As the UK entered into lockdown, Essex County Council (ECC) quickly and proactively committed to providing care technology to vulnerable local people, to keep them connected and supported during Covid-19.

This is how we have delivered the largest and fastest care technology roll-out in the UK:

**April 2020**
- Commissioned Alcove and RETHINK Partners to deliver 2,000 Video Carephones
- Quickly pulled together the team to plan and implement the programme
- Rallied and engaged a wide variety of stakeholders and partners to identify the types of people who would benefit from the device:
  - those who were shielding,
  - were in receipt of care services
  - at risk of social isolation & loneliness
- Reached out to older people, adults with learning disabilities, people living with a mental health condition and carers.
- Targeted people who don’t have access to mainstream consumer technology
- Worked with care providers, social workers, commissioners, NHS organisations, the voluntary sector, and a network of frontline professionals who could refer people to receive the devices

**May - September 2020**
- In just 16 weeks, we have achieved what no other care technology project has been able to achieve and have:
  - 2,400 people friends, family and care and support workers connected
  - 75,000 individual calls with 75 per cent of these on video
  - 350 individual health and care professionals briefed and trained over 80 sessions
  - 1,200 devices delivered
  - 230,000 minutes of voice and video calls and conversations made
  - 75,000 individual calls with 75 per cent of these on video
  - 220 organisations and care providers, across health and care, involved
  - High usage by day centres with over 18,000 minutes of video

**Uses of the Video Carephone**
- For video welfare check-ins by carers to make sure people are doing okay
- To help people to use technology to support their care
- By professionals to carry out assessments of individuals at home and in care settings
- For fun – for example, cooking sessions
- To maximise non-contact social interaction
- To increase family contact – connecting relatives who live further away and abroad
- To bring joy – people are seeing their grandchildren for the first time
- To help people to use technology to support their care
- To support mental health and suicide prevention
- For day centre activities including arts, music, and crafts
- To provide exercise sessions
- As a medicine prompt reminder – often avoiding a visit
- To supplement care services and to support people to try-out technology for the first time

With a phenomenal average of 75 referrals per week - at the peak 158 Video Carephones were processed in 5 days.
Fred had a stroke a few years ago and now lives in sheltered accommodation. His family can’t understand him over the phone so have to drive for over an hour, whenever they are worried about him, just to see if he is okay. Now they can video call him and it gives them all great peace of mind.

Our current priorities:

- Residential care homes and sheltered accommodation units are adopting devices
- The use of the devices to support therapies, health appointments and voluntary services are also being progressed
- Using the technology to provide support across health and care, as winter pressures mount
- Capturing vital lessons to enhance future care technology programmes

We still have devices available for vulnerable people in our communities. If you know of someone who would benefit from using a Video Carephone, please email erctd@essex.gov.uk.

Sarah has a learning disability and lives in an independent living scheme; she uses her Video Carephone to do activities with her support worker such as cooking and planting flowers. It has really improved her mood and confidence.

Fred had a stroke a few years ago and now lives in sheltered accommodation. His family can’t understand him over the phone so have to drive for over an hour, whenever they are worried about him, just to see if he is okay. Now they can video call him and it gives them all great peace of mind.

George, 90, was unable to visit his day centre and became moody and withdrawn. However, now he is able to do exercise sessions twice a week and have regular contact with the centre – improving his mobility and making him much happier.

Kitty lives in sheltered accommodation; she and her sister are inseparable but were unable to meet under COVID-19 restrictions. Both sisters were provided with a Carephone and now they talk three times a day.

“Mum loves it she said it’s changed her life.”
Jill

The Video Carephone is helpful to have ‘eyes on’ people and to check in on them. Seeing someone and making sure they’re okay makes a massive difference.”
Tanya, Caremark

“Easy to understand how to set it up and help customers to use it”
Day centre, ECL

“It’s great to have the device so I don’t get lonely or bored.”
Victor, 90, Dunmow

“Delivering check-ins for adult mental health services”

Helping to avoid admissions to hospital

Delivering check-ins for adult mental health services

Providing community health services for long term conditions, stroke and cardiac rehabilitation and integrated support for frail patients

Supporting hospital discharge

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