XMA chromeOS

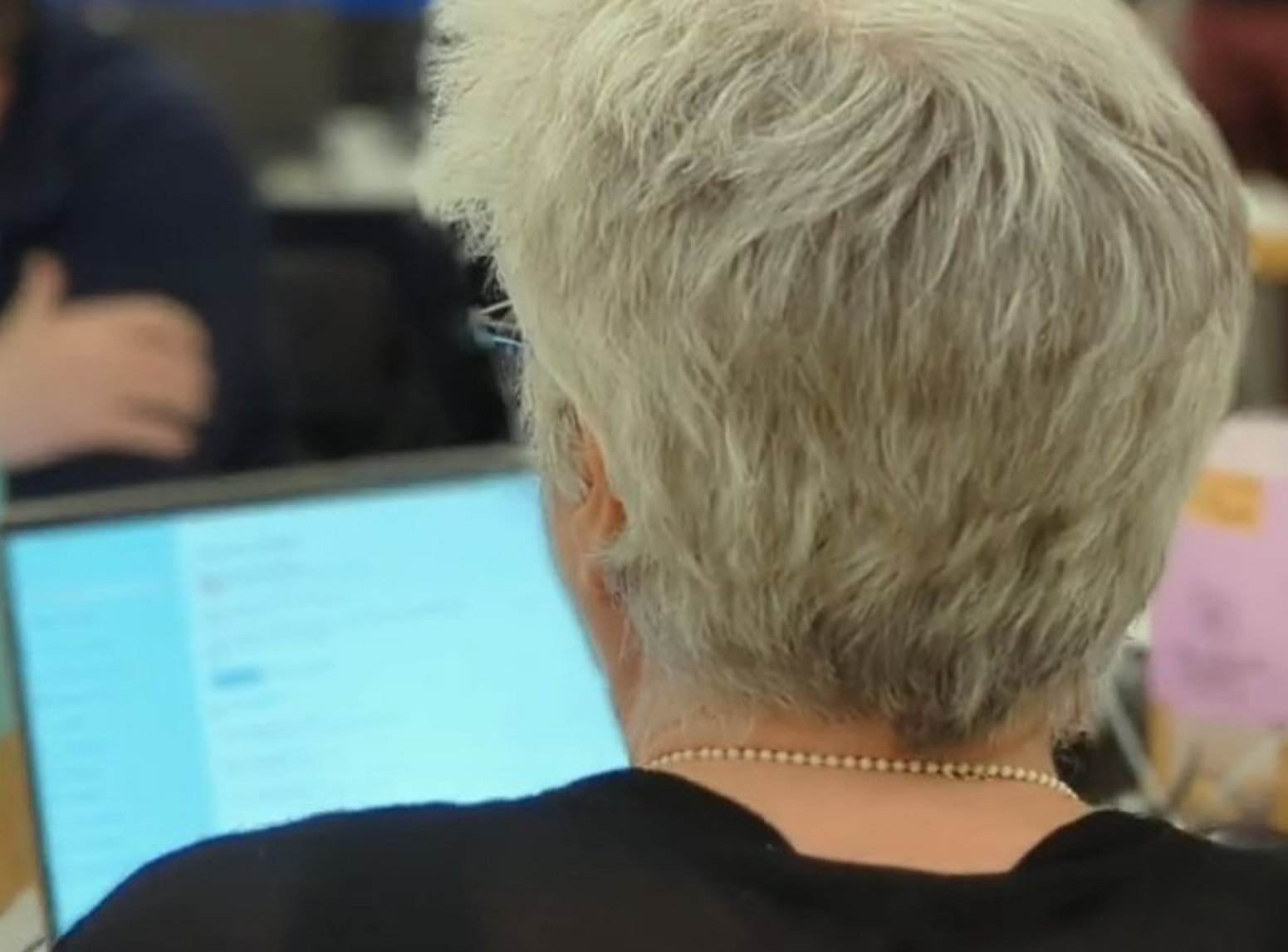**Case study**

XMA Supports Framework Housing Association

in Leveraging Google ChromeOS Flex for Digital Inclusion

✳ Framework
For your future

FHA's Digital Inclusion Initiative

**For many FHA residents, technology wasn't an upgrade; it was an insurmountable barrier.
The donated computers they received were outdated, plagued by slow speeds and security risks.**
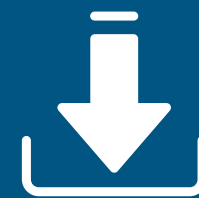Each frustrating attempt to file a benefits claim or search for housing online was a reminder of the wider opportunities out of reach. FHA needed a solution that was affordable, secure, and most importantly, fostered confidence, not discouragement.

When FHA learned about ChromeOS Flex, an operating system to convert old PCs and Macs, they saw more than a seamless operating system. It represented a chance to turn old, unreliable machines into gateways for access, with the added bonus of robust security features. ChromeOS Flex's built-in protections against viruses and malware offered vital peace of mind for residents handling sensitive personal data. Partnering with XMA, a Google Partner specialising in ChromeOS Flex, they secured the necessary Non-Profit Chrome Enterprise Upgrade licenses seamlessly, allowing them to focus on the more crucial task at hand, upgrading donated Windows devices. As devices were transformed with ChromeOS Flex, something else began to shift. The intuitive interface, reliable performance, and robust security replaced frustration with a streamlined user experience. In partnership with XMA's seamless licensing model, FHA could rapidly expand the programme to meet the overwhelming demand.

Introduction

Framework Housing Association (FHA) knows that a home is more than just four walls and a roof. It's a foundation for opportunity. But in an increasingly digital world, those without reliable internet access and devices are being left behind. The pandemic laid bare this digital divide – residents struggled to navigate online services that were suddenly the primary gateway to housing, benefits, and even healthcare information.

FHA sought a solution by forming a dedicated Digital Inclusion team funded by a grant from the Access Foundation. **ChromeOS Flex played a key role in the success of this project.**

ChromeOS Flex Features:

Ease of use	Easy to install	Speeds up old devices	Cost-effective	Secure and compliant

Key Programme Components

No longer locked out of the digital world, residents used their repurposed laptops to apply for jobs, manage Universal Credit claims with ease, and access health information. FHA went beyond the machines, offering digital literacy courses that demystified technology and gave learners the understanding they needed to navigate digital spaces. ChromeOS Flex's simplicity and security mirrored this effort, making it effortless to utilise, wherever people were in their digital journey.

The fight against digital poverty is too big for any one organisation. FHA partnered with the Access Foundation, the NHS, and others, pooling resources and sharing expertise. ChromeOS Flex extended the life of old devices, giving them a second chance while minimising e-waste.

This sustainable approach resonated with residents, making them feel part of a solution bigger than themselves. XMA's streamlined licensing allowed FHA to scale quickly. Residents didn't have to endure the anguish of long wait times for the tools they needed to improve their lives.
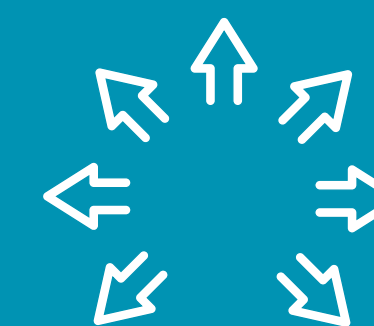

Results and Impact

Over 350 revitalised laptops have been deployed across 45 services in Sheffield, Nottingham, Derbyshire, and Lincolnshire, with plans for a further 50.

"It's been great to roll out fast and resilient ChromeOS Flex devices to our hostels across the East Midlands. Residents are now able to use them to help them in their journey towards independent living. Google Admin Console gives us the control to manage a large number of devices with minimal intervention. We have also used these devices to facilitate digital skills training and run specialised training around tasks such as job search and health training. It was definitely the right decision to kick start our journeys towards tackling digital exclusion."

Kevin Rookes, Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator

Deployed across 45 different services

Over 350 revitalised laptops

4 different counties benefited so far

The programme's success extended beyond inclusion.

FHA have recruited 10 volunteer Digital Champions to support the programme. This group have provided valuable support to service users. Edward, a Digital Champion, was able to

"receive a Chromebook laptop to allow me to work digitally while away from home, as well as a new low-end Android smartphone to be able to use modern apps like Zoom while on the go to take calls."

Edward now volunteers his time as a Digital Champion to support others on the programme.

Expanding the Programme and Future Outlook

FHA envisions their model inspiring other housing associations and local authorities. With partners like XMA simplifying the licensing process for large-scale projects, this vision becomes achievable for organisations nationwide. Libraries, NHS trusts, and job centres represent a network of potential partners to further amplify the programme's reach.

This work directly aligns with the UK government's "Transforming for a Digital Future" roadmap.

Conclusion

Framework Housing Association's initiative proves that the digital divide isn't inevitable. With the right solution, strategic partnerships, and a focus on both technology and skills, we can create a more inclusive digital world. With XMA and ChromeOS Flex, you can unlock a powerful and easy to manage solution to bridge the digital divide.

The benefits for FHA residents extend beyond technical access; the program also fosters confidence and opens economic possibilities. This successful model could inspire similar initiatives among housing providers, charities, and government agencies across the UK, working to ensure digital inclusion for all.

[1] Sutton-Parker, J. (2022), 'Quantifying greenhouse gas abatement delivered by alternative computer operating system displacement strategies'. 1877-0509. Procedia Computer Science. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Science Direct, Elsevier B.V.

[2] Accenture: ChromeOS Flex Shared Value Model, 2023