

## Black Country Connected - For a Healthier Future

### Digital Inequalities Programme

Dear Healthcare Professional,

Black Country Connected is a programme to loan a Geobook Laptop and donate connectivity/wi-fi to residents in the Black Country, to give them access to the internet. This will help people access information such as health, care, social and well-being sites, general information sites, educational sites for use with school, college or post-graduate courses, social media and even online shopping access and enable connection with people and organisations via email and APPs.

We are seeking people/patients to take part in our Black Country Connected Programme which is aiming to determine if our people have access to a digital device and whether they can access information/online resources via the internet. There are five main eligibility criteria:

- People who have no or limited access to a device
- People who have no or limited connectivity/wi-fi access
- People who have no or limited skills to use technology and support their day-to-day life
- People who experience barriers to using technology – poverty, require support, in social isolation
- People with long-term conditions/living with a disability (who are unable to work or need specific help seeking suitable employment)

We would also like to determine what basic skills people currently have when using a digital device and/or the internet and we are therefore supporting Walsall College/Colleges West Midlands' Basic IT Skills course which people/patients would be invited to attend **free of charge**, should they wish to do so. Throughout the three-month Programme, the recipient will have access to a telephone/email support service for any queries/technical issues they may have.

We will ask all recipients to complete a brief baseline survey when collecting their device and again at the end of the three-month period. This is to determine if having a digital device/access to the internet has had a positive impact on their Health and Wellbeing, this could be:

- helping them become more confident using the internet, reducing digital inequality
- finding employment
- gaining more knowledge to health-related matters
- or simply helped them to keep-in-touch with family/friends via video/audio

The online surveys will be built into the Black Country Connected web page via Survey Monkey. The surveys will give us an indication of the existing use of a digital device, what the device was used for i.e., sending emails, social networking, online shopping, etc., and whether people would use a device to contact their GP (General Practitioner), view their health care records, etc. The survey will also ask if the recipient would be interested in a basic IT skills course to help them get better use of their digital device.

We have attached a Referral Form should you want to refer any patient/resident you feel would benefit from this Programme.

Yours faithfully

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Digital Inequalities Lead