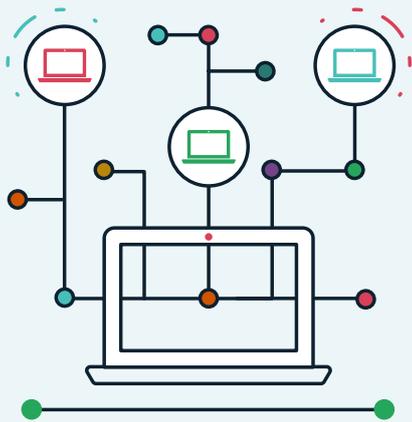


# Everyone Connected

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and delivered by Good Things Foundation and the Online Centres Network

July 2020 to January 2021

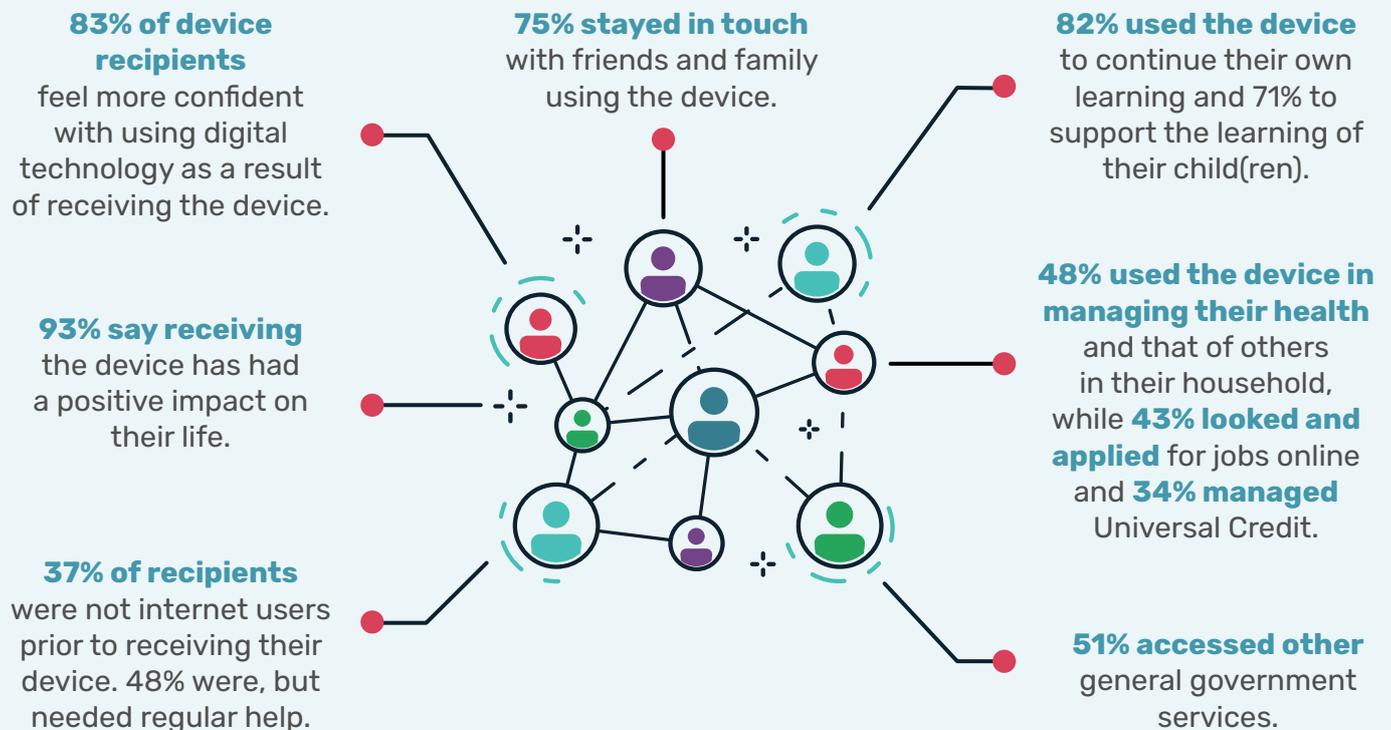




**No. Devices & Connectivity:**  
 1,750 tablets with data  
 2,847 smartphones\* with data  
**= 4,597 devices with connectivity**

\*kindly donated by Google

Good Things Foundation engaged with **180 community partners** who distributed devices and connectivity, supported people in their local community to set them up and provided ongoing support to the beneficiaries.





## Key Finding 1: Rebuilding community cohesion and participation

When lockdown hit, most of us immediately turned to our digital devices to stay in contact with friends and family. For people without access to these technologies and the internet however, the instant loss of communication and connection Covid-19 brought about hit them hard. If people were suffering from additional personal challenges such as unemployment or mental health issues, this sudden loss of communication was something community partners identified might do long term damage. By getting devices out to these people through

Everyone Connected however, beneficiaries' now instant ability to communicate with friends and family saw many of them feeling significantly better. One beneficiary noted that now they could speak with their friends and family all over the world, it meant they felt less alone and were relieved they had others they could talk about the challenges they were facing. One community partner taking part in the project identified that for some of those who are shielding, they have not properly spoken with or been able to see friends and families for several months. These beneficiaries of devices were incredibly grateful therefore, for now being given the opportunity to get in touch with people again and it "has been a lifeline for them during the dark winter months".



## Key Finding 2: Making needs visible and support pathways stronger

For people facing digital exclusion in Covid-19, not only were they without the key tools many of us rely on to communicate with others during lockdown, but they were also shut off from accessing the many support services that were now available through online portals. As one community partner taking part in Everyone Connected noted, when isolated people don't have access to the internet, they have no idea about what help and support is available for them. Community partners regularly heard about and encountered people who had ended up in challenging situations, unaware of the various points of support in their local community. Prior to Covid-19 these people relied on word of mouth and their face to face exchanges with people in their local community to find out about what support was on offer around them. When people received devices through Everyone Connected however, they were shocked and pleasantly surprised about discovering all the different services available to them. In addition, when one person was able to access a particular type of support through the device, they were then placed within a

new network of people who could further point them towards other support, a snowball effect. This was the case for one beneficiary who was signposted to a disability support scheme and by undertaking zoom sessions with others in the group, they then found out about other support schemes in her local area.

## Key Finding 3: Widening inclusion opportunities

Prior to Covid-19, community partners taking part in Everyone Connected noted that whilst they knew about pockets of their local communities, families and people that could benefit from their support, it had been difficult to reach them. Being unable to support these people was for a variety of reasons such as people working during the day, them not wanting to attend the physical space of centres, not believing they need support or being unaware about the different services community partners offered. During discussions with community partners however, they frequently noted that when they advertised about the possible availability of devices and data, they were now being put in contact with these people that they had, as of yet, been unable to reach. Many of the beneficiaries were initially sceptical about the offer, believing there must be a catch. When staff and volunteers were able to talk them through Everyone Connected, the devices and data offer however, the fears of these people were dealt with and at the same time, they established a relationship with staff at the community partners. Through this new relationship, centred around the device, staff were able to slowly introduce these people to the other forms of support they offered. Everyone Connected was therefore, not only a vital tool in helping organisations address the urgent issues in their local community during Covid-19 but it also helped them reach out and spread their message in new ways.

## 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 National Lottery Community Fund Community Fund has been instrumental in supporting us to reach those hardest hit by the pandemic. The funding enabled us to purchase 4,237 SIM's and MIFI's that were delivered to community partners, with either a tablet or a Google smartphone 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.

With thanks to 



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