

The Digital Divide

A Resource Pack for Voluntary and Community Organisations

The purpose of this resource pack is to offer support and guidance to Voluntary and Community Organisations who work with older people who would like to get online or gain more technology skills.

Whilst in no way exhaustive, this pack covers organisations who can provide devices and funding for this work, recommended best buys, advice on how to guide people from a distance, and support for gaining tech skills so that people can better take part in digital activities.

This resource pack was written in response to the Covid-19 crisis, but it forms a launchpad for all organisations to consider how technology can be used to connect in the future, and make our work more inclusive.

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1. Introduction

A key issue that has risen during the Covid-19 lockdown is the digital divide between those who are online at home and those who are not, and there are a number of different issues to address that have quickly become apparent. Some people may have devices but not know how to use them, or not have internet access. Others may have internet access but no device or knowledge.

This guide focusses on the older people we work with as Ageing Better in Camden, however we are conscious this challenge does not solely affect this population. For example, it was reported recently that *65 percent of children* in some of *Camden's* primary schools do not have access to a *computer* at home.

People wishing to get online

We have identified 5 groups of older people we need to work with to get online for now and for the future – possibly during a potential second wave or lockdown, as well as reassessing how we might engage more people who cannot physically be present at face-to-face activities.

Whilst not everyone wants to go online, for those who would like to engage, it would be unforgivable not to have offered the 'window into the world' to everyone that we can.

There are 5 key groups with specific sets of needs:

Need	Resources
<p>No device, some tech skills</p> <p>People who cannot afford technology but do have the skills. They were perhaps previously visiting the library to use a computer but this is no longer an option.</p>	<p>This group need charitable support to get access to a device and internet connection. They may also need support to set it up and use it. Someone may be able to log onto a PC at the library, but not know how to use an app on the tablet, which is easier overall, but may need to be talked through. The on-going data plan/wifi will be an issue.</p>
<p>No device, no tech skills</p> <p>People who <u>cannot</u> afford devices or internet access and who do not have the skills or have no interest in/or fear looking stupid or of being the victim of scams</p>	<p>This group will need considerable support to use a device. The volunteers supporting this group of people will need to be skilled, resilient, and determined, as well as kind! Older people are likely to need ongoing tech support and reassurance.</p>
<p>Possible access or affordability of device, no tech skills</p> <p>People who <u>can</u> afford but who do not have the skills or have no interest/or fear looking stupid or being the victim of scams</p>	<p>For older people, there are specialist packages to buy including the Grandpad (which comes with a 2 year support package) or there is an app called Eldy which you can preload onto a tablet which turns it into a simpler tablet</p>
<p>Possible access or affordability of device, keen to gain tech skills</p> <p>People who can afford a device but don't have the skills to use them, but are interested/keen to</p>	<p>Our experience suggests there is a group of people with money but no idea about what to buy and also a group of families and friends keen to support but also not able to work out which is the best tablet etc to buy. There are also complications of not being</p>

<p>take the plunge, especially when they have to the support of people or organisations they trust.</p>	<p>able to physically go to a shop to speak to someone about these devices, due to restrictions or isolating.</p> <p>Guidance on affordable and accessible technologies will be essential.</p>
<p>Have a device, some tech skills</p> <p>People who have a device at home and a little skill who may be able to open an email but not make a video call etc., and so want or need further training</p>	<p>This group will need support to use a device. The volunteers supporting this group of people will need to be skilled, resilient and determined as well as kind!</p>

This approach helps to identify where people are on the digital skills/attitude spectrum and so can enable organisations to consider where to focus their resources and then design the appropriate response to these different groups.

This idea of a digital spectrum is also important as it demonstrates and allows organisations to recognise that people are at different points. Some may need support overcoming fears, and raising their confidence, others may need support in choosing and purchasing devices (especially when shops are closed), whilst others may feel they need to know and be able to access support from a friendly/trusted ear in case they get stuck.

2. Possible funding for IT equipment

[London Community Response Funding](#)

London's funders are working together to provide coordinated funding to support groups responding to the needs of communities in the capital affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and this has included funding for tech in Waves 1 and 2.

[Camden Giving](#)

Camden Giving's Social Action Fund exists to bring together different groups and communities to help improve their lives and tackle local inequality in Camden

[Yapp Charitable Trust](#)

Small UK charities affected by the impact of COVID-19, grants up to £3k. Registered charities in England and Wales, with a total annual expenditure of less than £40k; core costs and staffing. Elderly are one of their priority groups.

[Tech Force 19](#)

Innovators who can support the elderly, vulnerable and self-isolating during COVID-19 to apply for government funding of up to £25,000 to test their solution.

[The Rank Foundation](#)

Rank has an Emergency Fund application of up to £750 for their past and present grant holders to cover immediate costs for items such as Zoom memberships, printers, technology and expert advice so they are able to continue as much service delivery as possible.

[Alpkit](#)

Prioritising funds to support projects that shift their focus over the coming months, prioritising funds to support projects that demonstrate an immediate impact on those affected by the Covid-19 virus crisis. £500 grants. 3 April.

Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund

Tesco Bags of Help is responding to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis by setting up a new short-term fund to support local communities. Due to the need to respond quickly to the emergency we have created a streamlined application process and payment process to make it easier to get funds distributed quickly. If your application is successful the fund will provide a single payment award of £500 to organisations who are supporting vulnerable groups. The programme is set up to support organisational need in this time of crisis rather than fund specific projects. (The elderly are one of their top priorities).

<https://tescobagsofhelp.org.uk/tesco-cv-fund/> For any queries please contact: tescocv@groundwork.org.uk

Neighbourly

Micro-grants of up to £400, to support good causes that are helping communities

The **John Lewis Partnership** has [announced a £1m Community Support Fund](#) to help communities across the UK to help those in need.

The **Department of Health and Social Care** has funding of [up to £25,000 for tech innovators](#) developing digital solutions to support elderly, vulnerable and self-isolating people during COVID-19.

UK crowdfunding platform **Crowdfunder** has [removed fees for charity and community group users](#) during the crisis.

The [Mayor of London, City Bridge Trust and London Funders](#) have announced a £2m fund for community and voluntary organisations in the capital.

M&S, Lidl, Aldi, Danone and Coca-Cola European Partners have partnered with **Neighbourly** to create the [Neighbourly Community Fund](#) to channel microgrants directly to community organisations helping those most at risk. For existing members of Neighbourly in UK and Ireland only.

[Big Society Capital](#) - plans emergency £100m loan fund for charities.

[Cadent Foundation](#) - Midlands, North West England, South Yorkshire, East of England and North London. Committed £240k to the Trussell Trust last week, ready to support other worthy causes.

[Greggs Foundation](#) - funding for emergency food parcels, hardship payments and other support to schools and community hubs.

[Halifax Foundation](#) - prioritising Covid-19 related grant applications, will now consider applications from constituted groups not yet registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.

[Leathersellers Company](#) - prioritise applications from UK registered charities supporting the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless, provision of food and essential supplies, victims of domestic violence, nursing care to vulnerable patients.

[National Lottery](#) - announces all the funding decisions for next 6 months (up to £300m) will be devoted to crisis and they will accelerate the cash part of this funding as much as possible.

[National Zakat Foundation](#) - people in our community whose financial situation is badly affected by this public health crisis

[National Emergencies Trust](#) - launching an to help those most effected by the outbreak. They collaborate with charities and other bodies to raise and distribute money and support victims at the time of a domestic disaster.

[Standard Life Foundation](#) - work directly related to crisis, addressing challenges & helping to contribute to social change which tackles financial problems and improves living standards.

[Vo Tech Now](#) - part of Ufi's response to support the vocational learning sector in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Disability

[Thomas Pocklington Trust](#) - available to **sight loss sector organisations** which are providing critical services for the physical and emotional well-being of blind and partially sighted people in these uncertain times. Up to £10k.

Individuals

[CaRe20 – Caring for Retail](#) - £10m appeal, financial, emotional, physical and vocational support to **store workers** who may be ineligible for government support during the health emergency.

[Care Workers Crisis Grants](#) - grants to **care workers**.

[London Community Foundation](#) - essential funds to grass roots charities and community groups.

3. Recommended IT kit

It is important to note many people will already have smartphones that with they can use with support.

- Amazon fire – These are the cheapest tablets and are most suitable for those who already have digital skills.
- Lenovo tablets – these have larger memory capacity so you can install a programme which allows you to run remote support on the tablet which is helpful for those with no previous digital skills. The Lenovo Tab E10 have proven to be a good choice and easily accessible for the users
- Some shops are offering good deals and it is worth asking about opening a business account with them to get further discounts.
- Grandpad - Costs c£400 but is specifically designed for older people with larger screen, cradle charging, phone and video calling etc. In addition, you pay c£30 per month which pays for support and data. It comes with core apps but you can add more, zoom for example at set up.

4. Support organisations

There are a few organisations who may be able to help get devices to your members or guide them to get online and upskill their tech know-how.

i. Support to obtain physical devices

Wavelength

WaveLength gives radios, televisions, and tablet computers to help people maintain and increase the number of meaningful connections they have in their lives. We support people who are lonely because of age, poor physical or mental health, or by circumstances which make it hard for them to leave their home. You can apply as a community group or for an individual.

Website: <https://wavelength.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01708 621101

Email: info@wavelength.org.uk

London Rainbow

We are a local community organisation, formed in response to hospitals having to stop in-person visits due to Covid-19. Many patients arrive at hospital without a phone or tablet to stay in touch with their families. In some cases, doctors and nurses have resorted to lending patients their own phones to call home during their last moments. We work directly with doctors, nurses, carers and community workers to deliver repurposed donated devices (from the public) to where the need is greatest across our London health and care services.

Website: <https://opencollective.com/london-rainbow#section-about>

Camden Council - Adult and Community Learning Team

Camden adult community learning (ACL) offer free courses across the borough, for adults aged 19+ and give priority to Camden residents. Courses include basic computing, beginner English, family learning, health & wellbeing, preparing for employment and

MS Microsoft Office packages. ACL can also train for a national ESOL qualification.

For more information, please contact Camden adult community learning on 020 7974 2148, check www.camden.gov.uk/adultlearning, email adultlearning@camden.gov.uk or check the team's Instagram page: @wearecamdenacl

[The Good Things Foundation and Devices.now](#)

Delivering devices and SIMs to people who do not have access to the internet via charitable organisations. You can sign up as an organisation in order to support individuals to access equipment and data / wifi.

ii. Support to better use devices

Ability Net

AbilityNet provides free IT support to help older people and people with disabilities to use technology to achieve their goals. We have a network of friendly volunteers who can help with most major computer systems, laptops, tablet devices and smartphones.

Website: <https://abilitynet.org.uk/>

Freephone: 0800 269545

Email: <mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk>

GCF Global

A great website which covers a broad range of topics to build confidence in using technology and the internet.

Website: <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/>

Zoom Guide: <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/zoom/getting-started-with-zoom/1/>

Techboomers

A website with hundreds of mini courses and articles about internet use and how to make the most of it.

Website: <https://techboomers.com/>

Camden Council - Volunteer Brokerage Scheme

Camden has set up an online platform – [Time to Spare](#) – to recruit volunteers who want to support their community. Organisations active in Camden can sign up to recruit volunteers able to get residents online and teach the basics of computer and internet use.

If you need volunteers for a particular role please email volunteers@camden.gov.uk and say what the role is (brief summary), how many volunteers you need, if a DBS is required, with your contact details including phone number. More info [here](#).

5. Top tips for distance supporting people online

Supporting people at a distance to gain new technology skills and get online can be especially rewarding but requires time and patience.

Here are some top tips for getting people online, at a distance - usually over the phone.

- **Diagnose the problem** - equip yourself with as much information as possible before trying to offer help.
 - *What would you like to be able to do with your device?*
 - *What device do you have? Tablet, phone or laptop? Apple or Windows?*
 - *How confident do you feel using the device?*
 - *Do you have internet access at home?*
 - *Do you have an email address?*

- **Set up expectations** - I'm really looking forward to trying to help today, but frustratingly I won't always be able to support you with the problem. I've got an hour to spend with you today - let's have a go together!
- **Work on the same/similar device** - If at all possible, it's useful to walk through the problem whilst using the same device. If volunteers can have access to a tablet, laptop and phone whilst troubleshooting, that can be really helpful.
- **Avoid jargon** - Different people will have different levels of technological know-how. Be aware that "space bar", "wi-fi", "double-click" and many more phrases may be alien to some.
- **Write it down/take screenshots** - If you can, encourage the person to write down your steps to aid their learning, or even better, make a guide with screenshots as you walk them through it. This may become a helpful resource in the future, and perhaps you could post it out to them as a follow up.
- **Affirm and build confidence** - Celebrate even small successes.
- **Repeat the process. Practice is key!** - If you have successfully helped someone to send an email, get onto Zoom, or download an app, it's helpful to repeat the process a few times.
- **Don't be frustrated if they need the same help again** – Keep in mind that you can't cook a meal from scratch without practicing a few times. Remember this is a long journey and the more times you do it, the better you will get at guiding, and the better the people you support will be at picking it up.
- **Remember to take it slowly** - tackle a little at a time so the person doesn't become overwhelmed
- **Try to connect them to a group event** – so they are encouraged to try going online again to continue to be part of that group

- **Ensure that the supporting person speaks a relevant community language** - if needed or has access to someone who does
- **Facilitate peer support** – often other older people can provide the support that is needed and are happy to help their peers