ARC England

LDE Learning Disability England

SEE ABILITY Live. Love. Thrive. Belong.

Good Things Foundation

Manchester Metropolitan University

Digital Lifeline

A Research Project about Digital Life After Covid

What we found out



Funded by NIHR National Institute for Health and Care Research

Easy Read

Easy Read

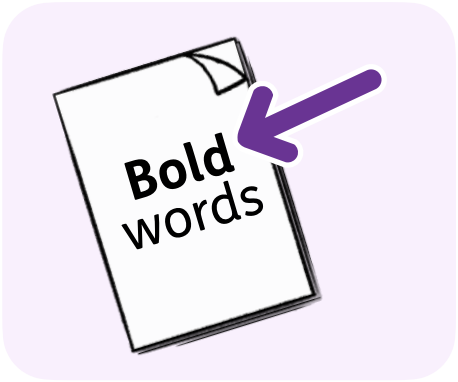


This is an Easy Read version of some information.

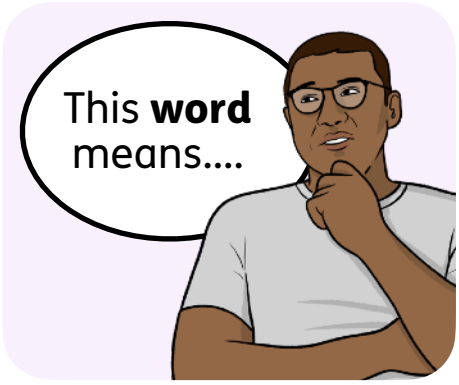
It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

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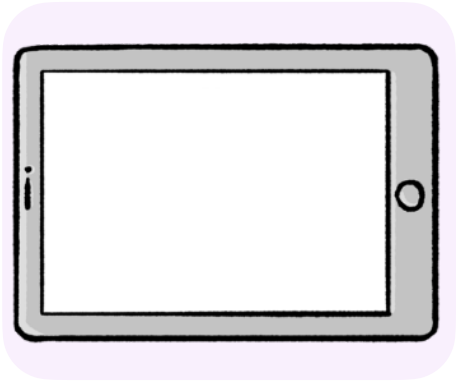
About this booklet

Digital Lifeline

This booklet is from the Digital Lifeline **researchers**.



Researchers are people who ask questions, collect information, and learn about things.

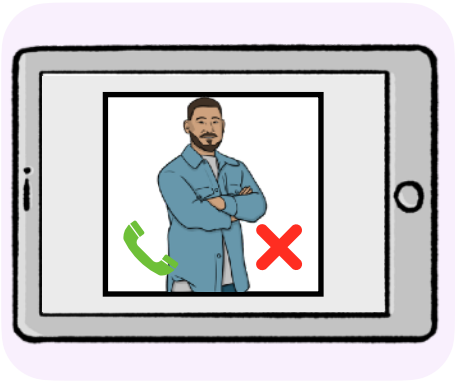


During COVID-19, some people with learning disabilities were given free **tablets**.

A **tablet** is a small computer with a touch screen.



They also got some support to use the tablets.



The people were given tablets to help them stay connected with other people and learn to use the internet.



We wanted to find out what difference the tablets made to people's lives.



This booklet will explain what we found out and what we think should happen next.

Funded by NIHR
National Institute for Health and Care Research

The National Institute for Health and Care Research paid for us to do this research.

What we did



To find out whether the tablets made a difference to people's lives, we spoke to 83 people in groups.



Most of these people had a learning disability.

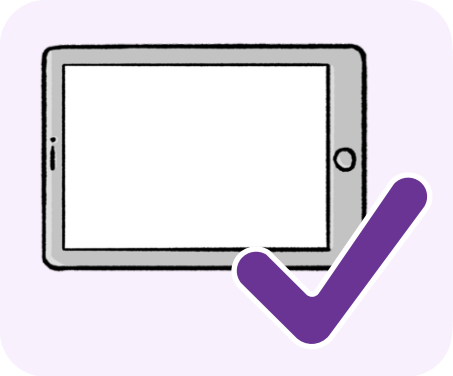


We also shared a **survey**.

A **survey** is a set of questions that people can answer.



160 people with learning disabilities did the survey.



About half the people we heard from had been given a free tablet during COVID-19.



It was difficult to find some of the people who had been given one of the free tablets.



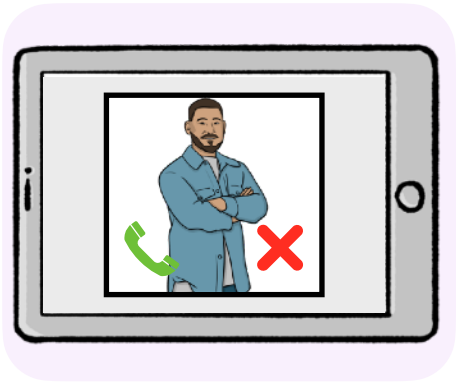
This was because some staff who gave out the tablets had left, and no one else knew who had been given one.

What we found out



We found out 9 important things.

1. The tablets made a difference



The tablets helped people with learning disabilities keep in touch with friends, family and carers.



The tablets got people interested in doing things online.

2. Losing skills

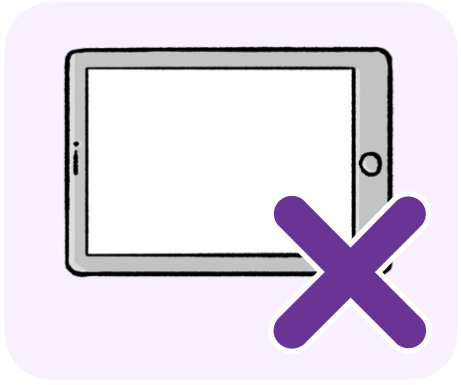


There is less support with **digital skills** after COVID-19, so people are losing their skills.

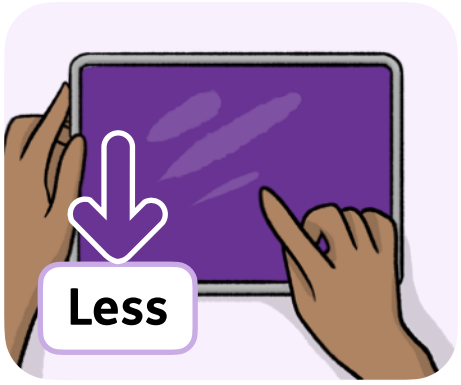
Digital skills means being able to use tablets and the internet.



A lot of people said they felt let down when the support ended.



Nearly half of the people who got a tablet are not using it any more.

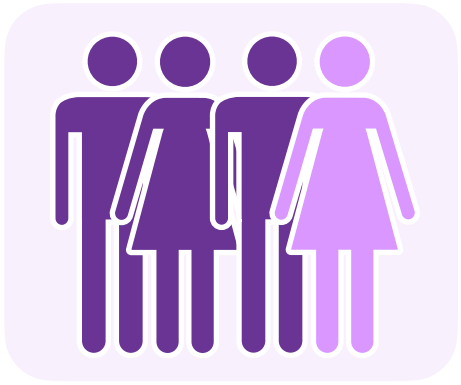


People who do still use their tablet are using it less.

3. People need support



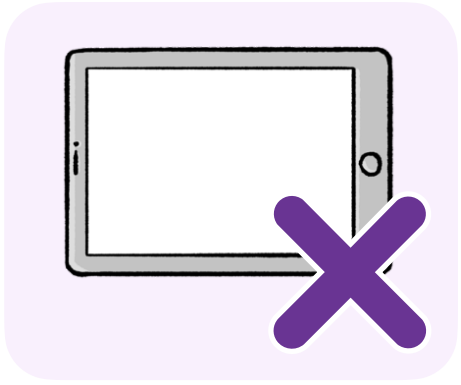
People with learning disabilities need support to use tablets.



About 3 in 4 people we spoke to said they needed help to set up their tablet.



More than half said they would ask a support worker to help them if they had a problem with their tablet.

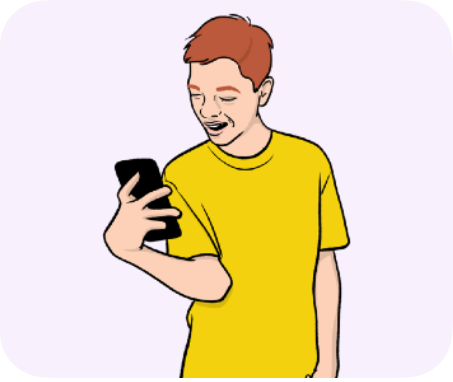


If there is no one to support people, they stop using their tablets.



But if people are given time, space and support, they enjoy using their tablets.

4. What people use

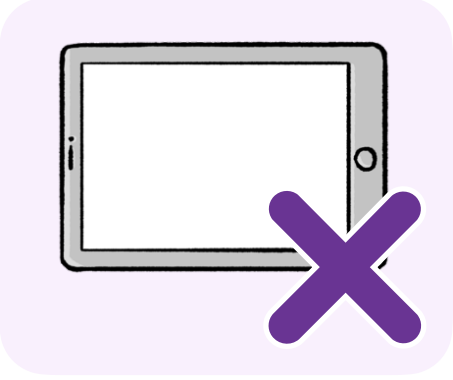


Most people use phones instead of tablets now.

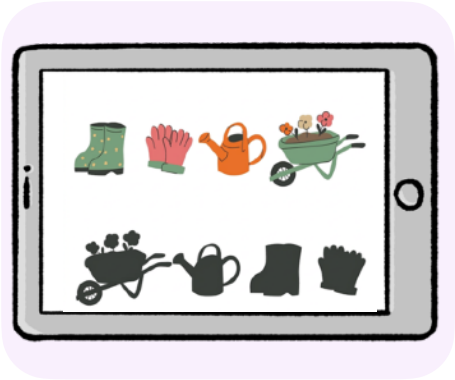
In the survey, we found that:



- More than half of people use their phone many times a day.



- But only about 6 in 100 people use their tablet as much.

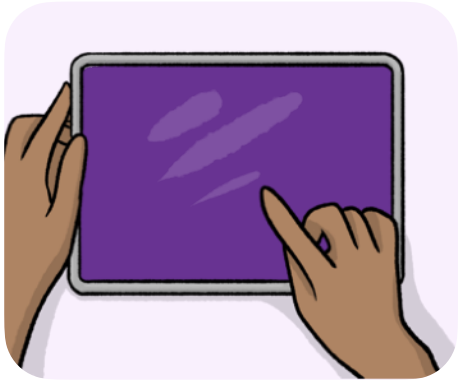


People use tablets at home to watch videos or play games.

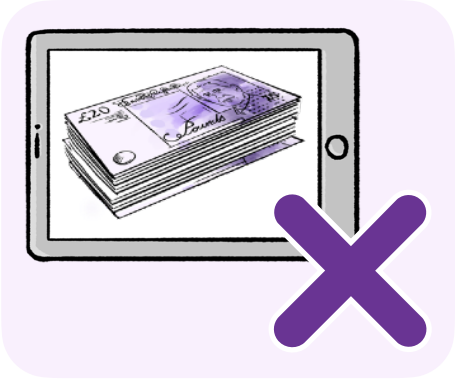


This is because watching videos and playing games is easier on a larger screen.

5. People use what they need



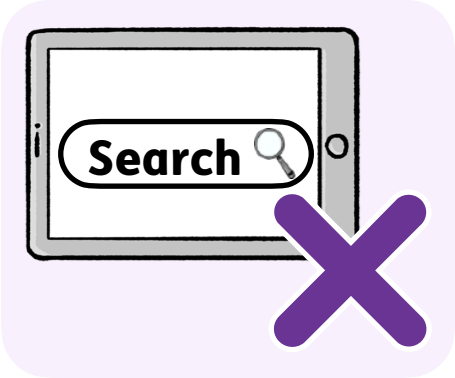
People used their tablets during COVID-19 because they needed to.



But people did not like using their tablet for tasks like managing their money or shopping.

6. Thinking people cannot use tablets

Some people said that the carers who support them sometimes think that:



- They cannot use the internet.



- They will not be able to use tablets or stay safe online, so do not give them tablets.

7. Making practice fun



It is important for people with learning disabilities to practice their digital skills every day, so they do not forget them.



They need safe spaces to practice, without being worried about staying safe or breaking the tablets.

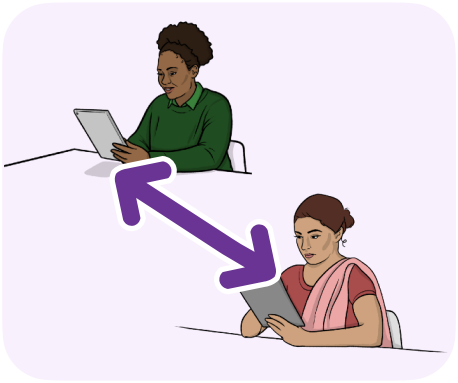


A lot of people use their phones as cameras, so helping them do that can improve their confidence.



Support is better when it is friendly, easy to get, and lasts for a long time.

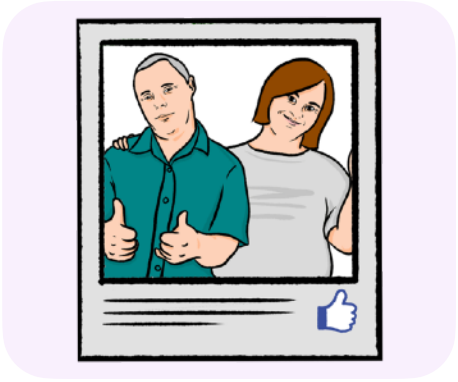
8. Everyone is different



People use tablets and the internet differently.



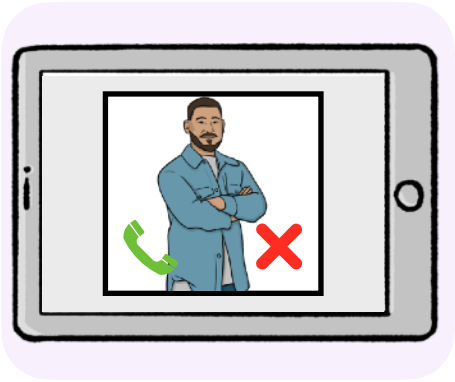
Some people are very good at using tablets and can do many things on their own.



Some people can use smartphones for things like social media and messaging, but need help with harder tasks.



Some people need a lot of support to use tablets or phones.



Using a tablet or phone can be very important for people's health, and for staying connected with friends and family.

9. Support in the future



A lot of people said they would like to get better at using their tablets.

People want to learn:



- From the people who support them.

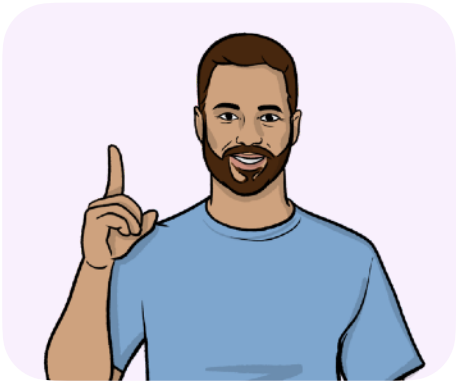


- By going on a course in person, not online.



People with learning disabilities and the people who support them both need help with new technology.

What should happen next



We have ideas for what different groups of people should do next.

People with learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities could:

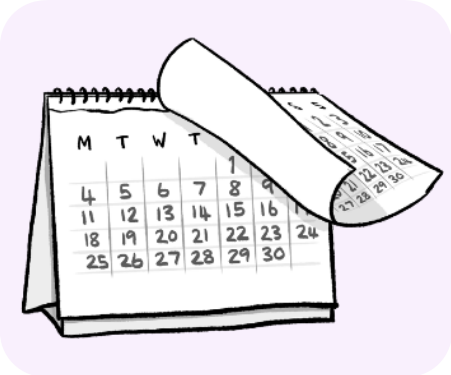


- Share digital skills with friends.



- Use technology to reach their goals, like hobbies, crafts, making TikToks, or learning a new language.

People with learning disabilities should:



- Practice using technology every day to keep their digital skills.



- Use tools to help them use their phone and tablet, like using voice messages to talk to friends instead of typing.

People who write rules and laws

People who write rules and laws about technology should:



- Think about what people with learning disabilities need, which might be different from what other disabled people need.



- Make sure that people can still look after their health and money without needing to go online.

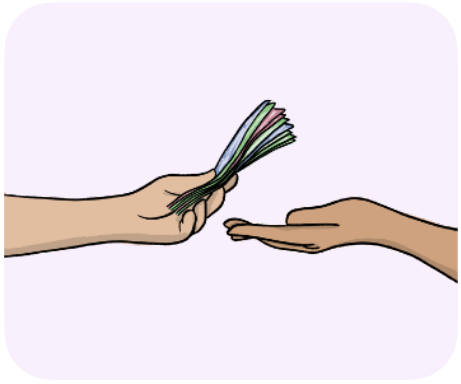


- Understand that some people with learning disabilities need help to do things online.



People who write rules and laws about technology should make sure that everyone who gets care has the chance to learn digital skills.

Funders



Funders are organisations that give money to groups who help people with learning disabilities learn digital skills.

Funders should:



- Give money so people can have new phones or tablets instead of old tablets that do not work well anymore.



- Give money to carers so they get more confident with using tablets, phones and the internet and can support people better.

Funders should also:



- Make sure that people with learning disabilities are included in planning new programmes to help people get digital skills.



- Understand how important tablets and phones are to some people with learning disabilities.



- Give money to support workshops where people can try out doing things online in a safe way, like managing money.

Support organisations

Organisations that support people with learning disabilities should:



- Help people to try out new digital skills.



- Make sure everyone they support has the same chance to get tablets and use the internet.



- Make sure that people still get support if a member of staff leaves.

Organisations that support people with learning disabilities should also:



- Make sure staff have the skills to help people use tablets and the internet.



- Use fun activities like taking photos, making videos or playing games to help people get confident using tablets or phones.

Find out more



You can look at our website here:
www.digitallifeline.org



What do you think about this Easy Read booklet?

Please fill in this survey to tell us what you think:
www.easy-read-online.co.uk/easy-read-feedback-survey

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