

Get Online progress report 23/05/14

Current situation:

19 residents have received assistance under the scheme at the time of writing this report. Break down as follows:

- 14 have been loaned a laptop and dongle
 - 2 have been loaned a laptop only, as they have broadband already
 - 2 have been loaned a desktop computer
 - 2 have been loaned a dongle only, as they already have a computer
- The scheme is proving extremely popular, with a waiting list of 33 residents.
 - As of 31st March 2014, total expenditure on the project: £3252.99.

Procedure:

Applicants are assessed using two forms, (attached).

- The first asks whether they are a tenant or leaseholder in receipt of benefits. They are also asked about any equipment and/or internet access in their home.
- The second form aims to assess the applicants currently level of computer and internet skills. As a result of this form, it was recommended that two applicants attend a basic internet course before receiving their equipment.

Resident Involvement contacts applicant to discuss any specific needs or issues.

Recipients are asked to complete a quarterly internet use survey, (attached). As the first five sets of equipment were only delivered in December, insufficient data has been collected to identify any trends. A report will be produced at a later date.

Demographics and impact of the scheme:

Whilst no specific demographic information, (age, ethnicity, etc.), is collected about individuals receiving equipment, the following examples help to illustrate the impact the scheme is having.

- 1) "P" was made redundant just before Christmas, having been employed in the catering sector for over forty years. He was referred via Job Centre Plus, who stated that he was highly motivated and a regular attendee at Job Club. As a result of receiving the equipment he has continued to build on newly acquired IT skills and has been in contact with the Independent Living Service (ILS) about volunteering opportunities.
- 2) "F" was one of the first recipients of the scheme. She lives in Cherry Hinton and was finding it difficult to attend Job Centre Plus to look for employment. Using the equipment provided, she has now found full time employment in the retail sector.

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- 3) "M" is a single parent who was referred by her caseworker. Her nine year old daughter was having difficulties keeping up with homework. The equipment has addressed this problem and "M" has expressed her gratitude.
- 4) "FI" is a young woman with multiple mental health issues. She has high level computer skills, but her existing equipment was no longer fit for purpose. Her caseworker has stated that the loan of newer equipment will greatly assist her in maintaining contact with the outside world.
- 5) "H" and "C" are both tenants with mobility issues. They had computers which were very old and temperamental. The equipment from the scheme has allowed them to stay in touch with family and the wider community.

Issues with the supply of equipment:

Finding a reliable supplier of good quality, refurbished equipment at reasonable cost has proven difficult. We have been using Partners IT and Social Telecoms CIC, two not for profit social enterprises. However, the former has recently ceased trading, whilst the latter is experiencing some difficulty in keeping up with demand. If the scheme is to continue beyond the pilot stage this issue will need to be addressed.

Wireless broadband in ILS communal areas:

Robert Hollingsworth (Head of City Homes) has asked the RI Team to investigate options for installing and supporting Wi-Fi in the communal areas of our sheltered schemes. Below is a brief summary of the research carried out to date.

The Resident Involvement Communications Officer has held discussions with our in-house IT department. These discussions have highlighted that Cambridge City Council is a partner in the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Network (CPSN), a project that aims to install Wi-Fi in all its buildings. It is possible that a single sheltered scheme could be identified as a pilot.

A recent visit to Camden Council, who have used funding from central government's Digital Deal to install Wi-Fi in all their sheltered schemes, highlighted the importance of identifying "hooks" to encourage residents to get involved. Camden quickly found that tablets, as opposed to the more traditional desktops and laptops, were much easier to use for those with limited experience of the internet. They also emphasised the importance of continual training and support for both residents and staff. To this end, Matt has been in discussion with Cambridge Online, who have the capacity to provide this service.

A meeting with Robert and Independent Living Service (ILS) staff is scheduled for early June to discuss the way forward.