Using Learn My Way to help others develop their digital skills

Introduction

Good Things Foundation has a free learning platform called Learn My Way that's specially designed for people new to using computers, tablets, smartphones and the internet.

This guide has been written to help you get the most out of Learn My Way, so you can help others to use this free learning resource to develop their skills. In this guide you will find tips on how to get someone started on Learn My Way, and some creative ways to support them as they become more confident online.

In your role as a Digital Champion, you may be helping people informally in drop-in sessions, or more formally in planned sessions. You may be helping people on a one-to-one basis, or in groups. Whichever way you do it, Learn My Way is a great free learning resource that can be included within any session.

If you aren't already familiar with Learn My Way, we suggest that you register and complete some topics.

This guide is produced by Digital Unite, a social enterprise working towards a more digital inclusive world in partnership with Good Things Foundation, a national charity that helps people to get online.

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Section 1. The benefits of using Learn My Way for you and your learners

In this section we will look at the benefits of using Learn My Way with your learners and how it can help you in your role as a Digital Champion.

What is Learn My Way?

Learn My Way is a free learning platform with bite-sized topics that are suitable for beginners that have no or low digital skills but can also be used by anyone looking to develop their skills.

Who can use Learn My Way?

Learn My Way can be accessed on an internet connected computer, tablet or smartphone.

It's possible to try a few topics on Learn My Way without registering an account. This may be a good way to get someone interested, before they go through the process of registering.

Some great features of Learn My Way:

- Available in English and Welsh.
- Written in plain language with an average reading age of 8.
- Designed to be easy to work through.
- Bite-sized learning topics (5-10 mins).
- Text to speech option.
- Learners can choose the topics that interest them.
- Topics fit in with the basic digital skills that the government thinks someone needs to be confident online.

This video gives a good overview of the main features.

Encouraging learners to sign up to Learn My Way

The benefits of someone registering on Learn My Way are that they get full access to all 100+ topics and a record of their personal learning journey.

The subjects are:

Using your device	Starting to use the internet
Using email	Safety and online security
Staying in touch	Spending money online
Online entertainment	Working with office programmes
Employment and work	Managing your health online
Managing your money online	

A learner may need help to register and get going on Learn My Way, but as they gain confidence, they can be encouraged to continue the learning in their own time and at their own pace. This can be a great boost to their self-esteem.

Learn My Way isn't just for beginners, almost anyone can learn something. In section three of this guide (Great ways to use Learn My Way to boost someone's digital skills) we will look at ways you can plan learning sessions around specific topics.

Case study:

Benchill Community Centre have been delivering digital inclusion support and building digital skills through the delivery of Learn My Way. Learners are able to work through topics by themselves after initial support to register an account.

A brilliant example of this independence is a learner at Benchill Community Centre, who has completed all the topics on Learn My Way twice! Being in his 50s, he had never used a computer before attending sessions at the hub. Now, having built his skills, he is able to confidently use the computer, browse the internet, and log into Learn My Way on his own.

Another user of Learn My Way is a volunteer at the hub, who didn't have a lot of knowledge about technology. Though initially quite nervous, she was able to develop her skills using Learn My Way. Through further learning she went on to obtain a Level 2 IT qualification. Being a fast learner, she is now onto a Level 3 IT qualification, and volunteers at Benchill Community Centre to help others to advance their skills. She feels confident with her digital skills and is able to look after the classes if the staff are occupied.

Section 2. Getting learners started on Learn My Way

In this section we will look at how to know if someone is ready to use Learn My Way, how to help them register, and tips for supporting them as they get started.

You don't need to be a computer expert to help others. If you are new to helping others, Good Things Foundation have some free guides to help you support someone else with their digital skills. Digital Unite also has some guides on helping people with a learning disability. Later in this guide we will look at learners with specific needs such as limited English.

What skills does someone need to register on Learn My Way?

These are the skills you would need to develop with your learner, so they are ready to use Learn My Way:

- Using an email account or mobile phone.
- Creating and remembering a password.
- Selecting items on the screen with a mouse, touchscreen, or keyboard navigation.

There are open topics on Learn My Way that can be used without registering to help your learner with these skills:

Using a device	Email	Passwords
Basic touchscreen controls Common touchscreen features Basics Of using a keyboard Basics Of using a mouse Clicking with a mouse Basic features of forms	Creating an email account Receiving and replying to an email	Making a good password

Digital Unite also has free technology guides covering all these topics.

Is your learner ready to use Learn My Way?

When you start helping someone, you should spend time getting to know them. Ask them about their personal circumstances and get an understanding of their digital needs and current skill levels. This will help you decide whether they are ready to start on Learn My Way.

Here are some important questions to ask:

- What have they come to see you about?
  If they have come to you with an urgent need, particularly if they are in crisis, it is not a good time to introduce Learn My Way. If appropriate, you could still mention Learn My way and encourage them to come back for more support in the future.

- What previous experience have they had of learning to use technology?
  Anxieties around their abilities to learn, or previous poor experiences, may mean you will have to build a learner's confidence before you can introduce Learn My Way.
- Do they have any additional needs?
  Learners with, for example, a disability may not be able to complete formal learning. If appropriate, you could help them try a topic on Learn My Way and discuss with them how they felt about it.
- Are they able to read English?
  The good news is that low literacy or English levels are not a barrier to using Learn My Way. In the next guide (Great ways to use Learn My Way to boost digital skills) we will look in more detail at examples of how you can adapt Learn My Way to fit the learners' needs.

What are their previous experiences of using technology and getting online?

- Have they ever used a device before? Do they have their own device?
  Learn My Way can be used on any device. It has topics to help learners get familiar with their device, but some learners may need help to build confidence using their device before they start using Learn My Way.
- Do they have any concerns about getting online?
  This is an important question to ask. It is important to address their concerns before introducing Learn My Way. Safety is often a big concern for people new to the internet, but they may also have other worries.

People with previous experience of getting online should be able to begin on Learn My Way straight away. If you are unsure if they are ready, then maybe get them to try a topic, it might help boost their confidence as well.

Introducing Learn My Way to a learner

If your learner needs a bit of extra encouragement to use Learn My Way, here are some ideas for some conversation starters:

- You really seem to be gaining confidence and learning really quickly, I could show you a free website called Learn My Way that has learning you could do on your mobile at home.
- We haven't got time in our session to cover everything around video calling. I can show you a website that has free learning to help you become confident with video calling. If we get you set up next week you could then learn in your own time.
- If you are keen to look for a job, then having good digital skills will really help you. Let me introduce you to Learn My Way, which is a free website to learn digital skills. They have this great resource on the digital skills that are needed for different jobs.
- You seem to be really confident with your tablet now. There are more touchscreen skills we can practice and there is this great website that you can use on your mobile at home to help you practice and remember these skills.

Supporting learners to register on Learn My Way

The process of registering on Learn My Way may be difficult for someone who is less confident online, so you may need to provide support. This underline video walks you through the signing in process (note: if your learner is not being supported by an Online Centre, select 'Learning without support' in step 1).
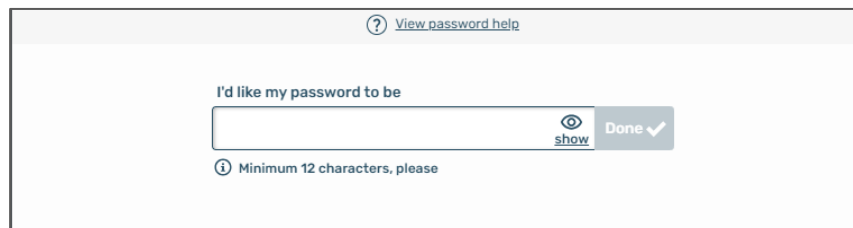
Before beginning the registration process a learner will need an email address or mobile phone number and have access to these during the registration process.

Troubleshooting common registration problems

Passwords

The only personal information that is held on Learn My Way is a name, email address and postcode, there is no financial information. Telling your learners this can help reassure them that registering is relatively safe. To increase safety, encourage your learners to use a different password on Learn My Way to those they use on other sites, particularly those they use for their email or internet banking.

A Learn My Way password needs to be at least twelve characters long. For help on creating a password they can select 'View password help.' You should make sure you always look away when someone is entering a password.

It can be difficult to remember a long password. If a learner selects 'Show' in the password box, they can see the password they have entered on the screen and take a picture of it on their phone. Alternatively, get them to write down a password prompt somewhere to help them remember.

Privacy and Terms & Conditions

To progress with registration learners must accept the privacy policy. A link to the policy is on the page if they want to read what Good Things do with the information given to them.

In brief, Good Things do not sell the information people provide when they register on Learn My Way. They only share the information with people who help deliver their services. They may use the information to improve what they do and learn how people use their services. They may also use it to provide evidence of the impact of their work.

Learners also need to accept the terms and conditions (T&Cs). A link to the T&Cs is also provided, which details what's acceptable when using Learn My Way.

The T&Cs explain that sometimes the website might be unavailable due to maintenance. They also explain why learners should keep their email address / mobile number confidential.

Consent to contact

Learners have the option to give Good Things permission to contact them. Sometimes, Good Things may want to contact people who register on Learn My Way. This can be to send them helpful news, to get their feedback or tell them about new services. Learners can opt in or out and can change this preference after they've registered.

When registering on Learn My Way, learners will need access to the email account or mobile phone they used to register with. A validation code will be sent to the method they used. You may need to help them access this code and enter it into the validation box on Learn My Way.

If after creating their account someone wants to change any of their details, consent or password, they can select their name at the top of the screen, this will open an 'Edit my details' page.

Helping someone to start learning

The topics on Learn My Way are grouped into subject areas. You may have already discussed with your learner what they want to learn, if so, you can help them to choose topics that are suited to them. It is best to start with a single or small number of topics. Each topic can be completed in 5-10 minutes.

If your learner is not sure what they want to learn then you could ask them:

- Do they have an immediate need, for example are they being required to apply for benefits online or do they want to book doctor appointments?
- Is there something someone else has told them about that they would like to do online? E.g. do their grocery shopping or talk to their relatives on a video call.
- Are there any online tasks that they find difficult or have difficulty remembering?
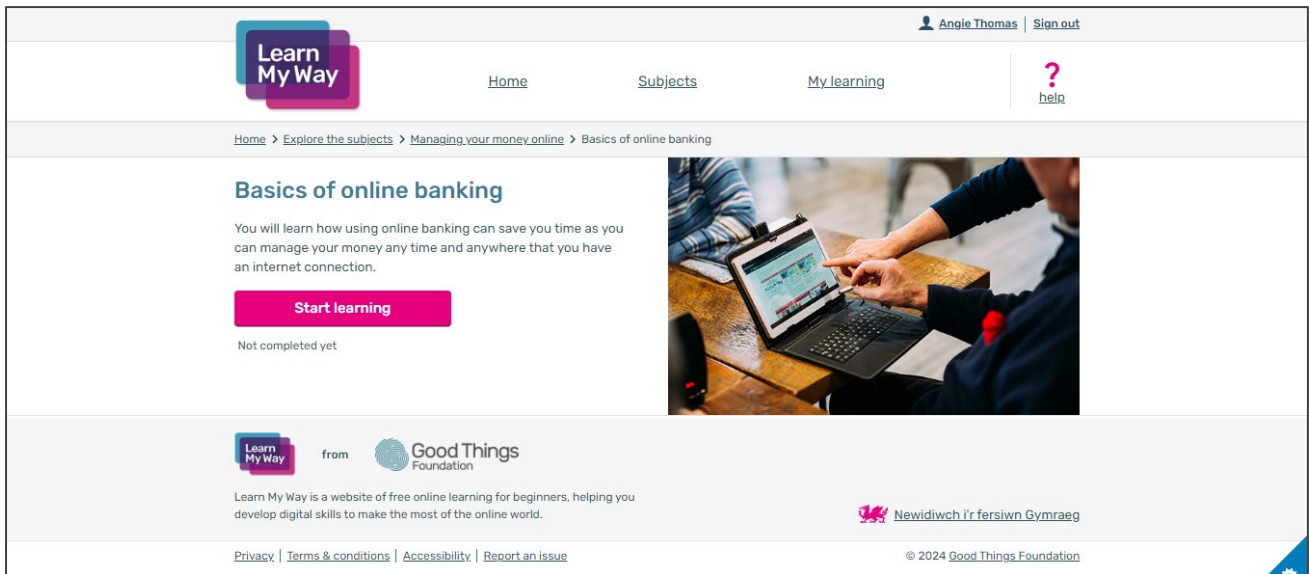
Completing their first topic

All topics are listed within their relevant subject areas. Start by selecting the word Subjects, selecting the required subject, and then help your learner scroll through the topics. They may need help to understand what each of the topics will cover and whether it will be relevant to them.

As an example, if you are helping your learner understand online banking you should choose the subject Managing your money online. There are various topics in here that cover online banking, the best one to start with would be Basics of online banking.

When they have chosen the topic, they begin by selecting 'Start learning.'

Navigating through the topics

To move between screens and progress through the topic select Continue or Previous:

Most topics have a quiz question at the end. Reassure your learner that it doesn't matter if they get the answers wrong, it's not a test. They can choose to repeat the quizzes, but there is no pass grade, so getting the answers right isn't essential. If instead of reading the onscreen text, your learner would prefer to have the contents on the screen read out to them, they can select the speaker icon. This is displayed in the top right corner of each topic screen.

Encouraging your learners

Here are some tips that will help ensure your learners feel comfortable and learn at their best:

- Let them do it themselves- don't control the computer for them or read things out.
- Encourage them to take it slowly and to take notes if they need to.
- Make sure to take regular breaks.
- Be encouraging and supportive and let them repeat things if they need to. Remind them how far they have already come.

At the end of a session:

- Congratulate them!
- Ask them to summarise what they have learnt.
- Get them to think about a practical way they could use what they have learnt.
- They could move onto another lesson, or you could make a plan for what they will do in their own time, or in the next session.

Case study: A turning point was discovering Learn My Way

"15 years ago, my life was on a downward spiral. I had just got out of an abusive relationship, and I had to be moved for my own safety. From there, my mental health declined.

I decided to make an appointment at the doctors and after one of my sessions I noticed a poster for digital classes. I was desperate to learn new skills and get out of the house. I knew I needed something to sharpen my mind. I wasn't interacting with any people, so I thought why not just go for it, you've got to open your hands to receive. I came to North Manchester Community Partnership and started the Learn My Way courses, and it was brilliant.

Learning how to use a computer helped me to do so many things. It helped me to sort out my medication, I learnt how to order my prescription on the NHS app which I didn't have a clue how to do before. Now I know how to use comparison sites, do online shopping and more. I improved my skills so much that I was able to become a digital mentor at the hub and now I've been working here for 6 years."

Section 3. Great ways to use Learn My Way to boost someone's digital skills

In this section we will look at using Learn My Way as part of your continued support for learners, some imaginative ways you can use it in sessions, and how to encourage independent learning.

Running sessions with Learn My Way

The Learn My Way platform can be used in a variety of ways to deliver a 'blended' digital skills session. Here is a suggested structure for a session (suitable for both individual learners and groups).

Suggested structure for a Learn My Way blended digital skills session:

✓ Short introduction to the topic(s)
✓ Learner completes Learn My Way topic(s) (with support if necessary)
✓ Short break
✓ Learner completes a practice activity
✓ Reflection- What did they learn? What did they find easy/hard? Was there anything they were surprised about?
✓ Next steps- How will they use what they've learnt? What would they like to do next? What will they do before you next see them?

In this video Digital Champions from Barnsley Council talk about how they structure their sessions using Learn My Way.

There are many other ways you can structure Learn My Way sessions, here are a few ideas:

● Start the session with the learner completing a topic and get them to teach you or someone else what they have learnt.
● Create your own quizzes or treasure hunts and get your learners to find the answers from within Learn My Way topics.
● Ask a learner to think about what they already know and anything they don't understand before they start a topic. Review with them at the end to see if their questions have been answered.

Continual learning

Learn My Way is the perfect place for learners to gain confidence in their ability to learn independently. After they have completed a few topics, they may be ready to plan their own learning journey. You can assist them in selecting the topics best suited to their needs. To increase their chances of success, keep their learning journey manageable. A good length for an initial plan is 4-6 weeks, before reviewing. It's better for them to exceed their plan than to fall behind.

Suggested topics for 4 weeks of learning:

Beginners 4 week course Using a computer	Intermediate 4 week course Getting further with the internet
Week 1 Parts of a computer Turning computers on and off	Week 1 Basics of online safety Keeping devices safe
Week 2 Changing settings on a computer Basics of using a keyboard	Week 2 Benefits of using search engines Moving around websites Searching websites
Week 3 Basics of using a mouse Clicking with a mouse Scrolling with a mouse	Week 3 Using and saving website addresses Saving things from the internet
Week 4 Using programme and managing files Introduction to the internet	Week 4 Online behaviours Dealing with online scams

Once a learner is learning independently, your sessions can shift to focusing on areas they find challenging. Keep encouraging them to apply what they learn in their daily life. Celebrate their successes!

Sessions for groups

Many of the session ideas we've mentioned above will work equally well with groups. Some learners will benefit from the social aspect of learning in a group, so build in time for interactions by, for example:

- Allowing learners to help each other. Often people learn well from people in the same position as them.
- Making time for discussions. What have they learnt, or were surprised about? How would they use what they've learnt?
- Gathering feedback. A discussion around how they have found the sessions will help you make improvements and choose future topics.

Some learners will complete topics faster than others, so make sure you have some extra tasks ready, or get them to move onto the next topic or even take a break!

"I'm getting data, a device and skills support which is just amazing. I'm ambitious about my life now – about where I can go and what I can achieve. It's helped me want to live again and helped me heal. The light has come back into my life." Victoria

Learn My Way for special groups of learners

The flexibility of Learn My Way means it can be adapted to be used with a wide variety of learners, we will look at some examples below. The Good Things Foundation news page on their website is full of inspirational, real-life stories.

Learners with no or low levels of English or asylum seekers

The topics in Learn My Way have a text to speech function which is useful for those with low levels of English or those with sight loss. To use this, select the speaker icon on each screen.

There is a Welsh version of Learn My Way and there is the option to easily switch between the Welsh and English versions at the bottom of each screen.

Switch to the English site ⇄ | 🐉 Newidiwch i'r fersiwn Gymraeg

If learners would prefer to read Learn My Way in another language, the site can be translated using the built in Google Translate in the Chrome browser. See Google's guide to changing and translating languages on web pages to see how to do this.

Asylum seekers who already have good levels of English and digital skills can still benefit from Learn My Way by completing topics that help them understand and access services in the UK, such as Using government services online and Finding health services near you.

> *"Learn My Way taught me how to use my GP's website, the Home Office website and how to make an appointment online." Amer*

Using Learn My Way to get learners ready for their own devices

If your organisation supports learners to gain access to devices or an internet connection, then you could make completing some, or all of the topics on Learn My Way a requirement. Ensuring that someone has the required basic digital skills can boost the chances that they will make the most of their new devices.

The impact of improved digital skills and providing devices and free or affordable internet can literally be life-changing for those that are digitally excluded.
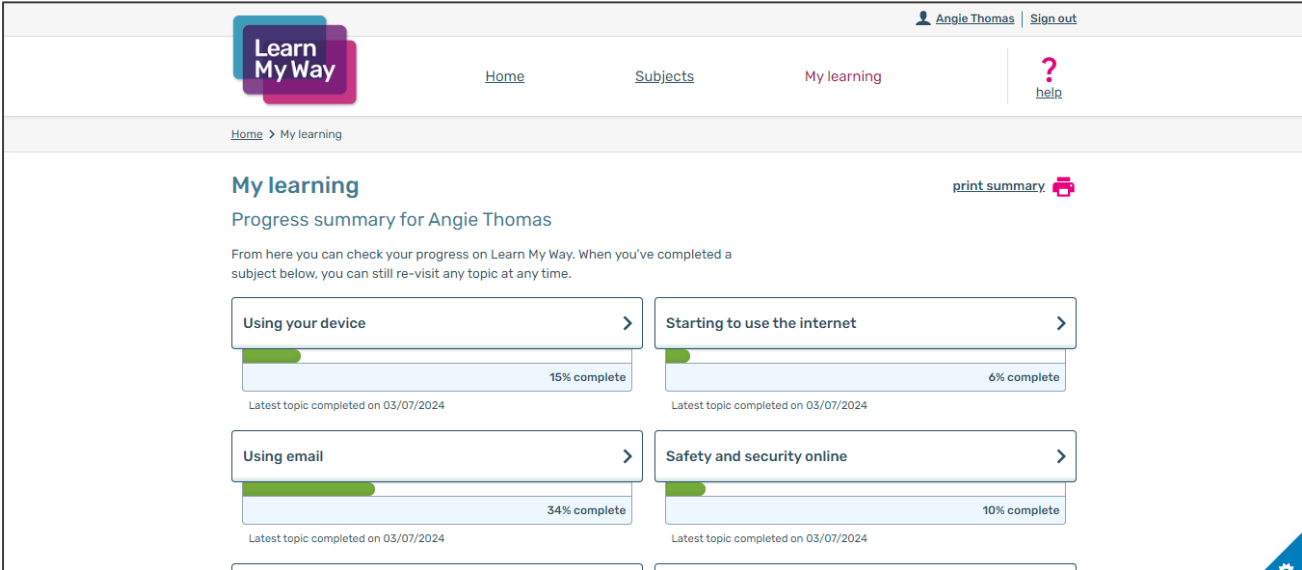
Using Learn My Way for remote learning

If you are unable to meet your learner face-to-face, then you could introduce them to Learn My Way in a video call. Your learner will need to know the basics of getting online, or alternatively have support to join the call. In the call you can use screen sharing to get them registered on Learn My Way. Once they have registered and started learning, you could use future video calls to discuss their learning, answer questions and plan future topics.

These guides from Digital Unite have some top tips on running remote sessions

Checking learners progress and celebrating their success!

It's easy for a learner to check their own progress on Learn My Way by selecting 'My Learning' in the main menu. If they want to share their learning with someone else, then they can print their learning summary.

Moving learners on and further support

When a learner has finished on Learn My Way, they will hopefully feel confident online. They can still go back and revisit topics, but you could also encourage them to continue with their learning elsewhere. Here's some ideas for things to do next:

- Do more advanced training e.g. Barclays Digital Wings.
- Improve their skills in areas employers look for in the Government's Skills Toolkit.
- Some learners may be ready to move onto accredited training, they can search for courses through the National Careers Service.
- Help others by becoming a Digital Champion. Often those who have recent similar experiences are the best placed to help others in the same situation.

Links

Section 1

- Learn My Way www.learnmyway.com
- Explore the subjects, Learn My Way www.learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects
- Technology guides, Digital Unite www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides
- Video, Learn My Way https://youtu.be/NGp0M0NL6TU
- Benchill Community Centre case study https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover/stories-and-case-studies/stories-and-case-studies-2024/stories-from-the-network-mrs-independent-living-benchill-community-centre.html

Section 2

- Resources, Good Things Foundation www.goodthingfoundation.org/discover/digital-inclusion-resources
- Helping people with learning disabilities to use computers www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/easy-read-technology-guides/helping-people-learning-disabilities-use-technology
- Digital Unite, technology guides www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides
- Video: Registering on Learn My Way https://youtu.be/dx2K7bo1g2U

Section 3

- Delivering digital skills with Learn My Way, video (Barnsley Council) https://youtu.be/UqHoe_SgPnQ
- Good Things Foundation News www.goodthingsfoundation.org/discover
- Welsh version of Learn My Way www.wales.learnmyway.com/
- Being a remote Digital Champion, Digital Unite www.digitalunite.com/technology-guides/remote-meetings-and-support/remote-support-and-meetings/being-remote-digital
- Barclays Digital Wings https://digital.wings.uk.barclays/
- Government Digital Skills Toolkit www.skillsforcareers.education.gov.uk/pages/training-choice/skills-toolkit
- National Careers Service course search https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course