

KEEPING IN TOUCH

An easy read guide

Please remember, this is a guide only. You should not take any of the content within this document as being a recommendation for any particular device or service

OFFICIAL

Keeping in touch – easy read guide

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1. Introduction

This guide is designed to help you to decide which communication device could be of use to you or your family during the current situation. The guide also has advice on services which can help you communicate using internet based technology.

There are a large number of devices and services available. There are a number of things which you should think about, like:

- **Features**, these are the types of things you want the DEVICE to be able to do. Or the type of things you want to support someone else to be able to do. **Think** - Do you want video? Is a large screen important? Can it work with my other devices?
- **Cost** – You can buy DEVICES for under £100, others cost more. Generally, the more you pay the more the DEVICE will do for you.
- **How easy is it to use?** – This may be important if the person being supported has little or no experience of using modern technology and devices. **Think** – are the buttons large enough? Is the screen easy to read?

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This guide offers an unbiased view on what may work best to support you, your family and any older relatives you may be looking after.

The simplest and most well-known method to stay in touch is to use the telephone but with a normal land line or mobile phone you can only have voice communication.

Some older and vulnerable people need more help than this to be fully supported. It is now possible using technology and devices to stay connected more than ever – you can even have online doctor's consultations and make video calls with other health staff using systems such as ['Near Me'](#) .

Many religions and faith based groups are putting their services online and of course, people can shop for all sorts of things, including food and groceries online these days.

This guide will give you information to help you make the best choice for both you and your family

2. What you need to have

Does the person needing support have a DATA CONNECTION in their home? This could be through a broadband line or a mobile SIM connected device. Companies like BT, Virgin Media, EE, Talk-Talk will sell you this.

[BT Broadband](#)

Does the person needing support have a DEVICE which can communicate? This could be a laptop, a tablet, a smart TV, a smartphone, or an Alexa or Google Dot type device.

[Motorola Mobile Phones](#)

Can the person use the DEVICE easily?

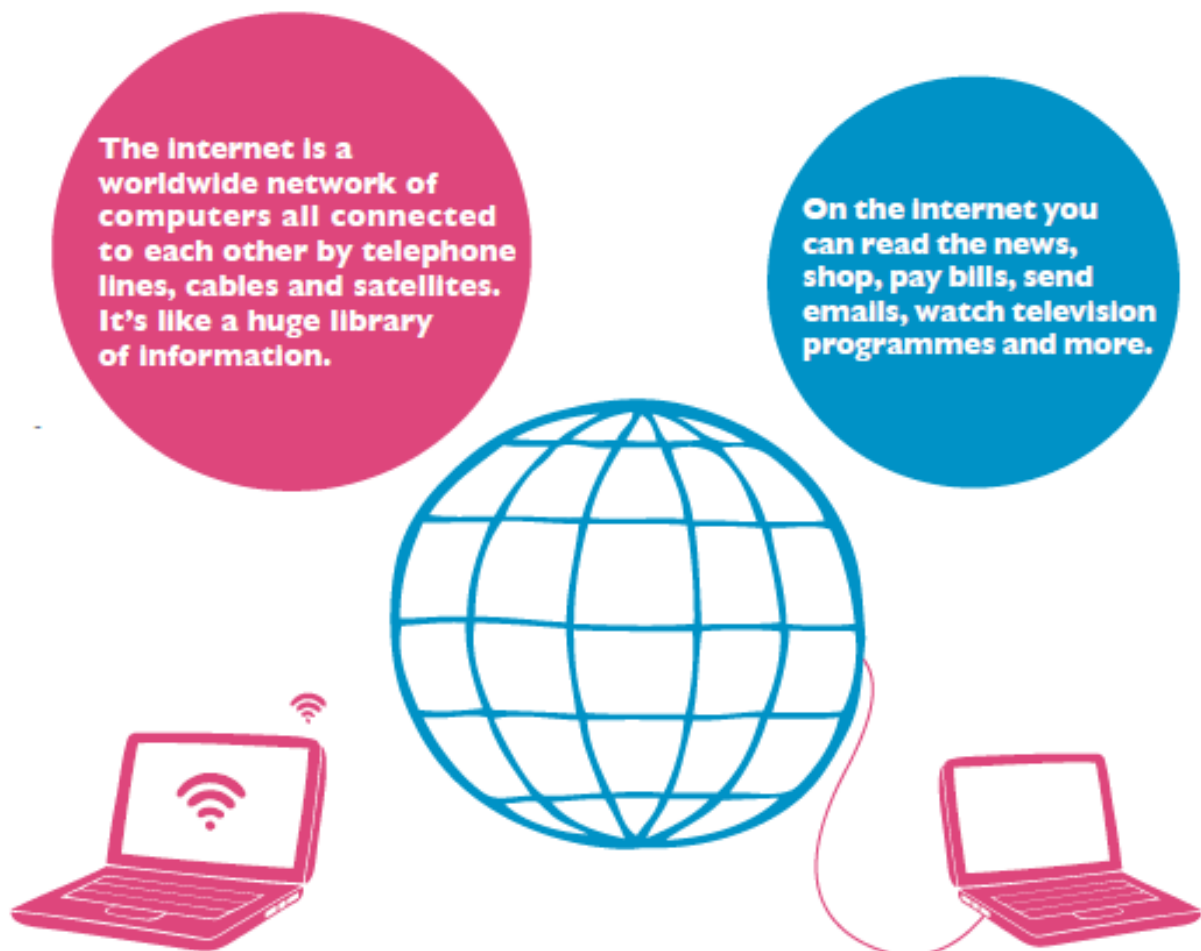
The easiest to use and operate are the voice activated systems like: Alexa.

[All-new Amazon Echo \(3rd generation\) | Smart speaker with Alexa](#)

3 The Basics – getting connected

Before you can start to communicate with other people using a DEVICE you need:

- A connection with a data plan
- A device!



Getting connected

All devices need a data connection to let two or more people communicate. Data connections come in three different types;

1. SIM enabled connections with data for devices like Smartphones, Tablets or WiFi ‘hot-spots’.

Lots of grocer’s shops sell SIM cards. Ask friends if they use a provider, they may know a good deal! Get a SIM with data included the retailer or SIM provider can tell you if this is included.

[Tesco Mobile SIM](#)

2. A broadband connection. This can be either within someone’s home or one which is shared by people within a building. All devices can connect to a broadband connection.

You will normally need a BT ‘landline’ connection or a Virgin Media or SKYTV line to get broadband. Ask a neighbour if they know a good provider in the area.

[U Switch](#)

3. A WiFi connection.

Some devices can connect to cloud WiFi or a shared WiFi signal.

There might be a WiFi signal in the area you can use. Ask your neighbour or device retailer if this is possible.

You might think about a WiFi hotspot DEVICE, which is a portable WiFi signal generator.

4. Some SIM enabled devices

Devices come in all shapes and sizes – it pays to shop around and get recommendations from friends or comparison web-sites.

Smartphones – these can be purchased for under £100 and most allow people to communicate both by audio and video.

Smartphones can also do a lot of other useful things like being used to set daily reminders, alerts, task-lists and lots of things you can do with a lap top.

All Smartphones require a SIM connection to work.

Tablets, notebooks and ipads - These are next-generation computing devices. They tend to have larger screens and can be used for a variety of purposes including video and audio communication, internet, music, videos looking at e-Books, games and lots more.

You can use tablets and ipads without SIM cards but you will need a broadband or WiFi connection to make use of connected features.

5. **Devices - Smartphones, laptops, ipads, notebooks**

A device with a large display area and one which you can increase the size of the text will be the most helpful - as we age our eyesight tends to get worse.

Look for devices on which third-party 'Apps' can be installed this will give you as many options as possible. Some brands of device only allow you to communicate with similar devices.

Smartphone devices and smaller Tablets can be purchased for under £100 from outlets such as;

- Argos
- Tesco
- ASDA
- Amazon

Although a lot of shops have closed they are still delivering by telephone order or online.

As stock in all of these shops is running low, think about more than one suitable device based upon things such as cost and features. Just in case your first choice isn't available.

[The BBC guide to getting online](#)

Using a web browser

The information on the internet is contained in **websites** and on **webpages**.

To connect to the internet you need an **Internet Service Provider** or **ISP**.

Your mobile phone company, home phone, cable television provider or even your local supermarket chain can offer you an internet connection.

A broadband internet connection allows you to access the internet.

The **address bar** has the address of the website you are on. Every website has an address, which is also called a **URL**.

For example, the URL for the BBC website is:

www.bbc.co.uk

The **www** stands for **World Wide Web**. Most websites have this at the beginning.

The **BBC** is the name of the website.

The **.uk** shows the BBC website is in the United Kingdom.



6 Setting up – getting an email address

Your connection provider will give you an email address. If they do not there are several free email providers.

You will need an email address to register for most services. Some free providers are

- [Gmail](#)
- [Apple](#)
- [Outlook](#)

You can use the same email address for a number of services – you do not need one email per service

7. Things you can do with devices and services

Audio and video communication - this can include having conversations with a group of people, so you could have a conversation with five or six family members at the one time even if they are all located in different places from each other.

Set up reminders and /or alerts to prompt you for example to take medication or remind you that your favourite TV programme is starting.

Control ‘smart’ devices about the house – this is a bit more complicated to set up but you can turn the lights off and on by using your voice if you have connected switch devices.

Internet CCTV - You can let family friends know that you are up and about.

Remote door bells – you can be notified by video link of someone at your door.

8. Links to combined devices and services

[Amazon Echo](#) – This is one of the best communication and task based devices available at present. Some Echo devices come with inbuilt screens which can be used for video calling.

Alexa – the voice on an Amazon Echo can control several smart devices using itself as a home automation system.

[Facebook Portal](#) You need a Facebook account and a web connection. Calls are made over Facebook Messenger, or WhatsApp, and your family and friends don't need a Facebook Portal device to receive these calls.

[Apple Facetime](#) To make a FaceTime call, you need the person's phone number or registered email address. There are a number of ways to make a FaceTime call, however the person you are calling also requires to have an apple device. If you have an Apple device it is a good idea to install a third-party app such as 'WhatsApp' on the Apple device which means people with any device can communicate with you.

[Blink system](#) Allows you to make visual checks on a loved one who may be unable to use technology to communicate with you. A small camera can be placed in the person's home and you can download an app to log in at any time to check in on the person. There are no monthly subscription costs but this system is really for visual checks only.

9. Stand-alone applications which can be used on any device

[WhatsApp](#) This allows you to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media. You can also use it for multi-person calls so that you could easily have a family or friends discussion with several people communicating at the same time.

[Microsoft Skype](#) - This software lets you make phone calls and video calls and send but not receive text messages from someone else.

[VSee for Apple devices](#)

[VSee for Android devices](#)

The main advantage to VSee is for situations where the person at the other end would have difficulty in operating a device to answer calls.

VSee is downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play store.

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The website is rather confusing as it is targeted at the US medical profession as this is its normal customer.

There are privacy issues with this so you will need to make sure that the person receiving the calls is comfortable with this.

[Call in Time \(Age UK\)](#). You may wish to have a telephone conversation with someone, especially if you live alone and your support service have been affected by recent events. Age UK offers a service allowing you to chat for 30 minutes per week with a volunteer.

10. Telecare – Getting help in an emergency

Some people will need to call on help. Telecare services use devices to call on carers. There are a number of national telecare services which offer a 24 hour monitoring service:

(Click on the logo to find out more)



11 Alternative Technology Options to Stay Safe

Technology is available for service users/ patients and their families to purchase at a relatively low cost to help keep people safe inside and outside their home.

Remote Home Monitoring Systems

These types of systems can be used both for assessment purposes and to provide reassurance to family members at a distance.

There are more and more of these types of devices available to buy today.

Should the need arise, families and carers can be automatically alerted to issues by using these devices.



[Canary](#) [Just Checking](#)

Door Sensor Triggers

Door Sensors - From all-inclusive remote home monitoring systems, to the simple yet very effective recorded message devices. These sensors can trigger alerts, either as a recorded message to prompt the person opening the door, or as an alert to someone externally which would tell them that the individual is leaving the premises.



Door sensors can also be used on other doors within the home, such as fridges. These indicate whether the door is being opened on a frequent basis and may give an indication or advance warning to some behaviours.

Ableworld

alzproducts.co.uk

Communication and Location Safety Devices

There are many simple communication and GPS safety devices available.

These can provide reassurance to both the individual and their carers/families.



Most of these devices will function well with a simple 'Pay as you go' SIM card, but be aware if the SIM credit runs out the device will not work.

[Doro](#) [Pebbell](#) [One Touch](#) [Buddi](#) [Smartsole](#) [GPS Tracker Shop](#)

Apps and Online Resources

There are a huge range of Apps and online resources available to people to help them manage their own conditions or to help care for someone else.

There are a number of sites which provide evaluations and ratings of online resources, such as ORCHA which rates Apps by both 'value' and 'risk' and they also allow you to search for Apps by keywords.



Two excellent online resources are 'NHS Inform' and 'ALISS' which are both focused on Scotland

[ALISS](#) [NHS Inform](#) [ORCHA](#) [NHS Choices](#)

More generally, Alzheimer Scotland operates a 24 hour helpline 0808 808 3000 to give advice to support people with Dementia and their families.

