

# **Government to fund devices to keep care home residents connected**

**New government funding has been announced to provide around 1,400 care homes in Scotland with digital devices to connect those receiving care with their loved ones.**

The government's £1 million fund will help all Scottish care homes to access iPads which will keep care home residents connected with friends and relatives, and support the clinical management of health conditions remotely.

From today, all care homes may apply for up to two iPads to support their residents. This will be funded through combined Scottish Government funding from the Connecting Scotland programme, which has committed £500,000 to the initiative, and £500,000 allocated in the Adult Social Care Winter Preparedness plan.

This follows a trial which provided digital devices to six care homes in Aberdeenshire addressing digital exclusion, supported by Scottish Care, the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: "Digital devices can never replace human interaction and we continue both to actively review what more we can do to support visiting with input from family members, carers, and clinicians and finalise our plans for routine designated visitor testing. But the pandemic has

shown us that digital technology can help keep us in touch with our loved ones and provide vital access to healthcare through services such as NearMe for video consultations.

“This fund will give care home residents an additional way to keep in touch with family and friends. Staying connected will be even more important as we approach winter, and the Scottish Government is committed to doing everything we can to prepare and support care home residents and the staff who look after them.”

Dr Donald Macaskill, Chief Executive of Scottish Care said:“The funding which has been announced by the Cabinet Secretary will help to improve connection for many. We hope that it is the start of an increased recognition of the critical contribution of technology in the care home sector and that we will see an enhanced commitment to the appropriate use of technology and digital in social care as a whole.”

Isla Cowe, acting care home manager at Allachburn Care Home in Aboyne said:“Many of our residents have really embraced this new technology and are delighted to be in regular contact with their loved ones. It really makes the difference to their general wellbeing and they don’t feel such a sense of loss at being unable to have the physical contact with their families at this time.

“Having the Near Me technology has proved so useful in reducing the number of people who need to visit whilst still being able to provide the same level of service that our residents and their families would expect. We recently had a consultation using this technology with the Speech and Language Therapy team, and were able to change the course of action to be taken for this particular gentleman which has proved immensely beneficial to the care that we deliver to him.”