

GETTING MORE CONFIDENT WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY **ONGOING HELP THAT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU**

Hello everyone, I've been looking into what ongoing technical support is available that could help members take advantage of digital technology more confidently.

I found that supposed local 'digital hubs' don't seem to exist any more, or where they do they don't now offer that type of service. I did however come across '**AbilityNet**' who are a national charity that provides free advice, support and practical help with digital technology to older and disabled people. Their DBS-checked **Tech Volunteers can provide help by telephone, remotely or, where available (see below), through home visits.** The service includes help with computers, tablets, smartphones and other smart devices - including setting up equipment, troubleshooting problems and making your technology easier for you to use.

Other key points about AbilityNet:

- Founded by IBM and Microsoft in 1998, AbilityNet is a global leader in digital inclusion and digital accessibility for disabled and older people (from their website)
- When last reported in 2025 they had 573 Tech Support volunteers across the UK. Every year since 2021 has seen a rise in that number (350 in 2021)
- Their Helpline advises that there is currently (October '26) a 7 - 10 day wait, from the initial contact with AbilityNet, for a volunteer to make contact
- Availability of local home visits varies across the UK, but they advise that they have quite of good network of volunteers in this part of Yorkshire and a local coordinator
- They have a relationship with the national u3a and host free 'webinars' (an online seminar) from time to time, which any u3a member can attend
- They are very much geared up for tech support rather than delivering formal training courses, but they do provide step by step guides and fact sheets aimed at making your device better meet your needs
- **The Tech Support they provide is free**

Please note that AbilityNet does **not**:

- provide a commercial computer repair / replacement parts service
- guarantee to fix every technical issue themselves, e.g. a software fault may be identified which would need to be addressed by the manufacturer, a serious security issue etc.

Our Committee has agreed to let members know about this service so that you can, if you wish, take advantage of it. If you do, please feedback to the Committee regarding your experience with it.

AbilityNet can be contacted online via <https://abilitynet.org.uk/free-tech-support-and-info>

AbilityNet can be contacted by phone on [0300 180 0028](tel:03001800028)

In addition to tech support from AbilityNet, there is an '**IT Buddy**' volunteer based at **Tadcaster Community Library** which is another option. Please note that it is best to book time in advance with the IT Buddy. A few other volunteers at the Library are also able to give assistance for people needing to engage with local public services e.g. bus pass, blue badge applications etc.