



**Digital Development Programme for Adult  
Community Education Providers (Digital ACE)**

# **Digital Support of Low Skilled Learners Guidance Materials**

**Guidance on how best to determine an online offer which enables  
providers to engage and induct learners with low level skills**

## Contents

|                                                                                    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction .....                                                              | 3  |
| 2. The scope and aims of the strand.....                                           | 3  |
| 3. How to use these guidance materials .....                                       | 4  |
| 4. Barriers to digital learning for low skilled learners.....                      | 4  |
| 5. Induction, information, advice and guidance (IAG), and initial assessment ..... | 8  |
| 6. Engagement .....                                                                | 9  |
| 7. Teaching, learning and support .....                                            | 12 |
| 8. Summary of key points .....                                                     | 14 |
| 9. 10 Tips from the sector for the sector .....                                    | 15 |
| 10. Thanks and acknowledgements .....                                              | 16 |
| 11. References and Links.....                                                      | 17 |
| 12. Annex list - Good practice examples/templates for you to adopt and adapt...    | 22 |
| 13. Case Studies .....                                                             | 23 |

## 1. Introduction

This document is one of six guidance documents produced for the Digital ACE programme. The six guidance areas for digital development include Policy, Safeguarding & Prevent, Developing Materials & Resources, Quality Assurance, Supporting Low Skilled Learners and Underpinning Technology. See the Reference/links section of this document for [additional strand information](#).

The guidance has been drafted to help providers develop their approaches to delivering online or blended learning programmes to low skilled learners. The project aims to provide guidance materials, training and support which will help providers develop their digital capability and enhance their offer so that it meets the specific contexts of their local provision in line with a national high-quality approach.

To provide insight into the issues facing adult and community learning (ACL) services, institutions, colleges and centres, HOLEX undertook a baseline survey in May 2020 (See [Link 1](#)). This showed that delivering online ACL provision to learners with low level skills requires providers to consider the additional barriers that these learners may face and how to overcome them. For some providers, establishing contact with existing and new learners and developing remote programmes is very challenging, due to the low levels of skills and lack of self-confidence of the learners in these target groups.

Online community learning can be especially challenging because of the high number of entry level learners and their low levels of skills and confidence. Engaging learners for low level English language or basic skills courses also presents challenges because many potential learners may lack the skills to access online learning. Other learners already experience multiple barriers to learning and their lack of digital skills and confidence therefore creates yet more barriers to learning remotely for them.

Research into digital motivation by Good Things Foundation with support from BT (See [Link 2](#)) found high correlation between people who thought the internet was not for them with those who are not “very” confident about their literacy, as well as with people who left education at or under the age of 16 and those with a low income. These guidance materials have been developed by ACL providers who are developing effective approaches that tackle these challenges and issues and have enabled them to meet the needs of their low skilled learners so that they can benefit from online learning.

**Link 1:** [Ufi/HOLEX Digital ACE survey report May 2020](#)

**Link 2:** Research into digital motivation.  
[https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/digital\\_motivations\\_final.pdf](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/digital_motivations_final.pdf)

## 2. The scope and aims of the strand

### 2.1. Who do we mean by low skilled learners?

In the context of remote and online learning this includes:

- people with little experience of using digital technology and have low or no IT skills and confidence

- ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) learners at entry and pre-entry levels
- learners at entry and pre-entry levels
- learners with learning disabilities
- vulnerable learners who lack the confidence to access online learning.

The aims of this strand of the Digital ACE project are to supply providers with enough information to get started on developing a digital offer for low skilled learners and to support those who have already started in refining their offer and widening its scope.

The guidance also provides links to more in-depth examples of how providers have developed their provision and approaches.

### 3. How to use these guidance materials

These materials have been produced for providers to use within their service and, as appropriate, with their staff. Each guidance document is supplemented with a webinar which, although recorded live, is available for download. The guide offers advice and tips from other ACE providers and links to relevant resources.

Each guidance document is supplemented with a webinar, originally broadcast live and now available to watch online (see **Link 3** below).

**Link 3:** [Recording of Digital ACE Supporting Low Skilled Learners webinar](#)

**Note:** Throughout this guidance, there is reference to platforms, apps and software, such as Zoom, Google Classrooms (GSuite) and Teams. Where these are highlighted as per these examples here, please refer to the [References and Links](#) section of this document for links to the relevant websites.

## 4. Barriers to digital learning for low skilled learners

### 4.1. Increasing learners' motivation, confidence and digital skills

Using the internet and online platforms safely and solving problems with the technology are often significant barriers to low skilled learners engaging in online courses and are the first priority for many providers.

#### 4.1.1. What you need to consider

Like any change, it takes time and practice for some people to start to embrace online learning. You may therefore need to consider:

- reducing anxiety by embedding digital skills into other learning and offer lots of support with using the technology
- that learners may have more digital knowledge than they realise and use social media but not consider this as online

- that learners need different ground rules and study skills for remote learning.

**Annex 1:** [Checklist for ground rules for online learning](#)

**Annex 2:** [Checklist for study skills for online learning](#)

#### 4.1.2. Advice and tips

- Keep in touch with learners to encourage re-engagement.
- Invest the time to build their confidence in online learning.
- Focus on everyday use of IT as an entry point or offer relaxing activity to get people using technology.
- Find ways to describe the digital activities that people can relate to and reach them using the channels they are comfortable with such as WhatsApp or Facebook.
- Provide support in as many different formats as possible, including simple documents, a help desk or phone line, making simple videos, sending links, having one-to-one support available etc.
- Make the language in written guidance on accessing online learning technology simple, using lots of visuals and symbols.
- Involve additional staff, volunteers or family members in initial sessions.
- Ground rules must be set at the start of online learning and these will be different to classroom ground rules, such as turn taking, muting, raising hands, information regarding recording of sessions, staying safe online etc.
- Learners, and some tutors, need guidance about remote learning study skills, such as finding a quiet space/time, appropriate settings, clothing etc.

#### 4.1.3. Examples of successful practice

##### 1. Some providers start with less formal learning

This can be activity to support learners' well-being and to engage them and build confidence. Some add a session 'Zero', comprising course information, and support to get started with online learning.

**Example:** Start with an hour's chat session which learners can join at any point. This can remove the pressure for learners who may have to overcome initial technical issues and then be worried that they may not be joining the session at the specified start time. The learners can contact the tutor via phone for support with any technical difficulties.

##### 2. Provide support in different formats on how to get online.

Several providers produce simple 'how to' guidance and contact learners directly to offer support. Some offer drop-in sessions and one-to-one support.

**Link 4:** Support videos from the WEA <https://www.wea.org.uk/help>

### **3. Expand the range of people who can offer digital support**

Learners can support and encourage their friends to have a try as they gain confidence themselves. Some providers use staff as 'Tech Buddies' to support in the first session or they use volunteers through services such as Lloyds Digital Champions or Digital Unite. Mencap is training digital champions, including people with learning disabilities and other volunteers.

**Link 5:** Lloyds Digital Champions (on the use of volunteers).  
<https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media/digital-insight/digital-champions-framework/>

**Link 6:** Digital Unite – <https://www.digitalunite.com/> (on the use of volunteers).

### **4.2. Issues: Accessing equipment, connectivity and a place to learn.**

The range of software and equipment available to learners varies considerably. Many people have smart phones but not necessarily other suitable equipment for learning. Issues with data, connectivity speed, reliability and cost can also cause problems. Their home learning environment and circumstances, such as childcare responsibilities or the need to share equipment with family members, may also hinder their learning.

#### **4.2.1. What you need to consider**

- Learners are likely to have a wide range of devices and platforms.
- Learners may not always have the most up to date versions of software or working cameras, audio etc.
- Tutors need to consider this when preparing materials and live classes and identify what can be delivered via phones and basic tablets.
- There may be financial implications if learners are using data on their own phones.

#### **4.2.2. Advice and tips**

- Seek funding or sources of support for additional equipment and connectivity for learners.
- Bench test materials and activities across platforms to ensure they are accessible on all devices.
- If learners are using phones, then your text needs to be simple and in font 20 minimum.
- If you are presenting a lesson with text, what you may see on your laptop is not how learners may see it and the exercises may be too small for your learners to read. Pictures and simple symbols work well.
- One-to-one sessions can be used to discuss problems with internet connection and access as learners may not admit to struggling in a group class.

- Sessions could be delivered differently. Blended approaches might be used such as recording activity on **YouTube** and sending it out as work to learners to complete within the week, with optional weekly **Zoom** sessions.

### 4.2.3. Examples of successful practice

Some providers have provided tablets or laptops to learners with data allowances. There may be funding for hard to reach learners through Good Things Foundation (see **Link 7**) including kit and connectivity for the most in need.

#### **Case study: Building learners' confidence**

At **Buckinghamshire Adult Learning**, a tutor working with anxious learners with low level digital skills in a remote learning context, successfully led them to confidence and success, using a 3-pronged response:

Reassurance and expectation setting

Starting with learners existing knowledge

Providing extra support.

This led to learners' successfully completing their courses and increasing their confidence.

**See Case study 1:** [Working with learners with low level digital skills in a remote learning setting](#) at **Buckinghamshire Adult Learning** for further details.

#### **Case study: ESOL learners' progress** was measured using **Socrative**.

At **Barnsley MBC**, ESOL classes started with an informal online chat session, followed by more structured interactive sessions. Final assessments measured learners' progress using **Socrative**.

**See Case study 2:** [Engaging learners who have low confidence and low self-esteem to continue their learning during the lockdown period](#) at **Barnsley MBC Adult Skills and Community Learning** for further details.

#### **Case study: Online modules for Maths and English**

**Bristol Community Learning** has created videos, interactive modules, quizzes and other tools to help guide learners through the Functional Skills curriculum. It also offers modules covering employability and digital learning topics

Functional Skills online videos, interactive modules, quizzes and other tools to help guide learners through the Functional Skills curriculum, with additional modules on employability and digital learning.

See **Link 8** for more information.

**Link 7:** <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/devicesdotnow> on funding for equipment or connectivity.

**Link 8:** <https://bristolskills.co.uk/>

## 5. Induction, information, advice and guidance (IAG), and initial assessment

**Issues:** IAG and initial assessment may need to be offered remotely. Induction needs to include the digital skills needed for both remote and blended learning.

### 5.1. What you need to consider

- Learners may be very reluctant to say they are struggling or are on the wrong level, so establishing starting points and making sure that they are on the right course is crucial.
- They also need to know that you can provide the right support and learning for them.

### 5.2. Advice and tips

- Make it clear to learners that you are checking their subject learning and not their IT skills, so they can ask for help with IT issues.
- Keep initial assessment friendly and supportive.
- Use a combination of questions through email or via a platform and more personal contact by phone or video.
- Have a phone support line for back up and tech support with a named contact, if possible.
- Include digital learning skills in induction sessions, either remotely or through blended approaches.
- Offer pre-course practice sessions using your platforms.

### 5.3. Examples of successful practice

- Providers have used existing assessments like **BKSB** or devised their own using **Google forms**, and various learning platforms, such as **Canvas**.
- Some providers are planning face-to-face induction for all learners, such as 2 hours in small groups, including an introduction to digital skills.
- Most providers offer a choice of online, phone or video call or they follow up initial contacts by phone.
- **Example:** Pre-Entry online ESOL Assessments followed by phone calls in Manchester (see **Annex 3** and **Link 9**).

**Annex 3:** Manchester Adult Education Service's [remote initial assessment processes](#) for pre-entry ESOL learners.

**Link 9:** <https://manchesteresol.org/how-you-can-join-a-class/> on enrolling learners.

## 6. Engagement

### 6.1. Engaging new learners

How to reach new low skilled learners online.

#### 6.1.1. Advice and tips

- Replicate face-to-face activities through remote approaches.
- Hold an online Open Day via social media or a Facebook live session.
- Work with partners who can refer learners, such as Jobcentre Plus, who refer lower level learners or library partners who host Facebook live sessions.
- Use a variety of digital approaches, using different platforms.
- Take a blended approach. Deliver some sessions initially through appropriate venues for lower skilled learners, then move to online delivery.
- Offer free informal activity, such as one-off online learning sessions to engage new learners to try learning in a safe and fun environment.
- Allow learners to engage appropriately at different stages of their confidence. Online learning is a progressive personal journey for learners.
- Be honest about what you are offering. Be prepared to answer questions from learners and their families if they are anxious and get to know their needs.

#### 6.1.2. Examples of successful practice

**Promoting courses:** Providers use a wide range of tools including Facebook posts, Twitter, Facebook Live, Instagram, Google, email, YouTube in creative ways alongside other media for marketing, promotion and advertising campaigns (see [Link 10](#)).

Activities include: Open Days, targeted ads, engaging people with useful tips on everyday topics, social media challenges, displays of learners' work and videos, such as the ones below.

**Blended approaches** can be used to engage priority groups of learners, such as small socially distanced face-to-face session with community partners to recruit learners.

Some providers deliver a **mixed model**. The tutor delivers remotely while other staff or partners are present in the classroom. Paperwork is posted or emailed to learners.

Some providers set up cameras in the classrooms. They offer a mixed face-to-face and live streamed class to small groups from within a wider class. Learners attend on a rota basis, such as every three weeks.

Some partners' staff have set up video conferencing in centres for groups of learners with learning difficulties. Libraries may also offer to facilitate video conferencing for groups.

**Link 10:** <https://www.facebook.com/watch/InspireLearningSkills/276927999982204/>  
online learning videos on Facebook (Inspire Learning). *Note that you will need a Facebook account to access.*

## **6.2. Engaging existing learners**

Engaging learners who have low skills and confidence to continue their learning supports their progress and their mental wellbeing. This is particularly important for some of the most vulnerable learners.

### **6.2.1. What you need to consider**

- Learners with low skills, including ESOL learners, can struggle to engage effectively in remote learning.
- Learners may need support for their mental and physical wellbeing as well as for their learning and skills.
- Tutors require confidence with all the digital platforms you are using, which could be more work for them.

### **6.2.2. Advice and tips**

- Experiment with different ways of teaching and learning to encourage learners to interact.
- Reassure learners by letting them engage appropriately, according to their different levels of confidence.
- Online learners can interact in different ways: watching, typing, speaking, and sharing, so adapt to support them.
- Using a variety of platforms helps increase engagement. Start with anything that is familiar to the learner or family member and gradually move them towards other platforms, via the technology they are confident with.
- Set up activities to encourage people to ‘click around and find solutions.’ Plan activities for learners to do whilst others are getting help.
- Some learners may already have some IT skills but learning online requires more than IT skills. The first engagement in online learning can be very empowering for learners, opening up a new world.
- Ensure that learners check their emails regularly for updates.
- Reinforce messages and announcements through other means, such as WhatsApp. Learners may receive emails and notifications from different parts of the organisation, learning platform, tutors etc. They need to know what to expect.
- Build in social time and ways for learners to learn from each other and keep in touch, by phone, text or social media etc.
- Use the skills of your staff and volunteers flexibly. For example, utilise bi-lingual staff to contact pre-entry or low level ESOL learners to help them get online and understand what they need to do.

### 6.2.3. Examples of successful practice

**Timing and format of sessions may need to be flexible.** There are different models which allow learners to study at their own pace or in their own time such as:

- online sessions scheduled each week to suit learners
- learning is delivered flexibly, with no set timetable
- recorded courses which are accessible any time are good for engaging some learners.

These can be standalone sessions or pre-class work, recorded on YouTube for ESOL and Functional Skills to enable them to prepare for group sessions. Some providers have posted learning packs, with follow-up support from learning support assistants (LSAs).

#### **Deliver a mix of wellbeing, fun and formal learning.**

- Engaging learners with learning disabilities online, through intensive one-to-one support, reassurance and gentle steps with support from staff and family, leading to learners joining groups in their own time.
- Fun courses, with games using short video clips on their phone to create exercises.

#### **Case study: Learners using Google Classroom, Google Meet and ESOL Nexus**

At **Buckinghamshire Adult Learning**, learners at Entry 1 used Google Classroom and Google Meets that had been adapted for learners who used smart phones. Learning materials were also emailed or posted, as required.

Pre-Entry learners used ESOL Nexus resources and Google Meets for a weekly coffee morning to consolidate online learning and practise their speaking and listening skills. Other learners received work packs posted every week.

See **Case study 3: [Pre-entry and entry level ESOL for learners with limited digital skills](#)** at **Buckinghamshire Adult Learning** for more information.

**Case study:** At **Barnsley MBC**, ESOL classes started with an informal online chat session, followed by more structured interactive sessions. Final assessments measured learners' progress using 'Socrative'.

See **Case study 4: [Engaging reluctant ESOL learners in online delivery sessions](#)** at **Barnsley MBC Adult Skills and Community Learning** for further information.

#### **Case study: Employment courses**

Mencap's employment courses for learners with learning disabilities successfully transferred to online. Intensive individual support and focus on wellbeing enabled learners to engage at their own pace.

See **Case study 5: [Remote delivery of employment programme for learners with learning disabilities](#)** at **Mencap** for further information.

## 7. Teaching, learning and support

Online and blended provision needs to be developed across curriculum areas to meet the needs of low skilled learners. All learners need some digital skills to be able to access any online learning course.

### 7.1.1. What to consider

- **Digital Skills.** Learners' levels of ability in digital skills will vary considerably. Low digital skills don't necessarily correspond with low skill levels in other areas. There are many good examples of developing learners' generic digital skills and you can supplement these with bespoke support using specific platforms.
- **Courses need to be adapted from the classroom-based model.** Concentration online is much shorter. For example, 1.5 hours is an optimum length for a creative session. Online sessions may become too tutor-led, as pair and group activities are more difficult to get started. It is harder to engage reluctant speakers and for tutors to pick up on non-understanding or lack of engagement online. Some practical subjects are easier to adapt online than others.
- Learners need good **information on their progress** to avoid feeling lost as a screen closes at the end of a session or course.
- Make sure all the **staff are confident to support digital learning**. The Education & Training Foundation offer free training that is useful for all staff not just tutors (see **Link 11**).

**Link 11:** <https://enhance.etfoundation.co.uk/EDS> for the Essential Digital Skills (EDS) professional development programme.

Other training is available, such as in **Google Classrooms** and websites that provide specific tools to help tutors. (See further references and links [here](#)).

### 7.1.2. Advice and tips

- Use non-accredited modules or Digital Entitlement qualifications for the underpinning skills for online learning. Consider dual delivery with IT and ESOL staff.
- Recognise learners' frustration barrier, and at that point, remove pressure on them by being flexible. Differentiate how a learner can demonstrate their learning. One-to-one contact, separate from taught sessions, helps tutors to assess learners' need and provide them the appropriate support.
- Use freely available online resources. (See [Free Resources](#) below for full list)
- Provide links to useful online learning resources and support advice on your website.
- Pre-record learning activities to prepare for sessions and share them via YouTube.
- Pre-recording the tutor's voice and face enables learners to relate to them more readily, even if the content is short and simple.
- Record learning sessions so that learners can review them in their own time.

- Breakout rooms and one-to-one support are important for the learners. They like to be able to message the tutor. Using breakout rooms for group activities provides good opportunities for tutors to check learning. Use LSAs flexibly in group and pair work and outside the class.
- Tutors need to strip back their planning and focus on 1 or 2 learning objectives. Time should also be planned for breaks. Allow longer for tutors to plan and deliver effective online learning. Large online classes can be difficult to manage.
- Feedback on work does not always need to be written. Tutors can provide voice clips and send them to learners.
- For marking of writing activities, learners can take photos of their work and email or WhatsApp them to their tutors for marking. There are tools to assist with this. Such as **Kami** (see **Link 12**).

#### **Advice and tips for upskilling tutors**

- There is a lot of training regarding how to use online platforms but less training to support tutors with the actual delivery of learning and specific pedagogical skills.
- This is why time and space need to be given for tutors to share tips, ideas, materials and best practise. Team teaching and online peer observations can also assist with this.
- Make sure tutors have support from other staff/ volunteers at the start of courses.
- Digital training, peer-learning, buddying and trialling is vital for tutors to feel supported and confident in delivering creative courses online.

**Link 12:** Kami - <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/kami-extension-pdf-and-do/ecnphlgnajanjncmbpancdjoidceilk?hl=en>

### **7.1.3. Examples of successful practice**

#### **Case study: Blended ESOL courses**

At **Idea Store Learning, Tower Hamlets Council**, learners were contacted by WhatsApp, phone and email. Instructional videos on YouTube in English and Bengali enabled them to join the courses. Courses were a blend of live online sessions and recorded materials which were shared in multiple ways.

Pre-recorded materials were used to prepare learners for discussion sessions, supplemented by phone and postal contact for those unable to go online.

Tutors supported peers to gain confidence in teaching this way through training videos, staff forum and sharing good practice.

**See Case study 6:** [Delivery of online learning to ESOL, Literacy and Maths basic skills](#) at **Idea Store Learning, Tower Hamlets Council** for more information.

### **Case study: Developing creative arts through online learning – Creation in Isolation**

At Adult Learning, **Norfolk County Council**, online creative arts courses span dressmaking, drawing, painting and creative writing for predominantly older learners with limited digital skills. “Creation in Isolation” courses focused on wellbeing for at risk and socially isolated people.

Creative tasters and short courses were delivered through **Zoom** and **Padlet**. Tutors use learners’ home and surroundings for the context of these initial learning activities. For example, they asked learners to use what they could see in their home or outside the window etc. The service is piloting creative online courses for drug and alcohol recovery and wellbeing using art packs and Zoom that can be accessed via a mobile.

**See Case study 7: [Virtual creative arts delivery](#) at Adult Learning, Norfolk County Council** for more information.

### **Case study: Short pre-entry online sessions for Syrian refugees**

At **Norfolk County Council**, the Syrian Refugee Project held short online sessions (40mins) for pre-entry learners, using loaned laptops and supplied connectivity. The tutors were supported by LSAs to run paired and one-to-one activity in breakout rooms. Simple initial joining instructions were provided with Arabic translation.

**See Case study 8: [Online delivery to entry and pre-entry low skilled learners with low level digital skills](#)** at **Adult Learning, Norfolk County Council** for more information.

### **Case study: Learners using Zoom and Canvas, including for their speaking and listening exams**

At the **WEA**, accredited Entry level ESOL courses used Zoom and Canvas. Learners used their phones or tablets to join Zoom for group discussions and they shared their screen for pictures or photos.

ESOL learners at all levels starting from Entry 1 were able to use Canvas to complete written work and record their progress.

Speaking and listening exams were held at all Entry levels and were recorded via Zoom, with good pass rates.

**Pre-entry level learners successfully used Zoom via their phones.**

**See Case study 9: [Using Zoom and Canvas with Entry and Pre-Entry ESOL learners](#)** at **WEA** for more information.

## **8. Summary of key points**

It can take time and lots of support for low skilled learners to engage in online learning, but ACL providers have found ways to make it successful and rewarding for the learners. It’s very empowering for learners. The first engagement in online learning can open up a new world.

### What success looks like:

- ✓ **Inclusive learning** with all learners able to engage and feel included in online learning.
- ✓ **High levels of attendance**, engagement and active participation in online sessions.
- ✓ **Increased confidence and self-esteem** displayed by learners.
- ✓ **Learners requesting more** online learning and progressing.
- ✓ **Tutors feeling more confident in their own skills**, showing enthusiasm and wanting to share best practice and support one another.
- ✓ **Tutors can identify and monitor that learners are making progress** in their subjects. Achievement rates are high.
- ✓ **Learners at all levels are sharing their skills** and supporting their peers to engage in online learning.
- ✓ **Any problems accessing remote learning have been resolved and support is available.**

## 9. 10 Tips from the sector for the sector

1. **Adapt your delivery approaches to suit your learners.** Be flexible in the way you deliver online and your use of technology.
2. **Make people feel comfortable and safe with online learning.** Provide opportunities for one-to-one discussion to reassure people. Offer flexible and friendly support to learners in different ways and be clear about when support is available.
3. **Offer pre-course sessions to go through essential skills of online learning.** Provide joining information in simple language on paper, by video and by phone. Be patient.
4. **Adapt your teaching approaches for online** – length, amount of content, visuals, methods of assessment. Have clear messages so learners know what to expect and what actions to take.
5. **Create videos for both in class and additional work**, including practical elements and demonstrations so learners can access them freely.
6. **Develop ground rules and basic study skills** for on-line learning to reassure learners.
7. **Develop the skills of all staff and volunteers** and use them flexibly to support learners and other staff. You could create new volunteer or paid roles of Digital Champions or Tech Buddies. Train LSAs to support online.
8. **Adapt your approaches for different learners.** Remove pressure on learners by differentiating assessment. One-to-one contact, separate from taught sessions, helps tutors to assess need and support learners.

9. **Build in opportunities to create a community through less formal activity,** discussions, chats and social interactions. Use social media to engage people through fun and interesting short activities.
10. **Don't underestimate your learners' potential to engage in online learning!** Work with the positive. 'Everyone can do something; find out what that is and work from there'.

## 10. Thanks and acknowledgements

This strand was led by Sarah Howarth, Senior Delivery Manager at the WEA. Thanks are given to the following people from the sector who were generous with their time, thoughts and documents:

| Name                 | Role                                                                          | Organisation                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Amanda Olley         | Interim Principal                                                             | Kingston Adult Education                             |
| Andrew Clarke        | Quality and Learning Manager                                                  | Tameside MBC                                         |
| Amanda Cooper        | Learning Coordinator ICT Qualifications                                       | Adult Education in Gloucestershire                   |
| Diane Cooper-Ramsden | Skills and Qualifications Manager                                             | Barnsley Adult Skills and Community Learning         |
| Garry Nicholson      | Adult Learning and Skills Manager                                             | Westgate Community College, Newcastle City Learning  |
| Harris, Will         | Acting ICT Curriculum Manager                                                 | York Learning                                        |
| Heather Simms        | English Tutor/ Quality Coordinator                                            | Bucks Adult Learning                                 |
| Isobel Thomas        | Digital Social Inclusion Manager                                              | Good Things Foundation                               |
| James Bruton         | Team Leader Digital Learning                                                  | Community Learning West                              |
| Joseph Burns         | Lead Tutor Functional Skills                                                  | Stockton Borough Council Learning and Skills Service |
| Leanne Chandler      | Skills for Life Programme Manager                                             | Idea Store Learning, London Borough of Tower Hamlets |
| Mark Townsend        | Area Manager                                                                  | Newham Adult Learning Service LBN                    |
| Nicky Reed           | Adult Learning Manager                                                        | Inspire Culture, Nottinghamshire                     |
| Sara McCann          | Curriculum and Quality Manager                                                | Newham Adult Learning Service LBN                    |
| Val Gilchrist        | Curriculum Manager for Employability, Neighbourhood Learning & Digital Skills | Redbridge Institute                                  |
| Yasmeen Hussain      | Education Co-ordinator                                                        | The WEA                                              |

## 10.1. Additional thanks for sharing good practice to:

- Mencap
- Adult Learning, Norfolk County Council
- Manchester MAES and ESOL Advice Service
- Bromley Adult Education College
- Sutton College

## 11. References and Links

### 11.1. Summary of links within this document

**Link 1:** [Ufi/HOLEX Digital ACE survey report May 2020](#)

**Link** Research into digital motivation.

**2** [https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/digital\\_motivations\\_final.pdf](https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/digital_motivations_final.pdf)

**Link 3:** [Recording of Digital ACE Supporting Low Skilled Learners webinar](#)

**Link 4:** Support videos from the WEA <https://www.wea.org.uk/help>

**Link 5:** Lloyds Digital Champions (on the use of volunteers).  
<https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media/digital-insight/digital-champions-framework/>

**Link 6:** Digital Unite – <https://www.digitalunite.com/> (on the use of volunteers).

**Link 7:** <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/devicesdotnow> on funding for equipment or connectivity.

**Link 8:** <https://bristolskills.co.uk/>

**Link 9:** <https://manchesteresol.org/how-you-can-join-a-class/> on enrolling learners.

**Link 10:** <https://www.facebook.com/watch/InspireLearningSkills/276927999982204/> online learning videos on face book (Inspire Learning). *Note that you will need a Facebook account to access.*

**Link 11:** <https://enhance.etfoundation.co.uk/EDS> for the Essential Digital Skills (EDS) professional development programme

**Link 12:** Kami - <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/kami-extension-pdf-and-do/ecnphlgnajanjnkcmbpancdjoidceilk?hl=en>

## **11.2. Research**

### **11.2.1. Help with digital skills and accessing online learning**

Downloadable copies of digital support materials - Bristol Skills: Follow this link - <https://communitylearningwest.net/teaching-resources/>

Link to videos for support WEA <https://www.wea.org.uk/help>

### **11.2.2. Support for materials and equipment**

Funding for hard to reach learners through Good Things Foundation – <https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/>.

[devicesdotnow](#) is part of Good Things Foundation coronavirus emergency response in partnership with <https://futuredotnow.uk/devicesdotnow/> to get kit and connectivity to the most in need.

### **11.2.3. Free resources**

DfE The Skills Toolkit has a summary of basic free online courses <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/the-skills-toolkit#introductory>

Free remote mini courses are offered by The Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, (IDEA) develop digital, enterprise and employability skills. [www.idea.org.uk](http://www.idea.org.uk) .

Good Things Foundation has resources for people at lower levels which can be accessed on different devices <https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/> website has lots of useful resources including guides for supporting different groups of people to develop digital skills that are available free.

Basic digital subjects <https://www.learnmyway.com/subjects>

Guides and checklists <https://www.learnmyway.com/help-someone-else>

## **11.3. Teaching Materials**

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/resources-list-for-home-learning>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

<https://www.englishlanguage.org.nz/hub/teaching-resources/topic-worksheets/> -

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/>

<https://en.islcollective.com/video-lessons/>

#### 11.4. Platforms, apps and software that are highlighted within the document

As per the notes on how to use these guidance materials, various platforms, apps and software, such as Zoom, and GSuite have been highlighted throughout the document. The relevant links to these are included below.

| Platform/app/software | Link                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| YouTube               | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/">https://www.youtube.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Facebook              | <a href="https://en-gb.facebook.com/">https://en-gb.facebook.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Facebook Live         | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/facebook-live">https://www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/facebook-live</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| WhatsApp              | <a href="https://www.whatsapp.com/?lang=en">https://www.whatsapp.com/?lang=en</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Twitter               | <a href="https://twitter.com/">https://twitter.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Instagram             | <a href="https://about.instagram.com/">https://about.instagram.com/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Canvas                | <a href="https://www.instructure.com/canvas/en-gb">https://www.instructure.com/canvas/en-gb</a> (Learning Platform)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Socrative             | <a href="https://www.socrative.com/">https://www.socrative.com/</a> (good for assessments).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Zoom                  | <a href="https://Zoom.us/">https://Zoom.us/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| G-Suite               | <a href="https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/">https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/</a><br>An integrated suite of secure, cloud-native collaboration and productivity apps powered by Google AI. Includes Google Classroom, Meet, Docs, Slides, Sheets, Drive, Jamboard, Mail, Chat, Keep, Calendar, Assignments and Forms.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Google Forms          | <a href="https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/forms/?modal_active=none">https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/forms/?modal_active=none</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Google classroom      | <a href="https://edu.google.com/products/classroom/?modal_active=none">https://edu.google.com/products/classroom/?modal_active=none</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Google Meet           | <a href="https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/meet/?modal_active=none">https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/meet/?modal_active=none</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Google Forum          | <b>Forums</b> allow groups of people with similar interests to collaborate and work together online. If you want to create a <b>forum</b> in <b>Google</b> , you can, but only through <b>Google</b> Groups. Google Groups allows you to create and participate in online forums and email-based groups with a rich experience for community conversations. Learn more about Google Groups here - <a href="https://support.google.com/groups/?hl=en#topic=9216">https://support.google.com/groups/?hl=en#topic=9216</a> |
| Google Drive          | <a href="https://www.google.com/intl/en_zm/drive/">https://www.google.com/intl/en_zm/drive/</a> <b>Google Drive</b> is a <u>file storage</u> and synchronization service developed by Google., Google Drive allows users to store files on their servers, synchronize files across devices, and share files.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Microsoft TEAMS       | <a href="https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software">https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software</a><br>How to schedule a meeting - <a href="https://youtu.be/0O1Wr540CoE">https://youtu.be/0O1Wr540CoE</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Platform/app/software   | Link                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | More Detail – schedule a meeting - <a href="https://youtu.be/0sLJDs5AaqQ">https://youtu.be/0sLJDs5AaqQ</a>                                                                                                                                                             |
|                         | Hosting a Teams meeting - <a href="https://youtu.be/UxQUMmQvYWY">https://youtu.be/UxQUMmQvYWY</a>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| How to create resources | <a href="https://en.islcollective.com/video-lessons/">https://en.islcollective.com/video-lessons/</a>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Padlet                  | <a href="https://en-gb.padlet.com/">https://en-gb.padlet.com/</a> (use to share materials and resources)                                                                                                                                                               |
| Screen Castify          | <a href="https://www.screencastify.com/">https://www.screencastify.com/</a> (records the screen so that tutors can create pre-recorded materials)                                                                                                                      |
| Mote                    | <a href="https://www.justmote.me/">https://www.justmote.me/</a> (transcribes voice comments, multilingual)                                                                                                                                                             |
| Kami                    | <a href="https://www.kamiapp.com/">https://www.kamiapp.com/</a> (use to mark work)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Pear Deck               | <a href="https://www.peardeck.com/googleslides">https://www.peardeck.com/googleslides</a> (a presentation tool for Google Slides)                                                                                                                                      |
| Flip Grid               | <a href="https://info.flipgrid.com/">https://info.flipgrid.com/</a> (can help to facilitate video discussions between learners)                                                                                                                                        |
| Cam Scanner             | <a href="https://www.camscanner.com/">https://www.camscanner.com/</a> (to scan work through your phone)                                                                                                                                                                |
| Bramble                 | <a href="https://about.bramble.io/">https://about.bramble.io/</a> (good to record S&L)                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Jam board               | <a href="https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/products/jamboard/">https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/products/jamboard/</a> (interactive sharing tool)                                                                                                           |
| BKSB                    | <a href="https://www.bksb.co.uk/">https://www.bksb.co.uk/</a> (Functional Skills and GCSE initial assessment)                                                                                                                                                          |
| ESOL Nexus              | <a href="https://esol.britishcouncil.org/">https://esol.britishcouncil.org/</a> (ESOL materials)                                                                                                                                                                       |
| SmartSurvey             | <a href="https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/">https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/</a> SmartSurvey is a UK-based provider of digital survey solutions. The service offers a 14-day free trial, <i>after which there is a charge</i> . (Referenced in Annex 3).                    |
| Powerpoint              | <a href="https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/what-is-powerpoint-5f9cc860-d199-4d85-ad1b-4b74018acf5b">https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/what-is-powerpoint-5f9cc860-d199-4d85-ad1b-4b74018acf5b</a>                                                    |
| Graphics Tablet         | A <b>graphics tablet</b> is a flat surface on which you draw with a stylus or a pen-like device. The <b>tablet</b> is attached to the computer and the stylus to the <b>tablet</b> . The tablets capture the image as data which is then stored as a file or document. |

### 11.5. Link to useful resources on HOLEX member websites

<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/online/virtual-world/learning/>

### 11.6. Provider created materials

Functional and Digital skills. Free semi-interactive videos. All the content on this site was created as part of a DfE scheme and is available to download, copy or alter

under creative commons. All of the interactive elements are also available as SCORM modules. - Bristol Skills: <https://bristolskills.co.uk/>

### **11.7. Training for staff**

- [Enhance Digital Teaching Platform](#), professional development programme, ETF.
- [Supporting learners with SEND through remote learning](#), Centres for Excellence in SEND, ETF
- Google classroom [https://edu.google.com/intl/en\\_uk/teacher-center/products/classroom/?modal\\_active=none](https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/teacher-center/products/classroom/?modal_active=none)
- [Take Your Teaching Online](#) (Open Learn) Open University course.

Types of online learner (from “Take Your Teaching Online”, OU)

### **11.8. Digital Champions**

- <https://www.digitalunite.com/>
- [Lloyds Bank Digital Champions](#)
- [Barclays Digital Eagles](#)

### **11.9. Induction, IAG and Initial Assessment**

[Manchester ESOL Advice Service](#)

### **11.10. Engagement**

Displays of learners work to engage and interest [Inspire Culture](#)  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/InspireLearningSkills/276927999982204/>

Promotional video [Bristol Skills](#)  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQo4YeR8Wu\\_yUpQQGiy5Xg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQo4YeR8Wu_yUpQQGiy5Xg)

### **11.11. Digital ACE information and strands**

Funded after the establishment of a partnership between HOLEX and Ufi VocTech Trust, the Digital ACE project enabled HOLEX to review and collate best practice and recommendations across key areas of online provision.

Digital ACE has been designed to support ACE providers on the next stage of their technological journey and help them develop their digital capability so that they can enhance their offer to students while still maintaining their learner centred and high quality approach to adult learning.

The various Digital ACE resources and materials are available via the [Digital ACE page](#) on the HOLEX website.

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Digital ACE Strand</b>                   | <b>Content of materials</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Policy</b>                               | Guidance on how to develop a digital policy and the areas which should be considered.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Safeguarding &amp; Prevent</b>           | Guidance on what to consider for moving effective Safeguarding and Prevent practice online.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Developing Materials &amp; Resources</b> | Guidance to support the training and development of staff in producing and adapting materials, live streaming lessons, use of video and YouTube recordings, online presentations and webinars, use of externally prepared materials, assessment and learner engagement. |
| <b>Quality Assurance</b>                    | Guidance around quality assurance for online adult education, including existing externally produced materials and in-house provision.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Supporting Low Skilled Learners</b>      | Guidance on how best to determine an online offer which enables providers to engage and induct learners with low level skills.                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Underpinning Technology</b>              | Guidance around the most effective and cost efficient underpinning technological solutions for adult learning, managing a service in this context, connecting and integrating with learners and communicating with staff.                                               |

## 12. Annex list - Good practice examples/templates for you to adopt and adapt

**Annex 1:** [Checklist for ground rules for online learning](#)

**Annex 2:** [Checklist for study skills for online learning](#)

**Annex 3:** Manchester Adult Education Service's [remote initial assessment processes](#) for pre-entry ESOL learners.

### 13. Case Studies

See below for a full list of the case studies referenced within this document.

- Case Study 1:** [Working with learners with low level digital skills in a remote learning setting](#)
- Case study 2:** [Engaging learners who have low confidence and low self-esteem to continue their learning during the lockdown period](#)
- Case study 3:** [Pre-entry and entry level ESOL for learners with limited digital skills](#)
- Case study 4:** [Engaging reluctant ESOL learners in online delivery sessions](#)
- Case study 5:** [Remote delivery of employment programme for learners with learning disabilities](#)
- Case study 6:** [Delivery of online learning to \*\*ESOL, Literacy and Maths\*\* basic skills](#)
- Case study 7:** [Virtual creative arts delivery](#)
- Case study 8:** [Online delivery to entry and pre-entry low skilled learners with low level digital skills](#)
- Case study 9:** [Using Zoom and Canvas with Entry and Pre-Entry ESOL learners](#)