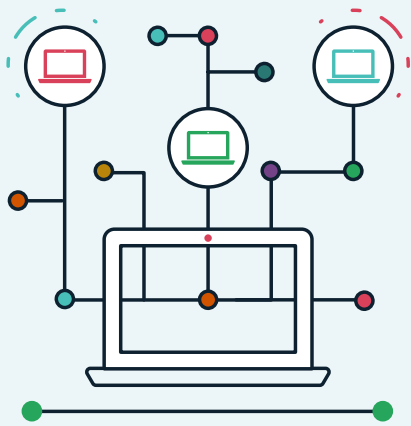


Everyone Connected

Funded by Barclays and delivered by Good Things Foundation and the Online Centres Network

September to December 2020





No. Devices & Connectivity: 428 devices with connectivity

Good Things Foundation engaged with **47 community partners** who distributed devices and connectivity, supported people in their local community to set them up and provided ongoing support to the beneficiaries.

65% have used the device to continue learning digital skills

51% to manage their health or that of someone else

69% to keep up-to-date with the news



62% used it to support their children's learning.

90% of device recipients say they are more confident with digital technology since receiving their device. While only **4%** were not regular users of the internet prior to receiving their device, almost a third needed considerable support

89% have used their device to stay in touch with family and friends



Key Finding 1: Consolidation of support at community hubs

For a handful of community partners taking part in Everyone Connected, Covid-19 saw the building they had previously operated from close. This presented an immediate challenge to these organisations that were needing to maintain an element of face to face contact with the people they support. A handful of organisations were however, able to relocate into multi-use community spaces such as local health hubs. In these new locations, they worked alongside food banks, Citizens Advice hubs, health centres and other organisations.

This relocation presented new challenges for community partners. Having to move during a pandemic whilst also informing the people they regularly support was a difficult task. The move did however, result in numerous positives for community partners taking part in Everyone Connected. Relocating to these central hubs of support meant the organisations were able to easily and efficiently refer people between services. This meant that community partners were able to provide devices to people who may have not otherwise engaged through their traditional channels of support. Centres taking part in Everyone Connected and those who had relocated to such spaces noted they were keen to maintain these new referral arrangements.



Key Finding 2: Wrap around support to enhance digital device and access

For the staff, volunteers and advisors at community partners taking part in Everyone Connected, they frequently commented that setting up beneficiaries with devices went hand in hand with teaching them the necessary skills to use them. As one staff member noted 'even those who thought they knew how to use a tablet would end up asking us questions for over two hours'. Although this additional support required significant time and resources from community partners, all commented it was worthwhile. Had they failed to provide the skills support at the same time as handing out devices, people would not maximise the technology, thereby not helping themselves or the community partner in the long term. Furthermore, when community partners were setting up the devices with people, these beneficiaries would begin to open up more and more about their needs and the challenges they are facing. This engagement meant community partners were often having to set people up with a device and simultaneously triaging issues by downloading apps to help them.

Key Finding 3: Importance of social connections tools

People needing a device with internet connectivity frequently commented that it was to maintain contact with friends and family. Beneficiaries had relied on the physical space, IT setup and support provided at the community partners prior to lockdown in order to stay in touch with people. With these spaces now closed, people were without the vital infrastructure needed to be connected with others. When setting people up with the devices, staff and volunteers at community partners were frequently asked to help install Zoom, Whatsapp, Skype and other communication platforms on the tablets and phones. People who had undertaken ESOL courses with community partners would often be a major group requesting these different platforms. For numerous community partners, the first applications to be installed, accompanied with the necessary skills training, were typically these communication platforms. Not only would these applications allow beneficiaries to speak with friends and family, but were vital tools helping centre staff and volunteers keep in touch with beneficiaries and to troubleshoot problems remotely.



Concluding remark

In March 2019, Good Things Foundation, in partnership with FutureDotNow, mobilised an emergency Covid-19 response programme, DevicesDotNow, raising over £1.5m to distribute digital devices and data to those in need. Since then, we have worked with corporate and community partners (Online Centres) to distribute devices to over 12,000 people without internet access; and to develop new ways of providing 'remote' and 'blended' digital skills support which can work in line with social restrictions. The DevicesDotNow model has been refined and embedded into Good Things Foundation's operating model, under the new name **Everyone Connected**.

Good Things Foundation's services have been in great demand as Covid-19 has exposed and further exacerbated digital exclusion; lockdown only served to make things worse for people facing data poverty due to places closing down where they previously accessed free internet. Without much promotion, Good Things Foundation had a list from community partners of 8,000 people who were in critical need of a device, connectivity and the support to use these effectively. Alongside mobilising [DevicesDotNow](#) as an emergency response, and advocating publicly and at the highest levels

of Government for action on digital access and skills, [we created a Response and Resilience Fund for Online Centres and supported our network to pivot their models of delivering digital skills](#), with many moving to remote and blended models. Although the UK community sector has been seriously impacted by Covid-19, with many of the smallest organisations forced to close or put their work on hold, around 1,600 Online Centres remain operational and delivering digital skills to vulnerable and excluded beneficiaries.

The support from Barclays has been instrumental in supporting us to reach those hardest hit by the pandemic. The funding enabled us to purchase 428 devices with data that were delivered to community partners to set up and distribute to people in their local communities who they then supported remotely. By measuring impact, we know that these devices have helped people stay connected to their loved ones, access vital services and access home learning. **Thank you.**



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