

Tackling Digital Poverty Together



Tina Shinton from CiLifecycle delivers phones to the BCHC Charity.

At CiLifecycle, we focus on giving technology a longer and more purposeful life. When devices move out of service, they still hold the potential to support people who face barriers to connection.

In 2025, we worked with the Birmingham Community Healthcare Charity's (BCHC) Direct Access to Wellbeing Services (DAWS) Team to make this possible for residents across Birmingham.

Last year, the DAWS Team launched a ground-breaking partnership with Cadent Gas, which helps individuals who are struggling to stay safe and healthy at home. Many of the people they assist live with disability, financial hardship or limited access to digital tools.

To contribute to this effort, CiLifecycle provided 50 refurbished phones and chargers, allowing the team to place reliable devices directly with those experiencing digital poverty. Vodafone's donation of SIM cards completed the support package, ensuring recipients could stay connected to essential services, education and employment opportunities.

'THESE THINGS HAVE CHANGED MY LIFE. I FEEL LESS ALONE, MORE SECURE, AND LIKE I HAVE A CHANCE TO GET THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME.'

One Birmingham resident who received help through the programme shared their experience:

'Living on the 9th floor of a cold, draughty flat has been incredibly hard for me. I moved here from a warm country and wasn't prepared for the cold, and I didn't even have proper clothes for winter. I live with a disability caused by childhood polio, so standing for long periods is painful. I've been trying to get crutches and a wheelchair, and I'm still waiting to hear back about PIP.'

'My husband is unemployed, and I'm a student, so money is very tight. We only had one phone, which I used at college. It was stressful because my husband needed to be reachable for job calls, and I needed a phone for safety. When I was given a phone and SIM card, I cried with relief; it felt like someone genuinely cared.'

'I was also given warm clothes, a slow cooker and an electric throw. I've been referred for support with my cold home. These things have changed my life. I feel less alone and more secure.'

This example shows how refurbished devices can deliver meaningful social value when redirected to vulnerable people and families within local UK communities. CiLifecycle partners with organisations to ensure that working devices can be donated back into the local area, helping to bridge the digital divide and create real, positive impact.

If your organisation would like to explore how CiLifecycle can support you in turning surplus IT equipment into a community benefit, please get in touch with the team. We would be pleased to help you make a difference.