LEEP1 Digital Skills Consultation for the ALaDDIN Group

Project Summary

LEEP1 was funded by Social Enterprise Fund, through UnLtd.

ALaDDIN created a digital skills survey to engage with people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people. LEEP1 Project workers, co-produced and delivered a consultation with a group of 5 people with lived experience of a learning disability and/or autism to further insights into the survey questions and responses. The data was analysed by a deductive thematic analysis consisting of 5 themes.

Volunteer sampling was used to gather participants, and a mixed methods approach was used for the gathering of qualitative and quantitative information, which utilised structured and semi-structured questions, through digital formats. A deductive thematic analysis explored the findings of the project. There were 5 key themes around digital skills and confidence.

Main Conclusion

Overall, the report suggests many people found that Covid-19 restrictions pushed them to try new apps and devices, so that they could keep connected to friends, family and colleagues. However, there are still some users who lack confidence or digital skills, with some people who have no access to the digital world. Many participants reported being concerned about online safety, such as banking and purchasing items online. Few participants had knowledge of consumer rights or where to access technology, such as the tablet lending schemes. Overall, participants in this survey were somewhat digitally included to varying extents. Although, this study was small scale and was limited to online formats, such as Smart Survey and Zoom.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the digital skills questionnaire and consultation and for the extra time consultees took to provide valuable and influential information on how to improve access to digital technologies.

Project Activity and Delivery

The ALaDDIN group created a digital skills questionnaire (*appendix 1*) to engage with people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people. The questionnaire consisted of 14 closed questions. The digital skills consultation took place over five sessions on a weekly basis, with a group of five people who were either learning disabled or autistic. The findings from this consultation were analysed by a deductive thematic analysis.

Methodology

The digital skills questionnaire took the format of an online questionnaire using Smart Survey. Volunteer sampling was used to gather participants. The questionnaire was comprised of 14 structured, closed questions (*Appendix 1*).

The digital skills consultation was conducted using a co-production model, whereby a person with and a person without a learning disability use their skills to work together to form an inclusive and accessible consultation. The consultation aimed to consult with 8 learning disabled and/or autistic adult participants. There were 5 participants in total. This was due to one unexplained drop out and another participant who was new to using technology and subsequently did not participate. Covid-19 impaired the ability to gather diverse participants with varying digital skills as the consultations were advertised mainly

online or via word of mouth using digital devices. Furthermore, the consultations took part via Zoom, which required participants to have digital and internet access. Participants were gathered using volunteer sampling and paid £10 per hourly sessions with a payment method of gift vouchers. 5 sessions were conducted in total on a weekly basis, consisting of 1hr sessions per week. Many sessions took longer, and participants stayed from approximately 2 hours each week. Participants were obliged to leave and were compensated for their extra valuable time.

The ALaDDIN members asked their organisations for one of their members to participate in the consultation and become an ambassador for their organisations. Most participants did not derive from the ALaDDIN group and were formal connections of the consultants. Participants could take part in consultation by emailing or phoning LEEP1. The findings of the report were analysed via a mixed methods approach, consisting of qualitative and quantitative data and specifically, a deductive thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Demographic Data

No demographic data was collected. As an improvement for future data collection, demographic data should be collected.

Quantitative Data

Questionnaire graph responses for the complete data set can be found in *appendix 2*.

Question 1: About Me

	1. Please tick the boxes that apply to you.		Response Percent	Response Total
1	I don't have the skills/confidence or I don't know where to start/what to do		66.67%	12
2	I don't know where I can get online		11.11%	2
3	I don't have a device or an internet connection because it's too expensive		16.67%	3
4	I don't want to / I don't feel that the internet is for me		11.11%	2
			answered	18
			skipped	34

Most participants reported not having the skills, confidence or knowledge to be digitally active (66.67%). 16.67% did not have a device or an internet connection because it was too expensive, followed by 11.11% of participant reporting that they did not know where to get

online. Furthermore, 11.11% of people also reported that they did not want to access the internet, or they felt it was not for them. 34 participants skipped this question with only 18 participants answering it.

Questions 2 to 4: Communication

The questionnaire found that 65.85% of respondents were able to post appropriately on social media, with only 34.15% not being able to. The majority of participants were also able to talk to friends and family on WhatsApp or Messenger (75.61%). Furthermore, 78.05% of respondents also reported being able to send a photo to a family member or friend. It should be noted that the past 3 questions around communicating had been skipped by 11 people.

Questions 5 to 6: Handling Information and Content - Could you do this if asked to?

24.39% of people reported not being able to search for accurate information using an internet browser. Most respondents reported knowing how to do so (75.61%). However, a closed question does not reveal if the sources people are using are credible, accurate or biased. Most people knew how to stream music or videos on YouTube, Spotify or iPlayer (74.36%), whilst 25.64% did not know how to stream music or videos. Fewer people answered this question. Without further questioning, it cannot be shown if it was not applicable or the language was inaccessible, for example, streaming.

Questions 7 to 10: Using Forms - Could you do this if asked to?

Under half (42.50%) of the respondents reported knowing how to fill in a form online. 58.54% of the respondents reported being able to create an account to use a website, with 41.46% of those people reporting that they were not able to create an account to use a website.

9. Pay for things online Ã			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		50.00%	20
2	No		50.00%	20
			answered	40
			skipped	12

When participants were asked if they could pay for things online, the questionnaire found a 50/50 split. 12 participants skipped this question. This question does not explore if someone was supported to make these purchases or if it was done so independently. From experiences of LEEP1's AND project, it was discovered that often paying customers who are

learning disabled; did not have their own bank accounts, control of finances or the knowledge to shop online, because they did not feel that websites were safe.

10. Do online banking Â			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		34.21%	13
2	No		65.79%	25
			answered	38
			skipped	14

Half of the respondents were happy to buy items online, but less used online banking (34.21%).

Question 11: Problem Solving - Could you do this if asked to?

62.50% reported that they used the internet to find information, for example to plan travel or to fix something.

Questions 12 to 14: Being Safe and Legal Online - Could you do this if asked to?

58.54% of participants reported knowing how to apply privacy settings, so that only friends could view shared content. Followed by 70.73% of participants being able to create safe and secure passwords. Furthermore, 70.73% of participants were able to not share online log in information with anyone else, whilst 29.27% could not.

Qualitative Data

LEEP1 Project workers, co-produced and delivered a consultation with a group of 5 people with lived experience of a learning disability and/or autism.

A deductive thematic analysis identified 5 themes:

- About Me
- Communication
- Handling Data and Content
- Using Forms
- Being Safe and Legal Online

About Me

In this theme it was found that during lockdown, people had developed new digital skills to stay connected with people. Participants reported:

"I've got more under lockdown. I've learnt how to use Twitter and Facebook more, email too and now using Zoom and Teams. Used to use WhatsApp but it doesn't work very well now. I'd like to be more confident using Zoom."

*"Like me *****, I struggled with Zoom. It took a lot of learning, but I can do it now."*

"I use Zoom, at first it took me ages to get it working and putting codes in. It took me ages to do the calls, but I've got there now. I'm zooming now and put codes in now. I feel more confident, I don't use it every day."

In this theme, it was found barriers people have faced were around Zoom codes or links and having a good Wi-Fi connection. Participants reported:

"Passcodes, you get different ones, and it can be confusing. My centre helps me. We have perfect WIFI in one part, but not the others."

"Today I was going to use the short cut for Zoom but the link didn't work on my laptop. I used plan B instead, the link worked on my iPad so I could get on to the team meeting. I used to panic about stuff like that, but not now. "

Participants were also asked 'how confident are people with digital stuff?' Participants talked about using Zoom and finding it the most user friendly. People also talked about feeling confident or how to become confident when using devices or apps and browsers; this was achieved when people would take them through the process or use a guide, but both must be done step by step. Participant reported:

"I must admit, when we say how confident are we, some of us can pick it up fast. Let's say if you're parents have trouble, you could walk them through it, step by step. Go back to basics."

"A couple of weeks ago, I was working and caught the wrong button, I couldn't get on Zoom. Plan B, I went on my phone, talked to the manager and she helped me sort it. I felt happy and confident when I asked for help. I make sure I put all my passwords on a mobile or iPad, being organised."

"It gives you confidence to do it by yourself, like this meeting now, it's very interesting. With codes, it's very good."

"Not good, just scared, of strangers on Zoom. Don't see names, if we don't know them we don't let them in, safeguarding."

"Some people helped me to get on Facebook. My support worker helped me to get a profile to be safe, to stop spam or people sending abuse. I didn't have the confidence. But then we did it step by step, to be safe online. They didn't take over, they advised."

When analysing the data, a sub-theme of peer support began to emerge when talking about finding solutions to the barriers which people faced. Participants reported:

"I have become a mentor to help people, slowly to teach people how it works."

"You use your experience to mentor people about how to use devices. Zoom, Facebook or Twitter."

"Someone wanted me to send a video of myself. I had to make the video shorter for it to send. In the past, I wouldn't have the patience or confidence to do that. It's good to have try or ask for help, at least you tried."

When exploring why people might find it harder to get online, the consultation looked at the cost of technology and people's thoughts on the use of second-hand items. Participants reported:

"I live on my own. I shop around for the best prices and speed."

"Can be hard knowing the best bargain, working out which is best, which contract, gigabytes and data. I get quite a lot of data now. You get this amount of gig, mins... but will I use it all. It's understanding it."

"Good idea or if they get broke, you could take them to repair shops. Get insurance."

No participants in the group had knowledge about iPad or tablet lending schemes. A member for LEEP1 staff reported:

"You can get iPads from Leeds libraries they provided us with a tablet lending scheme. I have a work iPad with unlimited data. I don't have to worry."

The consultation also explored where people go to use the internet when they are out and about. Participant reported:

"Funny you should say this. When I get devices, the first things I do is play around, all apps and what its's for, says on phone. Out and about I go on hotspot. Making sure it's affordable."

"Before lockdown, I used free WIFI on the bus or at the bus station. They don't charge."

"Broadband, internet on broadband in lockdown."

"Hotels, my mum used it at Holiday Inn Express."

There are many internet cafes in the Leeds area. Of which, these have been closed over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, when restrictions apply. However, when participants were asked about internet cafes, participants reported:

"Yes, I have heard of them but not used them."

"Seen them on holiday, my mums used them. It depends on where you are."

Participants were also asked 'Is the internet for me?' In a digital era with new and updated technologies, there is a movement of greater online and digital presence or function. However, the internet is not suited to everyone, and people may choose to continue with non-digital alternatives. Participants talked about how it has been useful to use the internet in lockdown and that some people used apps before lockdown. It was also spoke about, how we need to switch off from the internet, to help our mental health. Participants reported:

"Good for me. Going out is restrictive. I watch YouTube, keeps me happy in lockdown."

"It helps me. Before lockdown, I always used to use it. It's good for me, maybe bad for someone else with different views."

"Internet is good but be careful. I like using it. This lockdown without internet would be tough."

"Not looking at emails from Friday. Time to switch off."

"I think the internet is for me. If someone says why, use it for YouTube. Connections is good, puts on Zoom groups."

"I use it for Zoom and on chats and to look at food recipes, cooking sometimes. Passing NVQ."

Communication

A second theme explored in the consultation was communication. Facebook and WhatsApp were the most used from what participants reported in their lists, there was also some barriers to using apps, which may be glitches or apps not providing accessible information for a person who is learning disabled, around resolution. Participants reported:

"Mobile phone, Twitter more now, video, WhatsApp but difficult to use it now, keeps asking for a QR code or bar code, Zoom, Facebook."

*"WhatsApp to message friends, it's very confusing *****."*

"Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Facetime, Emails, Messenger."

"At work I use teams and Zoom and email. I used to look at my work emails a lot when I wasn't working, but I'm not looking on my day off anymore. Too much media too."

The consultation also asked if people used any other types of video communication such as Skype. The conversation quickly turned to other platforms such as TikTok and keeping safe online. Participants reported:

"Used teams but prefer Zoom, it's friendlier."

"Different TikToks, people showing obesity. "

"Dancing on TikTok, can get nasty comments. When I go home on a night, I might finish at 4, a night out with friends but don't like going on bus, ok with friends."

"I agree, people pretend to be friends on Facebook and ask you to send dodgy pictures or money, block them."

"I can share here because there was a day that my Facebook was set up through work, I was chatting to someone online, I had a job to do. One of the friends said don't speak to him, he's not your friend. It really got me down. Nasty comments about me on Facebook. I needed support from family, about what to do. I messaged my mum. I know what to do. Had an argument at work."

"Capable on social media, I'm more mature now. Friends, family, people from work. No one to take advantage of money, mate-crimes or being more vulnerable time. Small circle online and other platforms."

"Good and bad. My wife is in the Philippines, people can be racists, saying about her colour or that she is only after a green card. I've known her 7 years. She doesn't want to come to England. Someone commented about my wife, what do the parents think."

With restrictions eventually approaching an easing, it was explored as to whether people would prefer to continue using online communications and if this would have a place at all in their lives once their social norms return. Most people could see the benefit of digital communications and thought there would still be something beneficial from it after the pandemic. However, most people reported missing social interaction and the feelings which arise only from human presence. Participants reported:

"I feel I can be myself. I miss talking to people face to face, it's half and half."

*"Same as ***** before. I really miss the real world and linking up with friends in the real world."*

"Let the genie out of the bottle, working from home. I thought any managers could."

*"Ok, to a point and I agree with you *****, as humans we are social and home learning has made us go backwards."*

"I've gone from not working, not seeing friends and family, what else can I do."

Some participants reported feeling frustrated by the lack of authority and enforcement around restrictions as well as a lack of co-production. Participants reported:

"Until Boris makes it clearer for people with learning disabilities."

"I haven't seen my brother, other people being silly outside, haven't been staying in. The council people are not doing the right thing."

"Guidelines, they should include people with learning disabilities from the beginning. It's hit and miss, not good enough."

Participants shared that they felt as though they were able to post on social media appropriately. In regards to feelings of not posting appropriately, participants talked about general errors such as accidently sending a message to the wrong person or concerns of posts being reported. Participants reported:

"I meant to send something to my wife, but I sent it to her best friend instead. They have the same name, I pressed the wrong one by accident."

"Meant to send something to my mum but sent it to my mate.

"Need to be careful what we put on social media. I've noticed that Donald Trump is suspended from all social media accounts. Got to be careful."

"Because of my spelling mistakes, I do ask for help when sending emails. Friends, family or co-worker. Got to be careful on social media. One thing down can backfire. I keep my Facebook private because of nasty people."

Participants were also asked 'Can you talk to family or friends on WhatsApp or Messenger?' Participants reported:

"Yes, safe to say, I use it"

"Yes, I use it quite a lot. Using messenger, photos, lost my costume, flowers, organising things. WhatsApp video chat? No."

"Easier to use messenger."

"Can be hard sending photos, wait for the two ticks"

"I went on YouTube to find out why I couldn't get on WhatsApp, but I didn't get anywhere."

"Used to use WhatsApp, now messenger or Zoom."

Handling Data and Content

Due to a family emergency, the Consultation Group Lead was absent, and data was not collected which could be used for the purposes of thematic analysis. The consultation was agreed to continue as last-minute cancellation had the potential to cause unnecessary anxiety to some participants, who find routine essential.

The overall feedback from the consultation was that the consultees were aware of unreliable sources on the internet, such as news. It was explored where people could find the best sources to find news or updates around current issues, such as Covid-19 or where to buy items. The group agreed that the more suitable and safe website sources were from government, NHS and news sites that are notably trustworthy, for example the BBC. It was also talked about how some news outlets such as newspaper companies can write with political bias toward one party or another. Many participants highlighted the importance of

receiving news from trustworthy experts and not to trust *"fake news"* that can be peddled via social media.

Subsequently, the area of 'scams' was addressed, and participants noted the need to be careful about what they read and what they themselves put on the internet. It was suggested that people should shop around on the internet and not be swayed by deals that may be too good to be true. The consultation also explored what we should look out for when using online resources or websites so that we are safe. Some participants had good knowledge of this. One participant had knowledge around being alert by looking for the 'lock' before website addresses which will tell you a site is secure. It was later discussed the differences between 'http' and 'https', highlighting the fact that the additional 's' also indicated a secure site.

Using Forms

When exploring whether participants completed forms online, it was reported that many formats were inaccessible for a variety of reasons, that impeded communication and comprehension. Forms from government sites were of pivotal talking point, as these were reported as containing the most jargon and being some of the least accessible, even though they are of great importance for people to access. Participants reported:

"It was difficult because of my dyslexia, bright and white, small text. Need to talk to people with learning disabilities to make sure people can read and write the form."

"Pressure to keep everything online, not another option. Not everyone is online. It needs to be accessible full stop."

*"Plus, don't know about you *****, but when you look at forms online, they're about 40 pages long. Who has the time? Do we need it all?"*

"When I had all forms to fill out, birth certificate, my mum had to do it, it was a nightmare. Really small, the font."

"Be nice if some forms were in Easy Read. For someone with Autism, the best way is to go to government sites for changes through lockdowns. Colours for backgrounds should be person centred."

"Like for a form or letter, for hospital appointments, they could give me options. I couldn't do it too small, jargonistic, bold, no colour background."

Participants were asked 'Can you create an account to use a website? '. Many participants stated they had a Facebook account. However, it was highlighted that when creating an account, sites often ask for irrelevant and non-compulsory information, but this is not evident to all people with lived experience of a learning disability or autism. Some sites provide an asterisk next to essential information, but it is not always explained that the subsequent information does not need to be completed. Participants reported:

*"Correct, what ***** says. Doing it for Facebook, when you create an account, you might find it easy, hard or need support. Half of the info can be correct, but half misleading."*

"When you create a Facebook account, it asks for certain details, bio and stuff, but you don't have to do it. They don't have to know everything, like your favourite things, where you live."

"Family and friends on my Facebook. You can get hacked."

*"I know what ****** means, I don't put on what I don't want to."*

"Don't have to put sexuality on if you don't want to. They can prey on you."

"Privacy settings is what I have done. I was watching the news and I got touchy. My mum was sat in the same room as me, so I asked my mum for help to be secure."

"I don't trust them, with details like mobile number."

Furthermore, the consultation asked participants 'Can you pay for things online? e.g. Topshop, Amazon, Argos'. Many participants found it difficult to use gift vouchers online. Certain vouchers which you could spend in store, needed to be activated online and presented a barrier to some participants. Participants reported:

"Click and collect at Argos, my mum did it."

"I haven't done online shopping much, not confident enough yet. Maybe I would do online banking. I will talk to my mum about it. I can't feel it like I can get it in a shop, you have to give bank details too, what if you are robbed, you give away privacy and power."

"Paying online can get a refund, like getting a refund in the shop, least you can still return it."

"Gift vouchers are a way of paying people in different ways or time over done. Gift vouchers online are difficult to use it, it's difficult to get it. The information is complicated, the writing is small, or I lose the link. They need to ask us what is the best way, give us choices."

"Not the biggest fan of gift vouchers. Too many barriers, ask people how they want to be paid."

"Kitemark or app that would take you to a safe site."

"When you go online, why can't there be something online, a list of companies you can trust. Feel like you cannot be robbed. Should be accessible, real and kite marked. Needs to be accessible and safe."

Participants were also asked if they knew their consumer rights and company's returns policies. It was also asked if participants used credit or debit cards, and if they knew how card type may affect refund rights. For example: Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 or usage of Visa, Mastercard and Amex's internal ruling such as Chargeback, although not a legal requirement (Money saving expert, 2021). Many participants were not confident shopping online. Participants reported:

"Independence from my own bank details. Have you watched Martin Lewis show? He gives interesting facts around rates. Martin Lewis money show."

"I use it to take cash out, card, pin number, I put my hand over it. I have short term memory issues, so my mother keeps my account details."

"First time this week I did online shopping. My dad helped me, I learnt it. I might do that again. First time you learn, then you are confident enough to do it."

Most participants reported using the internet to solve a problem, in particular YouTube. One participant reported that they used the internet to book trips. Participants reported:

"I have used this as a good thing. Over lockdown, I have booked 5 rail tours, all by planning etc all around the country."

Many participants did not use online banking due to safety concerns, lack of confidence in using an app regarding finances, budgeting control or apps themselves being inaccessible. However, participants talked about wanting to use online banking and the benefits of it. LEEP1 produced a leaflet around the benefits of pre-paid cards (*Appendix 4*) which enable people to have greater budgeting control. Participants reported:

"Don't like cards, cash is key. Before lockdown, if I went out for a drink at night in a pub, I would order, and they would ask how I want to pay by. Always know when I go, I say cash. I can't spend over a certain amount. Will I overspend?"

"I don't agree. Can be dangerous carrying money around. I got robbed. I used a debit card or credit card when needed. Only take small amounts out though like £5 or £10 for taxi. With shopping I know my limit."

"I check how much I spend by ringing the bank. Online banking, I could watch it more."

"I have no overdraft because I don't feel comfortable having one. The app would be good for me."

*"You know cos, *******, when like checking all details, balance and how much got spent, my mum checks all that."*

"The app, what if you want an account for savings?"

The final consultation session explored 'keeping safe and legal online'. Participants were asked what keeping safe online meant to them. Themes around peer support emerged again, as they did continuously throughout the sessions. Participants also reporting knowing how to apply privacy settings so that only friends and family had visibility of posts. Participant reported:

"Privacy, not letting people take advantage of you. Proper codes and programmes or apps. VPN, thinking about getting one, I keep getting dodgy messages, keep safer."

"Have it on friends privacy"

"Tightened up security."

"Be careful nowadays, they will find anything to hack you."

"Happened to my wife once, a bloke from another country. Reported things to Facebook. Block them."

"Before I touch the block button, I unfriend and unfollow, then block. They can't get you again."

"Online keeping safe, I'm gunna try do that and unfollow people I don't know. Dunno, change password."

"Change password"

One participant highlighted a key flaw in keeping safe online. Many people who become blocked, simply create new email addresses and new accounts, to then pursue persons online.

"Block someone, then they make a new account"

Furthermore, participants were asked if they knew how to create safe and secure passwords, comprised of letters, numbers and symbols. Participants reported having a good knowledge of this, but also reported many barriers to doing so, as well as some reliance on another person or a need for a 'safe place' for credentials. Participants reported:

"New Facebook and new password. I know what it is. Going on Facebook and I like, don't but on some stuff. Friends and family."

"I have a password personal to me, only me. But because of my short-term memory, I back it up not paper – my mother. I don't want anyone to get my password or forget it."

"Ask for email or password- you can click don't forget my password."

"I mix letters and passwords, stuff only I know."

"Use special characters or symbols."

"I have to, I do backups, no matter when I entered password. I have a book to write down in, for anything. It's for my piece of mind."

"Barrier for me is short-term memory, and what I do, lots of passwords for work, give to my mother, put on iPad too."

Participants were presented with a visual representation of a 'safe' and an 'unsafe' password. A safe password was defined as one using upper and lower cases, numbers and symbols (*Appendix 3*). Participants reported:

"Capitals, letters, numbers, character"

"Both unsafe, of was me I would mix letters or numbers, it's too easy. "

"Make as hard as possible."

"I have numbers"

"New password, done it myself"

Participants were also asked about data protection and how they could keep their data safe and to themselves. This was not always possible due to accessibility reasons or having little online presence. Participants reported:

"Asked my mum about opening a banking account."

"Don't like taking lots of cash out, only use it at the bank or supermarket."

"Can I just add, I know what you said. Sometimes the bank can be busy. Holes in the wall outside can be bust too."

"Prefer to wait in line for cash."

"I pay on contactless, been easy through lockdown. Made it more easy to use it. Lots of people have not been accepting cash."

*"Gunna ask ******* a question, how do you do contactless, is it easier? If I wanted to get a bank."*

"Talk to a bank. I don't want to have an overdraft limit."

"When I go to banks, I go inside, but going to far to wait outside. When it's quiet I go to the counter. What good is rushing doing."

"If there was a way, hiding places a million."

"In a safe"

"He tells me to put my password down, can remember number now for meetings"

"My mum keeps everything in a folder, paperwork and banks. Letters from adult social care, gave them to my mum to keep safe."

"Filing cabinets, my wife keeps copies in there with locks. Or money box password, my wife has one of them."

"Sessions were very good, confidence to keep safe online. Halifax have a record of me because I have a learning disability and dyslexia and short-term memory."

Conclusion

Overall, the participants of this consultation had good, general digital skills and felt that lockdown had helped them to further these skills. People reported that being on their own had put them in a position where they needed to be more self-sufficient, and it gave them the confidence to try using more new technologies and apps. The participants showed peer support throughout and encouraged one another to progress, whilst listening to and supporting each other's fears or concerns about being online.

Keeping safe online was a key issue for every participant. Many people were aware of scams and abuses which people have either experienced themselves or knew someone who had. Participants were mainly concerned around using apps or sites, whereby they had to part with money or the handling of money, such as online banking and paying for items online at retailers. Furthermore, participants did want to take part in online banking and would like to be able to purchase items online. However, they felt they needed more information and support to do so, as well as forms online being more accessible; many sites use small text and harsh colour contrasts such as black on white. Only one participant recalled the 'lock' which is displayed near website addresses, to evidence a secure site. No participants recalled the importance of the 's' in 'https', to signify a secure site. Greater awareness of looking for signs for a secure site would greatly benefit people with a learning disability and/or autism.

Handling data and content was a key safety concern when considering the feedback from the survey. Some participants had memory issues and thus some reliance upon a person they trusted to help the recall of passwords. Whilst in some cases this works well, it also puts people in a position of vulnerability to abuse, for example, financial abuse, if that relationship of trust broke down or was manipulated. Furthermore, when people needed to record multiple passwords for different accounts, they commonly wrote this on paper and stored it in a locker, draw and a hidden 'safe' place. Whilst hidden to the individual, without some form of security, it would be a possible risk for private information to be stolen or misused. No participants reported using a reputable online software or app to keep passwords safe.

Recommendations

Following the data analysis from the experiences and opinions of people with lived experiences of a learning disability and/or autism, the following is recommended:

- Online forms should be accessible to the individual, especially if this form is required by government or healthcare providers. Forms provided by healthcare providers should meet the Accessible Information Standard.
- Raised awareness of clarity around compulsory information needed, when entering information online, for example, creating social media or online banking accounts.
- Information sessions or workshops to be held by financial professionals, such as, banking staff, around how to open a bank account, how to set up and use online banking and fraud protection.

- Greater promotion of creating safe and secure passwords, as well as how to keep our personal data safe and secure.
- Greater awareness of tablet lending schemes or other ways to access digital technologies.
- Creating accessible step by step guides/support to using apps or technology
- Peer support groups for people to improve their digital skills and/or confidence.
- The creation of a 'safe' app, whereby people with lived experience of a learning disability can browse, buy and return products safe and securely.

Reflexive Statement

As a Consultation group lead, who also works for a human rights organisation for people with learning disabilities and an independent advocacy organisation, I have viewed many inequalities experienced by people who are learning disabled and/or autistic. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, I have seen people who have both been empowered by learning new digital skills and contrasting to this, I have seen some people become isolated and have no access to digital devices or the internet.

Furthermore, the digital skills survey was not created by the consultants and the only option to participate was using an online format. Future improvement would be to:

- Allow for the survey to consist of open and closed questions, so that people can expand and give more detailed data.
- Use various formats to engage with more people who are learning disabled and/or autistic, such as sending out postal copies. This means people who do not own a digital device or have access to the internet can participate and help represent a population.
- Collect demographic data to ensure we are reaching a wide range of people and communities, so that there may be indication as to how representative findings may be. As well as collecting data specifically around 'who is filling in this survey', as some people may be supported to complete the survey.
- To reach a wider number of participants, to help give a wider representation of the Leeds population.

The consultation achieved rich data collection and small numbers ensured the group had a friendly dynamic. Participants reported enjoyment and feelings of sadness that the sessions were ending. However, replications of small groups may be good to engage with more people and gather more feedback. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic placed some restrictions on data collection. Best practice would have included face-to-face consultation, so that people who do not have access to the internet or digital devices could participate.

References

Money saving expert. (2021). Section 75 Refunds Free protection for credit card spending on items over £100. Retrieved 4 May, 2021, from https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/reclaim/section75-protect-your-purchases/#:~:text=Section%2075%20is%20an%20important,go%20wrong%20with%20a%20purchase.&text=Pay%20for%20something%20on%20a,liable%20if%20something%20goes%20wrong.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Digital Skills Online Questionnaire

Leep1: Digital Skills Survey

This is an Easy Read survey.

It is for people with learning disabilities and autistic people in Leeds.

It asks you about your digital skills. The survey is by Leep1 - Leeds People First.

Save and Continue Later   Next Page

About me

1. Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

☐ I don't have the skills/confidence or I don't know where to start/what to do

☐ I don't know where I can get online

☐ I don't have a device or an internet connection because it's too expensive

☐ I don't want to / I don't feel that the internet is for me

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Communicating - Could you do this if asked to?

2. Post or comment appropriately on social media, e.g. Facebook

○ Yes
○ No

3. Talk to friends or family on WhatsApp or Messenger

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

4. Send a photo to a family member or friend

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Handling information and content - Could you do this if asked to?

5. Search for accurate information using an internet browser

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

6. Stream music or video on YouTube, Spotify or iPlayer

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Using Forms - Could you do this if asked to?

7. Fill in a form online

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

8. Create an account to use a website

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

9. Pay for things online

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

10. Do online banking

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Problem solving - Could you do this if asked to?

11. Using the internet to find information, e.g. planning travel, or fixing something

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Being safe and legal online - Could you do this if asked to?

12. Apply privacy settings to Facebook to ensure only friends can see posts and shared content

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

13. Create safe and secure passwords, using letters, numbers and symbols

○ Yes
○ No

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14. Make sure that online login information is not shared with anyone

○ Yes
○ No

Appendix 2: Digital Skills Questionnaire Quantitative Data Analysis – Bar Charts

1. Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I don't have the skills/confidence or I don't know where to start/what to do		66.67%	12
2	I don't know where I can get online		11.11%	2
3	I don't have a device or an internet connection because it's too expensive		16.67%	3
4	I don't want to / I don't feel that the internet is for me		11.11%	2
		answered		18
		skipped		34

2. Post or comment appropriately on social media, e.g. Facebook Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		65.85%	27
2	No		34.15%	14
		answered		41
		skipped		11

3. Talk to friends or family on WhatsApp or Messenger Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		75.61%	31
2	No		24.39%	10
		answered		41
		skipped		11

4. Send a photo to a family member or friend Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		78.05%	32
2	No		21.95%	9
			answered	41
			skipped	11

5. Search for accurate information using an internet browser Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		75.61%	31
2	No		24.39%	10
			answered	41
			skipped	11

6. Stream music or video on YouTube, Spotify or iPlayer Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		74.36%	29
2	No		25.64%	10
			answered	39
			skipped	13

7. Fill in a form online Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		57.50%	23
2	No		42.50%	17
			answered	40
			skipped	12

8. Create an account to use a website Å

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		58.54%	24
2	No		41.46%	17
			answered	41
			skipped	11

9. Pay for things online Ã

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		50.00%	20
2	No		50.00%	20
			answered	40
			skipped	12

10. Do online banking Ã

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		34.21%	13
2	No		65.79%	25
			answered	38
			skipped	14

11. Using the internet to find information, e.g. planning travel, or fixing something Ã

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		62.50%	25
2	No		37.50%	15
			answered	40
			skipped	12

12. Apply privacy settings to Facebook to ensure only friends can see posts and shared content Ã

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		58.54%	24
2	No		41.46%	17
			answered	41
			skipped	11

13. Create safe and secure passwords, using letters, numbers and symbols Ã

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		70.73%	29
2	No		29.27%	12
			answered	41
			skipped	11

14. Make sure that online login information is not shared with anyone Â

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		70.73%	29
2	No		29.27%	12
			answered	41
			skipped	11

Appendix 3: Unsafe and safe password activity

sunflowersun

SunflowerSun04!

Appendix 4: Pre-Paid Card Leaflet –Production of LEEP1

BENEFITS OF PRE-PAID CARDS

Benefits to having a pre-paid bank card in 2021

Since the beginning of the Coronavirus, the government has encouraged minimal contact transactions which means many shops and restaurants no longer accept cash

You don't need a credit check, you just need to prove your identity and you can get one

It is easy to budget with a prepaid card as you can only spend the money you have put on the card

Many Prepaid cards are contactless, meaning that you can minimise contact with other people whilst paying for things

LEEP1

PRE-PAID CARD OPTIONS

OPTIMUM PREPAID MASTERCARD

- Card Charge - £5
- Top up - free online, £1.50 at Post Office or PayPoint
- Post Office and PayPoint top ups have a minimum of £10
- Can use anywhere that accepts mastercard, contactless and with PIN
- Monthly fee of £1.99 removed from available balance

UXEDO PREPAID MASTERCARD - (PAY MONTHLY)

Card Charge - £9.95

£4.99 monthly fee

ATM Withdrawals - 50p

Top Up - free online, 99p at Post Office or 3% charge at PayPoint

UXEDO PREPAID MASTERCARD - (PAY AS YOU GO)

- £9.95 charge for card
- No Monthly Fee
- Transaction fee = 2.95% (Charge minimum 50p, max £5)
- Top-Up - Free online, 99p at Post Office or 3% charge at PayPoint
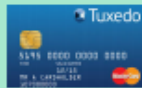
UITS ME PREPAID CARD

- Free card
- £9.95 first load fee
- £4.97 per month
- ATM Withdrawals = £1.25
- Cash top up at PayPoint locations = 99p + 2.6%