
**Supporting the Nepalese
community in Folkestone
to get online**

**Social Return on Investment analysis
Healthwatch Kent report**

January 2022

In the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, we all started to rely more on digital technology to help us communicate and replace processes that usually happened in person. Whilst this had many benefits, such as ensuring services could continue to be delivered during Covid, it also heightened the impact of digital poverty and inequality. Here at Healthwatch Kent we have clearly evidenced this trend thanks to feedback from people and communities - read our reports [here](#).

We have not been alone in identifying the issue. Many organisations both locally and nationally are seeking solutions that would lessen the growing digital inequality. These interventions were well intentioned but numerous. We do not want to run the risk of duplicating effort, so we have taken the decision to focus our attention on one intervention, exploring whether it has really made a difference to the people that it aimed to help. Our intention is that this will provide valuable insight and intelligence to inform other organisations and help them understand if what they had put in place was a good return on investment.

The focus

In 2020, before the pandemic, EK360 funded a project to enable the Nepalese community in Folkestone to get online. Now two years later, we wanted to see what difference it has made.

The project, which was led by Kent Coast Volunteering, had clear objectives:

- Support people from the Nepalese community in Folkestone to get online
- Enable them to connect with health and social care services
- Help them to feel less isolated and support their wellbeing

Did it work?

Our Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis shows that for every £1 invested by EK360, there was a social return of £20.90.

Overall, the project has generated £209,086 worth of social value/ impact in its first year.

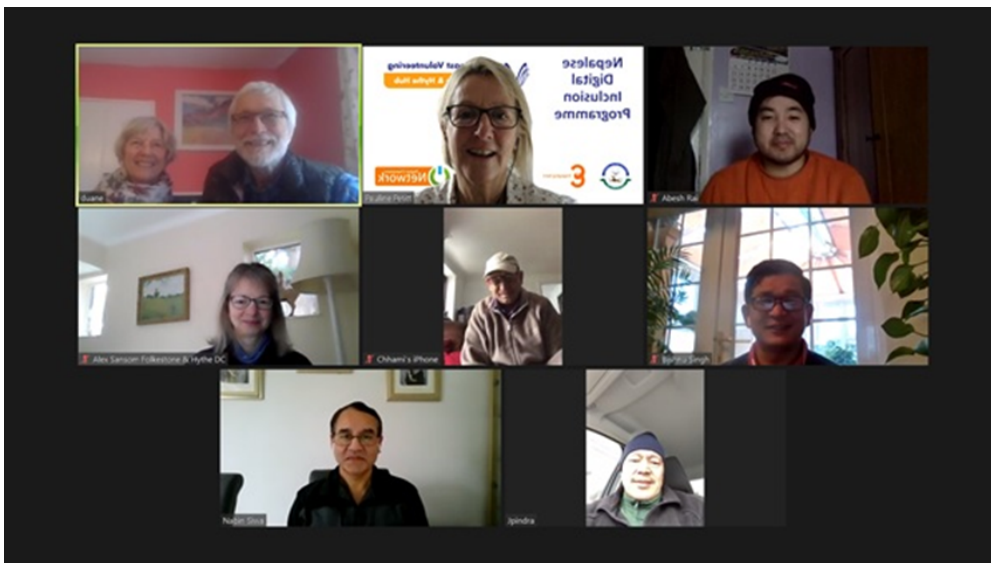
That works out to an average of £8,041 worth of social value for every single person that took part.

Supporting the Nepalese community in Folkestone to get online



Folkestone is home to one of the UK's largest Nepalese communities, which includes the community of Gurkhas who have served for the British Army around the world.

A working party of 11 members including five digital champions and six learners was formed in July 2020, which has now been expanded to include a further 17 learners. Due to the social distancing measures caused by the pandemic, this project took a little longer to take off than expected.



Some members of the working group including staff at Kent Coast Volunteering, digital champions and learners

Participants had clear ideas about what they wanted to learn, including:

- Managing GP appointments and NHS services online
- Using NHS Track and Trace
- Organising and applying for Pension Credit, Council housing, housing benefit, Universal Credit and state pensions
- Using government and local authority services online
- Being able to do shopping online

How did the project work?

Kent Coast Volunteering (KCV) recruited 'digital champions', to support the learners. These champions were all from the Folkestone Nepalese community, which promoted friendships and inter-generational connections as well as avoiding any language or cultural barriers. However, KCV do have plans to expand their champions team and recruit non-Nepalese speaking digital champions in the future

The project has become a key part of the new Nepalese Community Centre, which was opened in Folkestone in October 2021, complete with a digital training room for the community to use. The Digital Champions have attended online safeguarding and 'keeping people safe' training, which includes ensuring their computer is up to date with software, anti-virus, and a firewall. Other training includes:

- Digital Champion Essentials A Digital Champion's guide: How to get started with a new learner (open-ended time)
- Essentials for engaging with older people
- Using government services online
- Getting Started with Email
- Managing Health online: GP and NHS services
- Digital fun: using the internet to help people love later life!



Staff at Kent Coast Volunteering with some of the digital champions and volunteers working on the project

One of the digital champions told us the main priority has been concentrating on teaching the basics of using a computer, as most of the learners had never used a computer before. The learners were given a practical test on some basic IT skills and the digital champions gave feedback on how each person was progressing.

Why are digital skills so valuable?

Many public health and social care services such as GP appointments, benefits, pensions and banking, are now largely carried out online. In a society that relies so heavily upon the digital operation of these services, living without digital skills can place you in a position of isolation or inequality.

Tackling Digital Exclusion has been a strong focus for many community organisations over the past two years, as the circumstances caused by the covid-19 pandemic have meant many vital services have been delivered primarily online. Here is some of the recent feedback Healthwatch Kent have heard about people suffering from digital exclusion.

“Many people like me do not have access to the internet and where I live the internet is very poor, which precludes me from accessing GP services online”

“I would like some help making a complaint about my GP surgery. I do not have access to the internet”.

“I am emailing on behalf of my sister-in-law, who does not have internet access but is looking for assistance to make a formal complaint concerning her GP”.

“I have struggled to contact Medway Hospital regarding the covid vaccine, I was given an email address but I’m not very good at using the internet.”

Digital skills are not only considered as ‘essential for life and work’ [1], but also are said to provide significant lifestyle and well-being benefits.

Studies [2] have shown that when asked about digital engagement...

- **87%** say it helps them to connect better with friends and family
- **84%** say it helps them to organise their life
- **55%** say it makes them feel more part of a community
- **44%** say it helps them to manage physical and mental well-being

[1] Essential Digital Skills Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[2] [lb-consumer-digital-index-2020-report.pdf](https://www.lloydsbank.com/lb-consumer-digital-index-2020-report.pdf) (lloydsbank.com)

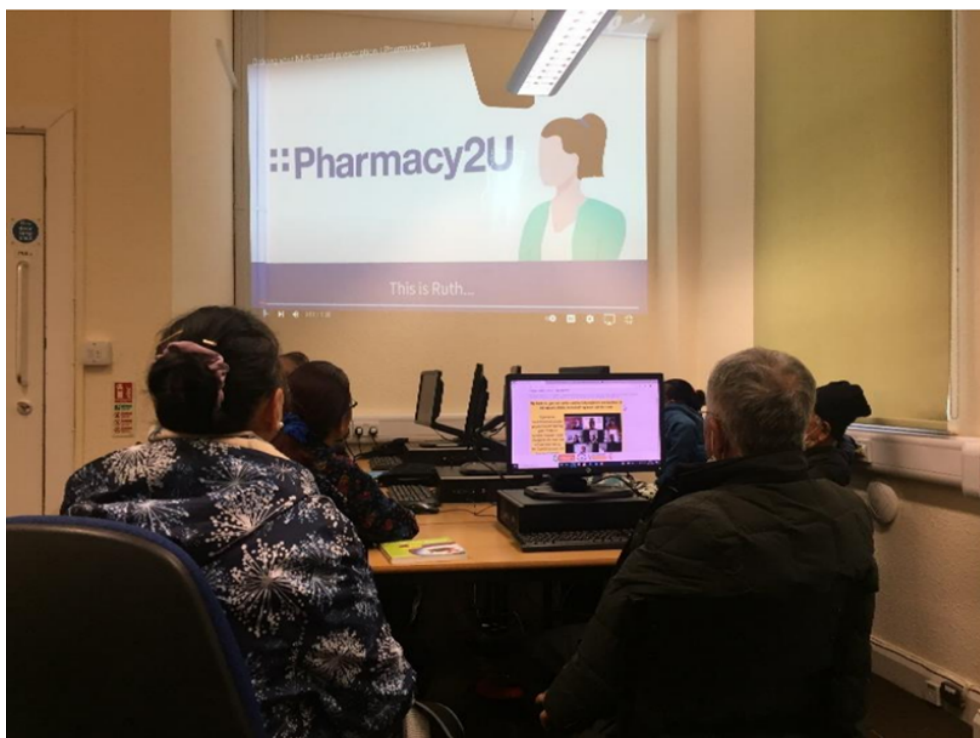
What has been the impact of the project so far?

We heard from 21 learners who are all Nepalese elders within the Folkestone community, and 5 digital champions, to hear about the outcomes from the project so far.

- Each learner has completed 45 hours of training
- The Digital champions having delivered 132 hours of support to people between them.

We asked them questions to find out how much impact their learning time had, and what changes they experienced in line with the project's goals to improve wellbeing and decrease isolation. Our survey findings in detail are listed as Appendix A.

Stakeholders	Identified Outcomes
Learners	Improved Digital Skills Reduced Health Inequality Increased sense of inclusion in the community Reduced Isolation Improved Mental Wellbeing
Champions	Improved Digital Skills Increased sense of inclusion in the community Reduced Isolation Improved Mental Wellbeing Work experience gained Training completed - Employable skills



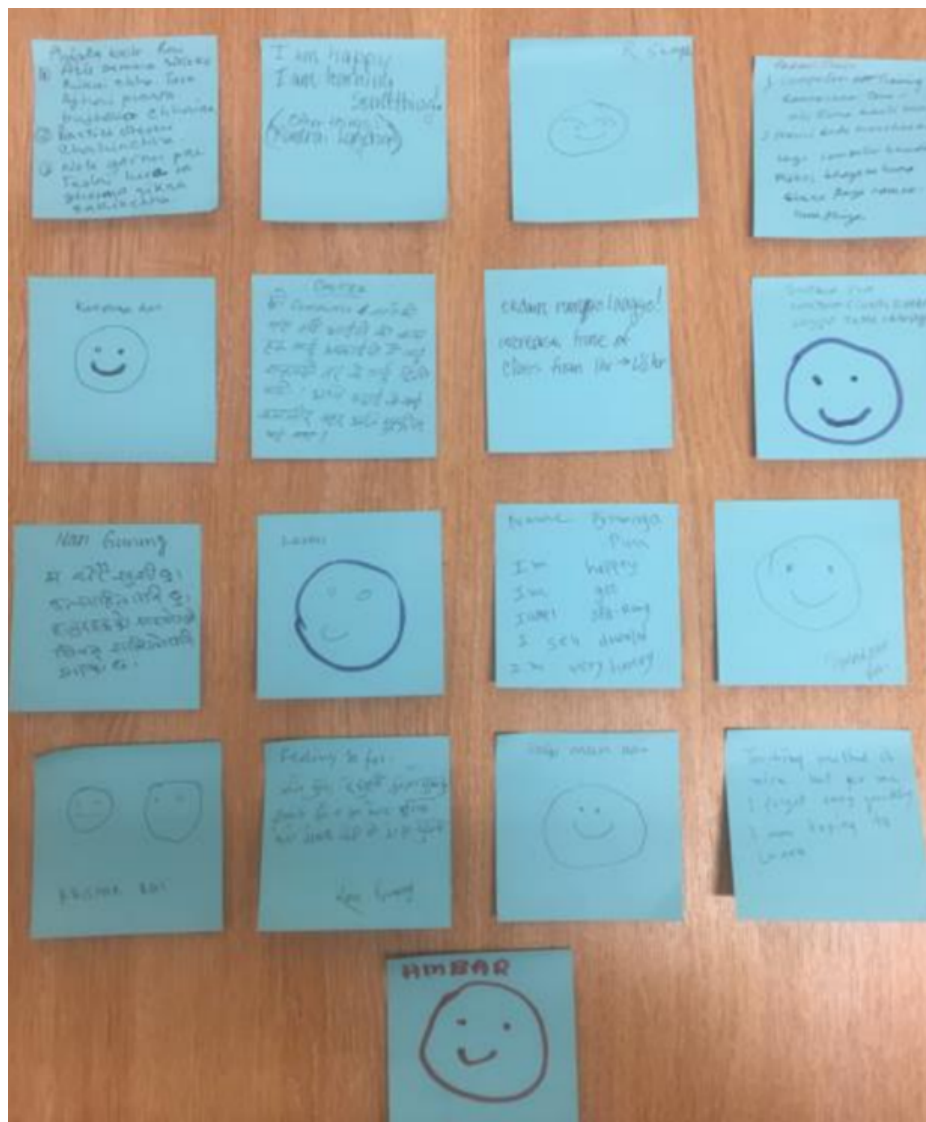
Some comments from the learners

“I have learned new things on the computer such as desktop icons. I can now open and create folders and have recently even bought a laptop. Some of the most interesting and important skills I have gained is to use e-Consult on my local GP surgery website and access to online services on Folkestone and Hythe District Council website.”

“I have learned how to turn on and off the computer, to open notepad programme and type own name. I don't have my own laptop but use smartphone to access Facebook and Messenger.”

“The program is really good as I did not use computer before and now, I know how to write names on Notepad, and have gained confidence in using the mouse and keyboard. There are a lot of useful skills we have been taught in the programme.”

“I have learned how to book medical appointments online which is by far the most useful.”



Learners were given the opportunity to express how they felt about their experience on the programme, with sticky notes

Some comments from the learners

“I have learned how to help someone with an accessibility need as well as working with people with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities.”

“Working with senior citizens is a new thing for me, this is a skill I have gained”

“We followed the principles of what our learners like and what they want to learn”

“My learner is enthusiastic, and this is great for me. We’ve been spending a lot of initial learning time on the familiarising the basics of email communication and the mailbox interface. The learner is now confident in reading and sending emails and also understands malicious website links are often included within the email for wrong reasons!”

“Since my learner received her computer from Kent Coast Volunteering on which to practice, she is learning about an hour or more each day, how to open and write emails, familiarising to use the computer, opening different apps.

“I am just helping her when she becomes stuck or wants to make a way further ahead. I am thinking to take her next to the government website and NHS appointments.”

What is Social Return on Investment and why is it important?

SROI allows an organisation to quantify the value they are providing for the communities they work with. SROI tools provide guidance for allocating a financial value to a wide range of outcomes even if they were not originally measured in financial terms.

These calculations are important when it comes to evaluating the success of our work, as they are used widely used throughout the business world, helping others to understand the value and impact of our work.

You can see a full step-by-step breakdown of our SROI analysis process in Appendix B.

The social value produced...

Through our SROI analysis and social value research, we found that over the course of the year, the project generated £209,086 worth of social value for the 26 individuals we spoke to. This group included 21 learners and five digital champions. This analysis considered values attached to outcomes including but not limited to improved mental wellbeing, improved digital skills and reduced health inequality.

You can find a breakdown of the values attached to each identified outcome in our SROI Value Map, Appendix B.

What are the inputs in this programme?

EK360's initial investment was £10,000

This funding covered the costs of computer equipment, provided digital licenses and contributed to staff costs to oversee the project.

This leaves us with a total social return on investment of £199,086 for the first year of the project. We have calculated that the initial outcomes from this project have enough longevity to continue producing social value for the same individuals over a three-year period. The additional social value in year two is predicted at £11,633.39 and £8,570 in the third year. This gives us a net value of a £219,290.90 social return over a three-year period, with the return per pound invested value at £22.93.

Thank You

To the team at Kent Coast Volunteering who have delivered the project, for providing us with the information and data to write this analysis. To the learners and champions for sharing their experience of the project with us. To EK360 for working to tackle digital exclusion in the local community.

Author Details

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Thank You

Our service is free, simple to use and can make a real difference to people in Kent and beyond. Have your say [here](#) and help us to make a real difference to you and your community.

You can also reach us through the following routes:



Online:
www.healthwatchkent.co.uk



By Telephone:
Healthwatch Kent Freephone
0808 801 01 02



By Email:
Info@healthwatchkent.co.uk



By Text:
Text us on 07525 861 639. By
texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's
British Sign Language interpreter
will make contact and arrange a
time to meet face to face

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Appendix A

Our survey results

Survey Summary - completed by the beneficiaries	Qty	%
1) Digital capability/ skills have improved		
<i>a) How would you rate your digital skills before joining this programme? (Scale of 1-5)</i>	21	
1	12	57.14%
2	6	28.57%
3	3	14.29%
<i>b) How would you rate your digital skills now? (Scale of 1-5)</i>	21	
1	2	9.52%
2	10	47.62%
3	5	23.81%
4	4	19.05%
<i>c) Tell us about some of the digital skills you have gained</i>	21	
Computer on / off , mouse, open folder and GP eConsult	2	9.52%
Computer on / off , use mouse, search websites, google search and GP eConsult etc	3	14.29%
Computer on/ off and typing	1	4.76%
Computer on/off, mouse, keyboard skills and website and search engines	3	14.29%
Computer on/off, mouse, websites	3	14.29%
computer on/off, using websites and accessing GP services	1	4.76%
Creating documents and saving files	1	4.76%
GP eConsult, Desktop, mouse, Internet search and documents and files saving etc	1	4.76%
PC on /off, using the Internet	1	4.76%
Turning computer on and off, typing	1	4.76%
Computer on / off, Mouse, keyboard skills and search engine	4	19.05%

2) Participants have become engaged with health and social care services			
a) How confident were you, before joining this programme, to access and use health and social care services? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
1	18	85.71%	
2	1	4.76%	
3	1	4.76%	
5	1	4.76%	
b) Before joining this programme, how aware were you, of the health and social care, and public services available to you? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
1	1	4.76%	
2	5	23.81%	
3	8	38.10%	
4	7	33.33%	
c) How confident do you feel now, to access and use health and social care services? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
1	2	9.52%	
2	12	57.14%	
3	4	19.05%	
4	2	9.52%	
5	1	4.76%	
d) How aware are you now of the health and social care, and public services available to you? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
2	3	14.29%	
3	9	42.86%	
4	6	28.57%	
5	3	14.29%	

3) Participants feel more included in the community			
a) Before joining this programme, how confident did you feel to engage with the wider community of Folkestone? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
1	1	4.76%	
2	1	4.76%	
3	10	47.62%	
4	6	28.57%	
5	3	14.29%	
b) How confident do you feel to engage with the wider community of Folkestone, after joining this programme? (Scale of 1-5)		21	
1	2	9.52%	
2	3	14.29%	
3	6	28.57%	
4	8	38.10%	
5	2	9.52%	
c) Would you be interested in joining a community panel in the future, to represent the voices of your community? (Yes, No, Maybe)		21	
Maybe	8	38.10%	
No	9	42.86%	
Yes	4	19.05%	
d) Would you be interested in signing up to the Healthwatch Kent newsletter, to hear monthly health and social care updates about what is happening throughout the communities in Kent? (Yes, No)		21	
No	14	66.67%	
Yes	7	33.33%	
4) Feelings of isolation have reduced amongst participants			
a) Has gaining digital skills helped you to communicate socially with others? (Yes, No)		21	
No	7	33.33%	
Yes	14	66.67%	
b) Has gaining digital skills improved your mental health, and or social wellbeing? (Yes, No)		21	
Yes	21	100.00%	

Survey Summary - completed by the digital champions		Qty	%
1) Digital capability/ skills have improved			
<i>1a - How would you rate your digital skills before joining this programme? (Scale of 1-5)</i>		5	
3		1	20.00%
4		4	80.00%
<i>1b - How would you rate your digital skills now? (Scale of 1-5)</i>		5	
4		4	80.00%
5		1	20.00%
<i>1c - Tell us about some of the digital skills you have gained</i>		4	
1) Helping someone with an accessibility need: working with people with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities			
2) Digital fun: using the internet to help people love later life!		1	25.00%
3) Digital Champion Essentials			
4) Using your role to help customers get online			
I have learned about the basic digital skills and activities for the learners with basic skills		1	25.00%
More revisions and brush my ICT skills as well as consideration for senior and deaf/hearing problems learners especially focus for senior citizens is new thing for me		1	25.00%
No new skills learned.		1	25.00%
(blank)			0.00%
2) Participants feel more included in the community			
<i>2a - Before joining this programme, how confident did you feel to engage with the wider community of Folkestone? (Scale of 1-5)</i>		5	
1		1	20.00%
3		1	20.00%
4		1	20.00%
5		2	40.00%
<i>2b - How confident do you feel to engage with the wider community of Folkestone, after joining this programme? (Scale of 1-5)</i>		5	
4		3	60.00%
5		2	40.00%
<i>2c - Would you be interested in joining a community panel in the future, to represent the voices of your community? (Yes, No, Maybe)</i>		5	
Maybe		1	20.00%
Yes		4	80.00%
3) Feelings of isolation have reduced amongst participants			
<i>3a - Has participating in the programme as a digital champion helped you to communicate socially with others? (Yes, No)</i>		5	
Yes		5	100.00%
<i>3b - Has participating in the programme as a digital champion improved your mental health, and or social wellbeing? (Yes, No)</i>		5	
Yes		5	100.00%

<i>4 - How valuable would you say the experience you have gained has been overall? (Scale 1-5)</i>		5	
4		2	40.00%
5		3	60.00%
5) How likely do you feel it is that the experience you've gained will contribute to your chances of securing further/ future opportunities?			
<i>5 - How likely do you feel it is that the experience you've gained will contribute to your chances of securing further/ future opportunities? (Scale 1-5)</i>		5	
3		1	20.00%
4		2	40.00%
5		1	20.00%
N/A		1	20.00%

Appendix B

Our SROI Calculations

The six steps of SROI

1. Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders. Clear boundaries about what the SROI will cover, and who will be involved are determined in this first step.
2. Mapping outcomes. Through engaging with stakeholders, an impact map, or theory of change, which shows the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes is developed.
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value. This step first involves finding data to show whether outcomes have happened. Then outcomes are monetised - this means putting a financial value on the outcomes, including those that don't have a price attached to them.
4. Establishing impact. Having collected evidence on outcomes and monetised them, those aspects of change that would not have happened anyway (deadweight) or are not because of other factors (attribution) are isolated.
5. Calculating the SROI. This step involves adding up all the benefits, subtracting any negatives and comparing them to the investment.
6. Reporting, using and embedding. Easily forgotten, this vital last step involves sharing findings and recommendations with stakeholders, and embedding good outcomes processes within your organisation

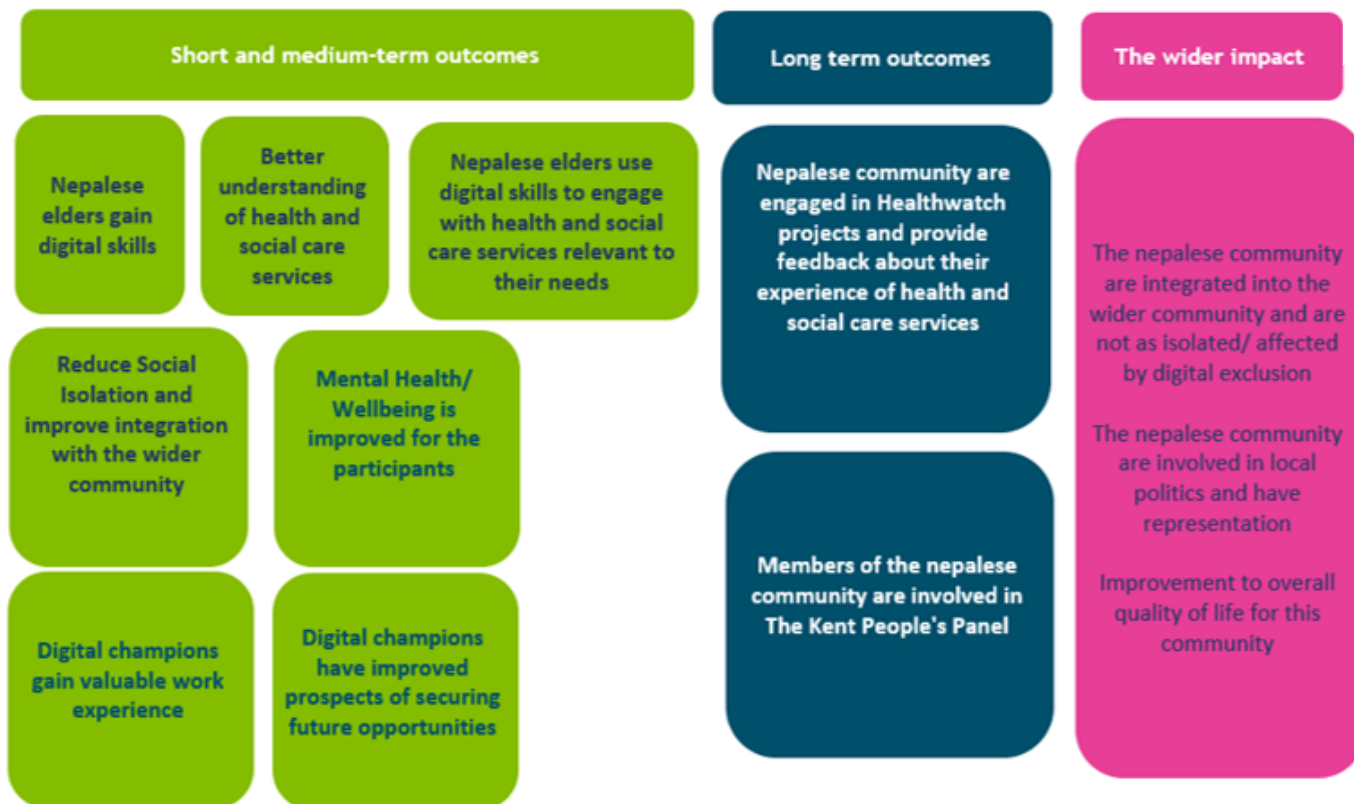
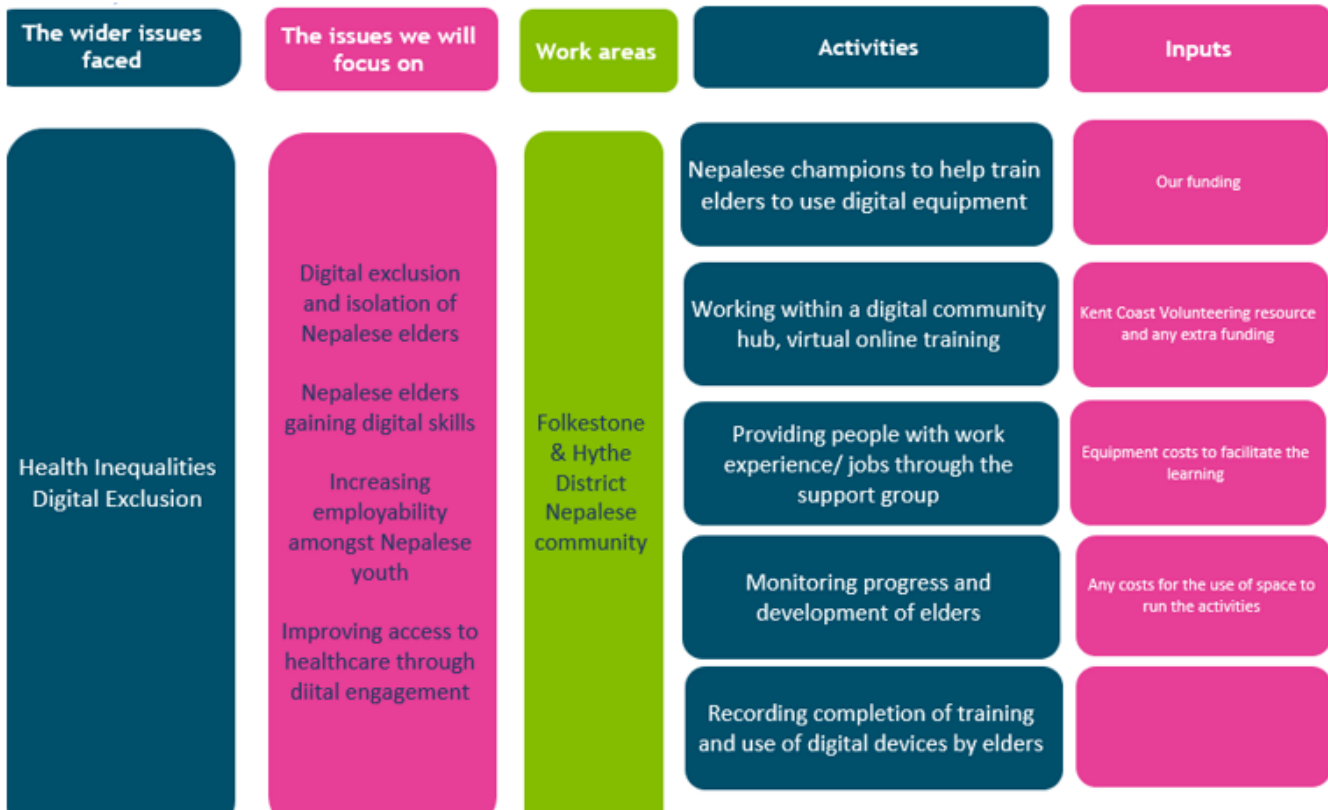
Let's walk through how we did it

Step 1 Establishing the scope

We identified key stakeholders from KCV, as well as some of the key volunteers working on the project, to liaise with in order to attain the information needed to conduct our analysis.

Pauline Petit	Co-ordinator for the Thanet, Folkestone and Hythe Over Fifties Forums at Kent Coast Volunteering
Mark Connorton	Senior Project & Development Manager at Kent Coast Volunteering
Abesh Rai	Project co-ordinator, Folkestone Nepalese Community Centre
Kumar Rai	Project co-ordinator, Folkestone Nepalese Community Centre

Step 2 Mapping Outcomes - Theory of Change



Step 3 Outcome Valuation

(We have included the evidence for our outcomes in Appendix A which details our survey questions and results)

Beneficiary	Outcome experienced	No. of people experiencing outcome	Unit Value	Total Benefit
Nepalese Elders (learners)	Improved digital skills	19	£675	£5771.25
	Reduced Health Inequality	20	£128	£1,792
	Community Integration	6	£1,064	£3,064.32
Digital Champions	Improved Mental Wellbeing/ Reduced Isolation	21	£12,500	£157,500
	Improved digital skills	2	£60	£80
	Community Integration	2	£1,773	£2,836.80
	Improved Mental Wellbeing/ Reduced Isolation	5	£12,500	£31,250
	Work experience	4	£2,357	£6,788.16

Improved Digital Skills

We used a financial proxy to attain the unit value here, which looks at the cost behind other avenues the individual could have taken to achieve the same outcome. Through research we found that the average cost of an IT tutor in the Folkestone area was £15 per hour. This included Nepalese speaking tutors. For the learners, we multiplied this by 45 as this was the amount of learning time each individual we spoke to had received. This gave us the unit value of £675. The digital champions completed four hours of self-initiated training for the identified improvement to their digital skills, so we multiplied this £15 financial proxy by four to get the unit value of £60.

Reduced Health Inequality

We used a financial proxy again for this outcome and looked at other ways the individuals could have attained a well-rounded understanding of the health and social care services available to them, whilst building the confidence to access those services. We found that a 30-minute private GP consultation (Bupa UK), which is recommended for someone's first appointment with their GP, costs £128. We felt this was a very modest value for the impact of reduced health inequality, however due to a lack of research around social values attached to this outcome, we felt it the most appropriate and robust proxy to use for our reporting.

Community Integration

We used a pre-existing valuation here, found through social value research into the HACT UK Social Value Bank [3]. This set of data was derived in 2014 and has been reviewed by Social Value UK experts for its relevance in today's society. This resource provides that regular attendance at a voluntary or local organisation is valued at £1,064 for over 50s, £1,901 for people aged 25-49, and £1,773 for unidentified age groups. This is associated with the outcome of improved social and community integration.

Improved Mental Wellbeing

We used pre-existing valuations again here, from a varied range of sources. Social Value research widely shows a significant increase in mental health and or wellbeing to be equal to the figure anywhere between £10,000 and £15,000 per year. The differing valuation depends on whether QALYs or WELLBYs have been used as a measure of life-satisfaction. We have listed some of the sources we used below.

[A Guide to Quality Adjusted Life Years \(QALYs\) \[4\]](#)

[What is a QALY? What is...? Series, Second Edition Health Economics supported by Sanofi-Aventis \[5\]](#)

[Green Book supplementary guidance: Wellbeing \[6\]](#)

Work Experience gained

We used the HACT UK Social Value Bank again here, looking at outcomes based around individual's willingness to pay for life satisfaction deriving from employed and voluntary work experience. The value for regular volunteering is £2,003 for 25-year-olds, £1,850 for people aged between 25 and 49, and £2,432 for over 50s. We used the value listed for unidentified age groups as we do not have the age demographics of the digital champions and this figure was set at an average of £2,537.

Step 4 Establishing Impact

The valuation table above shows the Benefits as they appear after we considered change that would have happened anyway (deadweight) and change that happened because of other factors (attribution). This explains why the Benefit figures are lower than the solo calculation of 'No. of people experiencing the outcome X Unit Value'. When looking at who else contributed to the change delivered, we considered the impact the digital champion volunteers had on the learners and that this constituted an equal amount of attribution as our primary financial investment. We also considered that some of the change might have taken place to some degree anyway, as there could have been other investors to the project or different initiatives run to support this community if we had not taken the leap to get involved.

Step 5 Calculating our SROI

This excerpt shows the calculating tool used from our spreadsheet, to capture the total SROI figures for a three-year period.

Total	209,086.53	209,086.53	12,040.56	9,181.45	0.00	0.00	0.00
Present value of each year		209,086.53	11,633.39	8,570.98	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Present Value (PV)							229,290.90
Net Present Value (PV minus the investment)							219,290.90
Social Return (Value per amount invested)							22.93

[3]The UK Social Value Bank | HACT

[4]guide-to-qalys.pdf (scottishmedicines.org.uk)

[5]QALY.pdf (bandolier.org.uk)

[6] Wellbeing_guidance_for_appraisal_-_background_paper_reviewing_methods_and_approaches.pdf

(publishing.service.gov.uk) Wellbeing_guidance_for_appraisal_-_supplementary_Green_Book_guidance.pdf

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