

# Accessing Digital Services 2020



# T.E.D.

Ageing Better  
in East Lindsey



## Providing access to online services for those not online

Digital technology continues to transform our lives. In an increasingly digital age, many public services once accessed on a face-to-face basis have been moved online by the Government and Local authorities in a bid to save money due to pressure on budgets, to increase efficiency and to provide a better service for individuals. Additionally, as more and more services go online and 'digital by default', telephone services are being reduced and have become extremely busy. For example, waiting times for some HMRC services are often in excess of 30 minutes, and people are then regularly directed back online to print off forms. This isn't just the case with public services (tax, benefits) but is also the case for utilities, Blue Badges and bus passes, with many of these services also requiring an email address before you can proceed, which is a further issue as many older people don't have an email address.



TED is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and is managed by YMCA Lincolnshire

## About TED

Talk Eat Drink (TED) Ageing Better in East Lindsey is part of Ageing Better, a Programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Ageing Better aims to develop creative ways for people aged over 50 to be actively involved in their local communities, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness through a Test and Learn approach. It is one of five major programmes set up by The National Lottery Community Fund that test and learn from new approaches to designing services which aim to make people's lives healthier and happier.

## Current online issues

For those that do use the internet, including many older people, the move online can provide quicker, easier and cheaper access to services. However, for those that don't use the internet, which includes 30% of people aged 65 to 74 and 66% of those aged 75 and over, or for those that lack basic digital skills (12.6 million UK adults), this can make accessing services extremely challenging, frustrating and inconvenient. Some local authorities do not have large provisions available for an assisted digital support strategy.

Moving services online without sufficient support not only makes it harder to access these services, but it also deters people from seeking support, can increase dependency on others and many older people are missing out on support that they are entitled to. For example, older people miss out on £3.7 billion of pension credit and housing benefit each year, as a result of not feeling like they are entitled to it, being put off by having to give financial information, or by being reluctant to ask for help. If you add the pressure of having to claim online to this mix, it becomes a further barrier that those who don't utilise the internet have to overcome. Furthermore, many older and homeless people who don't have access to the internet are unable to apply for social housing, swap properties, or request repairs. For these people society thus become disabling and unsupportive of their needs.



The above examples give but a flavour of some of the incidents where being unable to access the internet can cause problems for older people and other marginalised groups. For some of these people, however, seeking help from family and friends to overcome these barriers is easily done. For others, it requires a bit more help and that is where companies and charitable organisations like Age UK and Lincs Digital can begin to help, to ensure that those who do not have access to, or the confidence to use, the internet are not disadvantaged by the ongoing digital transformation in the public and private sectors.

In this case study we therefore focus on the role that Lincs Digital has played in helping develop people's confidence with digital technology and accessing online services. A process that they have undertaken by engaging people's interest, providing tailored training, ensuring there is follow up support, and addressing people's concerns about security and costs.

## Lincs Digital

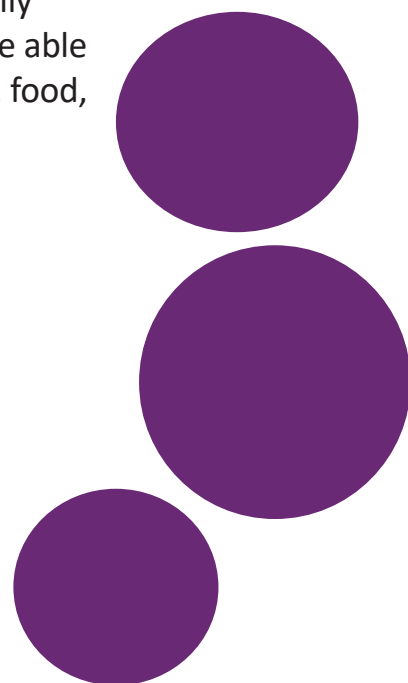
Established in 2018 as a community group, Lincs Digital became a registered charity in May 2019 providing digital outreach services and support across East Lindsey and Lincolnshire via events, one-to-one or drop-in sessions, and extended support classes. Their current educational programme is designed around 8 sessions, but this is flexible and adaptable to the needs of the client. During this programme they cover a number of different aspects of digital skills including online safety and scam awareness, using skype or facetime to stay in touch with friends and relatives, using Alexa especially now as it is linked to NHS direct, the use of social media, and even how to do your weekly shop online which is something that is becoming increasingly needed in a rural and coastal area such as East Lindsey. Lincs Digital also have access to [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) and other tools which they use as part of their educational programmes to encourage social interaction during their sessions.



In addition to this more formal educational programme Lincs Digital have also been instrumental in helping those who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation get access to the necessary housing and benefits registers in order for them to try to improve their situation and well-being. This initially started through work with Hope House in Mablethorpe, where people are able to drop in between 10am and 1pm on Wednesdays for drinks, friendship, food, and support.

Hope House recognised the need for those accessing their services to gain digital training and approached Lincs Digital to see if they could establish a drop-in session at their venue, thus providing their residents and those visiting with the opportunity to access housing and universal credit online services. It also gave Lincs Digital the opportunity to deliver some basic technology support sessions to these people, so that when they did leave Hope House or were successful in finding more permanent accommodation, they would be able to continue to access services for themselves. This has also led to Lincs Digital being approached by East Lindsey District Council to help assist them with the Housing Register now that it has been taken back in-house as opposed to being run by an external organisation. Although this opportunity presented itself in an informal manner, and the people who were accessing the service was very hit and miss, making measuring impact very challenging, but by having that presence at Hope House Lincs Digital were able to break down some of the barriers participants had in accessing online material.

As a result of this project, Lincs Digital have also begun to establish links with the Job Centre to provide similar services in getting people registered for various benefits and searching for jobs. This has helped Lincs Digital diversify what they offer in terms of solving needs rather than simply delivering a standard package. Additionally, Lincs Digital have also been working in collaboration with other TED delivery partners including Age UK, Magna Vitae, and Carers First to deliver one off, ad-hoc sessions alongside or as part of their friendship groups, courses or events. For example in August 2019, Lincs Digital delivered a session to the Magna Vitae Fitness Food and Friends group focusing on a selection of health apps including the NHS, Help 4 Carers, Healthy Recipes and Ask my GP by allowing participants the opportunity to try them out on an iPad. Each of these partnerships and opportunities has also helped Lincs Digital access a wider range of services and organisations and as a result have a greater impact on increasing the digital skills of East Lindsey residents and TED members along with creating a lasting legacy for TED through some very healthy and positive collaborations.



## Lincs Digital and TED impact so far:

- Engagement has taken place with over 14 organisations, including Waterloo Housing, Mablethorpe Coastal Centre, Chapel St Leonards Village Hall, St Pauls at Skegness, CVS, Lincs Rural Housing, Horncastle Over 50's Youth Club Group, Voiceability, Citizens Advice Lindsey, Hope House, East Lindsey District Council, Age UK Lindsey, Magna Vitae and Carers First. We do connect with many other organisations outside of the TED project where we use resources and learning to support our learners and organisations.
- Conducted over 125 digital sessions between 2018 and 2019
- Over 1500 registered attendances from new and repeating beneficiaries including Ken, Jean, and Pat whose stories we now detail;

Steve:

During his first session at Lincs Digital, revealed that he had recently taken over the role of treasurer at a local community organisation but was finding that his laptop and software were outdated for the role. Our first job was to point Steve towards a new computer and printer that would allow him to fulfil the needs of his new role. Steve then arrived at the second session armed with his new hardware and we were able to set it up for him and show him how everything worked and connected him to the online portal for his group. Following this, Steve engaged in a programme of learning tailored towards his needs, to help him understand how to use Word and Excel to keep his records up to date. He also developed the digital skills to use Facebook allowing him to stay connected with friends and family around the world. Working with Steve has been a great success for all of us, with the added bonus of helping out another local organisation. Steve has since stayed involved with the programme and is now a Lincs Digital, Digital Champion.



Janet:

Janet is a National Trust volunteer but had never claimed the expenses she was entitled too as she thought the amount would be small and that the online system would be complicated. When asked how far she was travelling, it worked out that she was missing out on approximately £10 in expenses every time she volunteered. She also informed us that the National Trust had recently moved their volunteer booking system online which meant that she was missing out on the slots she could do, meaning she might not be able to volunteer anymore. We therefore decided to help Janet decipher the mysteries of the system. Upon logging in, and working our way through the claims procedure, it became clear that the system was extremely user friendly. In no time at all Janet had inputted her expenses and was surprised to see just how easy it was and much she was missing out on per month, which for someone on a limited budget, was quite significant. We then decided to look at the rota system and again this was fairly simple to use. The diary was open for 12 weeks in advance, so we jumped forward a few weeks and Janet was pleased to see that her usual slot was free, so we booked her in. Throughout this process, Janet took a number of notes which we then checked for accuracy before ensuring Janet was able to follow them and complete the necessary forms herself. The confidence and the abilities that this has given Janet are lovely to see.

Barbra:

Having relocated to the coast with her husband a few years ago, Barbra was finding it hard to meet people and make new friends due to the spread-out nature of the village in which they live. Additionally, with family and old friends still living in their old hometown, staying in contact with people and being involved in their grandchildren's lives was becoming more and more challenging, especially with Barbra and her husbands limited digital knowledge. As a result, Barbra was interested in upskilling herself so she could contact her family more regularly and also start to use things like online shopping in case they became unable to drive. We therefore tailored a programme for Barbra that involved face-to-face sessions and take away step-by-step handouts to try at home. As the sessions went along Barbra's confidence began to shoot up and she is now happy shopping and banking online as well as using a variety of social media platforms. None of this, however, compares to happiness she expressed in being able to see and talk to her grandchildren in the evening, sometimes even reading them stories via facetime. Additionally, by accessing the sessions Barbra has also begun to meet other people in the local area and build friendships outside of the formal training sessions.

## Digital Tips for Older People

1. Never provide any of your sensitive information online.
2. Beware of fake websites and scams.
3. Never send money to someone you do not know.
4. Always validate someone's identity before trusting them.
5. Keep your computer's software updated.
6. Use an antivirus software.
7. Back-up files regularly.
8. Use a strong, unique and long password on your computer or tablet.



9. If something seems too good to be true, it likely is.
10. Don't click on links unless you are 100% sure they are legitimate.
11. Use credit cards if possible when shopping online.
12. Only shop at reputable online merchants with secure websites





# About East Lindsey



# T.E.D.

Ageing Better  
in East Lindsey

East Lindsey is a large, sparsely populated district within the county of Lincolnshire, which includes the popular coastal seaside towns of Skegness and Mablethorpe.

East Lindsey has a higher than average ageing population with 29% of people aged 65 and over. High numbers of older people move to East Lindsey in their retirement years and many have multiple chronic health conditions and few social and familial connections in the region. Public transport across East Lindsey is poor and therefore accessing services can be challenging, especially for older adults.

The overarching aims of the TED Programme are to:

- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Help older people to become better connected with volunteering, social, leisure and health improving activities
- Provide opportunities for older people to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of both the services and businesses available to them

We currently have over 1800 registered TED members, and over 100 businesses across East Lindsey hold an Age-friendly Business Award.

## Further information...

To find out more about TED or to get involved visit our website [www.tedineastlindsey.co.uk](http://www.tedineastlindsey.co.uk) or start a conversation and share your views online: Twitter: [@ted\\_EastLindsey](https://twitter.com/ted_EastLindsey)



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