

Outreach Digital Support for Older People

What do we mean by outreach support?

Outreach support means going to where the people are, whether that's a day centre, care home, residents association, or even their own home. This is a way of reaching older people who wouldn't be able to attend a session at one fixed location due to poor health, mobility issues, care responsibilities or because of big distances to travel in rural areas.

The digital support itself could be a group session, one-to-one, or even a drop-in, but they all have similarities in what is needed to set up this service. Ann and Rich Avison from Lincs Digital gave us some practical tips to setting up an outreach service.

Setting Up Outreach Support

- **Build relationships with local partners**
Working with local partners will enable you to reach people and access spaces that you wouldn't have otherwise. These relationships might grow and also open doors to future funding opportunities.
- **Understand the needs of the people you are supporting**
Talk to staff and the people you are hoping to support. What are their interests? What do they want / need to learn to do? What barriers might they face to using digital?
- **Get to know the space**
What kit and resources will you be able to use while you're there, where are the plug sockets, and what's the wifi password? It's really important to find all of these things out before you deliver a session. You may also need to do a risk assessment.
- **Prepare your kit**
You might need to provide laptops, tablets and even connectivity devices like a mifi or dongles. These all need to be fully updated and cleaned between sessions (especially in times of Covid) and you need to be able to transport these around - a festival trolley can come in very handy!
- **Be a friendly face**
The Lincs Digital team meets the learners a week before the activity starts to introduce themselves and manage expectations about the sessions. This can really break down the barrier when you're working in a new space.

- **Plan your session**

Whether it's a drop-in, group session or one-to-one, you need to make sure you have set roles and that everyone knows what they are doing on the day.

Final Thoughts

Strong partnerships and preparation are key to setting up an outreach service. It can help to chat to other organisations that already offer outreach support to get recommendations for kit, promotion and more. Why not join a meet-up, or our [Outreach Support](#) training session to connect with other organisations that are doing the same thing?

About Lincs Digital

Lincs Digital are able to deliver digital support to all kinds of people around Lincolnshire. They use a well-established outreach model, developed through years of partnership work and relationship building.

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