

Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19

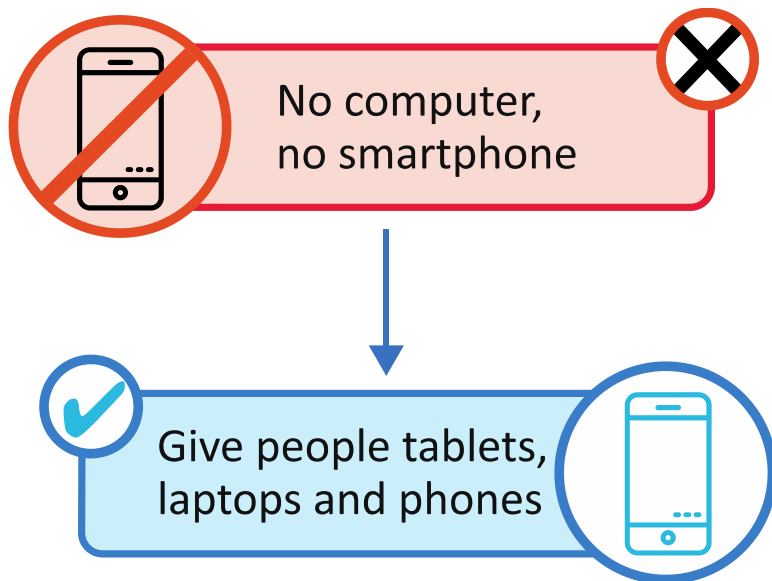


Not online and
not connected

Organisations working to tackle loneliness have had to move many of their services online.

They've also found creative ways to help the people they work with to get online, so that they can stay connected during lockdown.

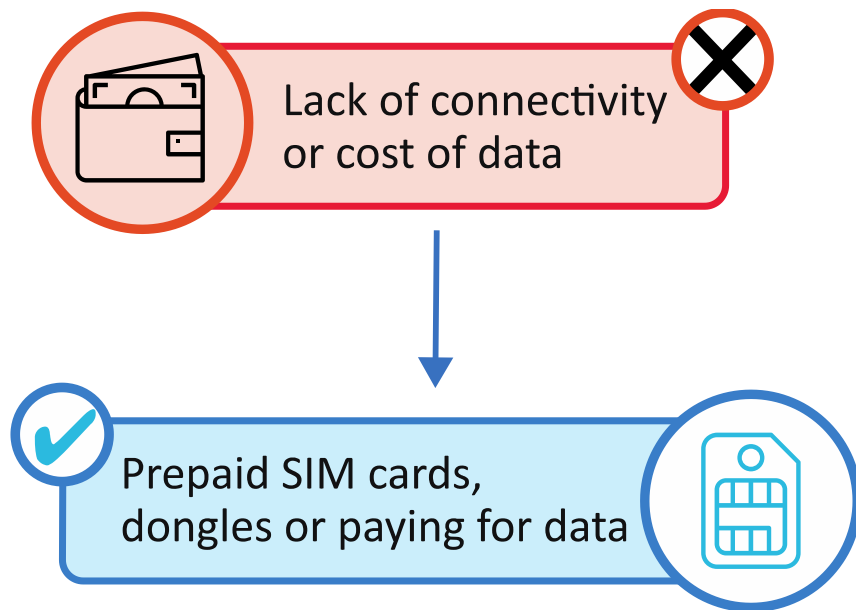
Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



The most obvious barrier to getting online is not having a device to connect to the internet.

Many organisations are providing people with laptops, tablets or phones, either purchased directly, donated by supporters or paid for through schemes like #DevicesDotNow.

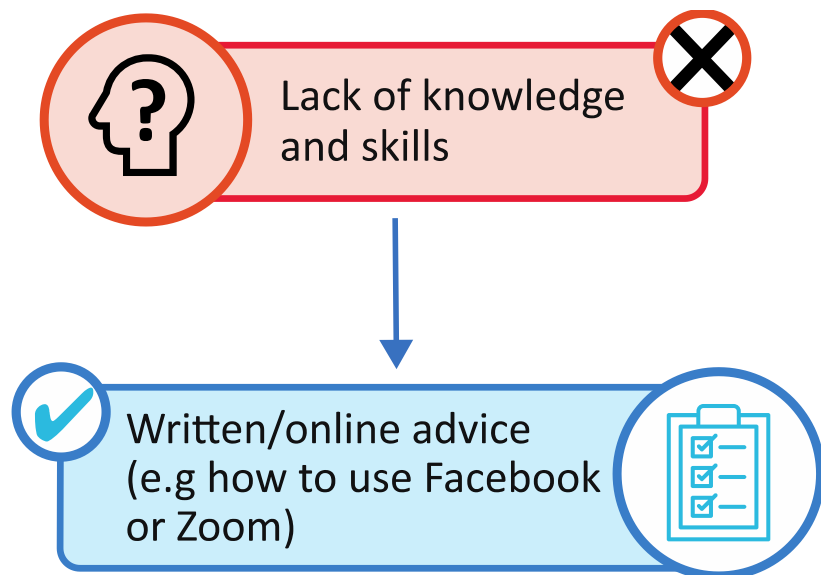
Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



Not everyone has a broadband connection - especially those living in residential care, and people in rural areas. The cost of data can also be a barrier.

Organisations have tackled this by paying for data or providing prepaid SIM cards or dongles, as well as or instead of devices.

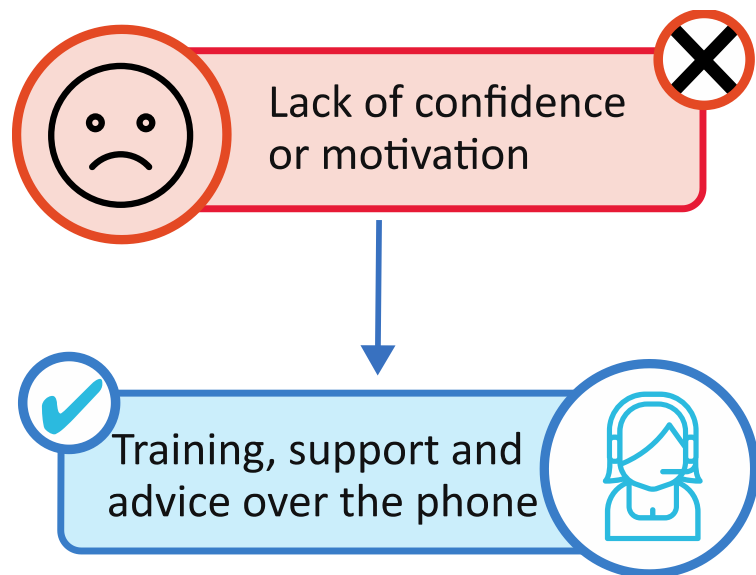
Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



People don't always know how to use video calls or other technology which organisations are using to deliver services during lockdown.

For simpler tasks like logging on to a video call, one solution is to provide simple, step-by-step instructions. Organisations have distributed printed copies, or sent written or video instructions by email or messaging app, depending on the preferences of their users.

Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



The biggest barrier to accessing digital services or connecting with others online is lack of confidence. Simply providing devices or one-off guidance rarely works.

People need ongoing help to get and stay online. In lockdown, a number of organisations are offering this kind of advice or buddying support over the phone.

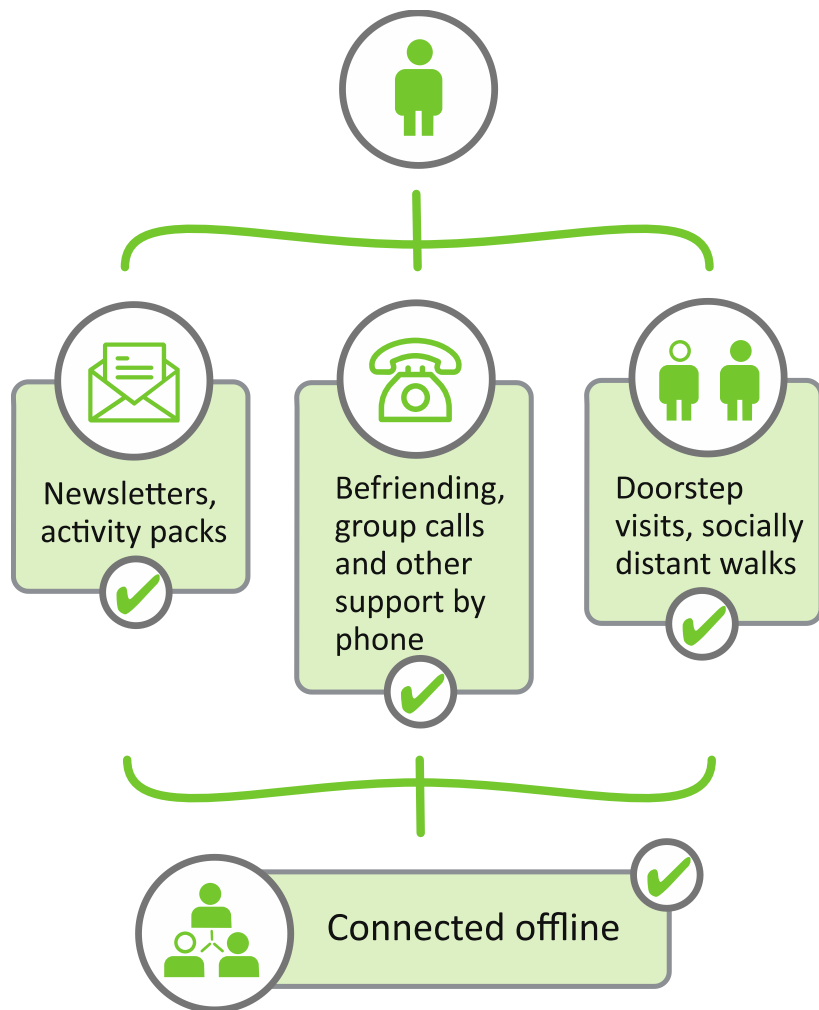
Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



Not online and
not connected

Some organisations have opted to work around the digital divide, providing offline alternatives instead.

Addressing the digital divide during Covid-19



Offline solutions include activity packages or newsletters distributed through the post or door-to-door, and moving both 1:1 and group activities to the phone. As lockdown has eased, some organisations have introduced distanced contact, such as doorstep befriending visits and socially distanced walks.