

*‘Digital skills sit alongside literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as the essential platforms for lifelong learning.’
(Digital Strategy for Scotland 2017)*

Between January 2017 & December 2017, Falkirk Council’s Community Learning & Development Service (CLDS) worked with a wide range of partners including the Department of Work & Pensions, Libraries & Capability Scotland to deliver the provision of Digital Skills courses throughout the Falkirk area, thereby meeting the CLDS offer.

CLD OFFER: CLDS work with targeted young people & adults in a group setting to build their core skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence in order to be more effective in their personal, family, community and working lives. Central to this process is the voluntary engagement of the Individual.

Core skills are the ability to communicate, use numbers and ICT effectively in order to handle information, communicate with others, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems.

CLDS will do this through:

- Being Learner centred and basing the delivery on the needs of the individual
- Building on skills, knowledge & understanding the learner has already acquired
- Maximising the Individual’s learning through peer learning
- Encouraging critical reflection that recognises the individual’s progression & achievement
- Signposting to appropriate partner agencies in order that their learning and development needs can be further met

METHOD

- CLDS established a dedicated referral service with Local Job Centres.
- Staff from across CLDs actively promoted and signposted local people to Digital Skills provision.
- Robust and centralised Digital allocation system in place.
- Promotion of information regarding availability of classes.
- Digital Skills for Work (DSFW) classes delivered for unemployed people looking to develop their ICT skills to help them get back into work across 8 identified SIMD areas in Falkirk.
- Digital Skills for Life (DSFL) courses delivered in SIMD areas.
- Provided access to Flexible Learning opportunities aimed at encouraging self-directed learning.
- Individual learning plans in place for DSFW learners.
- Introduction of additional Digital Skills summer sessions.
- Dyslexia Awareness, Buddying & Equalities training to volunteers and staff.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 135 registrations for CLDS Digital Skills Provision.
- 31 Digital Skills classes delivered in 8 SIMD areas of Falkirk.
- 12 learners achieved Online Basics Qualification with British Computer Society (BCS).
- All learners reported the improvement of their ICT skills was having a positive impact on their lives.^(FIG 1)
- 48% increase in the number of learners participating in digital provision.
- Training delivered to staff, volunteers and ICT Adult Learning Forum to further build their capacity to support delivery of Digital Skills Provision.

NEXT STEPS

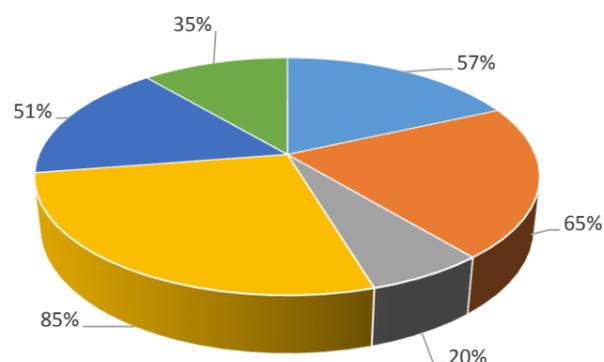
IN 2018 CLDS will:

- Continue to work with partners to improve data collection to inform planning & future work.
- Provide 50 students with the opportunity to complete a BCS qualification.
- Continue to provide CPD & Capacity Building opportunities for staff & volunteers, including the ICT Adult Forum.
- Introduce a blended learning environment to better meet the need of learners and reflect the changing digital & economic landscape.
- Improve progression pathway for learners to other Community Based Adult Learning Opportunities e.g. Health Issues in the Community.

RESULTS

**2017 Impact of Digital Skills Provision
Contributing to Single Outcome Local Delivery Plan**

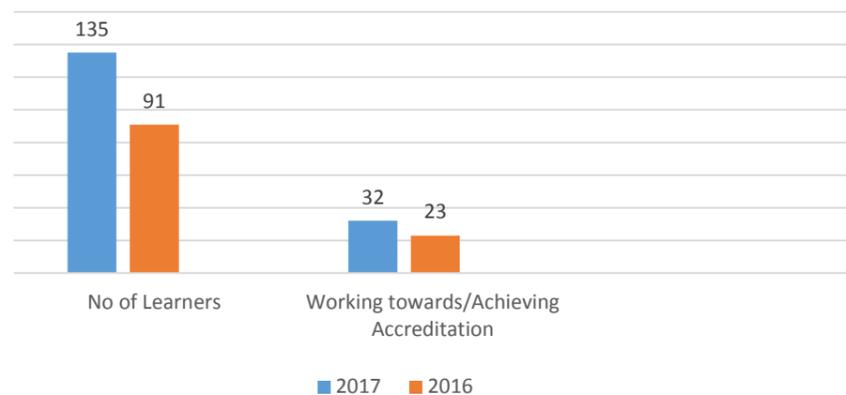
FIG 1



- Our area will be fairer & a more equal place to live
- We will grow our local economy to secure successful businesses, investment & employment
- Our children will develop into resilient, confident & successful adults
- Our population will be healthier
- People live full, independent & positive lives within supportive communities
- Our area will be a safe place to live

FIG 2

**Comparison of Learners
Participating in Accreditation**



CASE STUDY 1

From Cruddy to Study to Buddy

Cruddy

Ten years ago, the only time I ever used a computer was to either purchase geeky memorabilia on Amazon or play the latest video games, saving fictional worlds from an evil force. I never really bothered with learning the other aspects of a computer. This came back to bite me when I went to college, as all my assignments and projects were required to be completed on different Microsoft Office Packages. I didn't have a clue as to how to accomplish these tasks and my fellow students went out of their way to give me a hand. I was so cruddy that I actually became disinterested in my work.

Feeling like I was taking precious time away from my fellow students, I spoke to my course co-ordinator about receiving help and support on using Microsoft Office, who then booked a private tutor to help me. The tutor was less than helpful as she threw the book on the desk in front of me and said "Read that!" The book was full of jargon and lingo that I could not understand and when I asked for more hands on support, the response I got was "I haven't got time to babysit!"

Somehow I managed to get myself through college, but like some other college leavers I was unemployed and looking for work. When I first went to the Job Centre, I expressed my concerns to my advisor about typing a CV that would look presentable to potential employers. She then sign posted me to, what was then called 'Fast Track to Employment', a class for unemployed people who can gain the necessary I.T. Skills required to gain employment.

When a space became available and I got the phone call to ask for my attendance, I was elated. That excitement quickly turned to nerves as the day of the class approached. So many what-ifs were going around in my head: "What if I'm too slow?" "What if everyone laughs at me?" "What if everyone thinks, just because I'm young, I should know how to do this?"

Study

Nevertheless, I attended the class and I actually remember wanting to hide my face from everyone. I was initially scared of everyone and I didn't want to say too much to them. I very quickly realised that I wasn't there to be judged, thanks to the approachability and friendliness of the tutor and buddies. I left that day, wishing the class went on for longer and anxiously awaiting the next class with anticipation.

I was at the class for a few weeks and then I managed to attain full time employment, therefore I had to leave the class. Unfortunately, the job only lasted six weeks and due to the circumstances as to how the job ended, I was left feeling depressed and despondent. Amongst all of these feelings, I still wanted to return to the class; and after I put my name forward, I started to study again in order to get my mind off things.

Eventually I returned to the class and I started completing exercises for Microsoft Word, Excel and Access. I took to these exercises like a duck to water and my confidence grew. Because of this, I was able to help the other learners with their work. I became comfortable doing this Buddy and I decided to do it officially by becoming a buddy.

With becoming a buddy, I found out that I like to help and guide learners in the right direction. The class was very supportive of me in my new role and I still look forward to the class every week. The tutors and co-ordinators are also very supportive as I have been included in meetings and developmental training, even though I'm just a volunteer.

Nowadays I'm a buddy in two classes and I'm also currently waiting to start a class almost run by myself. I feel like I came through an incredible journey to get to where I am today and look on it with nostalgia fondly.

Eamon O'Donnell

