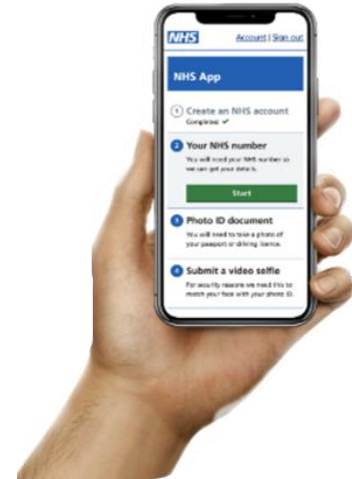
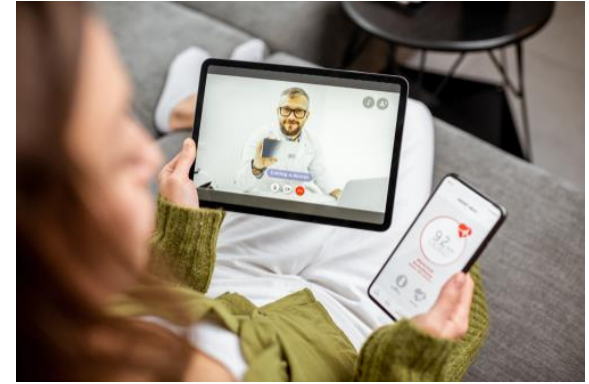


# Digital Health Champions

Building digital health delivery capacity, developing digital health patients, supporting service digitisation and adoption: the business case for Digital Health Champions



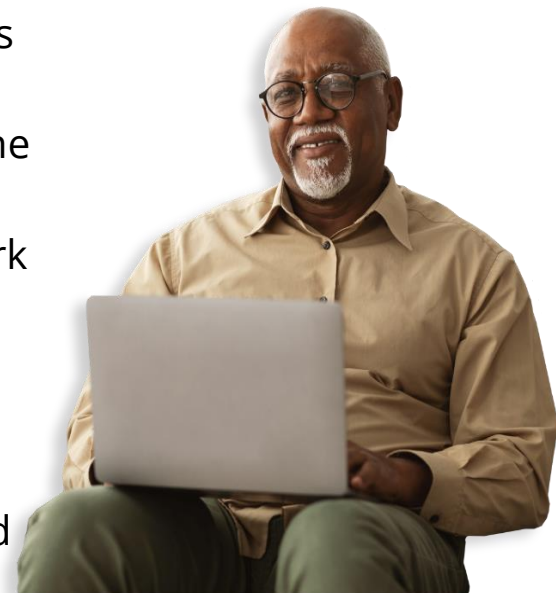
Digital Unite (specialists in Digital Champion models, see Appendix) have been working with NHS England since 2021 to test and learn from a Champion approach to supporting the delivery and take up of digital health services in a variety of community settings.

There were two main parts to this project. First, developing a Digital Health Champion learning and training curriculum for health professionals and intermediaries so that they could build this practice into their work.

Second, testing that curriculum and the Digital Champion model of colleague and patient engagement in a range of health care settings through a variety of Digital Health Champion Projects across the country.



- Designed **7 CPD accredited** e-learning courses and numerous supplementary resources for Digital Health Champions supporting people to manage their health online, including one on helping people with **limited English**
- Delivered that training through our Digital Champions Network to **26** Digital Champion Health Projects across England
- **369 Champions** and **49 Project Managers** trained and supported, with over **2629 courses** completed
- Over **5585 patient learners** reported being helped
- **16 online support sessions** for Digital Health Champions and Project Managers on different aspects of their Projects and facilitating knowledge sharing
- Continuous **email and video call support** to all Projects
- An online **learning community** and support through the Digital Champions Network
- **Quarterly reporting** over 2 years



“It has been a pleasure to work with Digital Unite over the last 3.5 years on developing a purpose built e-learning environment that enhances people’s knowledge and confidence of how to support people to use digital to increase their access to health services more effectively.

As we grow digital services within the NHS, helping people to access those services becomes ever more important and this model of working with local champions to help their fellow citizens is highly sustainable.

Digital Unite’s professionalism, enthusiasm and creativity have been key to making this project the success that it is. The organisation has been so supportive to not only central NHS England colleagues but all the regional projects that we have worked with, creating a true partnership relationship. Alongside this, the project represents excellent value for money for the service that we receive. I do expect that this project continues long into the future.”

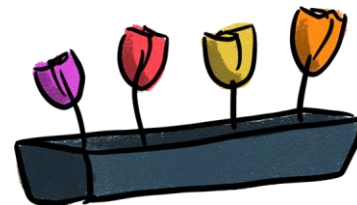
*Lynn Smith, National Head of Implementation, Digital Citizen, Transformation Directorate, NHS England*



## Digital Health Champion models can:

- Develop and support **staff and volunteers** to drive digital health service adoption within service delivery
- Improve **staff/ volunteer digital skills confidence**, well-being and attitudes towards digital
- Support **overall personal and professional** development through better digital skills
- Offer a **patient-centric model** meaning people get the help they need
- **Reduce inappropriate demand**, realise cost and time **saving efficiencies** for service deliverers and patients alike
- Community learning models nourish community connections and **build wider social value**





Digital Health Champion networks offer a **scalable and sustainable** way to grow not just the digital capability and confidence of patients, but they also **nurture and foster** digital confidence and capacity for those delivering health and social care.

Over the 2 years of the NHS England funded delivery, 369 Champions and 49 Project Managers completed an amazing **2,629 Digital Health Champion learning courses**.

They recorded helping **5,585 patient learners** with their digital skills in support of managing health and wellbeing online, though we suspect the number of people supported (but not recorded) was 10-20% higher than that.



**Using Drop-In and/or regular sessions to support patients gives a familiar format and context from which to:**

- Access online services
- Book GP appointments
- Access a medical record online
- Use online health apps and NHS app
- Make the most of their devices
- Stay in touch with friends and family

“I supported patient to set up and use the NHS App on their smartphone and how to use the patient access system to contact the GP surgery and how to use and fill in the online consultation form.

This helped the client to feel confident to order their repeat medication online and have this delivered to their home to use the online form to be in touch with the GP when the phone lines are busy.

This has made a big difference as client has problems with mobility and finds it difficult to come into the **surgery**.

- *NHS Sussex Digital Ambassador Pilot*



**Digital Health Champions can build their own skills and confidence to engage patients with particular needs or in particular groups at risk of digital exclusion, for example:**

- older people
- those with ESOL requirements
- with learning difficulties
- those with complex/ multiple support requirements

“I helped someone with dementia set up a reminder system on their phone; someone to use Teams so they can attend rehab session; someone with autism to manage their anxiety by teaching them how to check in with the GP services online; someone with a visual impairment sign up to RNIB libraries” – *Digital Health Champion*

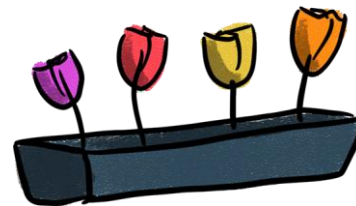
“As we try to get patients to take more responsibility and self-management of their own health, particularly LTCs (long-term conditions), we’ll need a raft of Digital Champions to help support patients as they transition ... to being involved in selfcare.”  
- *North West London CCG*





**Supporting people to access digital healthcare can open so many other – more extensive - digital inclusion and skills opportunities for them.**

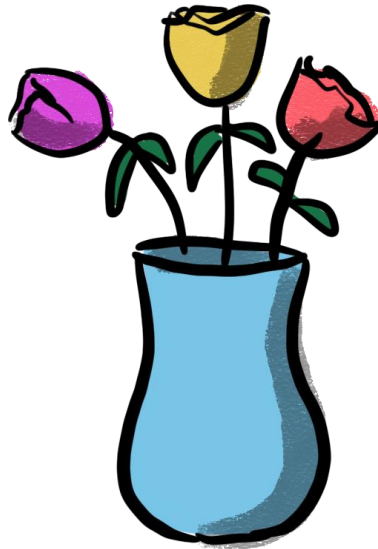
Trained and confident Digital Health Champions can help patient-learners build digital skills and confidence that support them in so many more everyday situations.



“We helped 9 people at the Cafe with a various range of needs from looking for jobs, downloading Teams for a health appointment, setting up devices with a range of email addresses, organising folders on computers and blocking people on social media.”

- *Spark Somerset*

“Including Champions as part of our strategy has been very helpful. Champions help to extend reach, bring diverse perspectives and skills, grow our capacity for supporting people in our communities.”



“The programme has helped us equip staff as well as volunteers to make every contact count for digital inclusion and support as part of other roles.”

“Champions sometimes have lived experience of what our clients are going through both with their digital skills but also their health conditions.”

*All quotes from Project Managers at the Digital Health Champion Projects*

96%

of trained Digital Champions increase in **their own** digital skills

94%

of trained Digital Champions say they are **better able** to support others



The training, support and resourcing of Digital Health Champions – and the Project Managers who support them – is key.

“Volunteers and staff flourish with regular peer support and sharing of experiences.” *Digital Health Champion Project*



“It’s great that **there is a mix of all kinds of resources** available on the DCN including options for Digital Champions to meet up too as some people prefer to meet up with others to talk.”

“The DCN **has helped massively** with training volunteers to upskill people's digital skills and using NHS app as well. Thank you very much!”

The **Digital Champions Network (DCN)** provides:

- Training for Digital Health Champions
- Training for Digital Health Champion Project Managers
- 500 resources for Champions and PMs ‘in action’
- 400 resources for learners they are helping
- Rewards and recognition for Champions including CPD
- Quality, consistency, benchmarking
- Community of Champions and PMs
- Project management tools for Managers: dashboards, data and MI tools
- Wrap around support - webinars, meetups, shared learning and resourcing



We're committed to supporting **Digital Health Champions and Projects** through our Digital Champions Network.

We very much hope we can continue to support **yours!**

## Scale

- We've been supporting digital inclusion through Digital Champion models **since 1997**
- Our Digital Champion training products and services are currently being used by **100+ organisations** to drive digital inclusion and skills
- **2 million people** annually use Digital Unite's proprietary free online digital learning guides

## Loyalty

- Our digital inclusion learning products are **trusted** by local authorities, housing providers, charities, health groups and trusts and community groups across the UK
- **25 third and public sector organisations** embed our digital inclusion and skills content in their own websites

## Credibility

- Member of the **CPD Certification Service**; quality assured, professionally verified e-learning.
- Approved supplier of digital inclusion training and support by the **Crown Commercial Service**
- Bronze Medallist for **Innovation in Learning**, Learning and Performance Institute
- Bronze Medallist for **Best Use of Blended Learning Public Sector**, Learning Technologies
- Emma, our CEO, awarded an **OBE in 2012** for 'services to digital inclusion'

