ARACHNE GREEK CYPRIOT WOMEN'S GROUP

Digital Inclusion Programme

Why did we take part in the digital inclusion programme?

◦isolation – a huge problem for many of our clients

◦worsened by digital exclusion

◦poorest and most vulnerable people increasingly marginalised

◦negative impacts on health and wellbeing

◦loss of social connectedness

◦loss of family connections

◦restricted access to services such as health, banking, council departments and shopping

Arachne's beneficiaries

- Over 65

- Many settled in the UK as part of Windrush generation or as refugee's following the invasion

- From rural communities, incomplete or no formal education but practical skill sets

- Digital innovations passed them by

- Disability and chronic long term illness

- Lower income groups

- English is a second language

Covid-19

- Magnified and accelerated pre-existing problems

- Struggling to access essential services

- Isolation escalated into depression and poor mental health

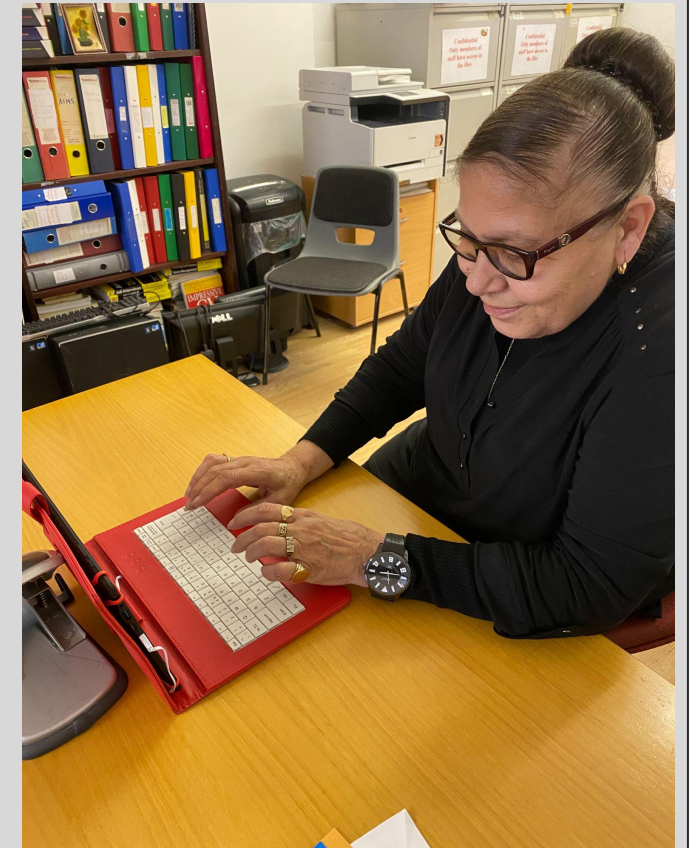# Digital Inclusion Barriers

- language and communication skills

- lack of resources (cost of internet and device)

- fear of using technology due to risks

- lack of confidence

- frustration and discouragement arising from mistakes

- lack of practice

Support we were able to provide as a result of the programme

- One to one support for different needs, interests and skill levels

- support tailored to their type of device

- learning, and repeating, at their own pace

- explanations in mother-tongue - Greek

- bitesize sessions with a focus on building confidence

- 'next step' support to develop and embed skills

- understanding the risks in the digital world

BENEFITS OF INCREASED DIGITAL INCLUSION SKILLS

Participants learned how to:

- More communication with family and friends via facebook, facetime and Whatsapp

- find information and access help with hobbies/interests

- identify and download Apps

- basic email skills, attaching documents, sending photo's

- accessing Greek newspapers, Greek TV, Greek music

- Health appointments - GP/Pharmacy

- use search engines such as google for health information

Additional advantages

- Skills learnt were invaluable during the second wave lockdown enabling clients to access welfare advice

- Participants were able to maintain stronger connections with family, friends, church etc during the subsequent lockdown

What's next?

- Ongoing support is needed to embed and develop digital skills

- Ongoing challenge to support people without access to their own internet or own device