

Meeting of Health and Wellbeing Board
Kent & Medway Digital Inclusion Device Loan Scheme

Overview:

The Kent and Medway Digital Inclusion Programme has been developed to increase access to digital public health services and to reduce inequalities that may have occurred due to accelerated digitalisation during the Covid-19 pandemic. This innovative pilot project provides an end-to-end service, that enables service users access to the digital resources they require to fully participate within health services. Achieving public health outcomes and ensuring digital inclusivity is safe, secure, and mitigated.

The project has been developed around two specific contracts. The first contract is between Kent County Council and Medway Council for 2 years, to provide free loaned devices to specific commissioned health services across Kent and Medway. The funding for the contract means that Kent have an allocation of 400 devices and Medway have 50 devices. These devices have been built to support the commissioned Drug and Alcohol, Maternity and Health Visiting services. This contract went live in April 2021, after 7 months of extensive product development internally and with partners including Cantium Business Solutions, EE (mobile phone and data provider) and DPD (contracted courier service). These 450 devices will have access to free calls, text messages and will have access to 6gb of mobile data per month, which should more than sufficient to support with digital health intervention support. The devices have tailor made builds to each of the relevant commissioned health services and are delivered to the service user so that it is ready to be used as soon as it comes out of the box and no set up will be required.

The second contract, the Social Prescribing contract is a specific contract for Medway that is being funded through Interreg to offer free loaned devices to service users. Due to delays in the funding request from Interreg the contract was unable to go live at the same time as the Kent and Medway contract. This contract is currently in its testing phase and due to the experience, problem solving and best practices learnt through the initial contract the potential for issues have been mitigated and as result has been able to move quickly through the development stage as a result of the best practices learnt. This contract is expected to go live by mid-November 2021, with a pilot phase to be completed by mid-January 2022, this is also a 2-year contract. This contract will have 30 devices specifically built for Social Prescribing service users but there is an increase data allowance per month of 20gb, this data requirement is different to the Kent and Medway contract as a result of analysis of service user demands through a needs analysis and feedback from Social Prescribing link workers.

Eligibility & Process:

The project offers a device loan scheme, on pilot for two years. Eligibility Criteria is based upon three key principles:

- 1) Being over the age of 18
- 2) A resident of Kent or Medway
- 3) Referred to us directly by approved health services

Currently we are working with: Health visiting/maternity, Drug and Alcohol services in Kent, Social Prescribing in Medway, One You Kent and Involve Kent. We have 450 devices available across the region for the Kent and Medway contract and 30 devices for the Social Prescribing Medway contract.

Service users will be provided with a device – a Samsung Tab A Tablet or a Samsung A20e Smartphone, delivered with a ruggedised case, charger, service user guide and a free post returns label.

The devices are managed by Cantium Business Solutions, whom we work closely with to ensure effective delivery of the service. They are responsible for the formulation and monitoring of the portal, technical IT solutions (BDR) and the creation of the PowerBi Dashboard for live monitoring and reporting against KPI's. They are also entrusted to manage relations with third-party services, EE and DPD. Team members work alongside the core digital inclusion team to ensure the devices are performing to optimum standard throughout the project.

The loan scheme is free of charge for service users however they will be asked to sign a loan agreement upon receiving the device to confirm they accept the terms and conditions of the scheme. Service users will recognise that the device is on loan and that it will be returned after the agreed loan period. This is typically for 6 months yet it can be extended for an additional period of up to 3 months, if necessary.

The service user will have flexibility in what they use the device for, however robust restrictions apply to specific applications and websites to protect the service user, using specialist security software provided by Wandera and Mobile Iron. Usage is monitored by Cantium to ensure the devices are being used legally and productively. If a device is not returned at the end of the loan period, or if it is continually being misused, it will be remotely blocked so it has no resale value.

Digital Inclusion Coordinator:

The wellbeing of service users is essential for the scheme, subsequently they are supported by the Digital Inclusion Coordinator throughout their loan period. The Digital Coordinator's primary role is to engage with the service user, assisting them with any issues and helping them get the most out of their device.

The Digital Inclusion Coordinator is responsible for processing referrals via the Cantium portal to ensure service users receive their device efficiently, collating and maintaining a record of all data on a secure master spreadsheet. The coordinator supports users with the return of their device or extension of their loan period and acquires service user feedback via evaluation surveys. The surveys provide baseline data evidence that the programme is working and demonstrates that it improves the digital skills, confidence, motivation, and access for service users, as outlined by the NHS and in the UK Digital Strategy (2017).

It is the coordinator's duty to ensure safeguarding is a top priority and all service user data is protected in line with GDPR and DPIA policy guidelines. The Digital Coordinator also facilitates a network of Digital Champions, liaising with HR to approve DBS checks.

Digital Champions:

The project offers a team of Digital Champions who act as additional digital support for our service users. The champions are a mix of community volunteers, students and staff from Mid-Kent College, who have undertaken online training with Digital Unite & Citizens Online to support service users with digital skills from the Essential Digital Skills Framework. The framework focuses on five key areas of digital use, including Communication, Handling information, Transacting, Problem solving and being safe online. Mid-Kent College will operate two Digital Champion hubs, one at the Medway and Maidstone campuses and will be reactive to the demand for Digital Champions through the Digital Coordinator.

We currently have 10 fully trained champions who are actively providing digital support via telephone call to the service user. This is arranged and overseen by the Digital Coordinator to ensure both champion and service user are content and protected throughout the process. Not only does this interaction enhance digital confidence it also encourages social interactivity, crucial amid the effects of current health climate. The element of socialisation is further encouraged by our in-person support hubs in Maidstone and Mid-Kent College's drop in digital café. Plans for expansion include creating more of these spaces around Kent when the health climate permits.

All Digital Champions are required to have a Standard DBS check before moving onto training, the DBS checks are facilitated by Medway Councils HR Department.

Social Prescribing Medway Contract:

Referrals to the scheme are expected to increase as the Social Prescribing Contract testing phases completes and goes live within the next few weeks. The referrals to this contract are for service users over the age of 65 and are limited in mobility, so their digital inclusivity is paramount to their socialisation and reducing social isolation. They

will be supported by link workers throughout the loan period, physically delivering the device to them and assisting with initial set up. Referrals will also participate in evaluation surveys in which their digital confidence and mental health will be measured in line with NHS specification. Social Prescribing partner services e.g. Chatty Cafés, will also be utilised throughout the scheme to increase support leads for the wider Digital Inclusion agenda across Medway.

Conclusion:

The device loan scheme has built strong relationships with health services across Kent and Medway, providing devices, data, and digital support to some of the hardest to reach and most vulnerable individuals in the region. We have seen high uptake in areas of deprivation across Kent and continue to promote the service both internally and externally to increase referrals to the scheme. We are delivering webinars and disseminating promotional materials across local services and organisations to maximise outreach in utilisation of our devices.