

Making a difference every day

Making a Difference Every Day Approach

KARA Video

Carephone

ALCOVE

KARA CAREPHONE

The Ashford (and Maidstone) teams are working closely with the Alcove Team who are supporting the Kara project.

The Alcove team attended the weekly Supervisor meeting and during their first meeting they met Sharon Jeffery, Enablement Supervisor, she highlighted the difficulty one of our clients had trying to speak with her husband who is in a residential home.

The client had a fall and was admitted to Westview in August 2021, her husband who has dementia was also admitted, but they were placed on different floors and unfortunately, he was then moved to a residential home. Although she returned home, she has not been able to visit her husband and they have brief telephone calls when the care staff are able to take the phone to him, but they have not seen each other for the past 5 months.

The Alcove team (a big thank you to Rebecca Dowle) arranged for a Kara device to be delivered and set up for both of them. on 23 December, their 40th Wedding anniversary, they were able to have their first Kara call where they could see each other, talk and listen to music together and have some quality time, something that was impossible before.

They are also now able to spend time together through the Kara device over Christmas thanks to the Alcove team visiting and setting up the devices so quickly.

It's a great result for the client and her husband, but also a great demonstration of joint working.



Wendy Pfeiffer · 2nd
Friendship Manager at Inspired Villages
10h · 🌐

When we placed 2 **Alcove** tablets with best friends Mary and Renee (both 94) it was the very first time they had used any type of IT device. They love speaking and seeing us and their families on the simple to use video call.

Last night Renee's new tablet was literally a life saver when she had a fall indoors. The device that was closest to her was her Alcove tablet and she pressed it to call Mary who raised the alarm.

Renee, 95 today is now tucked up safe in hospital.

Thanks to **Hellen Bowey** and **Alcove**



Reactions



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East Kent Mencap
- double click here

PC was one of our first Service Users to receive a Kara in 2020. Since they have received the device, it has been an amazing piece of tool for them. They have a big family and it has allowed them to stay in contact with them visually. PC is not a great talker on a telephone, she is more of an observer and likes to watch and listen to her family around her. A new addition to their family came in July 2020, PC's great niece, so by using the Kara it has meant they can still see the new born and the other children in the family grow up, as they do grow up fast and it has allowed them to not miss out on milestones in their lives. Another Great Niece of PC, really enjoys seeing them through the Kara, as she can show them what she has been doing and it is the same for PC, as they all miss each other so much. They have always been a very close family and they support PC and her mother a lot. Also, PC lost one of her sisters last year, which hit the family hard. But with the Kara, it has allowed them to get through the tough times together by seeing each other and to comfort each other by face and not just over the telephone. PC's mother tells me, when they use the Kara, PC's face lights up with smiles and it is very clear that she enjoys seeing them, using the Kara. There has been times when the family haven't been able to ring through, due to connection. So, they have had to ring PC on the telephone to say they had been trying to call and could PC with her mother's support call them back through the device. This has happened on many occasions, but overall they really like the Kara and enjoy using it, just as much as the rest of their family enjoys using it with them.

He loves technology and new gadgets, and his favourite pastime is playing games offline on the Xbox and watching films on Sky. However as he is unable to read, he cannot use most technology, such as a mobile phone.

"I love my [Kara device](#), and it has changed my life. I don't need to be able to read numbers and names and just need to click on a photo to call my support workers and friends.

I take it in the kitchen as I like to do cookery and art with my support workers. I know when people are free to talk as there is a green dot next to their name. It is great to have so many people on it."

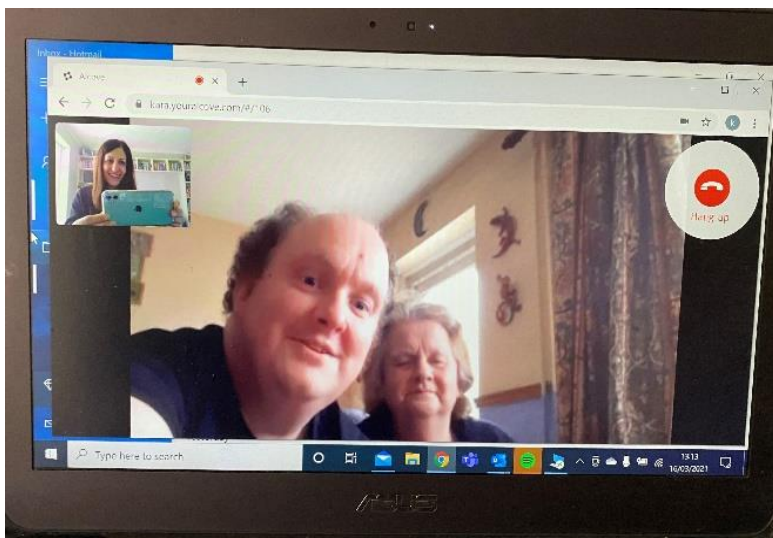
Andrew

Before COVID-19, Andrew attended day services three times a week and participated in photography, cooking and art classes.

"I miss my friends and doing stuff, as I have only been able to go for a walk during lockdown. Having Kara means I can speak to other people and do activities on it so I don't feel so isolated.

It would be amazing if we could set up the pharmacy on it so I can call and discuss my medication. Or maybe I could order a take away or call for a taxi! That would be good, wouldn't it?"

Andrew



Lynne lives in her own flat and, before the Covid pandemic, used to attend the Bridge Community Hub three or four times a week.

She would also travel to the different hubs for activities using the bus and knows a lot of people from different areas.

The activities she enjoys includes the community choir, sewing, arts and crafts, music sessions, African drumming and swimming.

In addition, Lynne used to help out a lot in the hub and would normally have lots of jobs to do. She says: “I would do the picture activity board in the mornings and help prepare for the lunches with cleaning the table down after sewing.

“I was worried about who was going to help the staff at the bridge. There have been two staff that have left the service since it has closed, I was very fond of them and would normally help them a lot.”

Lynne says that she is able make my own calls and she likes to help her friends when they get their device and that they call her to can call to practice using it.

“I have lots of calls. I did find it a little confusing at first, but I feel a lot more confident now. I know we have stretches with Trudi on Wednesday and bingo on Friday. I enjoy the guessing games and the music bingo. I am also able to keep up with all the news about the hubs and make plans for going out for a walk for or a coffee,” she says.

Jason lives in Canterbury with his family and his sister lives nearby.



As he is now unable to attend his local day Centre, his Kara device allows him to ring his sister and speak to his support workers where he can show them his Lego models.

He also likes takes part in virtual art classes through his Kara device, where he is able to show off his coloring and drawing skills.

Jason also takes his device away when he is at respite for the week, the staff there will help set it up for him.

"Kara is easy to use and I can do it myself, I just press the photo and can see people. It's nice to see faces. I miss my friends, but I do like my device, and I would like to keep it."

Christine has attended day services, five days a week, for over 20 years and lives with her elderly mum.

At the hubs, she enjoys cooking, volleyball, choir, sewing, bowls, sensory art, and book in the bag and it had a big impact on her when they closed due to Covid.

Her support worker provided her with an Alcove Video Carephone so she could stay in touch and continue to participate in activities virtually.

She says: “I really enjoy my device, but I found it a bit difficult to use at first. But now the device gives me a chance to catch up with staff who I miss very much. The staff make me laugh. When it was my birthday, they all sang happy birthday to me on the on a video call.

“I really found this enjoyable, as I could not see anyone, not even my family. I like my device; I can call my friends and see them by video. I also enjoy playing musical bingo and using Makaton when calling out the bingo cards.”

Sarah Martin is an Enablement Officer with the Sensory Team at Kent County Council. She specifically supports people who are deaf or have hearing impairments, helping them with every day practical tasks and removing barriers for them.

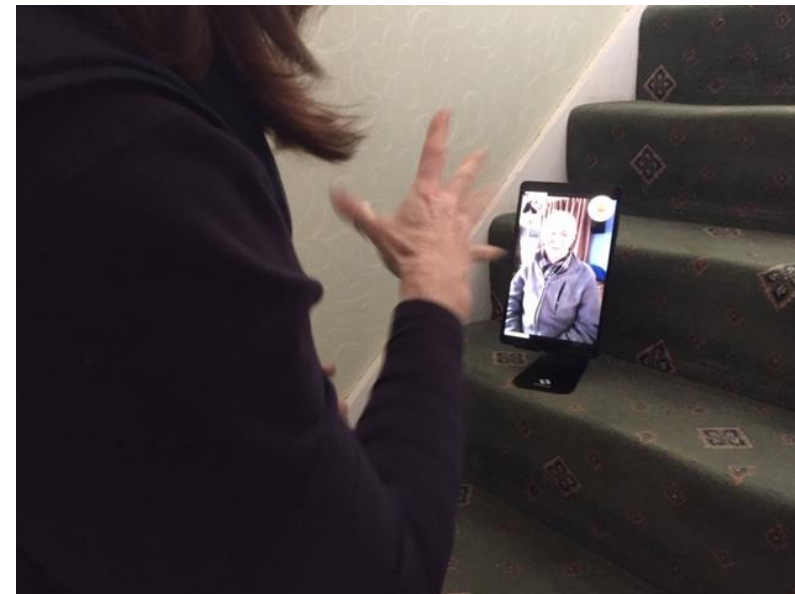
She says that they would normally run Gateway sessions (like a Central Advice Bureau) across Kent so that people could drop in and ask for assistance and support.

However, during COVID, they have really struggled to connect with their clients and she says that many don't respond well to mainstream technology.

Sarah says: "Overall, having a Kara device has been a great experience for so many people as they are able to contact us for help and support. Many are isolated and we know that when they need help, they can just video call us.

"This third lockdown has been especially hard for people as they can't just pick up the phone and speak to friends, or make arrangements. Just little things, like being able to see family on Christmas day, has made the world of difference."

Sarah currently has 25 clients who she supports through the Kara devices.



One gentleman, who is 75, is very anxious and calls her for reassurance and support. She has recently helped him to understand, book and attend his vaccination appointment – all through the Video Carephone.

She explains: “Everyday society is not equipped to support people with sensory needs. His vaccination letter asked him to go online, or call to book an appointment - neither of which he is able to do. Through Kara, they were able to do this for him and support him to attend.

“During the initial lockdown, another client was so worried that she had to move in with her sister. However, when she received a device she was able to go home, giving her independence back and providing the family peace of mind.”

For Sarah, it was pretty intense period rolling-out the devices and setting them up – as they had to support their clients face-to-face to do so. But once the teething issues were sorted, she has confidently carried out welfare checks and helped clients to widen their networks.

“There are some challenges using technology as it is difficult if it buffers or pixelates while people are signing, however, on the whole it has made a massive difference. Most importantly, it gives people access to each other and services they wouldn’t normally have”, she says.

Spencer House is residential home with 25 beds in Birchington, Kent. Their residents often arrive with high medical needs, mobility issues and physical disabilities.

Dawn is the office manager and ensures the smooth running of the house. She joined in April and was previously a carer so understands how pressurised the job is, and how difficult it has been for residents without visits from family members during Covid-19.

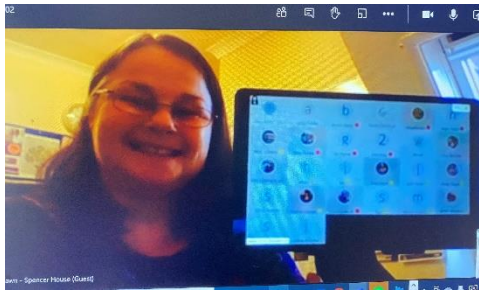
When Dawn became aware of the Kara service, provided by Kent County Council, she immediately applied. She said the device has been 'life changing'.

Before they received the device, relatives would have to call their mainline number meaning that for hours of the day, they couldn't undertake any other business by phone or accept other calls.

She explains: "We leave the Kara device plugged in permanently in middle floor and when someone calls, we take it to the appropriate resident who can chat as long as they like. We have over 22 contacts on the Carephone and it has been extremely popular. We have had it for over two months and receive approximately 14 calls a week.

She continues: "Every resident can use it. The first time they use it, you can see the smile on their faces. One gentleman told me it is *absolutely marvellous*."

She concludes: "There is such a great benefit to being able to see your loves ones, it lifts their emotional wellbeing and their spirits so much, so they don't feel cut off. It has made a huge difference and gives us a boost to see the residents happy and excited.





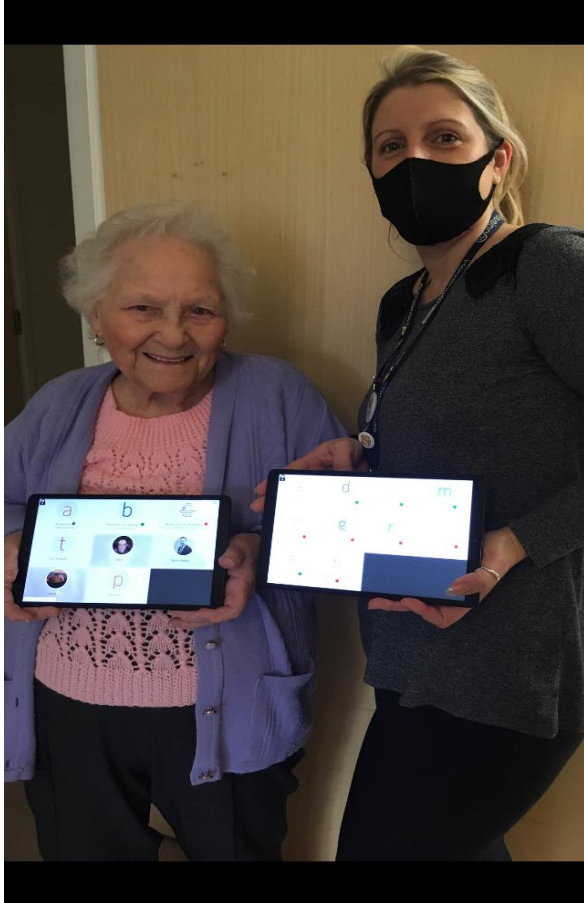
I have delivered KARA devices to four of our Service Users and am linked to have calls with many more. Although we have had a few connection issues which can be frustrating and can cause some added anxieties for those people who really want to see and talk to us, when the KARA Devices work, they are brilliant !!

I have witnessed the first calls made by four of our Service Users to some of their friends. Their faces have been a picture and their smiles have said a thousand words as they connect with people they haven't seen since March !

We are also able to offer some sessions via the KARA, including games, quizzes, art/craft, dancing, singing and jokes as well as the important checking in with people and making sure they are ok.

When reporting issues to Alcove they have been very quick to respond and to try and solve the difficulties we experience.





Rebecca has worked at Bradstow Court for two and half years and her role is to oversee the residents, their tenancy and undertaking daily wellbeing checks.

She says that she used to run two or three activity groups a week, but sadly has had to stop them due to Covid. Unfortunately she has seen a lot of their residents struggle with loneliness due to the lack of interaction. She says, however, that the Kara service has helped immensely - with nine of the residents using the Video Carephones to keep in touch with friends and family.

Rebecca explains: “One of my residents came to see me on Christmas Eve and said she was so glad she had her tablet so she could watch her grandson open presents on Christmas Day. It was wonderful to hear.”

Rebecca has seen a noticeable difference to one lady in particular after she received her device: “She became really depressed during the first lockdown as her family mean a lot to her and they live far away. But now she is able to see and speak to them and the shift in her mental health has been phenomenal.”

She concludes: “I feel the Kara tablet has changed some of the residents’ lives. It’s brilliant”

They are just happy to see me - and it is completely different to the phone – **Edita, Westminster Home Care**

“It has been a saviour and I cannot thank KCC enough for this wonderful kind donation which has bought the family together in the closest way possible and to keep us safe – **Family member**

Andrew from the team is going to be running cooking class 1:1 with a person – **Paul Tomlinson, KPS**

“I believe this to be tangible evidence of new skills, reduced isolation, increased confidence and general wellbeing etc. to get feedback of this quality is uncommon! – **Jason, East Kent Mencap**

I have not been able to see my grandkids due to the coronavirus but now I can – **Robert**

She set it up herself in 10 minutes, she was so proud when she showed the carer what she had done – **Choice Support**

It's an absolute "lifeline" connection to my daughter in London - **Helen**

Thank you, thank you and thank you! From two very excited people – **East Kent Mencap members**

I have completed an assessment using the KARA device. It enabled the person to support her hearing loss by lip reading, so we were able to go through the assessment process which wouldn't have otherwise been possible – **Sally, KCC Sensory Services Team**

It gives me peace of mind, as her son and carer, that she is able to make contact and also that only trusted persons can make contact with her – **Family member**

I've managed to see my Grandson in the USA – **Joyce**

It's made a massive difference to connecting residents with loved ones, please send more! – **Halden Heights Care Home**

Glen is now smiling and is more involved when he is speaking to his Speech & Language Therapist. She said that he was very depressed before this and now since he is able to video call, it's changed his life –

Alcove

I left it about 15 minutes and went up to make sure he had managed OK and was delighted to hear him laughing and chatting and just calling out goodbye. When I went in he was so excited to have done it all himself. He was over the moon! Thank you all so much!! – **External carer**

My self and the carers have noticed a substantial improvement in A and B's mental health and attitude since using the KARA tablets. They are both a lot happier and in high spirits. A has mentioned to me multiple times that he has felt like self harming when he gets frustrated, and has felt calmer once talking through the KARA tablet – **Tahni, Westminster Home Care**

One person has proactively added contacts to their care phone – in this instance so that they can access their physiotherapist remotely – **Claire Morris, Rethink**

This device is easy for Stephen to use and is helping him maintain his independence and stops him from feeling isolated by speaking to friends and family – **David, KCC In-house services**

Prior to KARA we were having to text each other which was long winded and not an effective way of communicating. KARA has allowed myself and Sharon to have all our conversations in British Sign Language and therefore communication has improved 100% - **Juliet, KCC Sensory Services Team**

Very positive impact- clients are really enjoying it – **My Life Home Care**