Tea & Technology
Digital engagement project in partnership with Aviva
Over the past few months, Anchor Hanover has been working closely with Aviva to increase digital engagement amongst older people. Anchor Hanover’s Tea & Technology project has used the £50,000 gifted from Aviva’s Community Fund to purchase tablets and train volunteers to open up the digital world to a whole new audience.

Why this project is so important

In 2018 only 44% of those aged 75 and over were recent internet users\(^1\), suggesting the majority in this age group still do not have access to the online world.

A BritainThinks report\(^2\) prepared for Age UK in 2015 found that while older people were not opposed to going online, some have many entrenched barriers to using the internet. These include:

- A lack of knowledge and experience of the internet
- Low to no ‘top of mind’ awareness among this audience that they are missing out by not being online
- A feeling that the internet is an ‘unsafe place’
- A strong feeling that using computers/the internet is very much outside their comfort zone
- A perception that cost and access are prohibitive

The report also suggested that research participants felt addressing these barriers successfully would involve sustained and focused face-to-face support to help build confidence and skills.

Tea & Technology has been working hard to tackle these barriers and help older people realise the benefits of the getting online. In an increasingly digital world it’s vital the older generation are given the opportunity to see for themselves what the internet has to offer and decide whether they can benefit.

By providing trainers, face-to-face sessions, tablets and wi-fi connections, the project is enabling those who may have previously felt going online wasn’t for them to have a go.

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1. Internet users 2018 - Office of National Statistics 2018
2. Life Offline | What life is like for older people who don’t use the internet. A report prepared by BritainThinks on behalf of Age UK
How is Tea & Technology making a difference?

Since the Tea & Technology project started, many more older people are now getting the chance to speak face-to-face to relatives abroad, check they are receiving the correct financial benefits, have shopping delivered to their home, research their family tree, reminisce about times gone by and save money on household bills in a way they’ve never done before.

And we’re continuing to hear good news stories from participants and volunteers alike, which reassures us that we’re making a meaningful difference. We can’t wait to make an even greater impact in 2019!

Our key achievements in the past six months:

- Almost 200 customers reached so far
- 100% of customers pleased with their experience
- 100% of volunteers pleased with their experience
- 50 tablets are now in circulation
- 35 trained volunteers
- Volunteers have travelled more than 1,200 miles to break through the barriers to accessing technology

What customers told us

“It gave me more confidence in handling my mobile phone and tablet.”

“Relaxed atmosphere, no pressure and a very patient instructor.”

“Everyone had a different query and the instructor was able to answer all questions.”

“Very friendly and patient instructor. I did not feel embarrassed by asking simple questions.”

“As the session was at my scheme, there was no travelling involved so I was able to sit comfortably and enjoy the session. I left the session feeling very confident with using a tablet.”

“The ‘Tea & Technology’ session was really informal which I liked most about it. It made me want to attend more sessions and continue learning more skills.”

“The trainer was very patient with me and communicated the session really well.”

“I would have never thought I would have enjoyed learning about technology but the trainer made it really interesting and fun - I would recommend other customers to join in. I also made some new friends during the session.”

“Really liked the enthusiasm of the instructor who was very patient.”

“A very enjoyable experience. The session was very well presented and easy to follow.”
What our volunteers told us

“I love technology and I get great satisfaction when I see people gain confidence and start asking questions and telling me their achievements. I have really enjoyed being part of the project and look forward to continuing in the New Year.” Aviva volunteer, Christine Dodds.

“I really enjoyed the sessions I had at Bretton Court. I went three times and had around two and a half hours there each time. As there were different skill levels, I had to tailor the experience from total beginner to those who were slightly more advanced.

“I took my tablet and the Aviva one so we could all see what was happening. I would show customers on mine and get them to do it on theirs. I was also able to show them the App Store to find things like the iPlayer and solitaire.

“I think this project is a great idea as it is bringing customers and colleagues together to help each other over a nice cuppa. As technology advances it’s great to share our knowledge and skills and learn from residents more about living in one of our locations. It was great fun.” Tori Linley, Apprentice Payroll Administrator

“The sessions were beneficial as the customers had a better understanding of using the tablets and specific applications. Knowing the fact that I have helped a customer use their tablet or iPad is great.

“I felt a sense of achievement as it helped me develop on my training skills and improve the service that we provide to our customers. It helped me with tailoring the sessions and adapting my approach to depending on the customers skills and knowledge.”

“We take technology for granted and how much easier it has made our lives in regards to communicating with friends and family using various apps. As an Aviva volunteer it is important to educate our customers and ensure that they are comfortable using their tablets to get the full benefits of using the different types of technology.” Abdul Chattun, Customer Centre Advisor

“It was a really good experience taking part in the Aviva project as it gave me a chance to go out and meet both the residents and a location manager. It was very rewarding to be able to show the residents the basics of how to use a tablet and browse the web and see them gain confidence.

“The residents thoroughly enjoyed the session and one resident was overcome with emotion when we showed her a clip from a Bollywood movie. I would recommend colleagues to take part in any volunteering project as when you see the smiles on their faces, and knowing that you have made a little bit of difference to someone, it is worth your time.” Carole McCarten, Procurement Services Administrator

“I found the Aviva Project enjoyable and would certainly recommend other colleagues to get involved with the project and volunteer. It was a heartening experience watching customers becoming confident in using the tablet.” Lauren Smith, Customer Engagement Coordinator

“As an IT trainer there is no greater satisfaction than seeing the look on a person’s face when the impossible becomes possible and the fear of technology subsides.

“The biggest achievement is helping elderly residents to use technology to help change their lives. Giving them the confidence and ability to keep in touch with family around the world, order their shopping online and arrange medical matters online.

“I think my own personal achievement was when a 73-year old lady asked her GP to come off her anti-depression medication as the internet had opened a new world for her to explore.

“Becoming an Aviva volunteer doesn’t mean giving up lots of your own time as it is amazing what you can achieve in a couple of hours. Seeing the sense of achievement when an elderly resident learns how to turn on a tablet is wonderful. They are then full of questions and want to run before they can walk but that’s the fun of achievement that you can be a part of especially as it can so easily remove the barrier to social isolation.

“The Aviva Project is reaching the people who need it the most and they are enjoying the opportunity.” Steve Rafferty, customer volunteer

“I enjoyed the sessions, as I like helping people that don’t fully understand technology. Some tenants are scared of using the tablets in case they break them so it was good to go through the user guide with them and re-assure them.” Stella Redford, Scheme Manager
What customers were interested in learning about first

All the training sessions have been tailored to what people have told us they want to learn about first. Below is a pie chart showing what’s been the most popular so far.

Helping people make their money go further

Through this project Anchor Hanover colleagues have also been able to use the tablets to help people find out about the main financial benefits available to those aged 55 and over and whether they are eligible to claim. Anchor Hanover works with entitledto.co.uk to provide a handy benefits calculator, which allows users to:

- Check which benefits they may be able to claim
- Work out the amount they could be awarded
- Work out their new entitlement if their circumstances change

During the pilot phase, managers worked with customers to identify potential unclaimed benefits available to customers totalling £112,000 per year.
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Anchor Hanover

We believe that later life is for living.

Helping people enjoy later life is our passion. It has been for more than 50 years. And today, in an ageing society, our housing, care and support is needed more than ever.

As England’s largest provider of specialist housing and care for people in later life, we’re committed to creating choice and opportunity for everyone. We put our customers at the heart of everything we do, listening carefully and shaping our homes and services around them.

And we’re proudly not-for-profit, which means every penny we make is reinvested into our properties and services, building more and innovating for the future so that people can have a home where they love living in later life.

To find out more visit www.anchorhanover.org.uk

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