

Background-

The project aimed at digital inclusion and access to digital services/information for grass root Asian Communities by bringing about behaviour change among people to get used to online health and health care services and information. This 1-year funding from Health Care Alliance, Scotland has enabled NKS to provide training and information in order to reduce digital exclusion among south Asian communities and as a consequence address issues relating to barriers to accessing information, upskilling, and improving their digital literacy. This project also paved the way for users to stay connected with organisation friends and family.

The project was able to connect skilled tutor and volunteer with clients to demonstrate the usefulness of technology in their everyday life, and the use of online health and health care services and information. The inclusion programme also entailed educational sessions and awareness of technology people can use and the services online and how the users can make a choice between digital services and face to face interaction.

Session held at NKS-Networking Key services were mainly focussed on 5 basic digital skills.

- Managing Information- like using search engines to look for information, finding websites visited before or downloading or saving photo found online.
- Communication-sending personal message via emails, online messaging services, carefully making comments or sharing online information.
- Transacting-Buying items or services from website or buying and installing app on device
- Problem Solving- by verifying the source of information or solving a problem with a device or digital service using online help.
- Creating- completing an online application from including personal details or creating something new from existing online, images music videos.

Our south Asian community are not as engaging with digital world. They run the risk of falling behind. In our increasingly digitalized society, digital inclusion and exclusion represent a new kind of inequality. This concept of the "digital divide" describes a situation where certain people are excluded from using digital technologies and associated infrastructure while others possess the necessary skills. The gap has widened as a result of the Covid19, leading to more inequality. People still require access, assistance, and digital skills, and digital inclusion is no longer a nice-to-have but rather a necessity. NKS assists those with little to no experience with technology in building their confidence and learning how to use the internet and digital technologies. Some topics we covered.

- Setting a safe password and using authentication
- Creating an email account, sending and receiving email, adding attachments.
- Video calling and social media platforms. How to use them effectively.
- Using a touchscreen, keyboard and mouse
- Online safety and dealing with online scams
- Using online government, healthcare and council services

Some of the barriers we found.

- Lack of access- inability to go online and connect to the internet.
- Lack of Skills- Inability to use online services and internet.
- Lack of confidence- lack of trust, fear of cybercrimes, and being unclear about how to navigate through online spaces.
- Lack of motivation- lack of understanding or awareness of why digital knowledge is so relevant these days.
- Language – English not being their mother tongue is a major barrier even changing using language accessibility function is a problem as they are not aware, and all information are not translated.
- Age- Most of the users were 50 above and had a relaxed attitude toward going digital. Also, forgetfulness, not able to remember what learned or practise in class once home.
- Lack of information on how to access digital health technologies was another barrier identified among groups.
- The gender gap remains high, with women half as likely as men to use mobile. Closing the gender gap will be essential to reducing the overall usage gap in the community, and requires addressing the barriers that affect women disproportionately – especially a lack of literacy and digital skills; affordability; and social norms.

What you did?

The Inclusion Programme included educational sessions; what technology people use and the services available, and how they can make a choice of choosing digital services and face to face. The session that we ran were tailor made to users' requirement and were flexible.

NKS ran 6 group session running, 4 week/group, having 6-8 user per group. We were able to impart digital learning and confidence through confidence. We also had 1-2-1 session we catered to 52 individual upskilling and building their confidence.

SI No	Objective	Proposed Activity	Achieved Outcome	Time scale	Outcome
1	Outreaching Grass root south Asian community and engage with potential participant	Engage with 5 NKS group and 3 Other community group to connect with 50 potential participants	Engaged with 7 NKS Group and 4 communities(Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, Afghanistan) *groups name included	This was done over the period of whole project	Creating Awareness and supporting digital inclusion among grass root South Asian communities
2	Develop a digital Inclusion Equality programme	Get a baseline through a short survey and prepare a digital learning Programme	Digital learning programme was created by creating a short survey with 7 NKs group and also with new user coming into NKS- in total 70 people took part on the survey (Finding explained below)	From Nov 22 to Feb 23	This helped us to identify the digital skill levels of the individuals, their knowledge of health information and whether they can access them. It also paved the way to create a tailor made plan for

					specific group and also 1-2-1 sessions
3	Build Capacity Through digital health Inclusion Process for grass root	Provide 6 session inclusion training in group setting	Provided 6 group session with 6-8 Users per group. Each group ran s 6-7 week of training once a week. We were able to train 40 -50 people.	From Feb23 – Jan24	These session help in creating increased awareness about digital health, how to access those services, and in turn how to use their smart devices in accessing those services. Every group session was tailor, made to user requirement.
4	Increased Accessibility to digital health and care	Provide 1-2-1 support to 50 individuals with low or no digital literacy	Provide advice and support to 58 individuals on 1-2-1 basis to access digital health and care and show how to use their devices effectively. These 1-2-1 session lasted 4-5 week per person	From Feb23 – Mar24	All these session were tailor made to user specification, these session helped them to gain confidence to use their smart devices and how they can access support from their smart devices.
5	Evaluation			At the end of each group and 1-2-1 session were collected through	Evaluation was collected in form of feedback and also during session conversation.

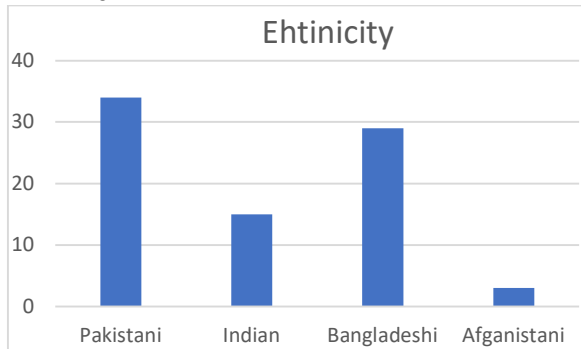
				the project	
6	DCP Meeting, Conversation Café, Short life working Group, Black History Month, NHS Inform Review Session, race health and Equity representation roundtable meeting.				Colleagues are members of the citizen panel and actively participated in all the events, meetings and discussion cafes. Throughout the year

NKS Group Involved

- Bengali Ladies Group
- Wednesday Women Group
- Indian Mix Group
- Indian Ladies Only Group
- Long term Health Condition Men Group
- Long Term Health Condition Women Group
- Carers Group
- New users through word of mouth and social media

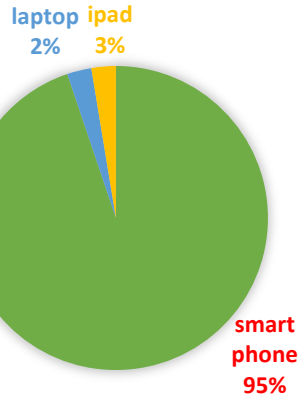
Short Survey Findings Before start of the Sessions

1. Ethnicity



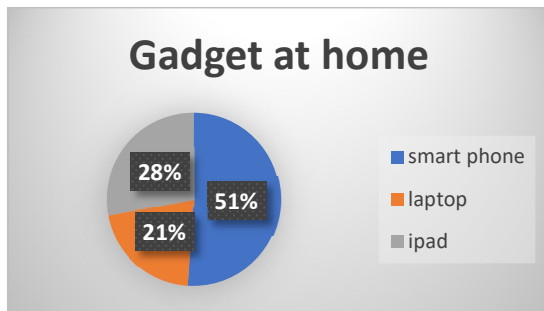
2. Daily Usage of Smart Device

DAILY USAGE OF SMART DEVICE

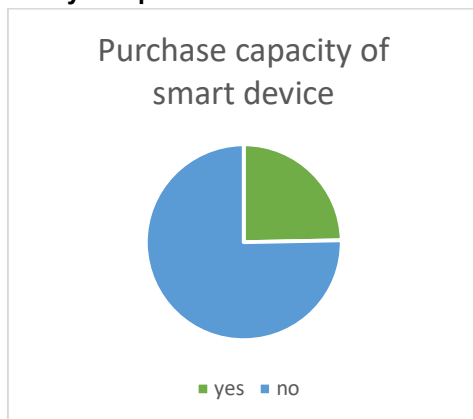


It is to be noted here though most of the user had smart phone, they were only aware of the limited function of the phone.

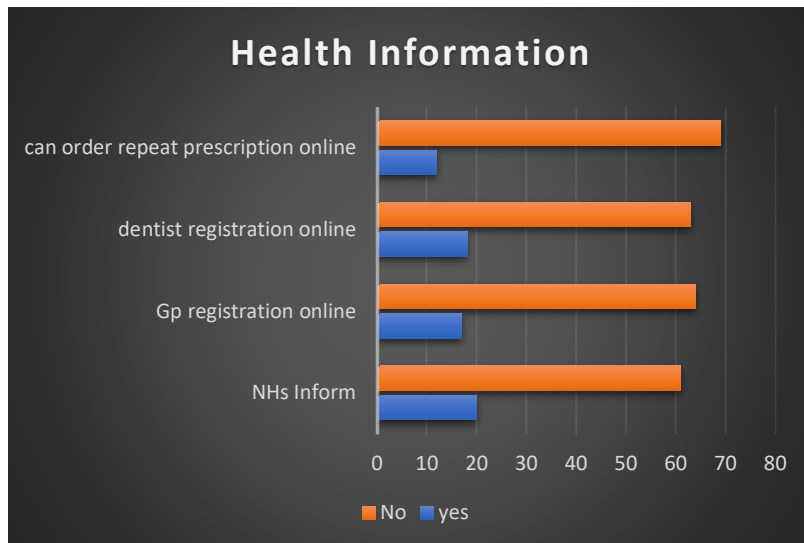
3. Gadget at home



4. If they can purchase a smart device



5. Accessing health Information online/Awareness of online Health Information



The focus of project was to make the South Asian Community aware of all the health websites and app available and to access information. Couple of session specially focussed on how and where to search and access those health information and connect with healthcare service providers, how to use different health app

Some the Website /App we focussed on

- NHS Inform
- ADAM (All about Digital and Me)
- NHS24 Online app
- Breathing space
- ALISS
- My diabetes my way
- NHS inform self help guide

User/ client and carers were taught how to access information from these website and use app

NKS, helps people with low or no digital skills to gain confidence and learn how to use the internet and digital technologies. Some topics we covered simultaneously were

- Setting a safe password and using authentication
- Creating an email account
- Video calling and social media platforms.
- Using a touchscreen, keyboard and mouse
- Online safety and dealing with online scams
- Using online government, healthcare and council services

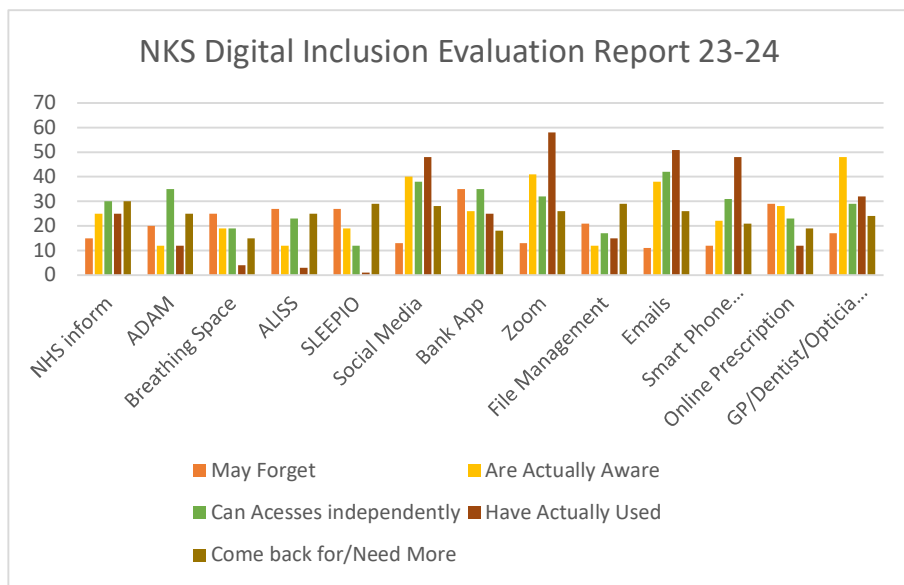
The project also paved the way to help participate and engage in various events. Black History month-saluting our sister and matriarch event was one of them where the work we do at NKS in transforming lives of our community was highlighted. It showcased how NKS works at the grass root level to bring about behaviour change among its users. [\(Attached is the audio piece that was used during the event\)](#). This audio

has also been used by Digital Network Officer for her NHS leadership programme. Some of our staff are also Member of digital citizen panel who regularly attend meetings and give feedback and shared thought on regular updates in discover digital meetings. We also actively participated in NHS Inform Review session where feedback was collected, what might be missing or could be incorporated based on our interaction with the users, who has used it so far.

NKS also participated in **Short Life working group – DCP Skills/Development** which was formed to guide the planning and delivery of this programme from (January - June 2024).

Evaluation Data

These data were collected during the session and also as feedback at the end of the session



What you learnt?

During the funding period, we noticed people learn much better during 1-2-1 session rather than in group session. The small group sessions were enjoyed by women and men. Women however were more welcoming of learning new skills and knowledge than men. Most clients were 50 plus and were dependent on children for their work. For them to come out of that dependency and actually learn, do and manage their phone/devices is something new and they enjoyed explore learning.

For a woman coming from a south Asian community, living in a patriarchal society and having lots of cultural barriers. It is commendable to see how they have moved forward. It requires immense practise going over the topics numerous times till they gain that confidence to do it themselves without inhibition and fear.

The impact it made on the participants of the project.

The project has opened the door among the users to learn and explore the digital world. They have thoroughly enjoyed learning new skills be it connecting to the internet/ Bluetooth or using simple search engine to find answers to their query. Learning about health website and apps paved the way.

There is still inhibition/ lack of awareness among users to access health information online. Though awareness has increased they still need to be supported when going online. NKS has and is always advocating its users to go digital.

Case Study 1- (audio attached – this audio was used in the black history month event)

Case study 2- Mrs J, has been a regular user of NKs Services. She was technological savvy and as most of our users was dependent on family members. She joined digital group session In July 2023, where she learnt how to access health information online. She wanted to learn more after her group session. After enrolling for 1-2-1 session and assessing her needs and requirement, she went on eight to ten weeks training, where she learnt how to order repeat prescription, send photos through WhatsApp and ways to communicate through app. She also learnt to set up reminder so that she doesn't forget her medication, smart phone folder management where she doesn't need to rummage her phone when in need. Booking online ticket for transport, cinema and sea life; she was able to do it successfully and enjoy her time with her husband and grandson. During the course of her sessions it was brought to our attention that she had difficulty sleeping. We suggested Sleepio App, we made her download and taught her how it functions. She went through all the Sleepio videos and maintained her sleep diary. It was noted that her sleep was considerably improved and she was able to manage her sleeping pattern. In her words "I have ups and down in my sleep pattern, some days are quite good and some are not. I am now able to manage better. Even when I wake up in the middle of the night I can go back to sleep easily. I also sleep soundly these days before I used to wake up at 3am now I sleep longer and wake up at 6am".

Actions/learning needed to take forward?

All these sessions had a short time span, the target was big, as an instructor it became extremely challenging to cover all the topics the group/users wants to learn. It was also observed that the 1-2-1 sessions were more rewarding and users had a greater grasp of knowledge than the group sessions. In order to see and achieve more positive and rewarding outcome it would be great if these projects are ongoing and people can be supported regularly. Having a gap make them forget what they have learnt. The demand for digital sessions is high and our users are always forthcoming to learn new things.

It is noteworthy here that the users did understand the importance of developing their digital skills and digital health knowledge and awareness. Computer literacy and language barrier seems to overpower and hinder their success rate. There is also a need of more educational and motivational strategies to help improve users' familiarity and confidence with the digital technologies among south Asian communities.

Feedbacks from the clients.

- *Mrs J - "I booked online ticket for Cinema and Vue life first time with myself and felt Confident. I went there confidently knowing that ticket are booked. Enjoyed the place a lot, children said well done"*
- *Mr N R- "it is so important to me, I was never interested in technology but now I think it is important to learn these things. It will definitely make things easier for me. I want to continue this for longer."*
- *Mrs K- these sessions are giving me confidence and will help me a lot. I can use bus app and not miss any bus and track also. Voice command feature is very good. I can now send message using this, I don't know English and I can send message in my own language."*
- *Mrs R- "thank you, I can now use zoom and attend my online English classes. Thanking for repeating again and again to make me understand. I can now attend online session easily. It is not overwhelming any more. I have also used the bus app while communicating and can escape now in missing my bus. I didn't know that we can access so many information from NHS website. I love the read on feature. I wish the 'read on' feature was available in my Nepali Language."*
- *Mrs S- "these sessions are great for us. I am glad somebody is focussing on what we want to learn and will be actually using it in our daily lives. Problem with me is forget easily if I don't use frequently I will forget. But I really like how we are taught here, very friendly. I never registered for a dentist I was not able to find near my house. Through NHS inform, I was able to contact so many dentist. Through many are not taking any patient I have been put on waiting list on one which is little far from home. Finger crossed."*

Pictures





