

The Digital Inclusion Fund was launched by St Monica Trust to tackle digital exclusion among people aged 55+. As services, healthcare and everyday life move online, many older people face barriers to staying connected, from lack of confidence and skills to the cost of devices and data.

The Fund supported people to build confidence, skills and independence in a digital world.



Our Reach

- Around 1,800 people aged 55+ engaged.
- Six funded projects across Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.
- Many participants had little or no prior digital experience.

Impact by the Numbers

Participants reported increased confidence, skills and connection:



Confidence using technology: **68% increase**

Learning new skills: **159% increase**

Feeling safe online: **71% increase**

Feeling inspired to learn more: **55% increase**

Engaging with people with similar interests: **56% increase**

Using tech to connect to community: **100% increase**



Who We Funded

- BS3 Community Development
- North Bristol Advice Centre
- North Somerset Training CIC
- Sight Support West of England
- St Werburghs Community Association
- Vision North Somerset

What We Funded

Flexible, community-based support including:

- 1:1 support and group sessions.
- Drop-ins and outreach in trusted settings.
- Home visits for those most vulnerable.

LEARNING, LEGACY AND VOICES

What We Learned

Digital inclusion takes time

It's a journey of confidence, not a one-off intervention.

Trust comes first

People engage through familiar places and trusted relationships.

There is no single approach that works for everyone

A mix of 1:1, group and flexible support works best.

Connection drives learning

Social interaction reduces loneliness and keeps people engaged.

Barriers go beyond skills

Cost, connectivity and access to suitable devices remain significant barriers.

Safety matters

Building confidence must go hand-in-hand with staying safe online.

Stronger Organisations, Lasting Change

The Fund helped organisations to:

- Expand reach and support new communities
- Build partnerships and volunteer networks
- Embed digital inclusion into core services
- Secure further funding and grow delivery
- Digital inclusion is now part of long-term service delivery, not just a short-term project.

A Lasting Legacy

Participants are now:

- More confident and independent
- Better able to access services and healthcare
- More connected to friends, family and community
- Many continue learning together, supporting each other beyond the project.

“I'm now able to text my friends without having to ask my family to do it for me.”

We are incredibly proud of what has been achieved and grateful to everyone who made it possible.

