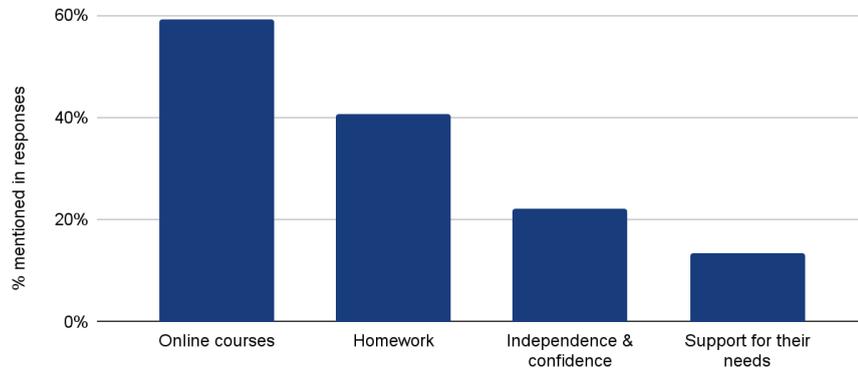
Organisations often mentioned that receiving digital devices and support was life-changing for their clients.



The next sections explore these benefits with more detail around education, jobseeking, inclusion and wellbeing.

Education and training

80% of respondents mentioned that clients used devices or support to access education or training.

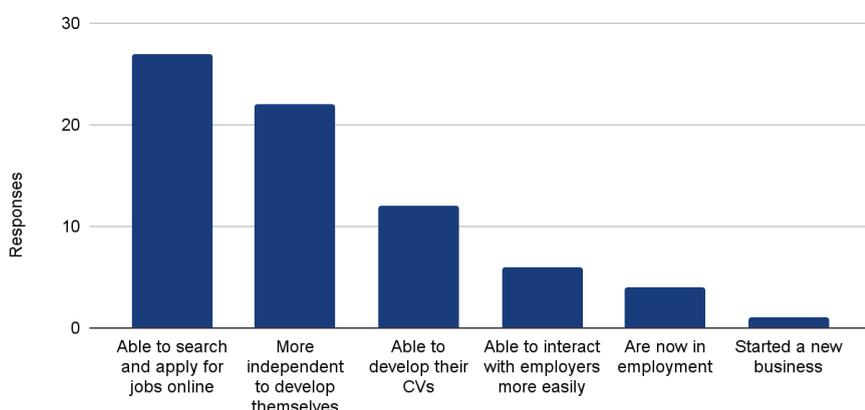


90%
of recipients using devices
and support for education
agreed online access
improved educational
attainment.

- The client is an asylum seeker who had nothing apart from an old mobile phone. He and his wife can now study, learn more English and learn about their new environment.
- Reliability of better hardware raises the confidence levels for both reader and their coach that their remote learning Zoom calls together won't drop out or go fuzzy
- a carer is able to continue further education and access free Carers Oxfordshire courses while caring for her elderly parent
- clients who were unable to travel have been able to access online learning for their mental health, receiving the support they needed.
- I've been able to sign clients up to college courses, they've been able to do domestic abuse workshops
- She was able to complete college referral for a counselling course as well as accessing courses which will help her become a confident, well-informed individual
- Students were very positive, able to complete work from home without having to come to College to use the Library computers, saving time and travel costs.
- The young person I supported who is at sixth form is able to complete homework at their own pace at home - their ability to access appropriate resources compared to their school device is fabulous - they had previously complained about the fire wall and being unable to access legitimate websites and upload legitimate software to support their completion of course work on their school device; having their own device has removed this barrier.

Jobseeking

65% of respondents had clients using devices and support to find jobs.

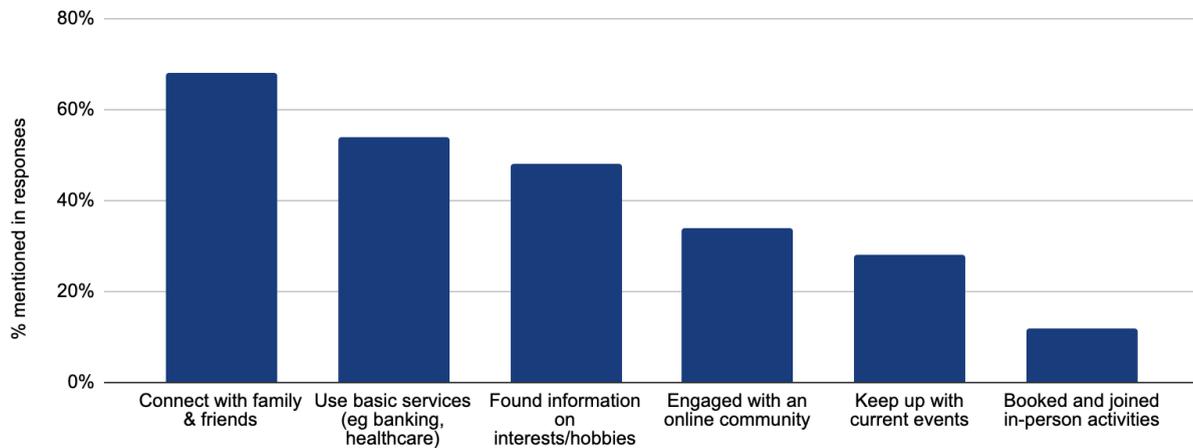


83%
reported that online access improved their clients job-seeking skills

- One client was able to complete the theory element of his bus driving licence on the new laptop, which he would have struggled to do on his phone (with a broken screen) or using the library. Having also passed the practical elements, he is now employed by Stagecoach.
- Another client has completed all of the assignments for his Award in Education & Training Level 3 on his donated device.
- My client completed his CSCS card training, passed the exam and is now working full time as a landscaper.
- My carer client has started her own little craft business on Etsy thanks to the laptop you provided.
- Clients have been able to join online recovery college, apply for roles independently, work on their CV, gain confidence with IT which makes them more employable and less "scared" of using technology.
- Clients were able to search for work and apply for jobs at home where they felt safe
- Clients were better able to engage with the job centre / DWP, search for local jobs daily, interact with employers more easily, take their time to update their CV and skills through online courses, attend online interviews
- While some clients applied for jobs, some had their own mental health / confidence reasons for not yet applying or succeeding. The laptop access was never my clients' only restriction to success with gaining a job, but is an important tool enabling them and giving them the opportunity.
- The young person I supported now has their own CV, stored on their own device, and has been able to submit applications to vacancies locally. Their self esteem and confidence has increased, now that they know they have the tools to enable them to achieve their goal of finding employment.
- Our client used to come to us to help them with their job search. Now they do that themselves, they know where and how they can find the right job and how to apply with just a little help from our advisors.
- All of our clients that received a device are now in employment - a massive achievement
- When I was unemployed I was supported with a laptop for myself and this helped me to do job applications and my CV. If it wasn't for Getting Oxfordshire Online's support it would have taken a lot longer to get to where I am today. Please keep up the fantastic work and thank you

Inclusion and wellbeing

Organisations described all sorts of ways people were able to improve their wellbeing by being more included in the online world:



88%

reported clients feeling more included

85%

reported improved confidence

88%

reported improved wellbeing (reduction in stress, etc)

Accessing services

- Older clients are learning how to access support through the internet including doctors' appointments, benefits and social media.
- Clients have been able to access their universal credit accounts, they have been able to have a level of independence by being able to bid for properties on the Oxford City website, Clients have also said that they have been able access online banking services and do shopping online.
- The laptops have enabled clients who struggle to get to in person recovery meetings, such as AA/NA, to access remote sessions and continue to engage in their recovery.
- One client uses their device for job seeking and online banking. For the first time since they moved out of home they have been able to access their own money remotely, having previously not had their own device, and having been too worried about doing this from a public device.
- Clients were able to attend online appointments in a confidential space.
- The client was very grateful and able to complete documents for EHCPs for their young person without having to travel to a local library by taxi. This was life changing for this family.
- My client used the device to teach her children, shop for groceries, access other services having begun learning to read as an adult.
- A young person with diabetes is now able to upload her diabetic data onto her device for herself and her Nan, and email this to the hospital for monitoring, rather than travelling into Oxford, saving time and money. Her previous device was a school laptop which was limited in what was allowed to be installed on the device - she now feels incredibly proud that she something that feels like it is hers, and isn't going to get taken back when she leaves education.

Being better connected

- A 91 year old carer I support now zoom calls me and he is able to access support on a regular basis and to video call his family who live abroad.
- A hospital inpatient felt connected with the outside world at a difficult time.
- One child would constantly go 'missing' from our home, you supported him to obtain a refurbished iPhone so we could keep in touch with him. Eventually he started staying here because he could keep in touch with his friends and would fall asleep with them linked to him via phone.
- This has been especially useful to clients for keeping in touch with family who live in a war zone so they can see them better than off a phone screen when they skype
- Being shut up in a hotel room for considerable periods, it gave clients a link with the outside world, improved their ability to read and educate themselves within this locality, this nation and with English language.
- Clients were able to link up with other carers and search for support. Before, they felt alone and unsupported
- Clients who are housebound have joined online exercise classes and educational lessons and this has meant that they have felt part of something outside of their home.
- One of my clients' grandfather died recently. He used his laptop to link with family and friends in Ireland to feel close to them and share his grief. This same client uses his laptop to soothe himself to sleep with religious sermons and old familiar Irish tunes.
- The devices along with support of a course at the larder really has helped clients who have only a home phone and no idea how to access the internet.

7
people on average
benefitted from each device
we provided

Independence

- Clients were able to complete a course and gain independence from a potentially controlling partner.
- A reader had struggled with an unreliable tablet and while still determined to succeed, this had impeded their progress until we could provide them with better hardware as they no longer have to resort to borrowing family member's devices or trying different locations due to poor signal.
- Clients felt empowered. One started to write a personal diary for self reflection.
- The laptop has been a game changer. Clients are now able to do their lessons, manage email with solicitors and connect with family via zoom much more effectively.
- It has increased clients' independence. It helps them fill their day and enables them to attend video conferences with social services about their children and attend online drug and alcohol meetings.

Confidence and self-esteem

- Clients' confidence in managing their finances increased and they were able to engage with wellbeing services more effectively. They were also more likely to implement tools and strategies discussed in sessions when resources were emailed rather than provided in paper format.
- They are so happy that someone is helping them! They feel valued, given more equal opportunities.
- They feel valued and heard, less stressed and able to get on with improving their own lives through education and access to services, without having to go via others.

- Clients have improved confidence, more access to information, feel more connected and "like everyone else". They are less stressed as they can access GP surgery, read emails, join classes, speak to friends online.
- Clients felt self-worth, being given something like a laptop, and trusted to make good use of it. Also being able to use it for leisure purposes has aided their mental health.
- Clients became more active, more engaged - connecting more to the 'outside world', potential employers and to friends.

Stress reduction

- My adult carer's caring role only allowed her to work for herself from home, so when her laptop broke, she was unable to do this and this resulted in raising her stress and anxiety levels. When she received her new laptop she was so relieved and happy and said that it had taken all of the stress and anxiety away and she was able to support herself and her family, with a device that worked so quickly compared to her old broken device.
- They now have the tools to enable them to achieve their goals - this removes a huge worry for them and makes them feel positive and empowered.
- My client listens to religious sermons at night as it reminds him of his family and it helps him to feel safe so he can sleep.
- Clients feel welcomed by the UK and able to be in touch with home during the stress of the Ukrainian conflict.
- My client's child has Autism and it has helped being able to use the device to keep them calm.

Hobbies

- Some clients have reported discovering their hobbies are on youtube and utilising this to further develop skills, such as one self taught guitar player.
- The young people listen to music and link with friends.
- One person obtained some music software and used it to make music, which gave him a huge sense of achievement
- A young person has supported us to make a video, using his device, all about the care he receives at Maytree (Our home).

Unexpected challenges

9% reported challenges, with a small number of devices which didn't work as expected, worries about cybersecurity remaining a challenge for some, and others finding difficulty in using the software.

Service to recipient organisations

At GOO, we strive to provide a service that recipient organisations can rely on, as they help clients to make the most of online world to transform their lives. We were delighted with the positive feedback we received:

88%
is the Net Promoter Score our recipient organisations gave. 75% is considered exceptional in our sector and we're delighted with this!

- The team at Getting Oxfordshire Online are fabulous, they are knowledgeable, helpful and responsive. They provide such an incredible service to help empower people who would otherwise remain digitally disadvantaged. I only wish they could see first hand the impact each device has on each individual - I feel very fortunate to get to witness this in my work with young people. Thank you.
- It was so easy - thankfully organisations are trusted to find the right people to direct to this service without having to fill in a lot of forms, provide income proof etc. The teams were helpful and friendly and quick to respond - SO good!
- A huge thank you to the whole team in Bicester who have helped support our clients. It is always easy to get hold of the team and they respond really quickly to our enquires.
- Very positive experience and the service from Aspire has been so good. Extremely friendly staff
- SOFEA are wonderful and provided a 2nd device to one of our autistic young people. They were very understanding with regards to his 'super power' - which is to take devices apart and to accidentally destroy them. SOFEA gave him a second device which is, so far, doing okay.
- This is a fabulous service and one I feel very lucky to have accessed for my students. The team were so helpful and made it very easy to access, even accommodating where we could collect from.

Feedback from Connect! volunteer support clients

We did a smaller survey of 10 clients who had received volunteer support from Connect! This service is popular with older people, with 80% of respondents over the age of 65. Every person surveyed would recommend the service!

We helped with	Achievements	Challenges
general support and confidence web/email online shopping government transactions staying safe online facilitated a group session for elderly people help disabled person to connect to family in australia ongoing support for dementia sufferer help user with loss of sight access basic functions	I am now independent and self-reliant, important since my husband passed away I'm more confident and now understand the opportunities of being online. My volunteer takes the complexity out of the situation and is working on technical issues like weak signal. This free, local service is accessible for everyone in our community The volunteer is patient, accepts my poor memory and helps with email, shopping etc We are happy to engage socially, and if we get stuck we wait to see our volunteer again. I'm 86 and feel that, for me, text and emails on my phone is enough..	Client struggles to learn and retain knowledge, so ongoing support will be necessary I would like to see my volunteer again as I've lost confidence since our sessions

Funds and Device Donations

We're very grateful to the funders and supporters who have enabled us to get this far.

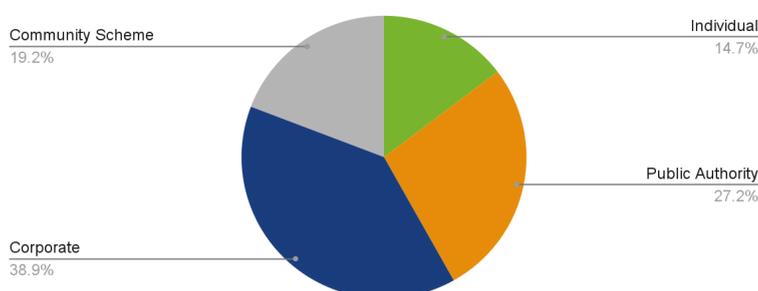
Funding

GOO was set up with support from Oxfordshire Community Foundation including funds and launch project management. We have also received funding from:

*Our Common Good • Oxfordshire County Council • Nominet • Tambour Foundation
OxLEP (No Limits Programme) • MagNox • SOHA • CAE • OCVA • Oxford IT Bank*

Device donations

As well as funds, we depend on donated devices. We've received fantastic support from all parts of our community, from personal donations, to corporates and public sector organisations:



Financial performance

Here is a summary for the last two years (1 Nov 21 to 31 Oct 23). This excludes some initial costs borne by Oxfordshire Community Foundation and our first 100 devices and support visits before November 2021.

Year	2021/2	2022/3
Funds received	£202,508	£140,822
Funds spent	£127,277	£179,328
Balance	£75,231	£36,725
Device spend	£110,567	£145,504
Devices refurbished	1,005	1,415
Cost per device	£110	£103
Support spend	£16,710	£33,824
Training courses		£3,500
Volunteer visits*	127	275
Cost per visit	£132	£110

* support visits and costs for 2021-2 only include data from April 22 to October 22

All the partner teams are working to continuously improve our operations and for this year we are on-track for a cost of £95/device and £105 per support visit.

The future

We are pleased to see GOO becoming a trusted digital “hub”, providing support to charities and community groups across the county.

For 2024, we will continue to grow our offering of devices, connectivity and support, with a target of 1660 devices and 300 visits.

We are also working with the county council to consolidate digital inclusion information in a new website, providing better signposting for those seeking support. And we will trial a “digital forum”, a quarterly online session for organisations supporting people with digital inclusion, helping to make sure everyone is clear on resources available and how to make best use of them. This will also help us spot gaps in provision, to steer our future work.

We are actively engaged with various growing national schemes, such as the Good Things Foundation’s National Databank and National Device Bank, the Digital Poverty Alliance and an informal network of regional groups like ours, being coordinated by Rural Action Derbyshire.

Find out more

To read case studies including written, audio and video, or find out more about our latest activity, please check out our website:

<https://gettingoxfordshireonline.org/latest-news-and-events/>

If you would like to support GOO, would like support from us, or want to find out more, please contact your local hub team (find contacts on our website) or email Ben, project manager, at hello@gettingoxfordshireonline.org