As the UK entered into lockdown, Suffolk County Council (SCC) committed to providing care technology to vulnerable local people, to keep them connected and supported during Covid-19.

This is how we have delivered Suffolk’s largest and fastest care technology roll-out

**March - April 2020**
- Engaged with care technologists and market leaders to identify available offers
- Commissioned Alcove and RETHINK Partners to deliver Video Carephones
- Rallied and engaged our social care teams, care providers and Digital Care Advisors from our key areas to identify the types of people who would benefit from the device, including people:
  - who were shielding,
  - in receipt of care services
  - at most risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- Reached out to older people, adults with learning disabilities, people living with a mental health condition, carers, and their formal support providers
- Prioritised people who don’t have access to mainstream consumer technology or connectivity
- Rapidly set-up a network of frontline professionals who could support people to receive devices.

**May - September 2020**
- Delivered over 750 Video Carephones
- Over 1,800 minutes of video being used by day centres to support people with their regular activities
- High usage by people keeping in touch with friends and family
- Over 45,000 minutes of voice and video calls made
- With 15,000 individual calls
- Over 1,000 friends, family and care and support workers connected
- Over 100 organisations and care providers involved
- Over 120 individual health and care professionals briefed and trained over 50 sessions

We have achieved what no other care technology project in Suffolk has achieved before and have:

**Now**
- Capturing vital lessons to enhance our future Digital Care partnership
- Using the technology across health and social care to help prepare for winter
- Supporting significant opportunities with HomeFirst and day services
Across Suffolk our Video Carephones are being used:

- For video welfare check-ins by carers to make sure people are doing okay.
- By professionals to carry out assessments of individuals at home and in care settings.
- To help people to use technology to support their care.
- As a medicine prompt reminder - often avoiding a visit.
- To keep people connected to loved ones and friends.
- For fun - for example, cooking sessions.
- To maximise non-contact social interaction.
- To provide exercise sessions.
- To support mental health and wellbeing.
- To bring joy - people are seeing their grandchildren for the first time.
- To supplement care services and to support people to try-out technology for the first time.

"It allows us to work more flexibly and change the way we support people."

Kevin, Potsford Care Services Ltd

"I think it's very good to help me communicate and see people I can't go to see. It is very easy to use and would be good for anyone who lives on their own and can't get out."

Bryan

"The big difference is being able to see people. If you speak on the phone, you can't make eye contact and see facial expressions."

Chris

"Having the Video Carephone has taken a lot of pressure off me. Especially now Mum speaks to her family in Derbyshire. She really enjoys using it and it has made me feel like she's not so alone."

Heather

Florence, who is 104, loves her Video Carephone and is very impressed at how easy the tech is. She would love for ‘everyone she knows’ to be added to make calls. She had never used technology before.

Jeni who has never used technology before and hasn’t seen her family in Derbyshire for months, managed to see her granddaughter walk for the first time – on video!

Susan, who has a learning disability, loves speaking to her support workers through her Carephone and has named it ‘John’. She is very excited to be going on holiday and is taking ‘John’ with her so she can give everyone at the day centre a virtual tour of her chalet.

Gloria is unable to attend the day centre in person and really misses her friends. Her support worker has given her a bingo card so she can participate in the game through her Carephone while at home.

The family in Australia, who managed to talk to and see their uncle Tommy before he sadly passed away. They were very grateful to be able to see him in his final weeks.

The family from Potsford Care Services in Suffolk, shows Bryan (right) the care farm through his tablet during lockdown - as Bryan missed seeing the animals.

If you would like to know more about our Virtual Care Response please go to www.suffolk.gov.uk/virtualcare