



£3.9 million funding to boost online skills



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Black Country families struggling to manage their money or find work will be given a helping hand to get online thanks to the £3.9 million Black Country Click Start project, which has recently won funding from the Building Better Opportunities programme.

Building Better Opportunities is a programme jointly funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund.

The three-year project will see Ashley Community Housing working in partnership across the region with Midlands social landlords whg and The Accord Group to deliver a range of initiatives aimed at helping vulnerable people make the most of the internet to manage their money and find training, volunteering or employment opportunities.

It will particularly target social housing tenants who will be affected by welfare reform changes such as the introduction of Universal Credit.

The Click Start partners will run a varied programme of fun activities at community venues, as well as giving people one-to-one support and training in their own homes, to boost their confidence and online skills.

The initiative will involve the recruitment and training of local people as 'Community Champions' who can informally engage with other people in their neighbourhood, encouraging them to make the most of the activities on offer.

Dave Conroy, Business Developer for Ashley Community Housing in the West Midlands, said:

"Ashley Housing are really proud to be involved in this exciting initiative and to be working with a range of partners to address some of the challenges of digital and financial exclusion. We will have an exciting set of opportunities available to help people pursue their ambitions, whether it be into work, further training or self-employment."

Other partners include Black Country Housing Group, Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau, Groundwork West Midlands, Remploy, Trident and Wolverhampton Homes.