

# Connect people who need it most with our connectivity solutions

Find out how we helped Wirral Council and Age UK Wirral connect elderly people for a digital future



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Exercise, mindfulness, quizzes, and video calls with friends and family, are just some of the ways that older people and people living with dementia are using tablets and connectivity in Wirral.

Powered and provided by Vodafone UK, the tablets are the result of the strong partnership between Wirral Council and Age UK Wirral, who help to provide care support to people at home and in care homes, across the district.

Working with both organisations, Vodafone delivered 150 devices in one week, at the start of the COVID-19 crisis, to help provide a lifeline and vital connectivity for those self-isolating or feeling lonely.

“

It's been really heart-warming to hear some of the stories about the difference the tablets have made. One gentleman got his tablet at 5pm one evening, and by the following morning he's had a video call with his son who lived abroad who he hadn't seen face to face for some time.”

**Jamie Anderson, Chief Executive of Age UK Wirral**

## Challenge

### The best life possible

Wirral Council is the local authority for the district of Wirral, in Merseyside. It provides public services in the area, including adult social care, where with partners and charities, the council help older and vulnerable people, live the best life possible.

“We recognise the tremendous value of our voluntary and charity sectors,” says Michael Hanrahan, Project Manager at Wirral Council. “Yes, we have an ageing population in Wirral, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't enjoy a vibrant and exciting life and Age UK Wirral is a fantastic organisation to work with.”

Along with managing care homes in the area, Age UK Wirral provide services to inspire, enable and support older people and people living with dementia.

They offer a popular day service, with activities including exercise, games, or simply socialising. The service also gives respite for carers.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis and strict measures for those over 70 and with underlying health conditions, Age UK Wirral were forced to make the tough decision to suspend their day services until safe. This meant those who relied on the service, could have been left feeling isolated and alone.

“Covid-19 is a frightening time for all of us,” says Jamie Anderson, Chief Executive at Age UK Wirral. “But for people isolating alone at home, or who are isolating whilst supporting someone living with dementia, it's vital we find ways of keeping them connected.”

## Solution

### Connecting people who need it most

Age UK Wirral approached Wirral Council to help them conduct virtual day services, and enable those self-isolating or feeling lonely, to stay connected.

The council had an existing relationship with Vodafone, not only for their mobile contracts, but also for ongoing talks about connected healthcare.

“We talked to Vodafone about getting the devices and it made sense to purchase the tablets and the connectivity from Vodafone,” says Michael.  
“It made it easy for us to manage, in fact so easy that it only took around about a week, which was testament to everyone involved.”

Tablets were the device of choice; easy to set-up, touchscreen and supplied with connectivity, so they could be used almost right away.

To start, 150 tablets were delivered to Age UK Wirral, who added Vodafone SIM cards and set-up the devices. They then distributed them to the people who needed them most, including older people living alone and people who would normally attend the charity’s day services.

“Our digital team developed a remote training package to help get people up and running,” explains Jamie. “And we are there every step of the way to help support people on their digital journey.”

The project has also been supported by The Steve Morgan Foundation, LCR Cares Fund & National Emergencies Trust and Wirral Lions Club, who have helped fund the scheme.

## Benefit

### Vital virtual services

With the tablets from Vodafone, Age UK Wirral have been able to host their day service online, where attendees can see the same smiling faces they are used to, virtually.

The tablets have also been used for exercise videos, quizzes, jigsaws, newspapers and to see friends and family. Even setting up the tablet has created a stimulus and feeling of achievement.

“It’s been really heart-warming to hear stories about the difference the tablets have made,” says Jamie. “One gentleman got his tablet at 5pm and the following morning, he’d had a video call with his son who lives abroad, who he hadn’t seen face to face for some time.”

The devices have proved so successful, that over 100 further tablets have now been delivered, giving more vulnerable and lonely people access to connectivity.

“We’re committed to extending this project, as the digital confidence of organisations and individuals has grown,” adds Jamie. “To know that people are feeling one step closer to loved ones has been fantastic.”

Whilst some measures introduced during the COVID-19 crisis may be temporary, Age UK Wirral and Wirral Council believe older people and people living with dementia, should always be digitally included.

“Imagine if we could give every older person the opportunity to use a tablet and see what they could do. It would be a better world,” says Michael. “And I think that whether in an extravagant way, or on a small case by case basis, we can work together with Vodafone really fruitfully in the future.”

## Why Vodafone Business

- Vodafone delivered 150 tablets and connectivity, with a further 100 following soon after
- The process was easy for the council to manage and meant the tablets could be delivered in one week
- With the devices, people have been setting up the tablets, with help or by themselves, before accessing puzzles, jigsaws, mediation and connecting with family and friends virtually

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Imagine if we could give every older person the opportunity to use a tablet for a while and see what they could do. It would be a better world. And I think that whether in a huge extravagant way, or on a case by case basis, we can work together with Vodafone really fruitfully in the future.”

**Michael Hanrahan**  
Project Manager  
Wirral Council



Age UK Wirral provides a wide range of services to help people across the district of Wirral, in later life. As well as looking after older people and people living with dementia in their care homes across Wirral, they also offer support to people living at home, and their carers.

[www.ageuk.org.uk/wirral](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/wirral)



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[www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

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