

Digital Recovery College:

Supporting our clients through online learning

Our Recovery Colleges provide an inclusive learning, training and employment experience for people in recovery from homelessness. Since the pandemic struck our team acted innovatively to move online, running over **4,500** virtual sessions. Lara Farah, Digital Recovery College Manager, shares how the team supported clients in going digital and the benefits this has had.

At the beginning of the pandemic, running activities and lessons remotely was challenging for clients and staff alike. We had moments where we were not sure if this new way of learning would suit our client group. But the team did an amazing job at mastering the complexities involved in delivering online sessions, while also supporting clients to adapt to a new online world.

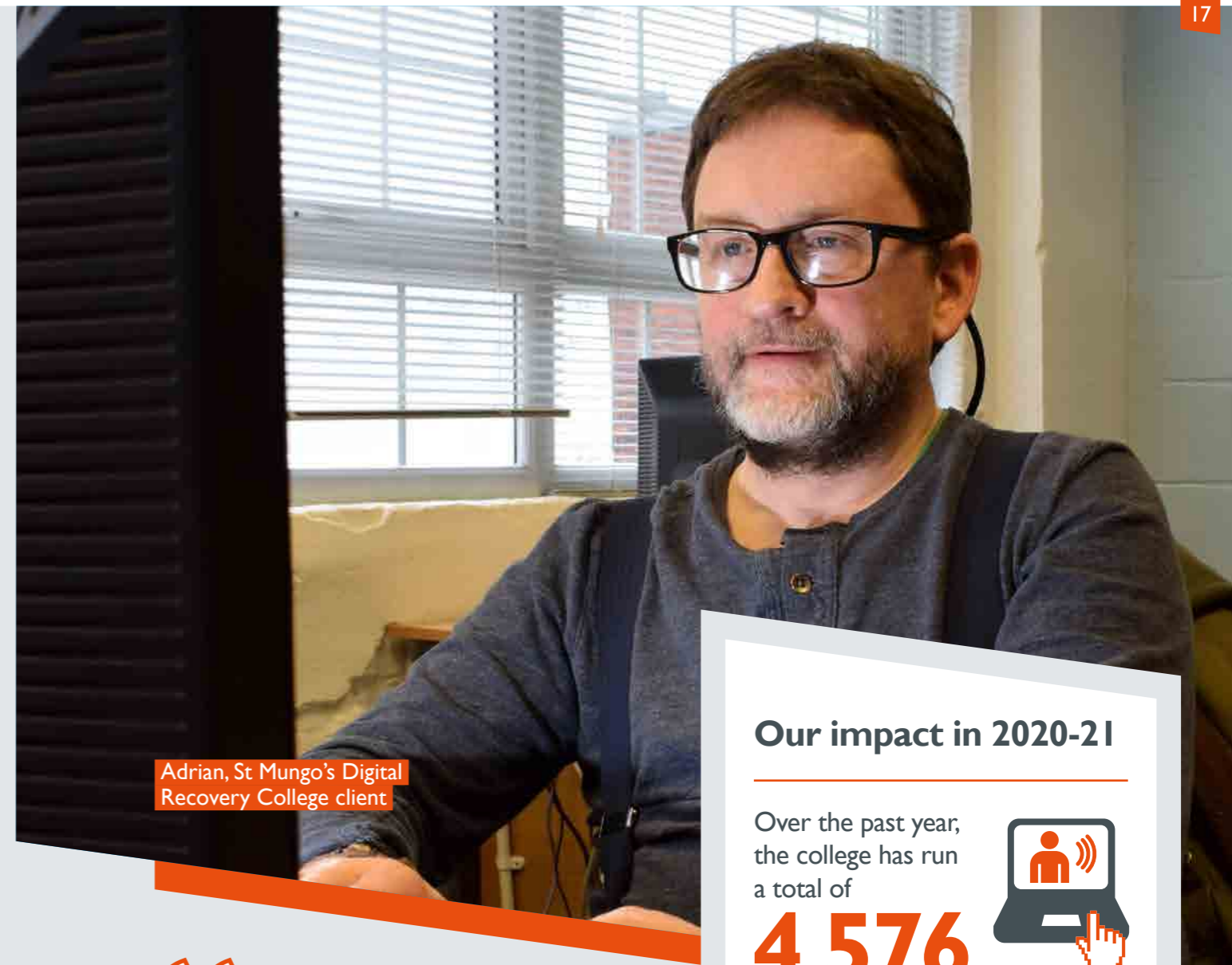
Initially, many of our clients had a lack of digital skills and some also did not have access to the right technology to access our online courses. Fortunately, Tesco Mobile and Clarion Housing Group generously donated 550 smartphones to our clients. We then worked with We Are Digital and Lloyds Bank Academy to develop a tailored smartphone course teaching people how to stay safe online, connect with community groups, and use key apps like NHS and HMRC.

I am so proud of what the team, our wonderful volunteers and our clients have achieved this year. By working together we have been able to deliver more than 2,300 one-to-one coaching and employment sessions and have supported more than 80 clients into employment, further education and volunteering positions, helping to pave their path away from the streets permanently.

Being online has helped us reach more clients from across our services. It has been amazing to watch people go from being anxious about technology to using it to improve their lives. In the future we are hoping to provide a blended learning programme of both online and in person courses. We cannot wait to start the next chapter.



Main photo, above right: taken in 2019, this year we have continued to boost students' digital skills online



Adrian, St Mungo's Digital Recovery College client



"It is such a pleasure to be part of the Recovery College. The classes have been ace. They're a great way to connect with other people and have kept me learning.

I've learnt so much about many different things – including how to use Google Hangouts! It's not always been straightforward, but using video and making virtual connections is now simple and it's given me the chance to connect with others during this tough time."

Gennoria, Recovery College student

Our impact in 2020-21

Over the past year, the college has run a total of

4,576

live activity attendances.



Over the year the team have delivered

217

one-to-one digital support sessions.



This past year the team have delivered a total of

2,339

coaching and employment sessions and 83 clients have gone on to start volunteering, take part in external education and training opportunities or gain employment.

