Who?

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What?

Hackney created a Buddy System to help vet and connect local school-age volunteers to support older people with getting online. Designed for those who have online access, but lack skills and/or confidence.

Why?

Not everyone has family or friends who can support them in getting online. Blanket training doesn't meet everyone's individual needs.

Reusable Tools

- Details of the buddies programme and lots of reusable templates and resources at: https://sites.google.com/hackney.gov.uk/buddies

Tips

- Automate to keep overheads low
- Ensure all sides benefit - understand motivations
- Marketing is key: online, offline (e.g. bus stops)
- Helps to have strong relationships with schools & VCS
- Ensure all involved sign data protection policy

Setting up a multi-generational buddy system

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Hackney

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Germ of this idea

- Googling ‘buddies’
- Salford Foundation
- Pandemic > kindness of strangers
- Share, reuse and recycle
- Gave us a head start
- Didn’t require a formal collaboration
- Didn’t require a grant application

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Why you should set up a digital buddies scheme

- Digital isolation leads to social isolation at this time
- Not everyone has friends or family who can teach them
- People respond well to one-to-one tuition
- The experience itself can alleviate loneliness so a double bonus
- Young people and old people enjoy talking to each other!

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But it seems like a big thing to set up!

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You'd never have enough buddies to go round

You do need to balance both sides

It would take ages to teach people everything

So don't. Teach them the one thing they really want to know

People prefer face to face so it wouldn't work

Can be less intimidating over the phone

It would take a lot of administration

So reuse ours

The people with the skills to be buddies are at work and don't have time to volunteer

School students are available and have the skills

You can't market it if people aren't going out and aren't online.

Leverage VCSO partners and target f&f

Sounds expensive

Buddies are volunteers

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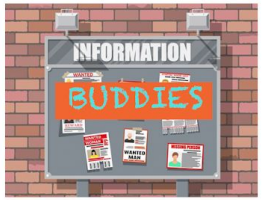
How does it work?

Buddy journey



Administrator liaises with school

Buddy sees marketing at school

Buddy fills out online application form

Administrator checks references with teacher

Administrator trains buddy online

Beneficiary journey

Administrator liaises with community groups

Beneficiary fills out online application form

Administrator calls beneficiary to discuss suitability

Administrator matches beneficiary to buddy

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Buddy journey

Administrator arranges call between buddy and beneficiary

Buddy teaches beneficiary over the phone

Administrator checks in with beneficiary

Beneficiary completes evaluation

Beneficiary leaves or goes on waiting list

Beneficiary journey

Administrator checks in with buddy

Administrator matches another buddy

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Things worth knowing

Things worth knowing I

- For scalability - volunteer-based, automate as much as possible to keep low overheads, redeployed staff to trial
- As with any volunteer programme, need to make it clear to all sides what they are getting out of it - administrator, buddies, beneficiaries, schools
- Take time to understand the motivations of older people (our key, but not only, demographic)
- We can't help everyone directly but we don't want to disappoint so signpost others (Digital skills, AbilityNet)

Things worth knowing II

- Marketing is key - include offline, create engaging videos, standardise copy so it's ready to go, and repeat
- Helps if the administrator already has relationships with schools
- Leverage Council partnerships with the voluntary sector to find beneficiaries eg lunch clubs, care home staff
- Balancing act between numbers of buddies and beneficiaries
- We're also utilising ICT Support Apprentices as part of their training

Resources you can reuse

View resources on Digital Buddies website or on LOTI website

- Be a buddy form
- Request a buddy form
- Training guides
- Evaluation forms
- Case study templates
- Administration sheet
- Safeguarding agreement and risk assessment

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Questions

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Q&A

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