



DIGITAL LEADERSHIP 101

MAKING STRATEGIC DECISIONS IN
SMALL CHARITIES

PROJECT EVALUATION

With funding from DCMS, led by Superhighways in partnership with The FSI, NAVCA & London Plus.

DIGITAL LEADERSHIP 101

in numbers

Feb - Mar 2019

Our Digital Leadership 101 programme reached

232



trustees and directors of small charities and community organisations in London



We facilitated **11** interactive Digital Leadership 101 workshops for trustee/CEO networks



We ran **4** taster sessions including at the London Civil Society Infrastructure Forum, reaching an additional **73** people



We prototyped a Charity Digital Code of Practice Toolkit with **6** trustee boards



We gave **1:1** advice to **30** trustees and CEOs on digital leadership issues

We engaged Directors and Development Workers from Council for Voluntary Services & specialist infrastructure in



22 London boroughs



51 staff members took part in training in specialist topics, including:

- Cloud migration 101 - Office 365
- Office 365 - a toolbox of amazing apps
- Data protection - are you getting it right?
- Choosing a fit-for-purpose database - tips and options for small charities



We developed **15** new resources, including **blog posts** and **fact sheets**, to inform and engage small charity leaders



9 small charity **video and audio case studies** were developed to inspire small charities to learn from others and try out new ideas

Digital Leadership 101

The Digital Leadership 101 programme was our first project specifically targeting civil society leaders. By focussing on supporting CEOs and trustees, we hoped to build commitment to and confidence in digital at a strategic level within organisations.

Being a small organisation brings unique digital challenges, opportunities and needs. Addressing this, Superhighways provided targeted support to CEOs and trustees of organisations with a turnover of under £1million across 22 London boroughs.

Through this DCMS-funded project, we aimed to strengthen the digital leadership skills of third sector leaders, helping leaders to feel better informed and confident about how to invest in, manage, resource and embrace digital opportunities and approaches across their organisations.

Our support included:

- 15 Digital Leadership 101 training and awareness-raising sessions for trustees and CEOs, introducing the Charity Digital Code of Practice
- 6 on-site trustee board training sessions
- 30 bespoke 1-1 telephone and email advice sessions helping CEOs take forward new ideas
- 15 new online resources and step by step guides relevant to small charities
- 9 multi-media video and audio case-studies showcasing success stories of small organisations who've successfully embraced digital.

Thinking strategically about digital & data

Outcome 1: Organisations think differently about digital and data-driven decision-making and prioritise this better at a strategic level.

'In smaller organisations, incremental changes can make a big difference' says Janine Edwards, Head of Business Development at The Foundation for Social Improvement.

Across our training, board 1:1 sessions, and advice, we explored the tools, practices and mindset that the word 'digital' encompasses. Linking digital transformation to social change, we asked organisations to reflect on digital practices across their organisations and identify small changes that could help embed a digital culture.

We also asked attendees to make pledges committing themselves to taking action as a result of new learning. Here's what they said.

'We need a plan for what we use and how much time and effort we put into each aspect'

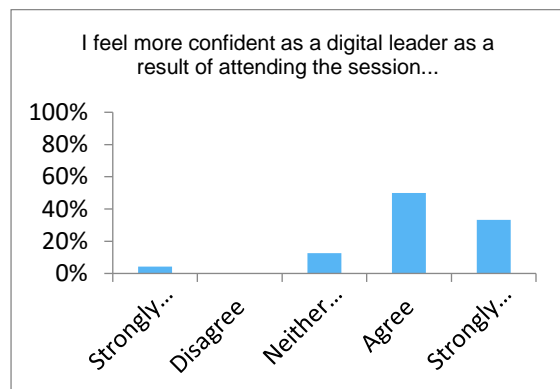
'Put digital needs into funding bids and include digital on the risk register'

'We can also discuss with the team and board volunteers to support us to adapt and survive in the digital age'

'Discuss what we are doing digitally - what opportunities there are, what we may need in the future in funding/immediate impact'

'We need to look at what digital resources we have but don't use'

We also asked leaders how the sessions helped them. 83% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed our sessions increased their confidence as digital leaders.



Building specialist knowledge

‘Small charities need to be able to succeed in digital, but the support on offer to help them do this has been limited and is often not pitched at the right level or aimed at the right people.’ Margaret Cooney, CEO of LondonPlus

Creating and embedding digital strategies in small third sector organisations is difficult when advice widely available either overlooks the resource constraints of being small, or fails to take into account the non-profit context. We delivered 4 specialist training sessions, targeted to small non-profits:

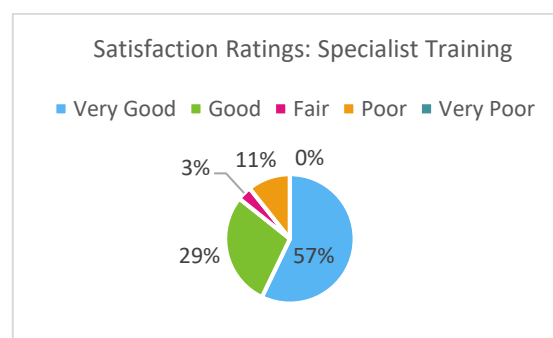
- Choosing a fit-for-purpose system: tips and options for small charities.
- Data protection: making sure you’re doing it right
- Office365 – a toolbox of amazing apps
- Cloud migration 101 – moving to Office 365

Our sessions helped organisations diagnose need, understand what’s available and how to use it, and importantly, how to make the most of what they already have.

The tailored approach helped organisations see how digital could fit in their organisations:

‘I found this session beneficial because it targeted small charities. Often at similar training the difference between charities, and therefore budgets, is so different it begins to feel muddled how you could apply it to your own charity’

‘As a charity we need to collect data for funding purposes/evidence. Presently we do this using evaluation forms in paper format but going forward, this can now be achieved electronically. It will be useful to see the data in various formats such as charts/graphs’



86% of attendees rated the sessions ‘very good’ or ‘good’, and feedback demonstrates the difference our sessions made.

‘The documentation that helps an organisation take a step back and look carefully at what they need from their database was very useful.’

‘The training took some of the anxiety out of the whole GDPR process.’

‘Exploiting what we have – e.g. using Survey Monkey to collect data rather than feedback was a new thought. I will also revisit the spreadsheets I have set up; I knew they didn’t work particularly efficiently, this has galvanised me.’

'With the knowledge gained our privacy statements can be improved and data protection and client confidentiality policies updated too.'

'The information on share point v one drive was helpful and will help to explain to staff as and when we move to share point. Will enable me to cascade information about the capabilities of 365.'

Our support also included bespoke 1-1 advice for 30 organisations, enabling them to take the next step in implementing learning.

Charity Digital Code of Practice as a framework

Outcome 3: More organisations use the Charity Digital Code of Practice as a driver and framework to develop next steps

'It's a checklist and helps to keep focussed'. Margaret Cooney, CEO of LondonPlus

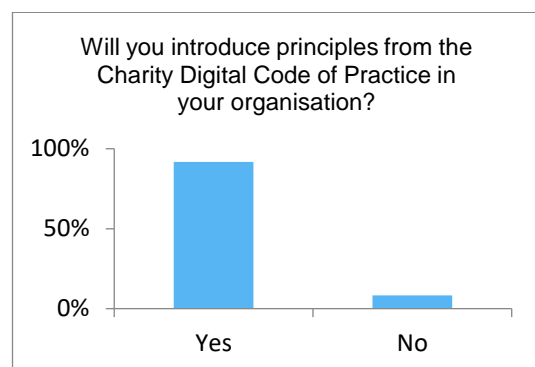
We introduced the recently launched [Charity Digital Code of Practice](#) in all our training and advice sessions as a framework for strategic decision-making around digital technology for social impact.

We created a handy one page take away and prototyped a 'Conversation Starter Pack' for attendees to use with their organisations after the project end.

Before the session, fewer than 20% of attendees had heard of the Code; by the end of sessions, attendees were identifying how they could use the Code to develop and drive good practice.



In our Trustee & CEO network session in Richmond, 13 of the 21 attendees said they would introduce principles from the Charity Digital Code in their organisations, while just under half of attendees commented that being introduced to the Code was the most useful aspect of the session. More widely across the sessions, 92% of survey respondents said they would be introducing principles from the Charity Digital Code.



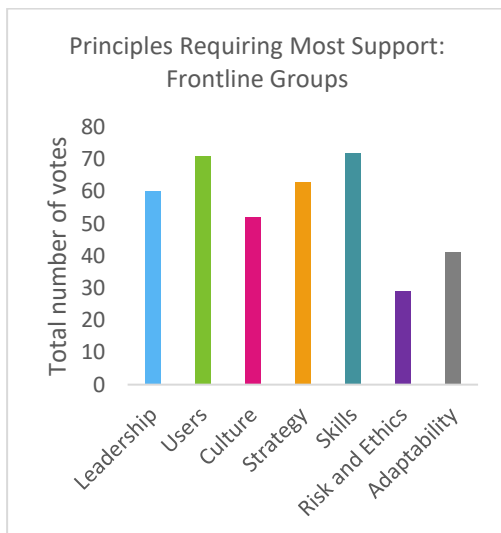
Across all the support we delivered, participants included the Digital Code of Practice in their pledges...

'Review Charity Digital Code of Practice and where we [are] at and encourage the board to challenge the status quo.'

'Discuss the digital code with staff team and board. Then start to embed digital into our strategy.'

'Nominating a digital champion outlining a plan for 2019 what do we want to achieve - small steps.'

To help charities kick off the process of using the Charity Digital Code of Practice as a driver and practically demonstrate how organisations can use the tool themselves, we used the Code in-session, asking attendees to rate the three areas they most need support with.



Frontline organisations identified Skills gaps, User centred digital services, and Strategy, as the three biggest barriers to making progress with digital in their organisations.

They perceived fewest issues with Risk and ethics, indicating either a level of confidence in these two areas (or, potentially a lack of detailed knowledge of what these areas entail).

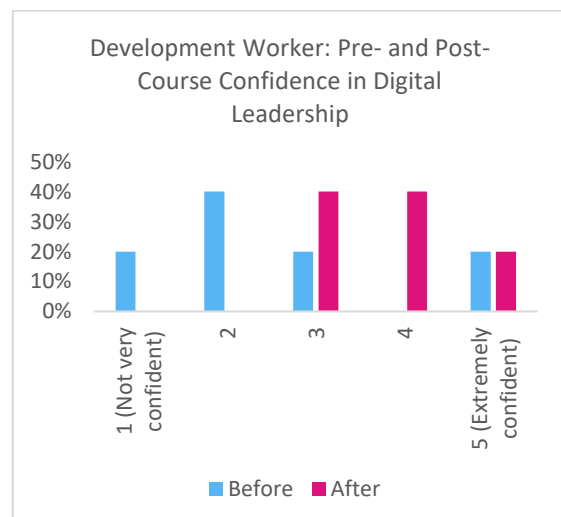
Local infrastructure – widening reach and integrating digital with capacity building

Local infrastructure organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Service, and development workers within them, are often the first point-of-contact for frontline organisations needing support. They bring detailed knowledge of the practical issues organisations face, including governance, the funding environment, evidencing need and impact.

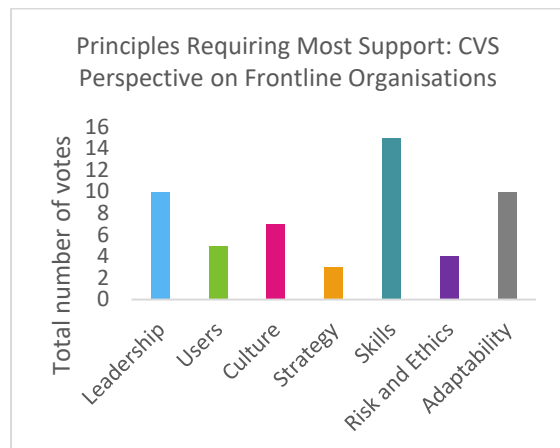
We wanted to learn from development workers to ensure our resources match need, and to ensure CVS workers have the skills and confidence they need to introduce digital to community organisations.

Our two specialist Development Worker Digital Code of Practice sessions were attended by 19 development workers, and through the project we reached 11 infrastructure organisations we hadn't worked with before.

The charts below show the impact of our training. Before our support, 60% rated their confidence as under 3/5; after the course, 60% rated their confidence as 3/5 or higher.



We asked development workers which Code Principles they felt frontline groups were most likely to need support with.



CVS workers agreed with frontline organisations that Skills gaps in these organisations posed the greatest barriers, but in contrast to frontline organisation, they felt Leadership and Adaptability were the next greatest challenges. This highlights the ongoing need to work with and develop digital skills and confidence in civil society leaders.

Development workers play a crucial role in cascading knowledge and skills throughout the sector, reflected in the pledges they made. Pledges included small, immediate, ongoing actions that embed digital into the support CVSs offer and so encourage frontline organisations to start thinking about digital.

‘Ask more organisations we work with about their use of digital’ [run] network sessions on digital.’

‘Include a digital slide in my trustee training tomorrow.’

CVS workers also set more ambitious plans including: sharing knowledge within their teams so that whole teams are equipped to offer digital support; creating specialist projects and forums to cascade knowledge across boroughs; and assessing digital within their own organisations.

‘Develop colourful case studies from organisations that use digital technology to improve practice/get funding etc and use them to ‘tell a story’ about digital transformation rather than just talking about it.’

‘We want to run a digital capacity project.’

‘Run a session with the whole team soon – demystifying digital.’

However, development workers also need more support themselves, to help them better support groups. 4 out of 5 of Development Workers in our survey felt the Charity Digital Code of Practice was either very or extremely useful as a tool, and agreed a toolkit with further guidance would help them introduce digital leadership into their work with groups.

Working in partnership with London Plus, we also delivered a lunchtime learning session at the London CVS Directors Network, and a session at the London Civil Society Infrastructure Forum, to raise awareness of the importance of introducing digital in infrastructure support offerings. Through these two workshops, we reached an additional 73 civil society leaders.

‘It’s generated a lot of goodwill and more interest as well’ comments Margaret Cooney.



Digital Leadership 101 session in Croydon

Increasing geographical access to digital support & resources

Outcome 4: Expanding our reach to other London boroughs and beyond.

Digital leadership remains an issue for small community organisations across the UK. For example, The Foundation for Social Improvement's 2019 National Skills Survey highlights that over one-third of civil society organisations felt there were skills gaps in social media and website development. But, specialist digital support isn't easily accessible.

'Organisations don't know where to go for trustworthy advice and information' comments Janine Edwards, Head of Business Development at The Foundation for Social Improvement.. *'There's difficulty in locating good quality objective advice'*.

We partnered with [London Plus](#), [The Foundation for Social Improvement \(FSI\)](#) and [National Association for Voluntary and Community Action \(NAVCA\)](#), to extend our reach for this innovative project. Our partners helped us promote the project widely, introducing us and the Digital Leadership 101 programme to more small community organisations across London and the UK.

We delivered across 12 additional boroughs we haven't previously been funded to deliver in.

Our partners also helped us reach new types of audiences in need of support. We noticed many small, but non-local, charities with a turnover of under £1million accessed our training for the first time. These organisations often share the support needs of small local charities, but aren't always members of CVSs, so don't necessarily hear about help that's available to them.

We wanted our resources to reach as many leaders as possible, including those in London who couldn't access sessions, and those across the UK. We also needed to make sure resources were relevant to small organisations.

'Lots of case studies are based on larger organisations with more resources; that can be unrealistic for smaller organisations,' says Margaret Cooney, CEO of LondonPlus. *'Small charities learn best from the experiences of other small charities – it's less intimidating'*

Drawing on our own networks and knowledge, alongside those of our partners, we created specialist support materials including 15 new factsheets and blogposts, to inspire, inform and motivate civil society leaders.

In collaboration with our partners, we identified small civil society organisations who have successfully implemented new digital ways of working, while overcoming the challenges that come with limited internal expertise and resources.

'In smaller organisations, more incremental changes can make a big difference' says Janine Edwards.

We created a series of written, audio and video case studies to highlight what's possible and share tips for success. In time, these will increase the reach of the project and give organisations different ways to access learning.

'When we did the event at the GLA – the case studies went down really well. It brings it all to life'. Margaret Cooney, CEO of LondonPlus.

Digital Leadership 101 - project legacy

'Digital can be a real turn off and terrifying,' says Margaret Cooney.

Leaders highlighted the need for more resources tailored to small organisations and increased practical support in implementing and embedding digital strategies.

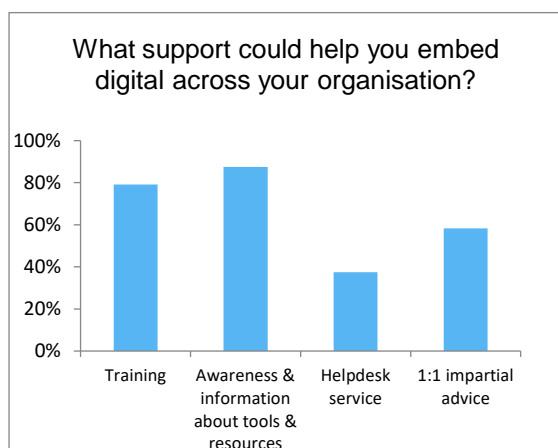
'Easy to understand information that makes digital less scary. Examples for small organisations.'

'Technical/digital skills to help train volunteers to gain confidence and experience in digital activities'

'In order to activate any of the above it would be helpful to be pointed in the direction of free and low-cost training and have a mentor that is available to discuss ideas.'

'Example digital strategy links to resources for training for staff, case studies apps and videos'

We conducted post-project evaluations with participants, and feedback indicates organisations need most support with...



We know that organisations valued the resources we created, and we're working with our partners to disseminate these widely.

The FSI will be integrating resources into their forthcoming Small Charities Week Big Advice Day, noting, *'it's a great opportunity in terms of taking the materials and giving a further legacy'*.

NAVCA will be sharing via their networks and a series of events around the country. *'I see this as part of a huge piece of work that we need to do nationally for CVSs and the local voluntary sector. Digital is massively important now, and it's going to become more and more important.'* Tom Watson, NAVCA

All resources developed, including our Conversation Starter Pack for trustee boards below, will be available at www.superhighways.org.uk/latest/digitalleadership101

Digital Leadership 101 Conversation Starter Pack

Instructions for using this conversation starter pack with your trustee boards or staff and volunteer teams on implementing the Charity Digital Code of Practice

- leadership
- users
- culture
- strategy
- skills
- risks & ethics
- adaptability

AGREE or DISAGREE

leadership

leadership

Our charity leaders are confident and motivated to use digital to achieve our mission

AGREE or DISAGREE



superhighways
harnessing technology for community benefit

Superhighways offers advice, training and IT support to help small charities and community organisations across London be more effective, raise their profile and demonstrate their impact using digital technology.

We delivered the Digital Leadership 101 programme during February and March 2019, in partnership with The FSI, NAVCA and LondonPlus.

We'd like to thank all of the small charities and community organisations that attended our Digital Leadership 101 workshops and contributed to our digital case study series.

We are also grateful to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for funding this work.

With thanks to Reetu Sood for compiling this report.