



Health+



Reaching People  
Commitment to  
Lasting Change

## Health+ A Story of Change

This case study shows how a Health+ digital companion helped Jennifer, aged 74-79 at a Health+ digital session. The Health+ project is a project from Reaching People which organises one-hour sessions for patients at GP surgeries to support them to access GP online services. Jennifer came to the session to learn about how to order a repeat prescription, however she went away with so much more:

*“What I really wanted to do was learn about ordering prescriptions online, but I took away lots more than that. I set-up an email address for myself and set-up the NHS app and linked up with my husband via the app too. My husband doesn’t do anything with computers so linking our account was something happily unexpected.”*

Method: This case study was randomly selected from patients who attended a Health+ digital session over 3 months ago.

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### TRANSCRIPT

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## What are some of the issues faced by yourself and other over 50s when trying to access health information, book appointments online, ordering repeat prescriptions, trying to contact the surgery or using digital tools in general?

When I did have a laptop, I found it difficult to use and couldn't get onto the surgery website to order prescriptions. I knew I could do all these things on my mobile but needed that 'push'. The surgery did not take prescriptions over the phone, which meant I had to make a journey to the surgery. I'm getting to the age, and I have health conditions, where I won't be able to drive any longer. I wanted to take the opportunity to make myself a little more independent and prepare for a time when I can no longer get about so easily. Without my car, it would take me ¾ of an hour by bus and then a twenty-minute walk.

I also look after my husband's prescriptions, so learning to do these things online is vital for us both.

I came to computers very late in my life and didn't have a computer until after I retired. And I'm not computer savvy even now. Things take a lot more effort and a longer time to learn when you get to my age.

And sometimes there is just no one with the time to show you how.

## Could you describe your experience of taking part in the health+ digital surgery.

I've got grandchildren and they do try to help, but instead of showing me what to do, they do it for me. That's the difference with [Health+ volunteer]. There was patience and kindness; I wasn't told what to do. I was shown what to do and then we did it all together.

(Another organisation) were doing a similar computer course, but the tutor wasn't interested in people like me, who didn't already have some knowledge of how to do things. Their tutor only had patience for people who knew what to do.

[The Health+ Volunteer] would say 'do you understand that'. If I wasn't sure he would go over it again to make sure I understood things.

What I really wanted to do was learn about ordering prescriptions online, but I took away lots more than that. I set-up an email address for myself and set-up the NHS app and linked up with my husband via the app too. My husband doesn't do anything with computers so linking our account was something happily unexpected.

The surgery tried to help me in the past, but they just don't have the time I needed to help me use the app or the website. They tried to fix me up with the NHS app but that didn't work.

[The Health+ Volunteer] 'dumbed' things down and showed me through all the steps you need before even using the NHS app. I still remember everything because we went over things, and I did things myself. It wasn't done for me.

## What are you now able to do with your device that you could not previously?

I came in wanting to do one thing, and then I wanted to do a few more things. I was only interested in learning about how to order prescriptions. I achieved that, but I also have my own email address now and I can also check my medical records online too. I know how to book non-

emergency appointments online too – I wish you could book emergency ones too, but they don't let you do that, you have to 'phone at 8am and sometimes you have to wait ages to get through.

I didn't use the NHS app or the surgery website before my visit, but I'd say I use both more than twice a month, every month.

I was impressed with how [the Health+ volunteer] approached learning. I was helped to explore other areas, like booking appointments, which I had not considered. As I get less able to visit the surgery, these things become more important.

I noted that [the Health+ volunteer] was of an older age group and that was comforting. The (other organisation's) volunteers were younger and I felt they did not understand me or what I wanted to achieve. (Health+ volunteer) had more patience and spoke in plain English. No computer speak, no nonsense. I could understand what he said because he said things in plain English.

He used ordinary English language and that helped to make my time with him a bit more useful. I walked away from the surgery positive about what I had learned.

I'm more inclined to use the app. I think it's because your volunteer showed me how to do it in an easy way – easy to me.

And thinking of the future, if I'm only driving for another three or four years, the time I spent with [Health+ volunteer] was so much more valuable.

### How would you feel if your Health+ session was online?

I wouldn't attend an online session. I don't know how to use Zoom and I was comforted by having someone work with me individually. I could get straight into what I wanted to learn, ask questions and then do things myself while having [the Health+ volunteer] there to help me if I needed it.

If I did not understand something [Health+ volunteer] re-worded things and the time progressed just like that. I don't think I would come away just as fulfilled if this was done online. If my time with the volunteer was online, I'd put it off.

At my age, it's hard to learn new things and even harder to find someone to help you in a way that suits you and where you are in life.

### What did quants data show?

Q, 'What was your reason for attending today?'

A, 'Getting online'

Q, 'Can you book a GP appointment online or via an App?'

A, Today I've learned to book an online appointment

Q, 'Can you order a repeat prescription online or via an App?'

A, 'Today I've learned to order a repeat prescription online'

Q, 'Can you check your medical records online or via an App?'

A, 'Today I've learned to check my medical records online'

Q, 'Can you use the NHS website/app or a GP approved system to decide whether you need to see a GP or go to A&E?'

A, 'Today I've learned to find health information online'

Q, 'What else have you learned today to help with using online health services? (you can select as many options as you like)'

A,

1. I have learned how to register for online NHS health services
2. I can take part in an online or video GP consultation
3. I can setup an email account
4. I can communicate with others using email
5. I can upload documents and photographs to an online system
6. I can download documents from an online system (e.g. a sick note)
7. I can find and download official and trusted health or GP recommended health apps to my phone in a secure and safe manner. (e.g. NHS health apps)
8. I can identify secure websites by looking for the padlock and 'https' in the address bar, and by hovering over the web address
9. I can keep the information I use to access my online accounts secure, by using different and secure passwords for websites, accounts and apps

Q, 'Thinking about the support you have received today, these final statements are about your digital confidence? (please select one option per row) >> You feel more confident about finding information online to do with your health and wellbeing'

A, 'Strongly agree'

Q, 'Thinking about the support you have received today, these final statements are about your digital confidence? (please select one option per row) >> You feel more confident using online health services'

A, 'Strongly agree'

Q, 'Thinking about the support you have received today, these final statements are about your digital confidence? (please select one option per row) >> Your Digital skills have improved'

A, 'Strongly agree'