



Technology Top Tips for keeping in touch with care home residents

These tips were developed by members of the Keeping in Touch Task Group. They suggest ways that technology can be used to help people who live in care keep in touch and have successful and safe catch ups with family members and loved ones. These are suggestions only and should be read along with the

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>



Making sure people are safe from Covid-19 has meant changes to how people who live in care can have visits with loved ones.

One change is less face to face visits inside people's homes.



Because of this, people have been using technology to keep in touch in different ways.



Many of us now have computers, laptops, iPads and tablets, smart phones and even smart televisions.

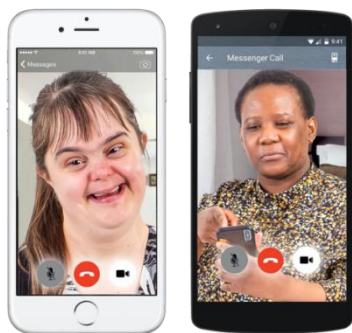
Hearing aids, hearing loops and voice synthesizers also help us to communicate with each other and to stay connected.



Not everyone finds technology easy to use.

Some people have not had the chance to learn how to use technology. Some older people grew up before computers were so common.

It also includes some disabled people who might not have had access to technology.



Some people find technology confusing.

For example, some people with dementia cannot understand the image on screen or the sounds they hear, even if it is a loved one talking.

This can be very distressing for some people.

Remember, everyone is different.



- Some people can use technology easily
- Some people might be able to learn how to use technology
- Some people need a bit of support to use technology
- Some people do not like technology and prefer not to use it.

Top tips for residents, families and friends



Put it in the plan

Make sure you fill in your Keeping in Touch plan including any thoughts or feelings about technology.

This might include things you can do and things you want to learn how to do.



Think about what works for you

There are many ways to keep in touch using technology. This includes phones, tablets or iPads, and computers.

There are also different 'platforms' you can use. This means different software programs that do similar things. For example Skype and Zoom are different ways to have a video call.



New technologies

There are new technologies all the time that are making it easier for people to connect. Some now only need your voice to work.

Find the right technology for you!



Practice makes perfect!

Learning to use new technology can take time. Sometimes connections don't always work. This can be very frustrating. Take time to practice and become familiar with the new technology and try not to worry.



Discuss technology with your care provider and see what they can offer

Your provider may have devices you can use like tablets and iPads. They may also have free access to Wi-Fi and staff who can help you to keep in touch with loved ones. Just ask!



Plan ahead

If you need support from care staff to use during a call or video chat, give the home as much notice as possible.

It can be a good idea to schedule regular times that work for everyone.



Find a quiet place to talk

It can be difficult to hear properly if there are too many people around you. Try and sit in a part of the care home which is not too busy. This will also help the person you are talking to.



Headphones

Headphones are another good way to have a more private conversation.

You will need a pair of headphones that are comfortable with a microphone.





Keep it private




Sometimes a password may be set up on a device or to log into software on a device.





If you have your own password, keep it private.

You may have to write passwords down to help you to remember them. Be sure to keep this private too.

	<p>Lock it away</p> <p>When devices are not being used then store them safely away so they do not get damaged or taken by someone else.</p>
	<p>Who pays the bill?</p> <p>There may be some costs associated with using technology, for example who pays the Wi-Fi bill? Ask your provider what the arrangements are.</p> <p>Remember video calls can use a lot of data which can be expensive. Have you got a plan that works for you?</p>

Tips for care providers and workers

	<p>Supporting someone to use technology to keep in touch with loved ones can make a big difference to their wellbeing.</p>
	<p>It is important to understand the person's feelings and capacity about using technology.</p> <p>Read their Keeping in Touch Plan first to see if there is any information that can help.</p>
	<p>Talk to the person you are supporting and try and find out how they feel about technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they comfortable using technology? • What have they used before? • Do they have any preferences? • Do they need any assistance?

	<p>Make sure there is enough time for people to get online, connect and chat properly.</p> <p>A bad call can be very frustrating for everyone involved and cause distress.</p>
	<p>Ask the person and their family what you can do to help during the call. They may need you to help support the person. They may not need you to do anything. Provide just enough support but be ready to help if needed.</p>
	<p>Respect people's privacy. They may wish to talk about personal matters in private.</p> <p>Stay nearby in case you are needed.</p>
	<p>For people who are deaf or hard of hearing, it is important to have hearing loops available onsite, both for residents and visitors.</p> <p>Portable loops can be moved as needed to support specific residents as needed.</p>
	<p>With more people online you may need to do more to make sure everyone can stay connected.</p> <p>Test your Wi-Fi signal strength in different parts of the care home so everyone has good access. Use Wi-Fi signal boosters if required.</p>

Made by the North Yorkshire Keeping in Touch Task Group, February 2020

