PRESS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release 1ˢᵗ August 2024

Successful Pilot Project Prompts Continuation: Call for Bulk IT Equipment Donations from Businesses

Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD), in partnership with PCrefurb, is delighted to announce the continuation of a successful pilot scheme aimed at refurbishing donated IT devices to help those who are digitally excluded.

They are looking to businesses, big or small, which are updating IT equipment to donate their old devices. Windows 10 will be coming to the end of its supported life in October next year which is likely to mean that businesses are going to start looking at replacing equipment very soon. PCrefurb can install alternative operating systems which means devices that may be redundant in a business can still have years of life left in them for use by a community group or individual.

Laptops, tablets and smartphones are all in demand. All donated devices are logged, the data is securely wiped, the hardware is tested and software is updated or installed. Once this is complete, it is available to go to go out into the community.

PCrefurb use REDKEYS USB, an ADISA Certified Data Erasure service and all equipment is tracked, every process is logged and even the impact of each device is measured so companies can share this to help support their social responsibility outcomes.

The refurbished devices will be used to support disadvantaged individuals to give them access to the online world. They will be able to receive online support and information that most people take for granted.

Donations from business changes lives. Digital exclusion affects many people who lack access and the ability to use digital services. With most services now being 'digital by default,' individuals without proper devices or digital skills face significant disadvantage.

Charlotte Winterbottom, Policy & Partnerships Manager at RAD, said, "We know from the pilot earlier this year that demand for devices exceeds the number that are available. We really hope that businesses will want to take up this opportunity by donating IT equipment which will directly help disadvantaged people around the whole county."

Helen Melhuish, Chief Officer at PCrefurb, stated, "We are very pleased to be continuing to work with RAD and the Digital Support Derbyshire network. By refurbishing and distributing donated IT equipment and providing access to basic digital skills training, we can continue improving digital inclusion for people and voluntary sector organisations throughout Derbyshire."

PCrefurb are based in Glossop, but donations are invited from all over Derbyshire. If businesses are not able to drop the equipment off in Glossop alternative arrangements could be made. If

anyone is interested in donating IT equipment or would like to find out more please visit the RAD website: ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk/pcrefurb or the PCrefurb website: pcrefurb.org.uk/businesses or email s.tock@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk.

Please help us bridge the digital divide in Derbyshire.

ENDS

For further information please contact Emma Simpson, RAD Communications 01629 592970/07540 736118, e.simpson@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk.

<u>**Notes to editors**</u>

Success stories

Some great examples of groups that have benefitted from this great initiative as a result of the pilot project which asked for devices to be donated from the public during January, February and March 2024. They have all said they are happy to speak directly to the media. If you would like to make contact with them please let me know (Emma Simpson) and I can put you in though with them direct.

Mike Swann, Ashbourne Foodbank

"The six laptops have been an excellent resource for our foodbank clients. They have allowed us to:

- Offer financial budgeting courses, empowering members to make informed financial decisions.

- Bridge the digital divide for members, ensuring everyone can access essential technology.

- Efficiently print materials for courses and other functions and help Foodbank clients with sending emails and printed paperwork.

Another benefit is using a specific laptop to present directly to the TV screen. This ensures that everyone in the group can see the information being presented, fostering a more inclusive learning environment."

Danny Henman, RAY Club

"This equipment provided by PCrefurb has made a massive improvement on our day to day running of the Charity. It has given us the opportunity to enable our users to get connected online. So many people who come to our hub, don't have access to this equipment at home and have become socially isolated as technology has evolved and increased in price! This donation will enable people in this position to use our hub to access this equipment and improve digital social isolation. THANK YOU so so much. We are extremely grateful."

Tony Hedley, Holme Hall Unite

"A big Thank You again for your help in sourcing the computers - as you can see all set-up and ready to go!

We held a birthday celebration at The Hub yesterday for a 90 year old lady - and 2 of the guests asked if we could help them get a little computer savvy, so I think it's going to prove very popular.

Please pass on our thanks to PC Refurb for their help too."

Tony Ford, Sandiacre Friendship Hub

"The laptops and MiFis have proved invaluable in our recent 2 week Digital Inclusion focus."

About Us

Digital Support Derbyshire - Rural Action Derbyshire was awarded funding from NHS Charities Together In April 2022, to deliver a digital inclusion project. The project is now funded by DCC. Digital Support Derbyshire works to:

- Map digital inclusion offers across the county

- Spot potential gaps in provision and, where appropriate, will work with communities and other partners to develop and pilot new digital inclusion projects

- Connect existing and developing projects through the Digital Support Derbyshire network - to enable projects and Digital Champions to support one another, share best practice and resources, and spot opportunities for collaboration

- Consider ways to support the delivery of specific digital inclusion initiatives – for example, NHS Digital Healthcare services

- Increase the number of active digital champions in the county

- Strengthen the digital resilience of our Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector

Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) is an independent organisation and registered charity operating across the county for 100 years. RAD aims to improve the life of those living and working in rural Derbyshire, by providing direct services to help people and groups in rural communities, and by raising awareness of the issues faced by rural communities. For more information go to the RAD website.

PCrefurb is a charity that aims to "bridge the digital divide". They refurbish donated IT equipment and redistribute it to those most in need, helping people connect with training and education and to support their well-being. They provide digital skills training in the community and engage volunteers, some of whom face complex challenges, in all areas of our work. They work together for social and environmental good. They have joined forces with RAD's Digital Support Derbyshire Network to enable the whole of Derbyshire to benefit from their refurbished devices.