Wealth of the Web: Broadening Horizons Online
Scoping report

Age UK London
1st Floor
21 St Georges Road
London SE1 6ES
t 020 7820 6770
e general@ageuklondon.org.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk/london
@ageuklondon

Age Action Alliance

London Age UK

0.0   Executive summary

Introduction

As part of Age UK London's on-going commitment to raising the voice and addressing the needs of older Londoners, this paper reports upon a research project targeted at understanding the issue of digital inclusion with respect to older Londoners in order to develop recommendations for future action.

The government's drive to going 'digital by default' follows the technological trend towards online-based forms of interactions with service-users. However, there is still a large population of people who are not online and the majority of these are people over the age of 55. Benefits of using online systems are clear in the cited literature so there is clear value in supporting people to get online but the government's agenda, understandably, focuses on getting the required information into systems rather than up-skilling individuals. Despite this, there is plenty of research evidence that up-skilling older people in computer-competency has clear benefits for them in terms of making cost-savings, having greater choice, overcoming isolation, promoting interests and possibly even combating onset of dementia.

Whilst there will, for the foreseeable future, remain a need to keep non-computer based methods of reaching older Londoners, there remain a number of psychological and practical barriers that impede those who wish to get online from doing so. On the other side of that coin, however, there are a number of drivers that exist with the potential to support digital inclusion amongst older Londoners. In order to minimise the impact of the barriers whilst reinforcing the potential drivers, this paper focuses on the three transitional stages from being 'offline and disinterested' to being 'offline but interested', from being 'offline but interested' to being 'online with restricted use' and from being 'online with restricted use' to being 'online with expansive use'.

Key recommendations for different stakeholder groups are as follows:
The Age UK London network:

- To play a role in facilitating and providing digital inclusion programmes based upon the research literature of what has been successful and on what is desired by older Londoners themselves.

- Developing the Age UK London website as a safe starting point for online operations with 'how to' guides for simple 'starter' tasks.

- Recruit 'trusted' software experts through the Business Directory

Other voluntary sector organisations:

- Based on the existing evidence base, to develop and trial initiatives to support ALL older Londoners to get online if they wish to do so, ensuring that isolated and/or those with disabilities are able to access opportunities

- To recruit older 'technology champions' to inform 'case study' materials and potentially support-service delivery.

- Working with local amenities to provide services in the community.

Regional and local government:

- To disseminate and form older Londoners on the time-scales of changes taking place and to provide sign-posting to relevant services

- Provide funding for adult learning such that older Londoners have affordable computer-training

- Provide the backing to local amenities (e.g. libraries, post offices) so they have adequate resources to meet demands in the community

- Provide mechanisms that work with carers and family members to support older Londoners to use online systems but always keep the option open to return to paper-based methods if desired

Funders:

- Support research designed to further understand motivational and behavioural elements of decisions to use online technologies

- Provide the backing for 'local trusted companies' to provide evidence-based initiatives in their own communities

- Fund innovations that seek to draw links between sectors for mutual benefit to enhance to environment of support for older Londoners wishing to get online.

- Seek to ensure that funded programmes are targeted to all older Londoners, irrespective of location, disability, involvement in known networks etc. and involve co-designed programmes where possible

The private sector:

- Incorporate older people representatives as co-designers and testers of products to ensure user-friendly operation.

- Develop affordable, low-specification but modern computers to attract entry-level computer acquisition to those on limited incomes.

- Provide reasonably-priced installation and set-up deals alongside purchasing plans.

- Target marketing to older as well as younger consumers to encourage 'normalising' of online use amongst older Londoners.

- Work with the voluntary sector on joint-initiatives to bring informed volunteering staff together with older people to provide hands-on support for specific issues.

Older people:

- Suitably skilled older computer-users can act as 'digital champions', offering case-study evidence that older Londoners can relate to, giving greater understanding of potential barriers and drivers and potentially assisting in co-design and delivery of support programmes

- There is a role for older people in speaking up and communicating what it is that they want out of digital-inclusivity such that training programmes, support systems and product-development can be based upon the needs and desires of older people themselves.

- Older people need to be pro-active in contributing to those who are trying to support them by, for example, providing feedback on training initiatives and working with private sector organisations to co-design suitable systems.

- In 'normalising' internet-use amongst older people, there is clearly more scope for suitably-skilled older Londoners in creative development of attractive online sites and communities.

0.1 Contents

1.0 The environmental context

'Everything that they do is based upon the real experiences of older people living in London'

1.1 Rationale of interest

Age UK London (AUKL) strives to raise the voice and address the needs of older Londoners. Everything that they do is based upon the real experiences of older people living in London and, accordingly, there is a drive to understanding those policy changes that are likely to make an impact on the lives of older people in the Capital. The government's drive to computerise services (going 'digital by default') represents a policy change that has and will very clearly impact upon many people's lives and, as is discussed in this paper, potentially older people more than anyone else. In a recently-conducted study into campaign-priorities for 2013-14, Older Londoners themselves have also reported comparatively low levels of satisfaction with their 'ability to use computers and the internet' against other aspects of daily living (AUKL, 2013a) highlighting this as an area in which AUKL's involvement should be directed.

1.2 Purpose and paper structure

This paper scopes the existing literature in order to develop understanding and provide recommendations for how older Londoners who wish to go online can be supported to do so whilst those who don't are not adversely impacted upon by this decision. Section 1 details the changes that are taking place before chapter 2 summarises the extent of impact in terms of the population of interest for this paper. Chapter 3 reviews existing literature to tentatively propose a theoretical model to aid understanding before chapter 4 endeavours to use this model to propose typologies for whom support-needs in the area of digital inclusion differ. Chapter 5 then uses these findings to propose recommendations for regional and local government, AUKL, voluntary sector organisations and older people themselves.
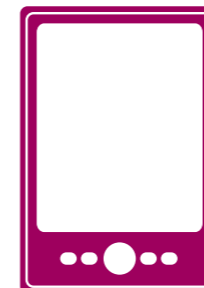
Sources included within this literature review include academic publications, statistics summaries, voluntary sector reports, government publications and AUKL's own research.

1.3 Rationale for change

Since the 1950s, technological advancements have had a growing impact on the way in which organisations manage services and conduct business. The ability to manage vast amounts of information in semi-automated fashion and in a manner where data-retrieval and analysis can be done almost at the 'touch of button' has enabled up-scaling of operations to global levels. The widespread use of the internet in the 1990's has further cemented this trend providing a digital domain for communications and business-processes that can operate quickly, efficiently and easily across geographical borders and time-zones.

At the same time, increasing standards of living and decreasing prices for mass-production of sophisticated computers and software systems has led to a consumer-market where home-computers have become the

norm and internet access is ranked almost alongside necessary utilities such as gas and electricity. The ability for organisations to 'connect' with consumers and service-users is now easier than ever before.

In this context, it is easy to make a very strong economic case for computerising processes in all sectors. Selling products online can 'cut out the middle man' providing better value products for the consumer and at a greater profit margin for the seller and, as detailed in the following section, providing government services online has the potential to make substantial cost savings whilst improving efficiency of interactions with customers.

1.4   Going 'Digital by Default'

As far back as 2000, and consistent with developing norms inside and outside of the workplace, it was recognised that there was a growing expectation amongst stakeholders that they be able to use online means of interacting with government services. With the potential for substantial savings to be made by putting services online, the government initially set the target of putting all services online as standard by 2005. Since then, the scope of this project has expanded through publication of the 'Government Digital Strategy' (Cabinet Office, 2012a) which sought to consolidate public services to a single website, increase usage of digital services and provide consistent services to people with and without experience of computer-use; all this with a deadline being worked towards of 2015.

Recent estimations for the savings that can be made by central government going digital by default are as much as £1.7 - £1.8 billion annually (National Audit Office, 2013) and, whilst these savings are, of course, affected by the number of people who willingly convert to online operations, surveys into this potential have reported that 83% of the population is online (ONS, 2012) and 93% of those online are reported as being 'very confident' or 'fairly confident' using the internet (National Audit Office, 2013). There is clearly, therefore, a great capacity for savings to be made through managing systems online and, where people are able to effectively access and use new systems, digital services also have the potential for more efficient and user-friendly operations.

Whilst it is anticipated, and, indeed, is a fundamental goal of going 'digital by default', that those people who are capable of using government services online will choose to do so, there is a recognition that there will be some people who are not in a position to convert to digital operations. For these people, the term being used is 'assisted digital' because, the reality is that those people who are not able to use online services will still be 'going digital', albeit with some form of assistance, either over the phone, through face-to-face contact or any other 'non-digital' means. The details of how this will be achieved are, at present, ill-defined, with the 'Government Approach to Assisted Digital' (Cabinet Office, 2012b) seeking to develop exemplar services to scope 'assisted digital' provision through 2014-15. However, by its own acknowledgement, the focus of these services is

essentially to provide means for the relevant data to be inputted into digital systems for individuals rather than to increase the digital capability of individuals.

1.5   A timeline of technology

Taking the step from using traditional methods to providing services in a digital domain seems intuitively and economically logical but it is important to bear in mind that the rapid technological advancements that have taken place towards the end of the 20th and start of the 21st centuries are relatively recent developments. Those born into this computer-generation used electronic toys as toddlers, computer consoles as children, i-phones and laptops in their teens and, in many cases, sophisticated desktop computers and software packages in their adult working lives but this is not the case for many older people. Televisions were not commonly owned in family homes until the 1960s and mobile phones only really took off in the 1990s. Desktop computers resembling the type used in offices and homes today were not prevalent until the 80s and 90s and laptops didn't take off until the 21st century had begun.

'There is a likelihood of older Londoners being predominant in the stats for being offline.'

Whilst one cannot generalise to a whole generation of older Londoners with multi-various levels of computer-literacy, vastly different levels of experience and highly diverse interests and applications in computer-engagement, it seems logical that, purely because of levels of computer-contact through the life-course, there is a likelihood of older Londoners being predominant in the statistics for being offline and low in confidence and/or computer-literacy. In itself, this has prospective implications for how 'assisted digital' support can be targeted to those who will be most in need but, beyond this, given that it is not a goal of 'assisted digital' to increase computer-capability, it appears likely that there will remain a large proportion of older Londoners who, interested but unskilled, are currently missing out on all the benefits and opportunities that exist through an increasingly computer-based world of operations and interactions.

2.0   Older Londoners' computer use

16-24 (99%)
25-34 (99%)
35-44 (97%)
45-54 (92%)
55-64 (84%)
65-74 (65%)
75+ (31%)

'Of all the people who are likely to require support to get digitally included, older people by far make up the majority.'
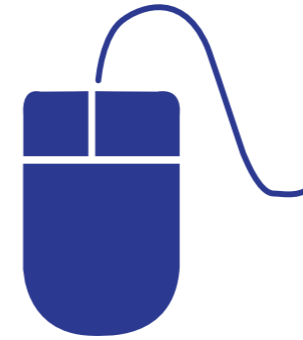
Generational differences

Differences in computer use by generations are well evidenced in the literature and support the anticipated predominance of older people's presence in the statistics of those who do not use computers and the internet. Indeed, whilst the Office for National statistics reports that 99% of those aged 16-24 living in the UK had used the internet in the last 3 months, this figure drops for each subsequent 10-year age-bracket to just 31% of those aged 75+. This is shown below:
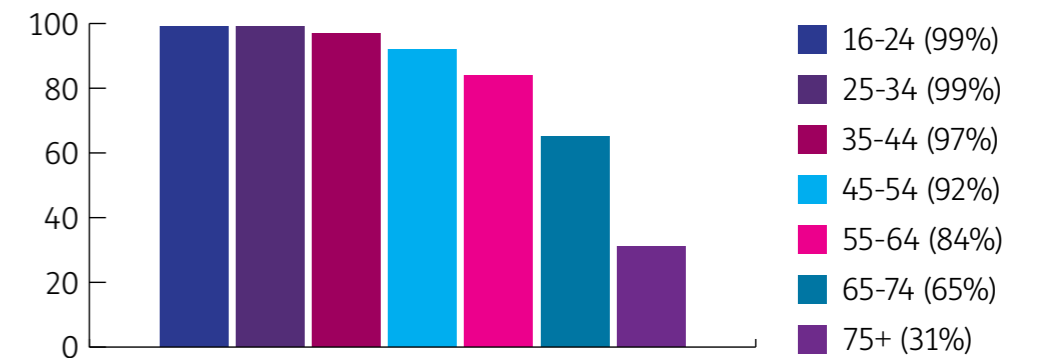

Figure 1: Internet users and non-users by age-group (years) and when last used, 2012, Q4 (ONS, 2013)

In fact, the ONS bulletin translates the non-users in the 75+ bracket as equating to 3.23 million people across the UK and indicates that older people (as indicated by those aged 55 and over) make up 85% of the total number of non-users. This amounts to a total of 6.35 million older people and, bearing in mind that 'internet users' are defined as those who have used the internet 'within the last 3 months', one can reasonably presume that figures for people who don't have regular access to the internet or are not confident in its use would be far higher. This all supports the idea that, of all people who are likely to require support to get digitally included, older people by far make up the majority.

2.2   **London and the national picture**

Often perceived as being a technological hub, demographic statistics related to computer access within the capital show surprisingly little difference to national statistics in terms of internet access and use amongst older people. Despite the fact that there is evidence that London is the region with the highest reported internet use (ONS, 2013), age-specific data from April to June, 2012 reported that 41% of those aged 55+ in London had never used the internet with this figure having remaining pretty constant from 2011 figures (ONS, 2012). This is also comparable with figures from the rest of the UK where it is reported that 39% of those aged 55+ had never used the internet. The same data-set also reported that

78% of those aged 75+ living in London had never used the internet which is rather higher than the 72% from the rest of the UK.

'There were 661,000 people over the age of 55 living in London who had never used the internet.'

In terms of actual numbers, this means that, at the time of the 2012, quarter 2 data-survey, there were 661,000 people over the age of 55 living in London who had never used the internet, a total that equates to around three-quarters of all people in the capital who hadn't used the internet. Furthermore, given that the statistics cited refer to those who have 'never used' the internet, this 661,000 people cited will not include, for example, those who used the internet once and never went back to it, those who get occasional use down at their library, those who get support once a year to do an online tax return or any number of other potential examples for people who are labelled 'internet users' in these figures but may have very limited access and capability with using computers and the internet.

It is evident from this that, while common perception of London may be that it has above-average internet access and use, this appears to be a statistic that relates to those under the age of 55 with older people statistics very comparable with the nation as a whole.

Whilst it was mentioned in section 1.4 that the government's 'Assisted Digital' programme would be targeted at enabling operations and processes to work for people who don't have access to or use computers rather than to up-skill computer-literacy, it is worth noting that, in London, the Mayor has said he is 'committed to supporting programmes that help older Londoners to learn and improve their IT skills where possible' (GLA, 2013, p.23).

2.3 **Why go online?**

A key part of the rationale for the paper has been on researching the impact of the government going 'digital by default' on older Londoners but many industries have already converted their processes to online operations as a part of modernising business-plans. This has not gone un-noticed to many respondents of the 'Your Priorities' questionnaire AUKL distributed in order to get feedback on Older Londoners' campaign priorities:

1 '*I try so hard and still it is difficult: Things are changing so quickly. What about 1) internet banking. Talking books downloaded from the library onto MP3?? Etc. etc..*'

2 '*Willing to learn and master (sic) computer as the world is going paperless.*'

Quotes taken from 'Your Priorities' (AUKL, 2013a)

The benefits for being online are pretty clear; incentivising of online interactions has led to the potential for internet access to provide individuals with cheaper bills and utility payments, discounts on insurance, cheaper products (cutting out the 'middle man') and availability of

'Recent reports have shown that accessing the internet can save people as much as £276 for paying bills online.'

products not available on the high street (from overseas or from internet-only businesses). Ultimately, recent reports have shown that accessing the internet can save people as much as £276 for paying bills online (Mail Online, 2013) to £560 per. year (Race Online, 2012). The financial savings are also only a part of the story. The Calouste Gulbenkian foundation commissioned Independent Age to do a study into how technology can prevent and alleviate loneliness where their study of four examples of 'good, sustained practice' highlighted the link between 'digital exclusion' and 'social exclusion' (Independent Age, 2010). Linked in with this, there is evidence that one of the two main reasons that 55-74 year-olds use the internet is to keep contact with other people (Ofcom, 2010). Other benefits reported within the literature include increased independence (through lifelong learning opportunities as well as greater choice and control of healthcare options and personal care budgets) (Race Online, 2012), the opportunity to pursue hobbies and interests (AUKL, 2013b) and there are even links between computer use and lowered dementia-risk (Medical Daily, 2012).

In a recent project set within Haringey, older Londoners interviewed reported awareness of these benefits at multiple-levels that internet-access can afford. Their comments included the fact that advertisements were now providing email addresses instead of phone numbers, the rise of online booking systems for hospital and GP appointments and the social shift towards people communicating by email (AUKL, 2013b). Even with this small sample, these three simple examples tap into the potential impact of change at information-access, medical and social levels.

This is all indicative of the benefits that older Londoners can accrue from gaining internet access and, whilst it is recognised that there will be some people who, for whatever reason, do not wish to or are unable to use computers, there appears to be significant scope for positive impact on older people's lives in many different areas of life should the support mechanisms be in place to enable digital inclusion.
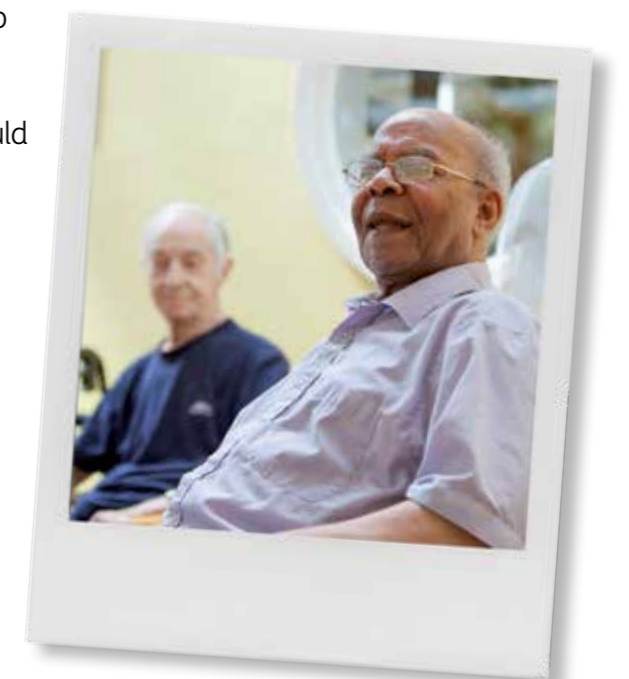
3.0 Considerations in supporting online access

What do we know?

So far, this paper has provided a strong rationale for older people getting online through the number of reported benefits different studies have highlighted for older people. However, it has also shown evidence of the large proportion of older people who are not online and, indeed, never have been. This, therefore, raises the obvious questions of what obstacles there are to older people getting online and of how older people can be supported to overcome these obstacles to get online. This is a particularly pertinent issue given the previously mentioned governmental drive to going digital by default. Positively, there is a growing pool of literature drawing upon research with older people as well as evidence from localised services to enhance understanding in this area. Whilst the research is diverse in terms of localisation, intended audience, participation and approach, they combine to provide a growing picture of the obstacles, drivers and recommendations for what would be required to support older people to get online. The extent of agreement amongst this literature is also encouraging in building reliable conclusions.

A number of propositions can be developed based upon the consistency of their being reported in the literature both in terms of specific, localised programme reviews and reports with a broader remit and these are crucial in establishing an agreed understanding from which to build more specific recommendations.

'Firstly, there is an issue over how well computing and the internet is made accessible to older people.'

Firstly, there is an issue over how well computing and the internet is made accessible to older people. Technology marketing is primarily targeted at a younger consumer with whom older people do not identify (Policy Exchange, 2012) and technology products are not designed with older people in mind resulting in issues related to the 'usability' of products with, for example, complex screens, small fonts and systems of operation linked with an assumed 'base-level' of knowledge (Melenhorst, Rogers & Caylor, 2001). Computer jargon is also an issue highlighted within the literature that over-complicates operations (e.g. AUKL, 2013b). Therefore, proposition 1 is that:

P1: Computing and the internet, in terms of their technology and marketing, is primarily directed at younger people who have been brought up in a digital age.

Implications for this are that many older people may not perceive the internet as being relevant or of value to them. Furthermore, poor usability issues could be dissuasive to older people using computers through a perceived prohibitive learning curve or a bad initial experience could be discouraging to those with initial interest.

The second recognition prevalent in the literature is that there is a group of people who will always need other means of providing information other than through computers and, bearing in mind that many financially and

socially vulnerable people will be in this group, this is a right that should be kept (ILC-UK, 2012). As a result, whilst there is value in assisting older people to become digitally included, proposition 2 is that:

P2: For the foreseeable future, there is going to be a group of people who, for various reasons, will not be 'going digital' and, as such, non-digital pathways for interactions and communications with them need to be maintained and/or developed.

Thirdly, it is important to recognise that the transition to online access and use is one that is contingent upon many different factors. The complexities of encouraging behaviour change are well-known in the social psychology literature and the choice to go online is likely to be impacted upon by individual circumstances, motivations, beliefs, attitudes and emotions (ILC-UK, 2012) as well as the external environment in terms of access to training (QA Research, 2013), family support (Cabinet Office, 2013) and life triggers (Nominet Trust, 2011). As such, proposition 3 is that:

'It is important to recognise that the transition to online access and use is one that is contingent upon many different factors.'

P3: When addressing older people's behaviours related to internet use, there is a highly complex interaction of personal and environmental factors that will combine to influence decision-making

Implications of this are that methods employed to support older people getting online will need to consider a great number of factors and that what works for one person will not necessarily work for other people and, as such, there is no 'one-size fits all' solution (Policy Exchange, 2012). Proposition 4, therefore, is that:

P4: There is no 'one programme' or 'one solution' that will help older Londoners get online.

Resultantly, one can infer that any successful programmes developed are likely to be have been successful with a specific 'type' of user and that different people will respond with greater or lesser degrees of positivity towards different support mechanisms based upon the complex interaction of variables relevant to individuals highlighted in proposition 3.

3.2

The obstacles to getting online

Based upon the four propositions in 3.1, it would appear intuitive that there are a number of different obstacles to older Londoners getting online and that these obstacles will be of greater or lesser impact and relevance to different people. A number of research reports have been conducted at local, regional and national levels but, whether data has been collected quantitatively or qualitatively and with small interview samples or large surveyed populations, results are remarkably consistent.

Lack of interest – As many as two-thirds of non-users have been implicated as fitting within this category (Policy Exchange, 2012) but this broad title can probably be broken down into a number of other categories evident in the literature depending on the reason for the lack of interest.

These include, for example, resentment of being forced online, negative early experiences of computers and a feeling that the internet 'isn't for them'.

Marketing of computers, design of products and jargon – As highlighted in proposition 1, this is a deterrent to older people embracing digital access as being relevant to them. These also have impact upon the following categories:

Fears of making a mistake, perception of being unable to learn, perceived lack of skills and feeling 'too old' – These all clearly impact upon an individuals own judgement of perceived 'benefits' of getting online against the perceived 'risks'.

Financial cost – Although it has been said that this obstacle affects only a minority, there is clear evidence of a relationship between 'computer access' against 'pay-bands' (ILC-UK, 2012). The issue of cost is relevant both in terms of the cost of an initial outlay on equipment, the cost of getting necessary training, the cost of support in case of difficulty and the on-going costs of maintaining a broadband connection at home. The latter of these is particularly pertinent at a time when utility bills are escalating and there is already a pool of research evidencing the difficulties many older people have with balancing food and electricity expenditure on limited budgets (e.g. Age Concern London, 2009).

'Going online opens up all manner of concerns over who has access to information they put online'

Fears of safety and privacy – For many, going online opens up all manner of concerns over who has access to information they put online. Concerns over their computer getting infected by viruses and them not knowing about it also tie in with this obstacle.

Lack of training and support – For some, this is for financial reasons but, for many, it is simply related to access to good quality training and/or support that they feel helps them. Whilst there are many examples of good practice out there, it seems that many older people are not aware of them, don't actively seek them or don't feel that they are able to access these resources.

Physical or cognitive impairment – For many, this will link in with the product-design but, for others, the specific concern of failing memory is an issue which is unsurprising given the statistic that the average person uses 10 online passwords per. day (Telegraph, 2011).

Personal attitudes and beliefs – Although regularly cropping up in studies as reasons for not going online, ILC-UKs research into behavioural economics and digital exclusion (2012) brought greater insight into this area implicating computer-anxiety, computer self-efficacy, ageing-anxiety, locus of control and loneliness as having relationships with computer use. Although direction of cause and effect cannot be determined, this brings much-needed insight into understanding the sorts of attitudes and beliefs that are relevant to digital inclusion.

The drivers for getting online

Whilst the list of obstacles may seem daunting, the literature also provides a number of drivers that appear to assist with facilitating digital inclusion of older people. Whilst it is recognised that these drivers will have a greater or lesser impact and relevance to different people, they offer understanding for what changes can be employed to support older Londoners to get online. As with the obstacles in 3:2, there are many research reports, albeit with different areas of focus, that contribute towards building a picture of what support mechanisms can potential act as drivers for change.

'The importance of family in getting online is widespread in the literature.'

Curiosity and an appetite to learn – This initial motivation has been implied as being of key importance when collecting data from people who had attended training courses (QA Research, 2013) and appears to logically offer the converse perspective to the barrier of 'lack of interest'.

Specific interests and hobbies – For many, an initial motivational 'hook' encouraged them to go online. Whether this be 'football', 'online newspapers' or 'fly-fishing', the desire to link and expand existing interests with internet resources is indicative here (ILC-UK, 2012). Other specific reasons for going online from Age UK London's own research include desire for social contacts (which is interesting bearing in mind the link between loneliness and digital exclusion referred to earlier) and saving money (which, linked in with section 2.3 is an interesting counter-argument to the 'financial cost' obstacle in section 3.2.

Family support – The importance of family in getting online is widespread in the literature. Possibly being the most obvious means of cross-generational contact in most people's lives, transfer of information, encouragement and support from family members can often facilitate computer-use (AUKL, 2013b). This also links in with the importance of being informed about benefits by people close to them, another driver evident within the qualitative literature (QA Research, 2013).

Independence and inclusion – Typifying a desire not to be 'left behind' or to be reliant on others, this driver links in with other drivers such as getting better information (AUKL, 2013b).

Work Experience and Studying – Those who use computers for their work or study or who had positive experiences of using computers when working (if retired) also reported this as being a driver for their computer-use.

Group and Club Membership – This ties in with the idea of social norms as a driver (ILC-UK, 2012) but is also important because it represents a potential communicational channel for advertising available courses and for raising awareness of what others have found beneficial.

Personal attitudes and beliefs – As much a potential driver as an obstacle, the opposite end of the spectrum of computer-anxiety, computer self-efficacy, ageing-anxiety, locus of control and loneliness can all be potential drivers for change.

'There is feedback from older Londoners who have reported being discouraged by attending courses.'

Training and Support – There are a number of good initiatives that have been able to provide evidence for good results in encouraging digital inclusion amongst older Londoners including AUKL MiCommunities (2012) and Go ON UK (CBR, 2013) which represent clear evidence for drivers. However, there is also feedback from older Londoners who have reported being discouraged by attending courses (AUKL, 2013b). Delving a little deeper into reasons for training being successful provide explanations such as advertising of training through known channels, accessibility of training, having a named contact and well-designed training. Although the latter of these encounters problems of different learning styles and training-preferences, there are consistencies in the review literature with regards to the following features of 'well-designed' training:

• Small classes
• Teacher aware of specific needs of older people
• Classes specifically for older people
• Time for one-to-one teaching/home-tutoring
• Avoiding jargon
• Patience and training run at individual's pace
• Various levels (e.g. basic, advanced) of training to suit individuals

Life-triggers – Details of what 'life-triggers' might encourage computer-participation are not entirely clear and it is likely that the 'life-triggers' themselves might evoke a change in other drivers in this list. Nevertheless, many older people who have attended training reported that, despite having interest in going online, it took them a long time to actually make the jump to doing so (QA Research, 2013) indicating that some form of trigger further down the line encouraged them to make the final step.

4.0 Different people, different needs

'Older people represent a very diverse population with varied levels of experience and engagement with computers.'

Typologies of computer use

As discussed in section 1.5, older people represent a very diverse population with varied levels of experience and engagement with computers. Nevertheless, research has found certain shared commonalities in participant-response that has enabled the development of categories, or typologies, to distinguish between different, but commonly encountered, views on digital inclusion. The Policy Exchange (2012) grouped those who are offline into categories of 'traditionalists', 'hesitators' and 'highly supported'. Under these headings 'traditionalists' referred to those who have a negative view of technology whilst 'hesitators' had a relatively positive view of technology but had not taken that step into digital inclusion. The 'highly supported' group represents those who are typically older and may well have live-in care. On the other side focusing on older people who had accessed computer-training, QA Research, in conducting a piece of research for Age UK (2013) developed typologies of 'active resistors' – who felt pressurised into going online, 'the curious' – where this curiosity was the primary driver ahead of any specific internet-related activity or task, and 'the purposeful' – in reference to those who cited particular interests and reasons for wanting to undertake training. Spanning those who are online and offline, ILC-UK (2012) defined online-users as either 'digital trail-blazers' or 'cautious toe-dippers'; the former referring to those who are 'adventurous about trying new things online' and the latter refers to those who 'tentatively use the internet for basic tasks' In the same paper, they referred to offline users as either 'non-line outsiders' – for whom fear and uncertainty was the main barrier to going online, and 'hi-tech sceptics' who are 'cynical about technology' and resentful of pressure to get online.

Although there are other typologies available in the literature, they tend to follow similar themes as those detailed above and all of these categories resonate with Age UK London's own localised research (2013) that found that participants fitted in one of five fairly self-explanatory categories – 'the uninterested', 'those open to persuasion', 'those who tried but gave up', digitally included but looking for more training and support' and 'early adopters and innovators'.

Interpreting 'those who tried but gave up' as people who encountered barriers to their digital inclusion and, as such, 'fell back' into either being 'uninterested' or 'open to persuasion' leaves a total of four typologies. In order to be more inclusive of other research-findings, these typologies have been subtly re-named and summarised in the following table with relevant references to typologies previously described.
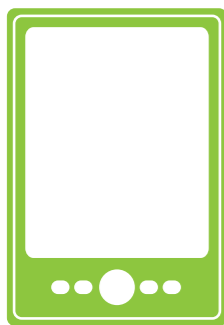
Offline and uninterested	Offline but interested	Restricted use but online	Expansive use and online
Traditionalists	Hesitators	Active Resistors	The purposeful
Highly supported*	Highly supported*	The curious**	The curious**
Hi-tech sceptics	Non-line outsiders	Cautious toe-dippers	Digital trail-blazers
The uninterested	Open to persuasion	Looking for training	Early adopters
Those who gave up*	Those who gave up*		

* This category will contain people in 'offline and uninterested' and 'offline but interested' categories.

** This category will contain people in 'restricted use but online' and 'expansive use and online' categories.

Table 1: Categories of Digital Inclusion Re-Classified by 'Offline and Uninterested', 'Offline but Interested', 'Restricted Use but Online' and 'Expansive Use and Online' typologies

This provides four simplified but inclusive typology headings that is consistent with the findings of previous research categorizations whilst providing a clear distinction along a model of online access, interest and level of use.

A model of digital inclusion

Although the categories in 4.1 are intentionally discrete, they evoke the question of what it is that may enable older people to cross typology boundaries. What measures can be put in place, for example, to assist the 'hesitators' of Policy Exchange's research ('Offline but Interested') into becoming the 'cautious toe-dippers' (Restricted Use but Online) of ILC-UK's research? Amalgamating findings from previous research categories under our new headings provides the following model.

Fundamentally, and although this is a simplified model, this raises the question of how older people can be supported to 'move' through three stages of digital inclusion – from being 'offline and uninterested' to being 'offline but interested', from being 'offline but interested' to having 'restricted use but online' and from having 'restricted use but online' to having 'expansive use and online'. It also raises the idea that the relevant barriers and incentives highlighted in section 3 will have different pertinence for older people depending on where they currently are in this model and that any interventions that wish to be successful need to be targeted to the right people.

'The question is how older people can be supported to 'move' through three stages of digital inclusion.'

Offline and uninterested

Characterised by:
• Negative associations
• Feeling that it is unnecessary
• Low awareness of online capabilities
• Cynical about technology

Offline but interested

Characterised by:
• Fears of low knowledge/making a mistake
• Perceived financial constraints
• Fear of safety and privacy
• Uncertainty of relevance to lives

Restricted use but online

Characterised by:
• Single-use functionality
• Desire for training
• Desire for on-going support
• Curiosity
• Sometimes feeling 'pushed' online

Expansive use and online

Characterised by:
• Positive associations
• Attended good quality training
• High exposure to computers
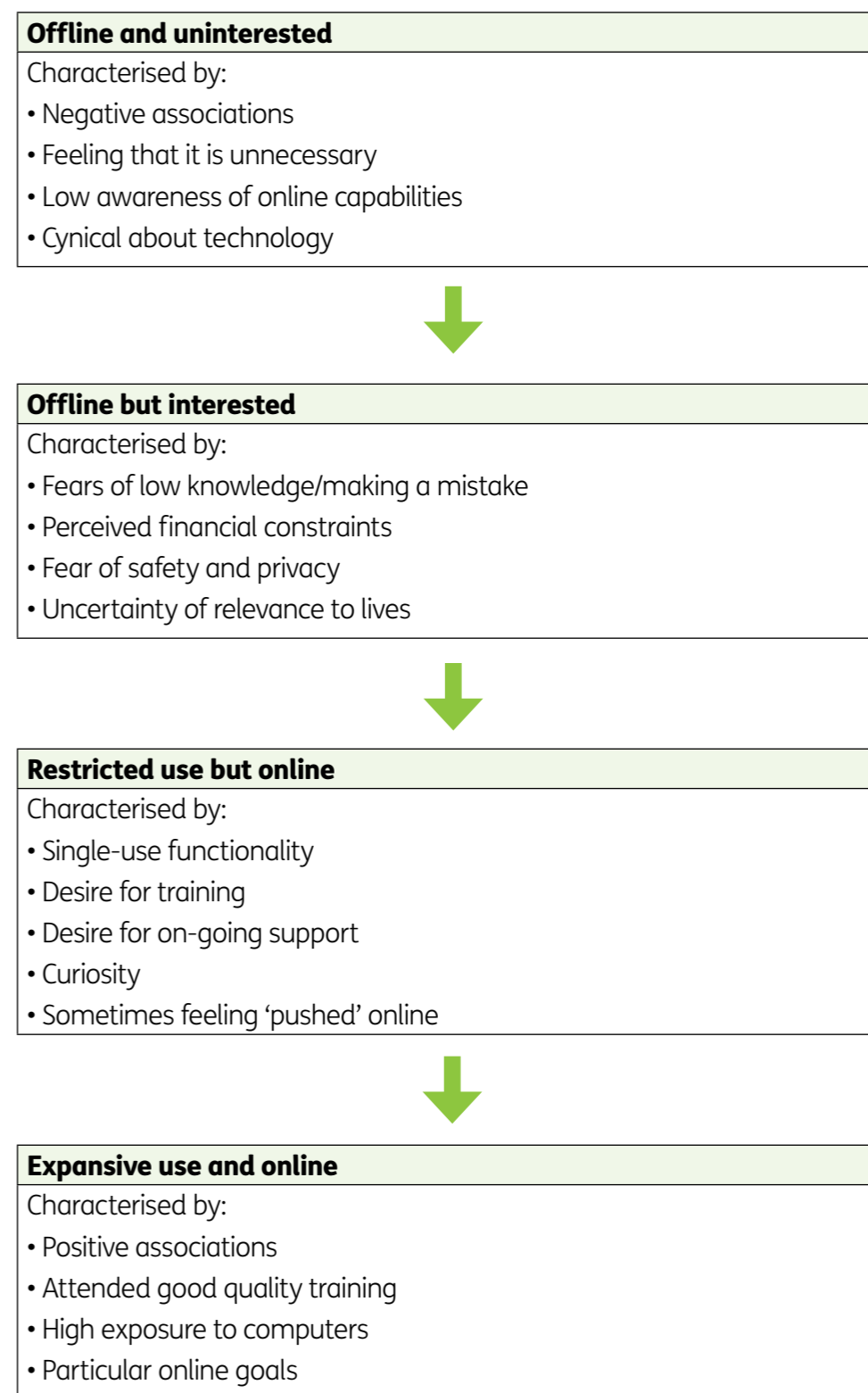• Particular online goals

Diagram 2: A Model of Digital Inclusion through Four Typologies

This model would suggest, for example, that it would be of relatively little value to develop an internet training course on social-networking and make it available to a potential group of people who are predominantly in the 'offline and uninterested' category. We would expect take-up to be far better if such a training course were made available to those in the

'restricted use but online' category. Similarly, training courses related to computer safety and virus protection might be of particular value to those who are 'offline but interested' and it is perhaps the motivational aspects related to benefits of going online that need to be imparted on those who are 'offline and uninterested' (though finding the right method of engagement would also, of course, be critical). At present, there is relatively little research into the targeting of different solutions to address different barriers (both psychological and practical) that are present to different typologies of older people and it is this that is tentatively approached in section 4.3.

4.2 What support? And for who?

Section 3 provided a comprehensive review of the barriers and incentives to digital inclusion highlighted in the literature but it didn't target the relevance of these barriers and drivers to older people with varied levels of existing computer interest and use. Section 4.2's typologies now provide a means to do this and are summarised in turn:

Transition 1:
From 'Offline and Uninterested' to 'Offline but Interested'

'It is interesting to hear of cases where this transition has taken place.'

It is interesting to hear of cases where this transition has taken place. In AUKL's own focus groups, some participants who classified themselves as being 'offline and uninterested' gradually had their curiosity piqued through the presence of similarly aged participants who were actively online speaking out about what they liked about it - 'curiosity' indeed, is a key aspect of this fundamentally motivational transition. Older people do not necessarily subscribe to the widespread belief that the internet can provide benefits to them and they do not necessarily have its presence and use as a 'social norm' in the same way that other generations do. There is, however, both a 'carrot' and a 'stick' approach to crossing this motivational divide. On the one hand, there is the 'carrot' approach of providing a 'motivational hook' incentive for going online but, on the other, there is the 'stick' approach that has led to many older people resentfully going online for fear of 'missing out'.

'Normalising' online access amongst older generations through use of older people as advocates or 'technology champions' would appear relevant here but this is also an issue for those in the private sector whose current consumer-targeting all too often alienates older people from seeing themselves as being a part of it. The idiosyncratic nature of what is attractive to different people also suggests that a flexible approach to information-provision at multiple levels would be advisable. In terms of the government's 'digital by default' agenda, getting people online through hobbies or interests as a voluntary 'step into digital inclusion' before branching into the prospect of using government services online would seem a better proposition than using the 'digital by default' agenda as an incentive in itself. However, the challenges to reaching out to all

older people in this way should not be over-looked and it will clearly be more difficult to engage with those older Londoners who are not currently connected with existing networks or who don't have the reinforcement through links with family.

Recognition that some people will remain 'Offline and Uninterested', as detailed in proposition 1 in section 3.1 is also crucial in ensuring that offline mechanisms remain operational and efficient.

Transition 2:
From 'Offline but Interested' to 'Restricted Use but Online'

'There are many examples of this transition taking place although the triggers for people pro-actively making this jump are not clear.'

There are many examples of this transition taking place although the triggers for people pro-actively making this jump are not clear. Whilst motivational aspects are key in transition 1, the means and practicalities are also of importance through this transition as financial implications of computer ownership, training, accessibility and maintenance need to be addressed. Of particular note, training needs to be targeted at an introductory level that is reactive to the learner's pace and interests as positive initial experience is key in encouraging online use to those who have made the step. It would be a worthy goal to ensure that the cases of 'those who tried but gave up' were minimised, if not eliminated. Primarily, the reasons implicated by those people in this category were through training short-falls through low levels of staffing support in library training and computer training that was aligned with individual interests. We know that small classes, time for one-to-one tutoring, patience, time, avoiding of jargon and linking training with individual interests and goals are key so generic courses for large classes of people are likely to leave some people dissatisfied. Funders have a clear role here by providing the support through tendering appropriate entry-level training delivery for older Londoners to improve the opportunities to learn. Accessibility also needs to be considered, particularly so that it does not discount older Londoners because of location and/or disability. With all the benefits of older Londoners going online detailed in 2.3, it is clearly important that the route to enable them to do this is made as easy as possible. Of critical importance, the barriers of 'fear' both in terms of privacy and security also need to be addressed. This barrier is highlighted throughout literature as being a key reason for older people who would otherwise be interested not going online.

The private sector also has a part to play in working with older people in co-designing products that are user-friendly for them and, with computers being upgraded over time, there is the prospect of fully-functional second hand computers being donated to those people who might ordinarily struggle to raise funds. The latter of these is by no means a solution in itself as the training, support and positive early experiences of computer-use (tied in with individual motivations and interests) need to combine to ensure sustainability of operation.

'There are many examples where the initial step into going online has opened up an interest to learn more.'

There are many examples where the initial step into going online has opened up an interest to learn more and to 'see what else can be done'. Given that many older people will have an initial motivational hook related to hobbies, interests or networks, it is this 3rd transition that is likely to hold most relevance for the government's conversion to digital services. Whilst trust in government services online is relatively high, there is still a reluctance for many older people to engage with them over more traditional methods. Confidence in using computers would appear to be a pre-requisite for this and, as such, any short-cuts from being 'Offline and Uninterested' straight to using government services online would appear over-ambitious.

Higher level training is relevant here to up-skill those who have engaged with computers but want to know more and there is a mass of literature on training design that, aligned with the preferences highlighted through interviews with older people, should well-equip providers for delivery. Opportunities for older people to act as trainers should also be encouraged as having someone with perceived similarities who has achieved something has the potential to inspire.

Benefits of using computers to do things typically done offline such as making savings on insurance, product-purchase and linking in with social networks can also be communicated here to enable those who already have a level of computer-competency to make the decision of how far they wish to take their level of engagement.

5.0 Recommendations

Recommendations for older people

Older people themselves have an obvious role to play in making the transition to using modern technologies and, in particular, those who have made this change in later-life have a great deal to contribute to those who are deterred by fears of operation-complexity, safety and privacy. For clarity, the relevant 'transition' phases from section 4.3 that are addressed by recommendations are included in parenthesis as 'Tr' 1, 2 or 3.

• Older computer-users can help by providing their 'story' of how they crossed the digital divide as well as describing what particular functions of computer-use are valuable to them. (Tr 1)

• Older computer-users have the capacity to act as 'digital champions' who can provide voluntary support, guidance and training to other older Londoners at a local level (Tr 2 and 3)

'Older computer users have the capacity to act as digital champions.'

• Older people need to be pro-active in contributing to those who are trying to support them by, for example, providing feedback on training initiatives and working with private sector organisations to co-design suitable systems. (Tr 2)

• In 'normalising' internet-use amongst older people, there is clearly more scope for suitably-skilled older Londoners in creative development of attractive online sites and communities. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

• There is a role for older people in speaking up and communicating what it is that they want out of digital-inclusivity such that training programmes, support systems and product-development can be based upon the needs and desires of older people themselves. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

5.2 **Recommendations for the Age UK London network**

As a pan-London charity representing older Londoners, Age UK London is clearly in a strong position to assist with co-ordinating implementation of recommendations across the capital. Local Age UKs, with their capacity to link in with individuals at a local level also have a vital role in operationalizing recommendations within communities to assist those who wish to, to manage the transition to digital inclusion.

'Age UK London have all the materials readily available to support the application of this model across the capital.'

• Having had the success in facilitating MiCommunities programmes as an intergenerational solution to digital inclusivity, Age UK London have all the materials readily available to support the wider application of this model across the capital. Age UK London and local Age UKs should ensure that they use evaluation methods that really capture what aspects of the programme work best and which work less well so that this learning can feed back into the relevant knowledge streams and assist with refining course-design. (Tr 2 and 3)

• Greater effort should be made to recruit older technology 'champions' who can provide case-study success stories to be disseminated through existing network channels. (Tr 1)

'Communicating benefits of getting online should look to relevant motivational hoots to attact interest.'

- Investigating internet support solutions such as MiCommunities but where older Londoners are both the support and the users should also be encouraged. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

- Age UK London and local Age UKs should seek to ensure that they look beyond the 'usual networks' to reach out to less-connected older Londoners so that they can get the same benefits and such that issues of 'isolation' can be addressed as an additional outcome. Jargon should not be used and awareness-raising should be targeted to families and carers as well as older people themselves. (Tr 1)

- As the Age UK Business Directory expands, efforts should be made to ensure that trusted 'computer-support' individuals and organisations are recruited and that this resource is communicated to stakeholders through relevant programmes. (Tr 3)

- Communicating benefits of getting online should look to relevant 'motivational hooks' to attract interest that are tailored more to older people's interests rather than to pressure into fears of 'missing out'. (Tr 1)

- Disseminating 'how to' guides for simple online operations would be a useful resource for older Londoners whilst also potentially attracting internet traffic. As a trusted organisation, Age UK London should also ensure that their website is a user-friendly 'starting point' for new computer users. (Tr 2 and 3)

- Linking in with private sector organisations should be encouraged such that any initiatives being developed for older Londoners can be advertised and made known to those who can benefit from them through existing communication channels. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

- Local Age UKs should investigate capacity to provide supported online access opportunities for their local communities from their own premises (Tr 1 and 2)

- Local Age UKs should seek to work with local amenities such as libraries to assist them to ensure that their digital support initiatives are suitable, attractive and effective for older Londoners. (Tr 2)

5.3   **Recommendations for other voluntary sector organisations**

The voluntary sector as a whole has a great deal to contribute in providing support mechanisms for older Londoners who wish to get online through contributing to the pool of digital-inclusion research knowledge, linking with local government, linking with private sector organisations, providing information, advice and sign-posting, and supporting programmes and initiatives to provide hands-on support.

- Through provision of support to older Londoners, voluntary sector organisations should ensure that robust and consistent evaluation methods are utilised to draw comparisons between initiatives and to build a picture of what works and for whom it works best. (Tr 2)

- Across the board, more older 'technology champions' should be sought both to provide case-studies to inspire others as well as to provide information on what has supported transitions to computer use. (Tr 1)

- Organisations with a focus on specific disabilities should ensure that they have a voice in ensuring products and services are suitable for older people, irrespective of their level of disability and ability. (Tr 2)

'Support initiative should have a clear idea of who they are targeting.'

- Support initiatives should have a clear idea of 'who' they are targeting. The model on 4.2 gives a summary indication of level of inclusion but an understanding of concurrent support programmes to monitor coverage is critical in ensuring no-one slips 'through the gaps' through feeling unsuited to available initiatives. (Tr 1 and 2)

- As with 5.1, dissemination of success stories, 'how to' guidance and awareness-raising pieces in specific areas of interest would help inform communities of older Londoners (Tr 1 and 2)

- Linking in with private sector organisations should be encouraged such that any initiatives being developed for older Londoners can be advertised and made known to those who can benefit from them. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

- Local organisations should seek to work with local amenities to ensure that their digital support initiatives are suitable, attractive and effective for older Londoners. (Tr 2)

5.4   **Recommendations for regional and local government**

As the 'Digital by Default' agenda continues to be rolled out, regional and local government have a clear role to play in ensuring that the transition runs smoothly and that those who do not have computer access and/or competency are not disadvantaged by this.

- Information regarding the 'Digital by Default' agenda should be communicated through non-computerised channels to give older Londoners plenty of opportunity to make decisions and plan ahead. (Tr 1)

- Government needs to link in with voluntary sector initiatives such that these can be signposted in correspondence. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

- At a local level, provision of courses specifically for older people, as the largest proportion of the offline population, should be encouraged. (Tr 2)

- Whilst it is clear that the transition to online-communications will be promoted, people should be given the option to return to paper-based methods if they find online methods unsatisfactory for any reason. (Tr 1)

- Support for completion of online forms needs to be facilitated at a face-to-face local level through amenities such as the local library or post-office. Simplified 'how to' guidance for government services should also

be provided for those who wish to 'go digital'. (Tr 1)

- Additional support and advice should be provided for older Londoners with specific needs related to impairments they might have. (Tr 2)

- The possibility for enabling family members and or carers to complete online correspondence on behalf of non-computer-using older Londoners should be thoroughly risk-assessed and investigated for feasibility. (Tr 1)

'Investment in adult learning is critical.'

- Investment in adult-learning is critical in supporting those initiatives that enable digital inclusion so should be given suitable prioritisation. (Tr 2 and 3)

- Those support systems that are being facilitated through the voluntary sector should be made known to older Londoners through, for example, sign-posting and social care pathways. (Tr 2 and 3)

- Funding should be provided to ensure that local support systems are suitably equipped to support local communities. For example, providing enough library staff sufficiently skilled to provide the necessary support or promoting usage of online facilities in other community settings. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

5.5 Recommendations for funders

Whilst there is evidence that programmes have had success in assisting older people to get online, these programmes tend to target those users who both have an existing interest in computers and who are known to networks. Funders are in a position both to finance support over a large geographical areas as well as encourage innovative approaches at all levels of the model shown in section 4.2.

- Support research designed to contribute to the literature and gain a greater understanding of the motivational transition from being 'offline and uninterested' to being 'offline but interested'. (Tr 1)

- Provide the financial backing for 'trusted local companies' to deliver evidence-based initiatives to provide support within their own communities. (Tr 2)

- Fund innovations that seek to draw links between sectors for mutual benefit to enhance to environment of support for older Londoners wishing to get online. (Tr 2)

- Ensure that funded programmes are targeted to all older Londoners, irrespective of location, disability, involvement in known networks etc. (Tr 2)

- Ensure that funded programmes are targeted to older Londoners across the transitions of the model of inclusion shown in 4.2; namely those who are offline and uninterested to those who are offline but interested, those who are offline but interested to being online with restricted use and those who then take the next step to being online with expansive use. (Tr 1, 2 and 3)

- Fund training specifically targeted at older people and encourage a co-design approach to this training with older Londoners who have experience of what has worked for them. (Tr 2)

5.6 Recommendations for the private sector

As the largest proportion of the population that is not currently online and who will continue to have computer-access and use incentivised, older people represent a potentially under-targeted market that the private sector can target both for their own benefit as well as prospective consumers of all ages.

- Incorporate older people representatives as co-designers and testers of products to ensure user-friendly operation. (Tr 2)

- Develop affordable, low-specification but modern computers to attract entry-level computer acquisition to those on limited incomes. (Tr 1)

- In sales outlets, provide basic operations guidance to ensure that older purchasers are clear on what they are buying and are able to test usability prior to purchase. (Tr 2)

- Provide reasonably-priced installation and set-up deals alongside purchasing plans. (Tr 2)

- Sales outlets could consider having an 'older person's afternoon' during typically quieter midweek working hours where older Londoners can be shown the pros and cons of different computer systems. (Tr 1 and 2)

'Target marketing to older as well as younger consumers'

- Target marketing to older as well as younger consumers to encourage 'normalising' of online use amongst older Londoners. (Tr 1)

- When upgrading systems, consider donating out-dated computers to the voluntary sector initiatives that are seeking to up-skill older Londoners' computer-capabilities. (Tr 2 and 3)

- Work with the voluntary sector on joint-initiatives to bring informed volunteering staff together with older people to provide hands-on support for specific issues. (Tr 2)

- Working with voluntary sector expertise, training for computer sales and advice staff should ensure that they understand additional support needs of older people with physical and sensory impairments. (Tr 2)

6.0 References

6.1

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