

## HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



## Cwmpas working with the Welsh Government & Bridgend Council

### Digital Hardship Project

Cwmpas identified that many people leaving hospital did not have the financial means to access technology or an internet connection. Technology has the power to enable people living with long-term health problems to better manage their care and maintain or increase their independence. Cwmpas developed two projects with funding from the Welsh Government and Bridgend County Borough Council to collaborate with local third sector organisations to identify people who could benefit from having a digital device or internet connectivity. Cwmpas worked with the third sector organisations to:

1. Identify the most appropriate device for the person's needs by factoring in their health, accessibility issues, digital skill level, access to broadband etc.
2. Provide the organisation with funding for the device and connectivity.
3. Support the organisation to provide the person they support to make the most of their new device, linking them to sources of health and care, digital training, ideas for making the best use of their device, activities to uplift wellbeing.

The projects ran for eight months in 2022 and supported 111 people all over Wales. The average funding awarded was just £295, but the impact of the project was far reaching. People were able to use their new digital devices to increase their independence, relying less on care and support services. For example, Cwmpas received an application from a 'community connector' working with someone with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) who was in financial hardship, including fuel poverty and debt. They had struggled

to manage since their health forced them to stop working, and they were using food banks to survive. They were unable to afford an internet connection or device so the Hardship Fund provided a tablet and a 24-month pre-paid SIM card. As a result, the person was able to manage their finances more effectively using online banking and shopping online to save money, identify cheaper energy suppliers and reconnect with old friends via social media. They told us, *“It’s great. It’s so easy and fast, I’m so grateful. I am back in contact with people and don’t feel so secluded in the flat.”*

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**For further information contact:**

Jenny Phillips

Bids and Commercial Consultant - Cwmpas

[Jenny.phillips@cwmpas.coop](mailto:Jenny.phillips@cwmpas.coop) | 07471 672 859 | [www.cwmpas.coop](http://www.cwmpas.coop)