



Emergency support to
get the most vulnerable
online during the
COVID-19 crisis

future
.now

 Good Things
Foundation

DevicesDotNow: The first 8 weeks

Interim Impact Report #1: 24 March - 19 May 2020

Locked in and locked out



Liz Williams MBE,
CEO FutureDotNow

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the nation's relationship with digital, and the impact digital exclusion has on the most vulnerable in society.

1.9 million households in the UK don't have access to the internet meaning many vulnerable people are now cut off from the world outside their doors. It's impossible to effectively shield without a device and connectivity. No internet means no access to critical online services; no accurate health information, no online purchases, no education and no video chat with family and friends.

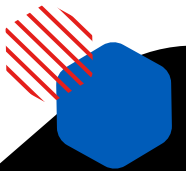
Frontline organisations are in desperate need of digital devices for the vulnerable people in their communities so they can help them stay connected with the outside world. DevicesDotNow has mobilised over 1600 devices to date, but in truth we are overwhelmed with demand. And we do not yet have the funds necessary to reach our first goal of helping ten thousand people.

We're actively working to engage government, industry and charity partners requesting their support for this urgent work, and we remain optimistic that with their help we'll not only be in a position to help that first ten thousand but many more vulnerable people who are digitally and financially compromised.

The impact a device and associated support can make can be life changing for the individual, but it's also an important part of our national response, ensuring people can shield and alleviating strain on the NHS.

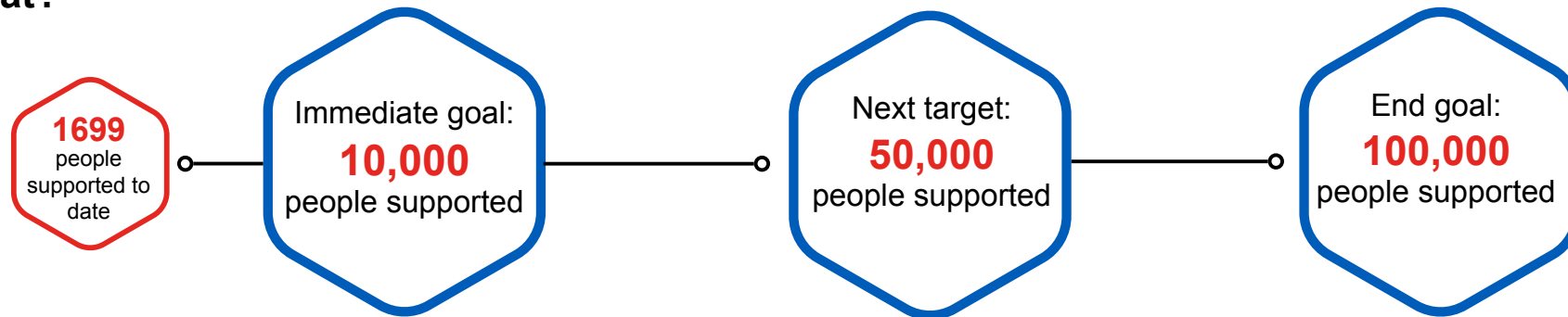
I hope this report on our first eight weeks of activity inspires you to join us and help more people benefit from DevicesDotNow. You can find out more at www.devicesdotnow.uk

“ I'm so proud of what's been achieved so quickly, but in truth we're overwhelmed with demand. ”



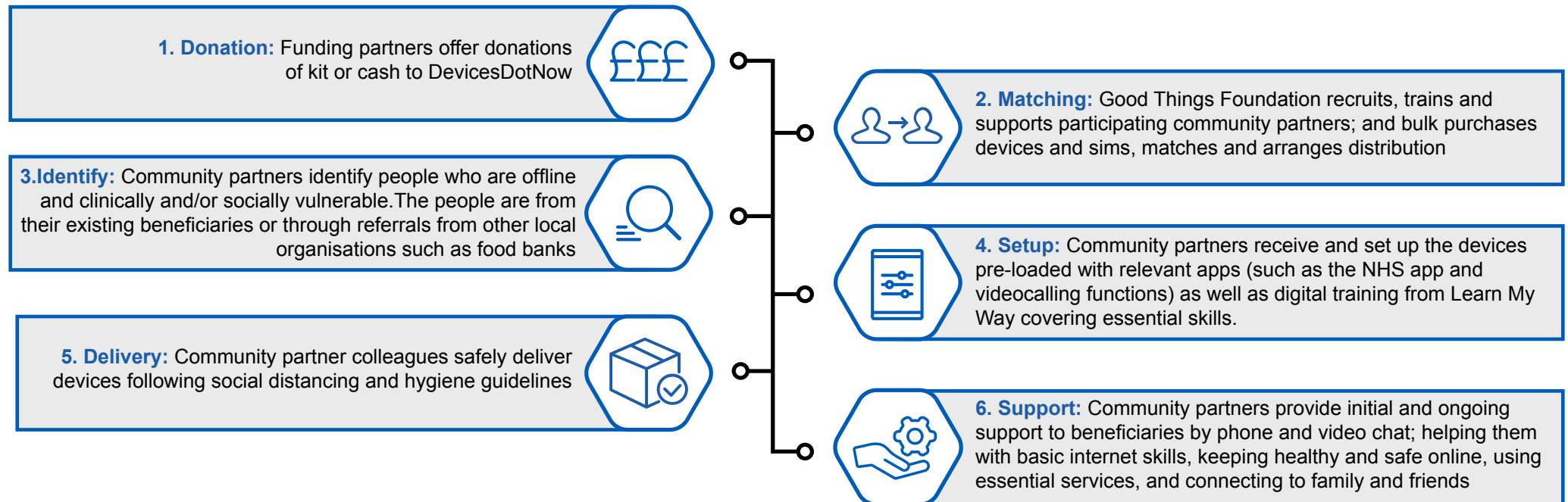
DevicesDotNow: Ambitious and Ready to Scale

What?



How?

DevicesDotNow, working with delivery partner Good Things Foundation, rapidly operationalised a six stage process that could help thousands of people. An initial pilot of getting devices, sims, and support to 1000 people was rapidly implemented and the process iterated. This process is now tested and ready to scale to support at least 5000 people a week when/if funding is donated or made available. This process is being used today with the current donations.



We depend on donations from businesses, foundations, and Governments, aiming to reach as many people as possible.

Our achievements to date



1699 devices
allocated to **258**
community partners



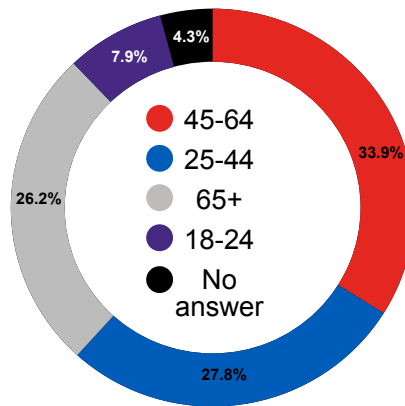
£152,360
Fundraising
total

People reached

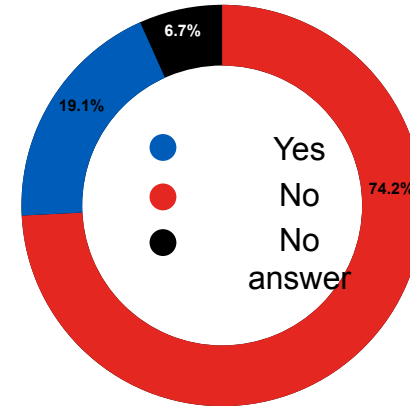


Demographics of people reached

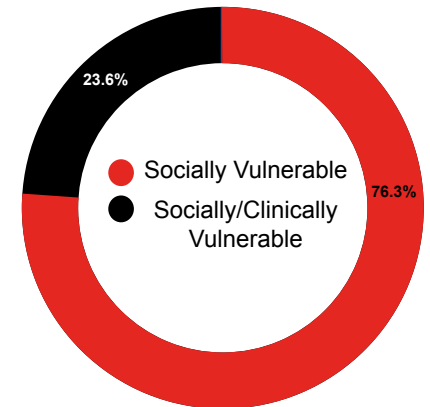
Age Group



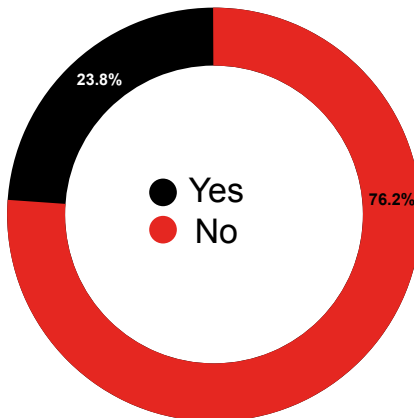
School-Age Children



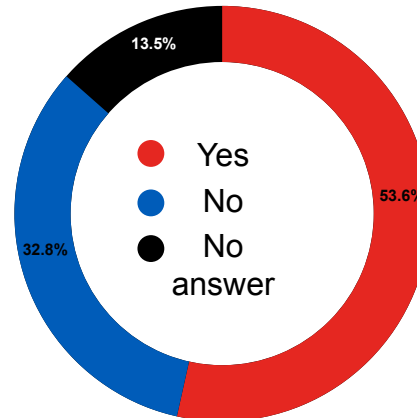
Socially/Clinically Vulnerable



Received NHS Letter



Fully Self-Isolating



Untapped demand - more people to reach

Demand for devices



Receiving an email to say we were granted ten tablets led us to such a quandary. To choose ten from the most neediest of the needy. I rest uneasy, as I wonder when I will receive another supply and how and if it will be easier, but whilst I know poverty makes choice difficult, a tablet and internet can help to provide the route maps out of poverty.



Hafsha Shaikh, Smartlyte, Birmingham

Community demand for our help is acute. From within the Online Centres Network we have received requests to help over 8000 people who are most vulnerable as a result of digital exclusion and social isolation. Our inbox is overflowing with requests for devices, each one with a compelling human story at the end of it.

To reach one person costs between £200 and £300 depending on devices and the market availability of lower cost devices.

To meet our immediate goal of helping **8,000** more people we need **£1.6m - £2.4m**

To help **50,000** people we need approx **£10m**

To help **100,000** people we need approx **£20m**

DevicesDotNow is a collective and collaborative campaign and is reaching people everyday.

To help one person makes a huge difference to their lives. Every donation matters.

This map shows the geographic spread of requests to date

New device gives Kathalingam a welcome health boost

- **Kathalinga, 41, West London**
- **Shielding due to health issues**
- **Able to access emergency NHS support and order food**
- **#DevicesDotNow**



Kathalingam, 42 lives in Eastham, West London. Before the outbreak of Coronavirus he would go along to his local Online Centre, Skills Enterprise, to access the internet, go to classes and access other key services and support.

As soon as the UK went into lockdown this support network was no longer available, leaving him isolated and cut off from the outside world. “I had no access to the internet. I regularly used the computer when I came to class, but now the centre is closed I have nowhere to go”

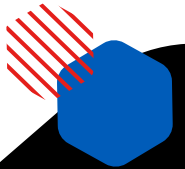
Kathalingam has a medical condition meaning he needs to regularly order and pick up prescriptions. “I had health issues and alcohol issues, I was lonely as I had no family or friends and I am classed as an NHS vulnerable category A. I felt very scared and confused and needed help to get food and prescriptions.

Already known to Skills Enterprise in his local community in Eastham, Kathalingam was identified to receive support from the DevicesDotNow campaign to help him stay connected with family and his community and order his prescriptions online. “I called Skills Enterprise for help and they gave me a tablet. On the tablet I completed an NHS online emergency parcel request and asked for prescription help.”

Since receiving his DevicesDotNow tablet things have started to look up for Kathalinga, “I am now feeling confident that I can connect with my community and I can ask for help when I need it. I used the NHS website to request a food parcel and now I can contact anyone if there is an emergency.

“I was able to see Corona guidance on the GOV.UK, I regularly use Zoom to connect to Skills Enterprise who have supported me during this time.”

“I feel happy that I have people to connect to. I was very scared of the pandemic but now I can keep myself safe by following the government guidance.”



Annette celebrates her 'virtual' birthday thanks to new device

- **Annette Addison, 59, Birmingham**
- **Shielding due ongoing health issues**
- **No longer lonely and isolated**
- **#DevicesDotNow**



Annette Addison, 59, is keeping connected to family and friends during self-isolation thanks to a free tablet and data plan from the DevicesDotNow campaign.

Annette is unemployed due to disability and ongoing health conditions, she is wheelchair bound and can only access the internet in the common room of the sheltered accommodation she lives in.

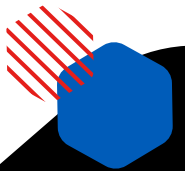
Since the UK went into lockdown, Smartlyte, an Online Centre in Birmingham has been supporting Annette under the Assisted Digital scheme. Since receiving support, Annette has been putting her new device to good use, "I have been using the device to speak to my family (3 children) who can't visit me due to lockdown. I have also been using it to access news as I don't have a TV license and cannot watch TV."

"My children were my only access to the outside world. Not having any contact with them was very difficult and made me feel very cut off and isolated. I could not meet any of my friends in the housing scheme as they all had to stay in their rooms."

"I am now able to stay in my room without worrying about mixing with other people. I have so many underlying health problems which make me feel very vulnerable and did not want to socialise much."

"Receiving the device through the DevicesDotNow campaign has added normality to Annette's life, "I will be able to keep in touch with my children and grandson. I will be able to see what they are doing via WhatsApp and Facebook. I really miss my grandson. At least now we will be able to read a book together and share some stories."

"I'm just really grateful to receive the device, especially as it was recently my 60th birthday and I thought I would be celebrating it on my own. Now I will be able to speak to all my children and we will have a 'Virtual' birthday party."



Army veteran eases anxiety with new device

- **Jason Zerafa, 34, Catterick**
- **Isolated and anxious due to lockdown**
- **Used device to keep in touch with family and access Universal Credit account**
- **#DevicesDotNow**



Jason Zerafa, 34, from Catterick, is easing his anxiety during lockdown thanks to a free tablet and data plan from the DevicesDotNow scheme.

Army veteran Jason, is unemployed and suffers from anxiety. However, since receiving the new tablet he has been using it to keep in touch with his family and to access his Universal Credit account.

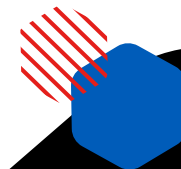
Before receiving a tablet from DevicesDotNow Jason had very limited access to the internet. He tells us: "I have an old iPhone but was not able to use it because the screen is broken. I was trying to use it to contact my family and keep in touch with my brother who is in the army. My support worker knew my phone was broken and that I was suffering from increased anxiety because I was struggling to stay in contact with my family."

A1 Community Works, a community organisation that works with army veterans in the area arranged for a tablet to be sent to Jason through the DevicesDotNow initiative and he's been putting it to good use: "I've been using my device to keep in touch with all my family. My uncle is recovering from cancer and it was great to be able to see and talk to him. I have also been doing online fitness classes, writing up my Universal Credit journal and some courses so I can start to get ready to return to work."

The lockdown period hasn't been easy for Jason: "I did feel very cut off and isolated. Living in supported housing is not like living in your own place. I have a small studio flat but before lockdown, I had free access to the communal areas and could chat with the staff and other residents. Lockdown meant my world became my flat and I only had limited access to support staff. I felt very lonely. I really missed my family."

Now, thanks to his new DevicesDotNow tablet and remote support from A1 Community Works, Jason's anxiety has eased "The device has helped me cope and feel connected to the world. I am less stressed than I was when I could not contact my family. I have also visited the NHS website to get good advice and learn the truth about the virus and to check on my own symptoms.

"I am very very grateful to the DevicesDotNow campaign and A1 for this tablet. Thank you."



Discussing DevicesDotNow with Parliament

Digital Culture Media and Sport Select Committee, 15 May 2020 Evidence Session Digital Culture



Liz Williams MBE, CEO
FutureDotNow

“There’s between 175,000 and half a million people who have been instructed to shield and aren’t online. For them that must be an incredibly frightening scenario.”

Question from Julie Elliott, MP: “The government haven’t put any money into the campaign as yet. What funding is needed to make it a success?”

Liz: “To get to 100,000 people is a £20 million project.”

Question from the Chair, Julian Smith, MP: “Presumably for those who were asked to shield, if they do not have these skills or do not have the connectivity, this would affect their ability to shield effectively, wouldn’t it?”

Liz: “Absolutely. I am not sure how you can shield effectively if you do not have access online. The NHS letters that went out instructing people to shield were peppered with references to websites.”



Helen Milner OBE,
CEO, Good Things
Foundation

“We are worried for people’s mental health. We are worried that there are people who need food .. We are worried for women who are victims of domestic violence ... We are worried that people need medicines. Some of the people who have received devices from us have told us that they wouldn’t be here without it.”

Question from Damian Green, MP: “Is there an opportunity now that the necessity has been raised? What should the Government be doing to take advantage of this sudden awareness to improve access for people?”

Helen: “I feel that I should not come and say it is about money, but right now there is such an urgent need. We have established, piloted and scaled a process to get devices to the people who need them. If tomorrow the Government provided around £2 million, we could help 10,000 people within two weeks. After that, we could help a minimum of 5,000 people every single week.”

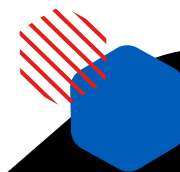


Nicola Wallace Dean,
Community Organiser,
Starting Point

“A number of people in our community are in a situation now where there is a poverty premium because of PAYG ... We have a family who are on benefits and making decisions over food and data. Data poverty is something we are seeing on a daily basis.”

Question from Kevin Brennan, MP: “In practical terms how do you, in a period of Covid, get somebody who has never used a digital device before trained up in how to use it safely? Is that possible?”

Nicola: “If anybody had asked me two months ago I would potentially have said no. We have realised that you can teach people online skills when they have none. They need to switch the device on and then accept our Zoom call, and from that point we can support them. We and hundreds of online centres are testament that we can do this and we can do it safely.”



Some of our many supporters to date

Funders



Some of community partners involved



The DevicesDotNow campaign has been stood up by **FutureDotNow**, **Good Things Foundation** and some brilliant people who've been furloughed and decided to devote their time to the cause, thanks to support from:



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For more information and to support our work:

futuresdotnow.uk/devicesdotnow

crowdfunder.co.uk/help-the-vulnerable-stay-connected

Keep up to date with the campaign:

[@futuresdotnowuk](https://twitter.com/futuresdotnowuk) [@goodthingsfdn](https://twitter.com/goodthingsfdn)

[#DevicesDotNow](https://twitter.com/DevicesDotNow)

