UNISON
East Midlands

THE UNISON DIGITAL CHAMPION

WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

WHAT IS A DIGITAL CHAMPION?

A Digital Champion is the name given to somebody who supports people to overcome a lack of confidence or skills to get online and use computers. The so called 'Digital Divide' means that many are missing out and the Digital Champion offers friendly support. They can do this as 1-2-1, as a 'surgery' or even organise a course.

WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

In 2023 the UK Parliament's Communications and Digital Committee published its report on Digital Exclusion and noted:

"4m people are still unable to complete a single basic digital task to get online. 5m workers will be acutely under skilled in basic digital skills by 2030. 7m households have no broadband or mobile internet access. £63bn is lost each year to the UK economy each year due to overall digital skills shortages."

HOW TO APPLY?

Visit: https://eastmidlands.unison.org.uk/follow-on-training-for-reps/ .
For more information contact:
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UNISON
DIGITAL CHAMPION

YOU'LL EVEN GET A BADGE!

BUT IS IT A UNION ISSUE?

Greater impact on older people

Members unable to check payslips

Digital skills needed for promotion

Mobile-only can make learning difficult

Society assumes - members miss out

Impact on time

Lack of confidence

Members missing out on vital union communications

Mandatory training is online

Financial impact - often discounts online

Loneliness/social isolation

UNISON forms, including There for You, are online

Clear link to low pay

Productivity and ability to work from home

=EQUALITIES

WHAT EXACTLY WOULD A DIGITAL CHAMPION DO?

JUST SOME OF THE THINGS A CHAMPION COULD DO....

Run a regular drop-in where members can ask for help

Tell the manager you're here to help

Carry out a survey of skills needs

Make members aware of support and courses provided by community group, councils etc

Make contact with the Training manager

Ask other reps to help

Make the link to the branch's priorities. Consider Health & Safety, Equalities etc. and work with branch officers

Challenge the employer. Are they ensuring equal access? Are they training staff? Are they providing equipment?
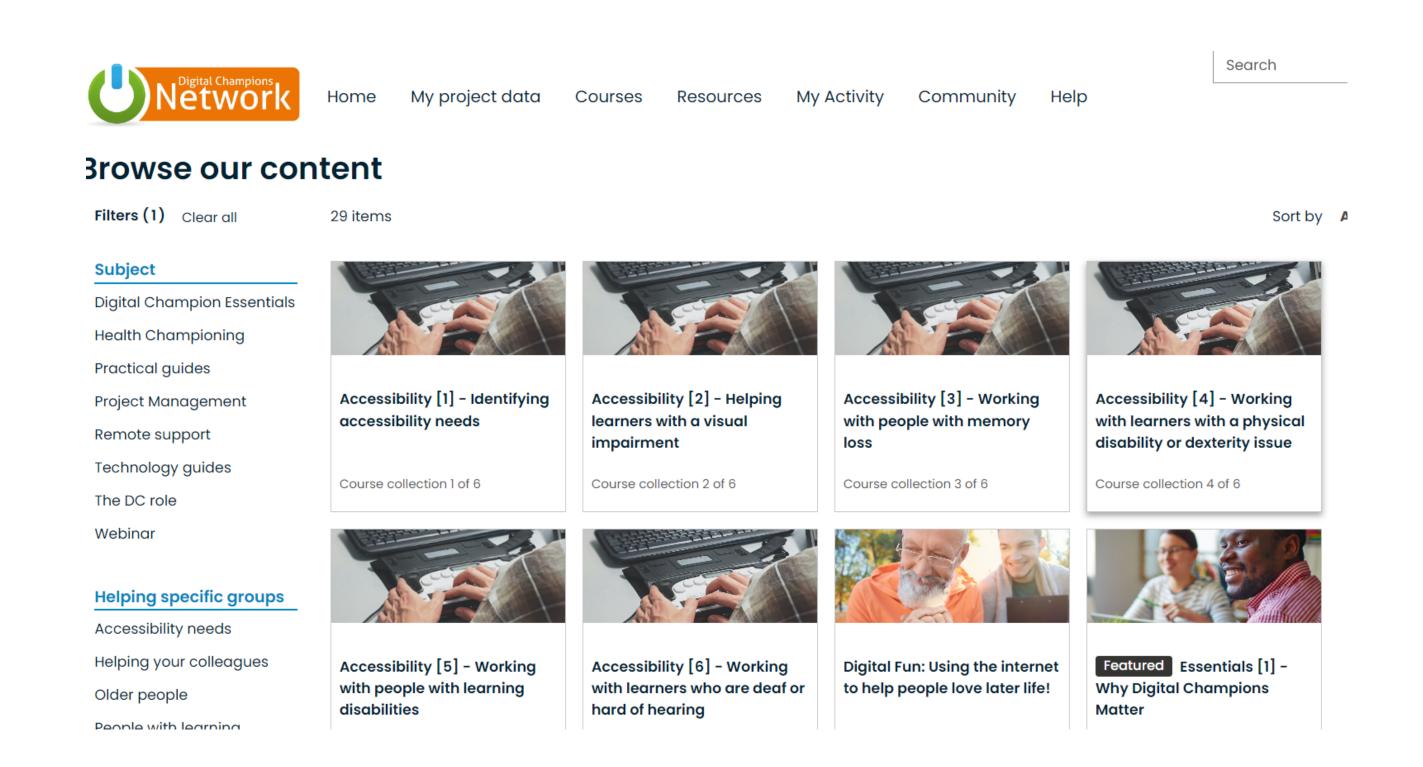
BRING IN A TRAINING PROVIDER AND ORGANISE A COURSE ONSITE

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED AND WHAT TRAINING IS AVAILABLE?

Digital Champions do need to have some IT skills. You don't need to be an 'IT whizz', just confidence to show members how to get online, use emails and social media and other basic functions

The training to become a Champion is online and provided by Digital Unite. There are almost 30 modules which are all CPD accredited. They help Champions identify what they want to do, how to do it and provide support to specific groups

CASE STUDY: MARCUS SHARP – NOTTINGHAM CITY. STEWARD & ULR

"As a steward working in Parks I've always been really aware that members miss out on so much. A lot of the communication is via emails and most of the training is online. My members often struggle with IT but often don't want to mention it. When the opportunity to become a Digital Champion came up I jumped at it and it's one of the best things I've done. At first the response was slow but slowly members started asking me for help. One older member asked if I could help him make videocalls on his phone so he can chat to his granddaughter in Australia. I showed him how to do that and get on to Facebook. Then he came to me as he'd had an accident at work and wanted to put in a claim. The form was online so I had to show him how to get on to it and fill it in. I sat with him while he did this and he won a significant amount of money.

More members started coming to see me including two on a chemical course. I showed them how to download apps that will help them and with other IT issues. They were the only ones to pass and now the manager is sending people to see me!"