

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE TO DIGITAL FOR CARE HOMES

## DIGITAL COMMUNITIES WALES: DIGITAL CONFIDENCE, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Cymunedau  
**Digidol**  
Cymru  
Hyder Digidol,  
Iechyd a Lles

**Digital**  
Communities  
**Wales**  
Digital Confidence,  
Health and Well-being

Darparwyd gan  
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Rhaglen  
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Programme

# CARE HOMES

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions has changed how we live, interact and access services. Care homes have faced rapid and difficult changes in how they operate and care for their residents, it has and continues to be a significant challenge.

Digital technology is playing an increasingly significant part in enabling families to be connected to their loved ones, providing a platform for virtual consultations with health services and keeping residents occupied and engaged in meaningful activities. For more information, please see our video about [Digital Inclusion and Health in Wales](#).

This guide has been created by [Digital Communities Wales](#) and partners to provide care homes with the information required to understand how digital technology can be used. It is recognised that it can be difficult to implement the use of digital technology within a care home setting, particularly when the sector is under intense pressure. Digital Communities Wales can provide training, information, and equipment to help you use digital technology within your care home - please [get in touch](#) find out how we can support you.

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## BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY

Digital technologies are tools that enable us to do things differently and, in some cases more effectively and efficiently. Whenever we think about using technology it is good to start with why and what will it give us. In terms of care homes there are several reasons why investing resources and staff time can help. Some of these have become even more important due to Covid-19. They include:

- 1 NHS and other care services are now available digitally, bringing care support into the home via apps and online video calls.
- 2 Loneliness and isolation can cause stress and anxiety – digital tools can help residents maintain relationships with loved ones outside of the home.
- 3 Assistive technologies including smart speakers (Alexa, Google Home) and Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets can support daily care and help to keep people occupied.
- 4 Digital tools can bring in fun too through reminiscence, music and games.

**“ Last week we used the tablets to celebrate Sir Tom Jones’ 80th birthday. We did a virtual quiz about him and watched his music videos from over the years so we could see how he has changed over time. This type of activity just would not have been possible before. ”**

## BENEFITS TO RESIDENTS

- Maintaining relationships
- Calming
- Entertainment
- Potential physical health improvements
- Improved well-being
- Keeping occupied

# BUILDING BLOCKS

To benefit from using technology the building blocks need to be in place to create a positive and quality experience for everyone.



1

## Staff and Leadership Buy In

Not everyone is comfortable with digital technology and some may feel they are not very confident using it. Support is available from Digital Communities Wales to inspire any care home staff that would like to develop their skills and who are interested in finding out a little more about how technology can be used within the home.

2

## Digital Champion

Digital Champions help others to build confidence and skills to get online. They do not need to be experts just have some basic digital skills. The key skills are patience, enthusiasm, and a passion to help others. Maybe there is already someone in the home that is a Digital Champion or someone that is willing to take on that role. We can provide support to train someone in your care home to become a Digital Champion.

3

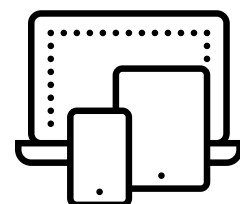
## Internet Connection

To ensure everyone has the best experience a quality connection to the internet is crucial. This can be a challenge especially when you do not know where to start or how it can be improved. Welsh Government has put together a connectivity standard for care homes which can be accessed on the [Digital Communities Wales website page](#) which includes some potential funding options.

4

## Digital Devices

Hopefully, you will have digital devices such as tablets (iPads/Samsung Tabs) to use within the home. Welsh Government provided Digital Communities Wales with additional resources to provide tablet devices to every registered care home in Wales. If you do not have devices available or you would like support to use them, Digital Communities Wales can help you. We can also provide advice on how to safely clean your devices.



5

### Training and Guides

Training for staff is available free of charge from Digital Communities Wales for organisations across Wales with help guides and ideas of good website and apps to use, plus access to a wide range of resources (**Appendix 1**). These training sessions will also help to inspire and motivate staff, develop skills, and build confidence in using technology. There are other organisations that can also help (**Appendix 2**)

6

### Digital Checklist

Digital Communities Wales has compiled a checklist (Appendix 3) to assist you on the start of your digital journey so that your residents can benefit from the many things' technology has to offer.

## MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS



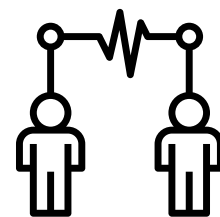
*The digital tablet has enabled our staff to be able to connect more of the residents with their families, which has a wonderful impact. Over the past couple weeks, we have hosted live video concerts from the lounge for friends and family and held regular video calls with loved ones*



During Covid-19 lockdowns, contact outside of care homes was reduced, cutting off many connections for residents. One of the only ways to maintain contact during this time was through video calling services such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype and Facetime. Investing staff time in getting to know how to use these various platforms and feel comfortable with them can result in saving time in the longer term and ensure that residents maintain contact with their families. Keeping your residents connected to their loved ones can have such a positive impact on their sense of well-being, which has now become more important than ever.

Other ideas you may wish to try include:

- Loved ones reading to residents, maybe at bedtime
- Family video call tea parties
- Virtual coffee morning
- YouTube videos
- Music Playlists
- Quizzes



## HEALTH APPOINTMENTS

### Attend Anywhere/NHS Video Consulting Service (Video Calling)

Health appointments have changed during Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown. The NHS in Wales rapidly rolled out a video consultation service so your residents can contact their doctor and other health professionals. Essentially this is a video calling service for your residents to contact their doctor or hospital when it is not possible to do so in person.

The service is now available across the NHS in Wales including primary care/GPs, secondary and community care, pharmacy, and dentistry. This may be a preferable option during the current restrictions where a face-to-face appointment may not be possible or appropriate.

More information on this service can be found on the [TEC Cymru website](#) and training is available through Digital Communities Wales (**Appendix 1**). Training will also cover the importance of online safety and what appropriate steps should be taken to ensure resident confidentiality during video calls/consultations.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Digital technology can offer many ways to keep residents entertained and engaged. These are just a few ideas:

1

**Music:** Researchers have found that music activates the brain, causing whole regions to communicate. Have a think of important times in your lives, there could be a certain song or a piece of music that evokes special memories. It could be the first dance at your wedding, songs from your childhood that you remember all the words to or a particular artist. This will be the same for the residents in your care.



2

**Reminiscence:** There is a growing evidence base supporting the use of digital reminiscence as a tool to improve the experience of patients in hospital and other care settings by generating interest, curiosity, and conversation. It improves rapport-building, communication, and engagement. Other benefits include reducing anxiety and agitation levels for distressed patients by providing a means of stimulation and distraction that can help with their symptoms.

3

**Hobbies:** From learning new skills to reviving old hobbies, the internet is full of guidance, how to videos and forums to speak to people with the same interests.

4

**TV Shows/Sporting Memories - Entertainment:** Being online means having endless entertainment at your fingertips. Digital Communities Wales has training that will explore ways to keep residents entertained online, from discovering new TV shows and music to re-living cult classics and old favourites.

5

**Religious Services:** Providing people who are isolating or shielding with the opportunity to experience regular religious services, can give people routine and the chance to maintain their faith. Most services are live streamed using Zoom/Facebook/YouTube. If your local service is not available live, YouTube can be a great resource for accessing services from the past, or from around the world.

Digital Communities Wales runs a training module for care homes to explore these ideas further and learn how to introduce these activities in your care home. Organisations who offer content and live sessions are listed later in this document.

## DIGITAL SAFETY

One of the barriers to digital technology can be the concern over safety and security. It is important to understand these issues and put safeguards in place to protect everyone – staff, residents, etc. Digital Communities Wales has a list of resources that maybe helpful to you or you can get in touch to arrange a training session which we can tailor to suit your particular needs and/or concerns.

## RECEIVING TRAINING ONLINE

As organisations look to deliver their support and training to care homes online, you may need to check that your home is set up to facilitate this. The following steps need to be taken in advance of the training:

- 1 Ensure you have a TV or monitor and laptop or tablet device available along with the appropriate connecting cables. If you are unsure about how to set up a device, get in touch and we can support you through this.
- 2 Ensure there is good internet connectivity in the room or office where you will receive the training.
- 3 Download the most common video calling software onto the device you will be using to connect to the TV or monitor such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Skype. Also make sure there is an email account set up on the devices as you may be sent a website link to access the training.
- 4 Check with the training provider what video calling platform they will be using and give them the email address of the account set up on the connected device, so it makes things easier.

## TYPES OF DIGITAL EQUIPMENT

***“Digital technologies (including Virtual Reality headsets) are being used to enable people with dementia to connect with positive memories. Reminiscence sessions in care homes for staff, families and people with dementia are using digital media (internet, tablet computers) to help people compile their life stories, through initiatives like Book of You.”***

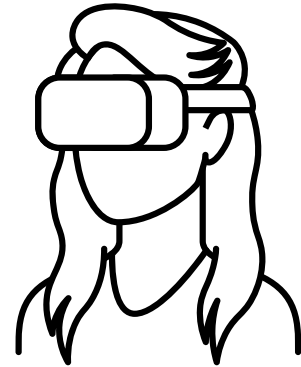
From the Digital Inclusion in Health and Social Care Guide



Although this guide talks about digital tablet devices there are many other devices that may work within your home. These include:

1

**Virtual Reality:** Wearing a headset can transport the user to other places/worlds for a fully immersive experience. The type of experience is almost limitless due to the many different VR apps you can download - anything from relaxing on a desert island to riding a rollercoaster to going back in time to the place you grew up. This technology when used as a therapeutic tool can be really effective by taking people out of their current situation.



2

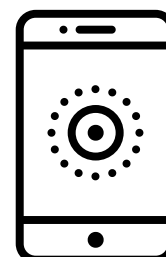
**Smart Speakers:** Digital technology that is controlled by voice allows engagement with the internet without having to learn any technical skills. These devices can be used to play music, find out information, play games/quizzes, set reminders and much more. An excellent way for someone with no digital skills to get online. Latest models now come with a video screen.

3

**Smart TV:** A television that is connected to the internet. This enables the TV to show online content e.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, BBC iPlayer. You can also browse the internet, send emails, etc. Smart TV's use an app-based system similar to the one in a tablet or smartphone, it can still be used as a normal television and has the technology that can be utilised for training

4

**Activity Tables e.g. RITA:** These devices are tablets/touchscreens that run bespoke software designed to be accessed by certain groups of people. For example, RITA - which stands for Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities - is a digital therapy system which allows patients to use apps, games, and other leisure activities as part of their hospital recovery. It uses the same technology as a standard tablet with some specialist software focussed on participants with certain conditions.



## DISABLED PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

Research shows that disabled people are more likely to miss out on digital technology, yet they could potentially benefit the most. As a result of the rapid development of technology there is a wide range of mainstream devices that work well in assisting people to get online, without having to resort to specialist software or hardware that can be expensive. Digital Communities Wales can provide Accessibility training that will help to make the most of the technology that you have.



Accessibility features are built into all smart devices. Options such as increasing text size or activating a zoom mode can make the world of difference to a digital experience. There are also many excellent free apps available such as Seeing AI (for Apple products) or Google Live Transcribe (for Android products) that can help someone with sensory loss to not only use the device itself but achieve new things offline as well.

The internet should be accessible to everybody and this is increasingly the case whether you use a laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

# INSPIRATION AND CASE STUDIES

## Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling is a fantastic way to engage people with technology and gives people a chance to create a short film that tells a story from their life. Preparing to create a digital story provides a space for reminiscence by looking through old photographs and is a gentle way to introduce someone to smart technology for the first time. Using an app like Adobe Spark Video makes the process of creating a story simple and fun, leaving the participant with a film comprising images, music and narration. The end product is often viewed with a great sense of achievement and gives people the confidence to engage further with online technology. Studies have shown numerous health benefits for people that create digital stories, especially for those that have some form of dementia.

Useful Links:

Adobe Spark Video (Apple): <https://bitly.co/5G4W>

Cyberlink Powerdirector (Android): <https://ggle.io/3mN2>

Digital Communities Wales video guide: <https://ytube.io/3DuT>

Digital Communities Wales resources: <https://bitly.co/5G4g>

## Covid-19 Lockdown Device Delivery

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Digital Communities Wales has been involved in delivering tablets and other devices to care homes across Wales. These devices are being used to support care homes residents to stay in touch with family, attend virtual GP appointments, keep occupied and much more. We have delivered 1,066 devices to 560 care homes since March 2020.

Some of this inspiring work and the reactions of those care home residents can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3llleTk7XWI>

## **Woffington House**

Woffington House in Tredegar was the first care home in Wales to sign up to the Digital Inclusion Charter. The Manager wanted to change the culture at Woffington House, reduce the use of medication and find new ways to keep residents occupied and improve their health and well-being. Care home staff were trained to use iPads with residents to research their hobbies and interests and keep in touch with their loved ones.

One of the residents at Woffington House who had no family or visitors suffered with anxiety, mild depression and was living with dementia. At times, because of his frustrations and physical outbursts he was prescribed Lorazepam. Using an iPad and Virtual Reality glasses, he was able to revisit where he grew up as well as going on rollercoaster rides and researching pigeon racing which had been a hobby all his life. He also loved looking up songs using YouTube. All the activities had a calming effect and his health and well-being improved dramatically.

Three residents who used to belong to a local male voice choir were amazed to be shown old footage of the choir singing on YouTube and were delighted to see themselves singing together again. One of the gentlemen loved listening to music on the iPad and finding different renditions of his favourite song Calon Lan, which he sang along to and encouraged other residents to join in. This gave him the confidence to use the iPad to chat to his daughter on Facetime - because he can see her he speaks to her as if she is in the room, which makes a big difference to them both.

The enjoyment that residents have from the devices has meant that these pieces of technology are vital resources for staff to help calm residents when they become distressed and help keep them occupied and engaged. Upon seeing the change in well-being of her mother, one family member said, 'I've got my mum back', showing how much difference technology can make in people's lives.

The use of technology in the home brought about significant change with the Manager reporting a 30% decrease in the number of falls and 100% reduction of PRN medications. They said: "Our residents can get very upset and confused, they might bang on doors and shout at the windows, wanting to know why they are here. Before we began on our digital journey, the response was to reach for the medication. Now, we reach for the iPad."

If you would like to see more, please visit our case study on our website:

<https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/case-studies/woffington-house-care-home/>

### **Digital Communities Wales**

Digital Champions  
Digital Storytelling  
Reminiscence  
Games and Entertainment  
Podcasts and music  
Smart speakers  
Sensory apps  
Health and wellbeing  
Accessibility  
Online Safety  
Keeping in touch

We can offer bespoke training to suit your needs.

Contact your Digital Communities Wales Adviser or visit the website:  
<https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/contact-us/>  
Alternatively, call 0300 111 5050.

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### **Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Cymru**

Training on the new NHS Video Consulting Service to enable you and your residents to access health professionals.

TEC Cymru website: <https://digitalhealth.wales/tec-cymru>.

When you have the building blocks in place you may want to reach out to organisations who are ready to support you. Many will have moved their delivery online. Here are a few examples of the organisations you may wish to contact. It is not an exhaustive list.

### Activities.

#### • → **Book of You**

Create a life story using words, pictures, music, and film. Bring family, friends, and carers together in one place to show who a person was and who they are now. If you are a carer, creating a Book of You will provide the opportunity for a shared, fun activity that lets you spend quality time together.

<https://www.bookofyou.co.uk>

#### • → **Digital Heroes**

Digital Communities Wales runs an intergenerational project called Digital Heroes. Young people, mostly school age, are trained to help people explore digital technologies in various settings including care homes.

<https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/digital-heroes/>

#### • → **Forget-me-not Chorus**

The Forget-me-not Chorus brings joy into the lives of those living with and those affected by dementia through the power of song. They reach over 300 people every week through choirs in the community, care homes and hospitals in Wales.

<https://www.forgetmenotchorus.com/>

#### • → **Live Music Now**

Live Music Now provides music sessions for thousands of older people every year, including those living with dementia, and their carers. During the Covid-19 lockdown, LMN's musicians and staff have worked quickly to produce a new online service, which is being accessed by care homes all around the UK.

<https://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/lmnonlinecare>

•  **Music in Hospitals and Care**

Music in Hospitals & Care (MiHC) is a charity providing live music sessions for people who are receiving care or treatment in healthcare settings across the UK.

<https://mihc.org.uk/>

•  **Songhaven**

Songhaven run dementia-friendly live events to connect with people through the power of professional music. The live concert series are currently on hold due to Covid-19, a new collection of professional concert films with printable programmes are available on the website

<http://songhaven.co.uk/>

•  **Sporting Memories**

Using sporting memories and physical activity, to tackle loneliness, low mood and dementia.

<https://www.sportingmemoriesnetwork.com/>

•  **Playlist for Life**

Playlist for Life's aim is for everyone living with dementia to have a playlist of personal music and for everyone who cares for them to know how to use it effectively.

<https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/>

Staff / Management buy in	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Champion identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Internet connectivity available	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Devices available	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Training**

Attend Anywhere (NHS Wales Video Consulting Service)	<input type="checkbox"/>
eConsult	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Technology in a Care Home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Receiving Training**

Large Smart TV set up	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good Wi-Fi connectivity in same room as TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital device connected to TV with correct connections	<input type="checkbox"/>
Download required software for training	<input type="checkbox"/>