

Get Online Newcastle – Newcastle City Library

Get Online Newcastle (GON) is a partnership between Newcastle City Council and Your Homes Newcastle and was set up in 2015 with support from the City Library. The aim was to help people who were traditionally excluded from developing IT skills and accessing the internet.

Over the last three years the project has evolved to deliver digital training to all Newcastle residents as well as extending the training offer to charity and community organisations, enabling their staff and volunteers to offer digital support to their customers.

Delivered at City Library, GON now recruits local residents and trains them to develop their digital skills, so they can then act as mentors to other residents. This model develops the mentors' skills and confidence and reaches out to disengaged groups who are more likely to engage with a peer than a formal support service.

While the project did not set out to tackle the changes set out under welfare reform, the insight gained into the digital inclusion issues facing residents enabled GON to put in place an infrastructure to support digitally excluded customers through the implementation of Universal Credit.

As a result of ongoing learning, courses that have proved popular and have engaged with residents have been expanded and developed so that the service is tailored to the needs of the city's residents.

Our current achievements:

- Over 2,000 residents have taken part in digital activities that help them to access and use the internet while developing their confidence when using a computer or mobile device
- 4,000 hours of digital inclusion activities delivered by mentors
- 700 learners completed the Learn My Way, Online Basics course
- 625 residents have attended sessions to learn to use their own mobile device
- 200 staff and volunteers from charities have attended training
- 78 tenants in receipt of Universal Credit have attended a course to develop their IT skills and help them sign up to Newcastle City Council and Your Homes Newcastle online services
- 60 tenants have found employment through GON's partnership with the Skills Hub also based at the City Library
- More than 4,000 volunteer hours, saving almost £30,000 in staffing costs.

During Libraries week we will be offering the Learn My Way, Online Basics courses that we deliver all year round, and one of our Techy Tea Parity sessions, which normally run twice a month at full capacity. These are free and open to anyone who has any type of digital device that they would like to use competently.