



# Annual Report 2022–2023

**NORTH  
OF TYNE**  
~~~~~  
**DIGITAL**



Digital Pathfinders helps SMEs, charities and social enterprises across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland become more successful and resilient by adopting digital technology.

[www.digitalpathfinders.uk](http://www.digitalpathfinders.uk)

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# your route to digital success.

The fully-funded Digital Pathfinders programme supports all sectors and helps organisations better understand how to use digital, equipping them with practical use cases and hands-on support.

From basic digital adoption, the introduction of new digital products, improved processes and workflows, or larger scale digital transformation; we are here to help.

Whether you're a charity looking to improve social media presence, a restaurant owner seeking greater customer reach or an engineer requiring new ways to drive productivity, Digital Pathfinders exists to increase productivity, efficiency, and resilience through the adoption of digital technology.

Over the past twelve months, we have supported organisations across a broad range of sectors to explore the positive impact digital can have in boosting resilience and driving growth.

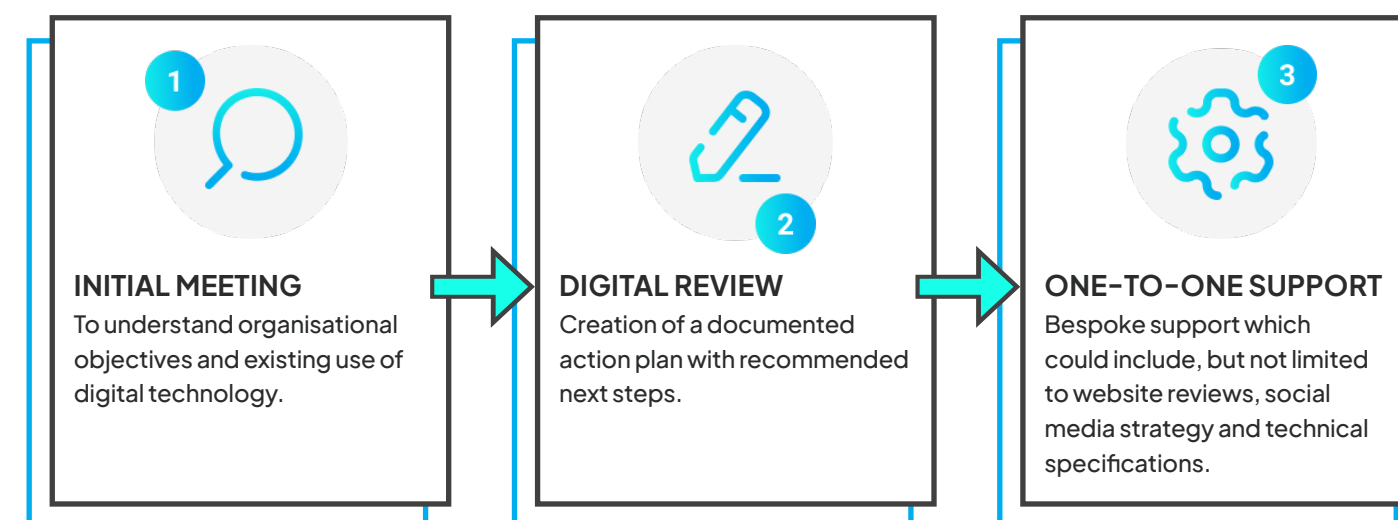


## OUR APPROACH

When it comes to digital adoption, there's no such thing as one size fits all.

Our approach means we work hard to get to know your organisation and deliver bespoke support that makes a difference.

### One to one support



### Events and workshops

#### REMOTE & IN-PERSON EVENTS

Ranging from large-scale to smaller workshops, all designed to spark new ideas and foster peer to peer collaboration.





# HARNESSING DIGITAL

## Digital adoption brings opportunity, but challenges still exist.

While the pandemic brought about challenges for many SMEs and charities, one legacy that remains is the increased adoption of digital technologies.

This increased confidence and greater use of digital brings about opportunity for organisations of all sizes to increase growth and sustainability. Yet barriers remain for smaller organisations. There is often still a lack of understanding about which technology product to choose and vagueness more generally of the role digital can play in advancing productivity (HM Government, 2022).

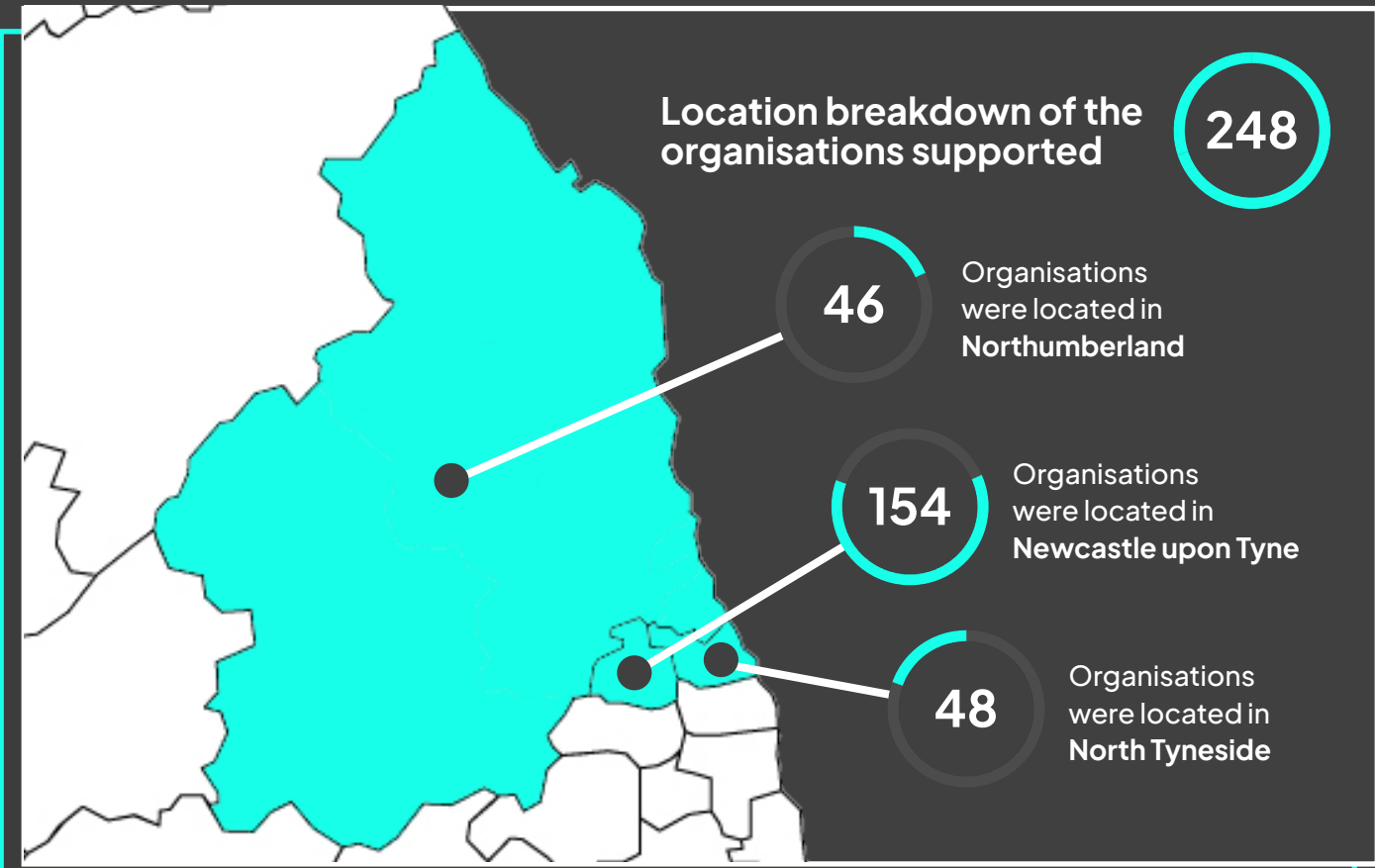
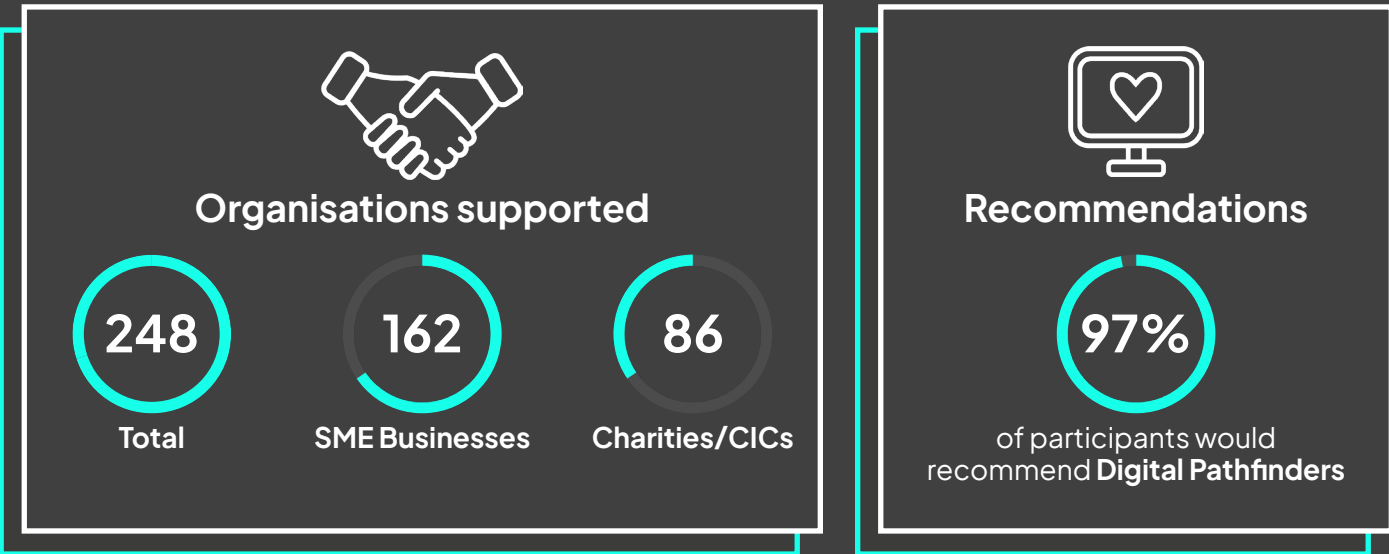
As many as 44% of UK SMEs think that the information available about specific digital solutions is confusing (HM Government, 2022). Opportunities are there to be harnessed, and with the right support, many organisations can gain from digital adoption (Public First, 2022). Digital Pathfinders exists to cut through the noise. Through tailored support, Digital Pathfinders meets the changing needs of organisations, no matter where they are on their digital adoption journey.



# OUR IMPACT

Digital Pathfinders supported a diverse range of organisations to understand the practical application of digital technologies and supported them in adopting new digital solutions.

Here are some key facts and figures so far:





# BASIC DIGITAL ADOPTION

## Making digital technology easy to implement and manage.

Digital Pathfinders’ basic digital adoption service helps organisations begin to explore and implement digital technologies.

Our team helps organisations find digital tools that suit their objectives. We explore the potential costs involved with implementing a technology, as well as the features or functionality required to stay on budget and get the best value for money.

**This could include:**

- Tailored research into potential digital solutions
- A review of current digital technologies, including existing websites
- An outline of technical requirements for implementing digital technologies
- Help with budget setting or budget management
- Help with finding funding



## BLACKFRIARS

LOCATION: NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
SECTOR: HOSPITALITY

Believed to be the UK’s oldest purpose-built dining room, Blackfriars is a 13th-century former medieval friary which incorporates a restaurant, tasting room, cookery school, banquet hall and meeting room.

Blackfriars was looking for a more user-friendly website that promoted all business areas. The website was built in 2012, when the owners only occupied the restaurant and it was built on now-outdated software.

Over the years, they have taken over new areas of the complex and now host more than 500 events per year but their website lagged behind in terms of functionality.

Digital Pathfinders made Blackfriars think about the customer journey, considering the new site had to be started from scratch. The support from Digital Pathfinders enabled Blackfriars to better understand costs for the new site and to talk through areas to focus on.



“We heard about Digital Pathfinders through North East BIPC and found the process very quick and easy. Working with the team and getting the Digital Tech Resilience Grant motivated us to get the new website up and running.”

SAM HOOK, **MARKETING DIRECTOR OF BLACKFRIARS**

## OUSEBURN FARM CHARITY

LOCATION: NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
SECTOR: AGRICULTURE

Ouseburn Farm Charity (OFC) is a city farm that supports adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. It also runs a visitor centre and has a shop and cafe on site.

Prior to accessing Digital Pathfinders, OFC had major business information, including customer and contact records, located in different places.

OFC required a CRM system to streamline the business and collate information into one place.

Digital Pathfinders organised a session with an expert to help OFC think carefully about the scope and breadth of what was needed. Thanks to this support, OFC chose the correct CRM for the organisation.



“I would definitely recommend Digital Pathfinders to other businesses. It is extremely easy to access, there is virtually no paperwork for you to complete, and the entire process was amazingly simple and useful.”

HUGH STOLLIDAY, **BUSINESS MANAGER AT OUSEBURN FARM CHARITY**



# NEW PRODUCTS & SERVICES

## Supporting the development of new digital products and services.

Whether it's an app, e-commerce website or a completely new technology; deploying a new digital product or service can be daunting and time-consuming.

Digital Pathfinders helps organisations in developing a process for adopting new products or services. From initial product roadmaps to support with procurement, our team are there to help every step of the way.

### This could include:

- Website user journey
- Functional specification
- Help creating pitch decks for investment
- Procurement support



## SPORTFIN

LOCATION: NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
SECTOR: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Sportfin helps community sport organisations quantify their impact by digitising their day-to-day activities and helping them monetise this data to access more funding.

When first approaching Digital Pathfinders, the business was in its early stages and the main product was still being developed.

Sportfin needed to identify not only what the product looks like, but also how to generate the most value for its target audience.

Digital Pathfinders organised a series of workshops to explore various user personas to determine Sportfin's client base. This valuable insight greatly influenced the product's design, ensuring it delivered significant value for all personas.



"The support from Digital Pathfinders was really useful and, after the workshops, it was very flexible. Priorities change very quickly in an early-stage startup and Digital Pathfinders helped massively with managing these priorities."

SIDDESH IYER, **MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SPORTFIN**

## TRIBUCO KNOWLEDGE BASE

LOCATION: NORTHUMBERLAND  
SECTOR: TRAINING PROVIDER

Tribuco enables businesses to continuously improve in underperforming areas in health safety and quality control through micro-training.

This micro-training is monitored and supplied to clients via a 'knowledge base' system that includes various apps and portals.

Tribuco needed support with a functional/tech

specification, as well as articulating a value proposition to showcase when seeking funding.

Digital Pathfinders played a crucial role in helping Tribuco formulate an effective marketing strategy. Additionally, the team conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Tribuco's current platform, identifying and addressing various functionality issues through collaborative efforts.



"I would highly recommend Digital Pathfinders. The process was very helpful and having someone from the outside coming in to give a different approach was extremely valuable."

IVAN CARR, **MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TRIBUCO KNOWLEDGE BASE**



# WORKFLOW & PROCESSES

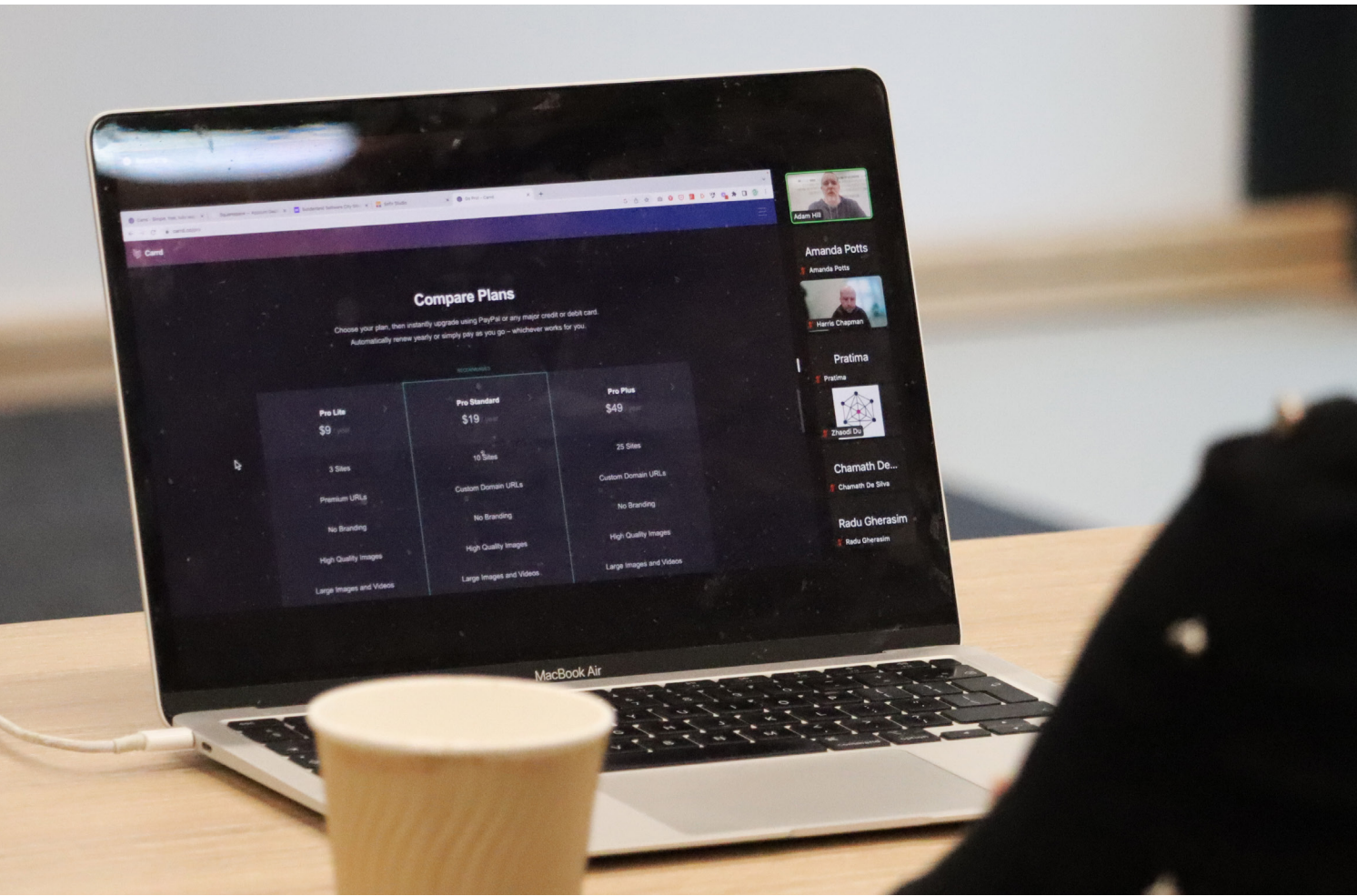
## Improving productivity by digitising work systems.

Digital Pathfinders can help organisations assess the most efficient ways of automating and integrating existing digital systems.

The team can help produce recommendations on how different digital and non-digital programmes can integrate seamlessly at work, mapping out systems that are already in use, while optimising data and GDPR compliance.

**This could include:**

- Reviewing how digital systems can be integrated more efficiently
- Tailored recommendations on using data more efficiently
- Help with budget setting
- A GDPR audit with recommendations



## SEE HER THRIVE

LOCATION: NORTH TYNESIDE  
SECTOR: BUSINESS SUPPORT

See Her Thrive (SHT) is a charity that helps organisations to attract and retain female talent. It provides training and consultancy on women’s health issues such as menopause and menstruation.

SHT had outgrown its current website; it had not been updated for over 3 years and was not fit for purpose.

SHT sought to revamp its website to help showcase business objectives, mission and clients. It also wanted to introduce a new course booking system to facilitate booking onto a new service.

Digital Pathfinders held regular workshops and guided SHT through the entire process, including developing customer profiles and creating site wireframes.



“The process was very clear and structured and we felt at ease asking questions to things we didn’t understand. It was an extremely fun creative journey! We would highly recommend Digital Pathfinders to any business needing support.”

CLARE KNOX, **DIRECTOR OF SEE HER THRIVE**

## STAND-UP MARKETING

LOCATION: NORTH TYNESIDE  
SECTOR: ADVERTISING PUBLISHING AND MARKETING

John McRae set up Stand-up Marketing to support businesses, mainly public and private sector startups, with strategic and online marketing.

John found that many businesses struggled with implementing a comprehensive plan to identify how to achieve their goals. In addition, plans were predominantly paper based but needed to be an online platform.

An initial discovery workshop with the Digital Pathfinders team helped John learn more about what the platform needed to do. The team also produced an industry report to provide a comparative marketplace view.

Following this, the team facilitated a benchmarking session via Miro, focusing on web and mobile user experience, to provide additional insight.



“The team at Digital Pathfinders was amazing! The bespoke service they offer is unique and was a game changer for the platform; I would 100% recommend this support to anyone.”

JOHN MCRAE, **MARKETING CONSULTANT AND MENTOR AT STAND-UP MARKETING**



# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

## Making digital transformation easy to achieve.

We provide free and local support to help you start using or improve the way you use digital technology.

An efficient digital business uses integrated digital systems that make data processing easier and are easily usable by staff.

The Digital Pathfinders team can help you understand how best to overhaul your business through digital; ensuring systems are integrated, affordable, easy to use, and compliant with data protection requirements.

### This could include:

- A digital review of how the company is currently using digital
- Producing recommendations for system automation
- A user experience assessment that will support user-centric digital transformation
- Training plans to assist staff with digital transformation



## +ADD STRATEGY

LOCATION: NORTHUMBERLAND  
SECTOR: PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES

+ADD Strategy is an innovation partnership agency. Paul Sutherland, senior partner at +ADD Strategy, has been involved in commercialising ideas and technology for 25 years.

The team recently won a national competition and £50,000 in seed funding. The initiative was to develop a unique 'serious learning games' game creation platform called BrightGame.

The team sought to build a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and how to better understand the broader technical requirements and systems architecture.

Digital Pathfinders facilitated a workshop series on the scalable framework needed and helped build a common vision and early design concepts. The team also supported broader insight into the size of the undertaking, skills and resources required for later platform scaling.



"There was a real sense of interest and engagement from the Digital Pathfinders team; it felt like they really wanted to see our development community come together and succeed. The help received was genuinely valuable and made a real impact on our thinking and cohesion."

PAUL SUTHERLAND, SENIOR PARTNER AT +ADD STRATEGY



## CONTACT US

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### Images

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