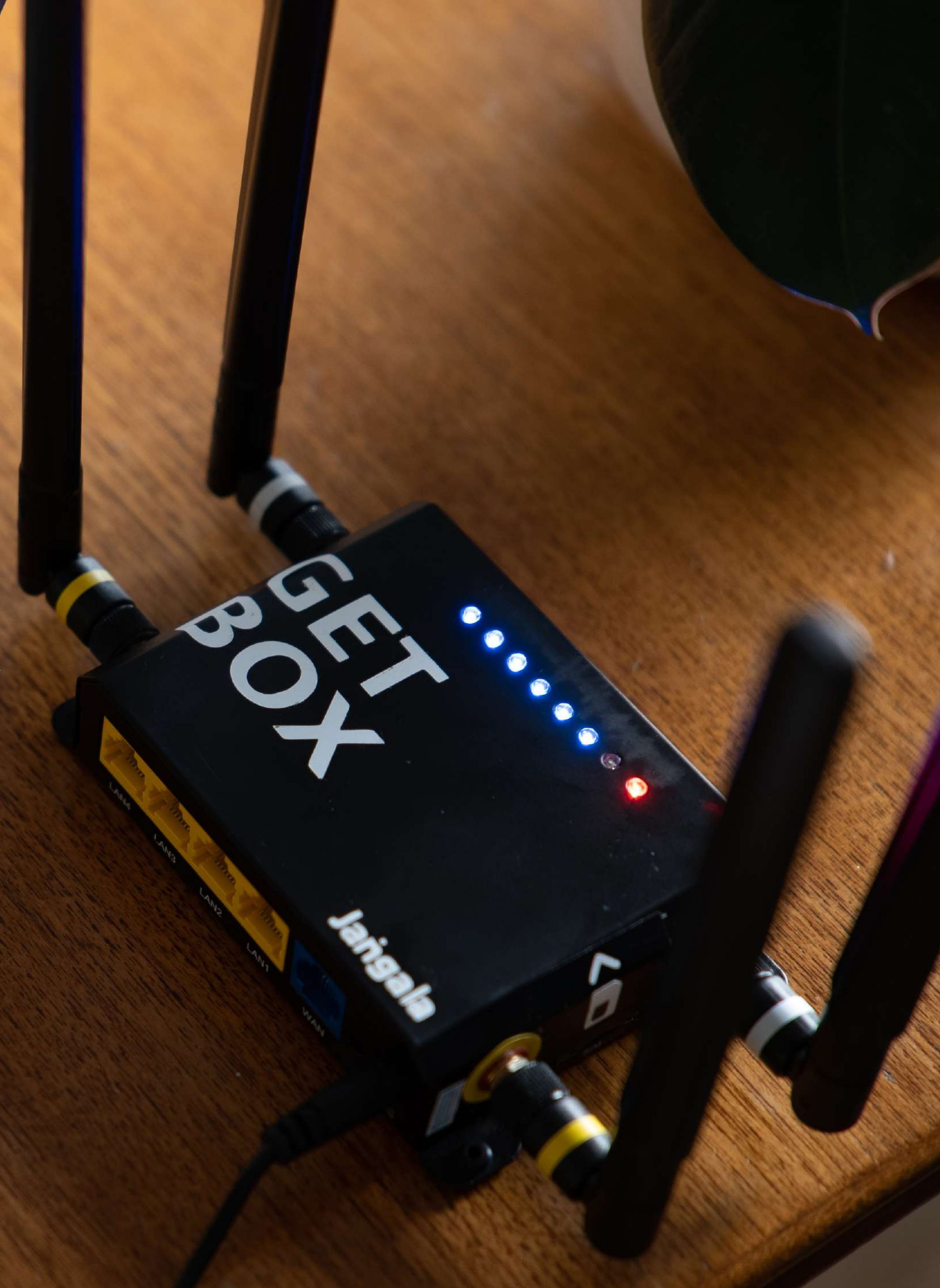# Jangala

Digital lifelines: How Wi-Fi Impacts the Lives of Residents in Temporary Accommodation

An evaluation of Jangala's Get Box Wi-Fi device in partnership with Virgin Media O2, Coventry City Council and the National Databank

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Virgin media O2

Good Things Foundation

Coventry City Council

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Contents

> **I use [the internet] to look at how I can get my life back on track... It's how to keep the flame of hope burning.**
>
> End User of Get Box

Executive summary

Introduction

This evaluation explores how a simple internet solution - Jangala's Get Box - has enabled people in temporary accommodation in Coventry to have increased access to the internet. These findings show residents with a Get Box experienced improvements in emotional wellbeing, empowerment and vital connection.

Through a partnership between Jangala, #CovConnects (Coventry City Council's digital inclusion initiative), Virgin Media O2 and The National Databank, a 6 month pilot study was established. 200 Jangala Get Boxes were offered for free over a 6 month pilot. This enabled 429 people in flats, houses and hostels to have increased access to the internet, connecting 1,086 devices.

Using the insights from this study, improvements are being made to the wider Get Box programme, with 5,000 Get Boxes being distributed over the UK to digitally excluded people.

Through a mixed methodology, using participatory methods and 'digital traces' (data points left by users whilst using a product or service), this study looks at the experience of people using Jangala's Get Box and the differences between those with limited and unlimited data packages. Alongside this, it explores the social impact of internet access within the context of temporary accommodation.

Key Findings

1. People in temporary accommodation need the internet and many have very limited access.

Residents face complex challenges. Many are refugees or asylum seekers, are fleeing domestic abuse, are families with children in social care, have recently left custody, are neurodivergent, are on very low income, or have experienced trauma (often with a complex overlapping of social challenges). Without internet, they cannot bid for permanent housing, speak with loved ones or access essential services to rebuild their lives.

2. Common barriers to internet access for residents of temporary accommodation include cost, quality and privacy of Wi-Fi.

Some find that there is no or poor quality Wi-Fi in a residency, or Wi-Fi is limited to communal spaces. Hot-spotting from a phone can drain battery and users can become anxious the phone will overheat and break. Fixed line internet does not always reach the bedrooms of hostels, meaning internet can only be used in kitchens or open spaces, which lacks privacy. Limited internet impairs residents' routes to independence, rehabilitation and permanent housing.

3. Jangala's Get Box is well suited to addressing common barriers to internet access in temporary accommodation settings.

Because Get Box plugs into mains electricity and uses a SIM card, it needs no physical changes to a property, making it especially suitable for use in temporary accommodation. Feedback from partners and end users demonstrate that Get Box is quick, simple and straightforward to set up. It can be set up immediately without expert support, is free to end users and requires no contract commitments. In this study, it was used across flats, houses and hostels, in partnership with local community organisations, such as charities, NHS services and housing providers.

Key Findings

Jangala's Get Box is used to do activities online mainly across 5 key areas:

Accessing essential services; practical everyday activities; communication; entertainment; and learning and development. Many online activities overlap, such as streaming video for educational purposes. When asked to rank activities by importance, users consistently placed 'essential' and 'leisure' activities side by side.

Accessing essential services such as housing, universal credit
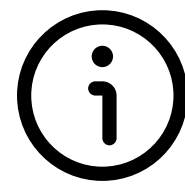
Practical everyday activities such as online banking, googling, or travel information

Communication with friends, family, community

Entertainment through streaming, gaming, music, social media and reading

Learning and development

Jangala's Get Box increases internet access for users and results in a mix of social impact across 3 key themes

Emotional and mental wellbeing

Many end users experienced improved mental health, a sense of comfort and normality, and reduced anxiety from the availability of Wi-Fi through Get Box. This could be from listening to music to sleep at night, relaxing with a phone game after a long day of parenting, watching TV with their kids, or not having to worry about using up all the data on their mobile phone.

Empowerment

Greater internet access fostered independence, enabled greater freedoms and created opportunities for learning. Our research surfaced many examples, including searching for work opportunities, studying for a driving theory test, searching for a drug rehabilitation centre or watching TV dramas to improve English language skills.

Vital connection

Increased internet access enabled more regular social connection, swift access to essential services and helped individuals stay safe. Many end users benefited from speaking more with family and loved ones abroad, accessing Universal Credit, online banking, and keeping in contact with key services, like mental health teams and police.

Key Findings

Jangala's Get Box can be improved, across its product and service.

Participants recommended a number of key improvements, such as increasing the amount of available data, increasing the cable length, video instructions and making the remaining data balance visible. Improvements to the distribution model included more direct routes to accessing a Get Box and clearer information. A number of key improvements have recently been implemented by Jangala.

Residents with access to unlimited data used Get Box internet more expansively and experienced more profound benefits.

End users with unlimited data in their Get Box used four times more data than Get Boxes with a limited data package. For those with limited data, running out of data resulted in frustration and distress, especially if it was unexpected. The most commonly cited feedback request was to increase the availability of data. End users with unlimited data experienced greater social benefits across the three themes, than those with limited data packages.

Coventry City Council's digital inclusion programme #CovConnects now has a new offer of support fit for temporary accommodation organisations

which they reported as a positive outcome from the pilot. This model is now available for adaptation and expansion across other geographical areas and to support different end user groups. The key learnings from this report may allow other Local Authorities to adapt this model more easily.

Learning & Recommendations

for addressing the digital divide

Learning 1: Temporary housing residents face a Catch-22 of needing internet without having good access to it.

Residents are penalised if they do not bid weekly for permanent housing, but are often on low incomes and cannot install internet in their temporary homes.

Learning 2: For residents of temporary housing, increased internet access through Get Box resulted in vital social outcomes.

These include improved emotional and mental wellbeing, increased independence and freedom, improved opportunities to learn, increased social connection, increased safety and improved access to essential services.

Learning 3: Many users place 'essential' services with equal importance to 'leisure' activities.

Users place a high value on connecting to loved ones and streaming services, and to 'leisure' activities which are fundamental to a sense of freedom, normalcy and wellbeing. If programme providers and evaluators try to rigidly differentiate activities under 'essential' or 'leisure' categories, this can undermine the social impact of internet access.

Recommendation A: All temporary housing providers should provide Wi-Fi internet access for residents.

This internet should be unlimited, of a reasonable speed and available to residents in physical spaces of privacy, not only communal spaces. This could be achieved with Get Box, fixed line or other portable Wi-Fi solutions.

Recommendation B: Connectivity programmes, including Jangala's, should recognise and be designed to address the diversity of user needs.

Intervention design should acknowledge that the freedom for users to access a variety of activities results in key social impacts, such as improved wellbeing, increased sense of freedom and reduced social isolation.

Learning & Recommendations

for the Get Box Programme

Learning 4: Jangala's Get Box is especially suited to swiftly addressing gaps in digital access in temporary accommodation settings.

Because it is portable, easy to install and free to end users, it can provide internet quickly to people who need it urgently.
Although suitable to a range of contexts, it is especially compatible with supporting temporary accommodation providers to get people the internet they need.

Learning 5: In this Get Box pilot, boxes with unlimited data used more data per month (approximately four times) than Get Box users with limited data.

This is partly because of differences in situational usage, but also because many end users require more data.

Learning 6: Many end users with 25GB of data run out by the end of the month.

End users experience distress and frustration when they run out of data, especially if it is unexpected.

Learning 7: The improved social outcomes of increased internet access are reduced by limited data packages.

Improvements in mental health, freedom and independence and other domains, are inhibited when end users run out of data or must ration their data.

Learning 8: Key elements of the Get Box product and service can be improved to offer a better user experience.

These include visibility of data usage, key design elements and information provided.

Recommendation C: The Jangala Programme should extend its support of residents of temporary accommodation with Get Boxes.

This could provide vital support and get residents online, quickly.

Learning
& Recommendations

for the Get Box Programme

Recommendation D: The Jangala Programme should increase the data limit of Get Boxes, offering unlimited data packages wherever possible.

Data limits could be increased in line with need; with higher limits for larger families or hostels and lower limits for individuals who need less.

Recommendation E: The Jangala Programme should review and iterate the Get Box product and service, using direct improvement suggestions by end users in this evaluation.

This review should include product design, information, and distribution model in the context of an intervention which supports freedom and empowerment, using the insights of this evaluation.

Conclusion

The Jangala Get Box in temporary accommodation in Coventry is supporting residents to rebuild their lives, through improved mental health and wellbeing, empowering freedoms and vital connections to loved ones and essential services. All partners surveyed (n=11) reported that providing end users with internet helps them access the support the delivery partner provides, and all partners surveyed reported finding working with Jangala 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

At the time of writing, Jangala and partners are implementing improvements to the programme based on the suggestions of these findings, including increasing data packages, adjustments to the product, and increased available information. With the successful implementation of these suggestions, the wider Get Box programme is well placed to support positive social impact by tackling digital exclusion.

Full Report

Terminology

Delivery partners: the partner organisations who worked with Jangala to identify end users and install and/or distribute Get Boxes.

Digitally excluded: in the absence of a standardised definition, Jangala's working definition for digital exclusion is "People who are digitally excluded are unable to do what they want and need to do online."
See appendix for an extended note on this definition.

Digital traces: also known as digital footprints, these are data points left by users whilst using a product or service.

End users: people who are directly connecting to the internet via Jangala technology. In this study, Jangala technology means a Get Box and the end users are residents of temporary accommodation in Coventry.

Get Box: the product name of Jangala's low-cost device which can be plugged into mains electricity to establish a secure Wi-Fi network instantly, generally using a SIM card.

Support Worker: in this report, Support Worker is used as an umbrella term for individuals who work with end users to support their route to independence. There are many different important roles in temporary accommodation support; one term is used to reduce confusion within the complexity of this specific model.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

In 2023 Jangala and Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) designed a new programme with an aim to get 20,000 digital excluded people online.
The programme distributed Jangala technology, a Wi-Fi device called 'Get Box' to people with barriers to internet access.

The resulting programme was set up to distribute 5,000 of these boxes to households and hostels around the UK. The Get Boxes contain O2 SIM cards from The National Databank (run by Good Things Foundation), which were donated by VMO2.

In Spring 2024, Jangala and Coventry City Council collaborated on a pilot of 200 Get Boxes - the first to be distributed under this programme. The aim was to test and learn from these 200 boxes. This report is an evaluation of that pilot, and its resulting impact on the wider programme.

Background to the project

Jangala and Coventry City Council delivered this pilot of 200 boxes together through the council's existing digital inclusion initiative #CovConnects. Together, Jangala and the #CovConnects team identified local Coventry delivery partners working in temporary accommodation services.

Through the #CovConnects Device Bank, the team was already providing digital devices to local people and saw connectivity as complementary to this work.
The team had identified residents of temporary accommodation as being at high risk of digital exclusion. The residents' housing status made securing broadband access very difficult and many temporary accommodation providers lacked Wi-Fi capability.

This pilot provided the opportunity to provide and test a new way of offering internet access to this group; as residents living in temporary accommodation spaces often cannot access fixed broadband regardless of affordability.

Delivery partners included charities tackling homelessness, NHS services and housing associations to collaborate on this pilot. Some were existing partners; some were new partnerships formed for the pilot. #CovConnects saw the pilot as a way to help partners bolster their digital inclusion offer.

Who are Jangala, #CovConnects and the National Databank?

Jangala is a technology charity dedicated to equalising technology for everyone. In the six years since their establishment, Jangala has connected nearly 100,000 people across 37 countries in pilot projects with self-developed Big Box and Get Box products.

#CovConnects is a digital inclusion initiative within Coventry City Council. #CovConnects aims to support residents on their digital journeys, working in partnership with organisations both locally and nationally, improving access for all.

The National Databank is run by digital inclusion charity Good Things Foundation. Like a foodbank but for mobile data, the National Databank provides free mobile SIM cards for people who cannot access the internet. In this programme, VMO2 donated data to the Databank, who then provided this data to Jangala, to be used in the Get Boxes.

What is a Get Box?

Get Box is a paperback-sized, open-source connectivity solution developed by Jangala to provide immediate and reliable internet access for households and shared spaces. Using a 4G connection, it creates a whole-home Wi-Fi network, enabling multiple devices to connect simultaneously.

Designed for easy and rapid deployment, Get Box employs traffic shaping to optimise data use, aiming to deliver a consistent and predictable experience for each user. Integrated with Jangala's remote telemetry system, it offers real-time monitoring and secure remote updates, important features for digital inclusion initiatives.

Get Box was conceived in direct response to the Covid-19 lockdowns beginning in March 2020, which forced essential services, education, and healthcare online. Service providers faced significant challenges reaching the most digitally excluded individuals.

Fixed-line broadband was often unfeasible; it required long-term contracts, and could take weeks or months to install. Many organisations turned to convenient Mi-Fi devices, but these presented their own limitations; they provided no visibility or control over data usage and lacked the ability to manage multiple users efficiently. Without a way to track network performance or ensure fair access, providers had little assurance that their interventions are having the intended impact.

13

Get Box was developed to address these issues, designed to be rapidly deployable, cost-effective, and data-efficient with built-in telemetry, with the ability to monitor and optimise connectivity.

Jangala began work on Get Box in March 2020, and by May 2020 the first deployments were underway. Get Box was initially used to connect residents in temporary accommodation in Brighton, providing them with internet access for communication and accessing services.

In June 2020, units were deployed at Clapton Girls Academy to support students without home broadband, ensuring they could join online classes. The following month, Get Box was integrated into a digital inclusion programme for mental health service users at an NHS Trust in north London, offering stable connectivity for remote consultations and support networks. These early deployments led to further expansion and refinement of the system.

The evaluation methodology is detailed in full in the appendix.

Evaluation aims & methodology

The evaluation aims of this pilot were twofold:

1. To understand how individuals in the Get Box Coventry Pilot receive, set up and experience getting online.
The aim was to gain insight so that Jangala could learn and improve on the Get Box product and/or service offering. This would then help the team roll out the Get Box service at scale to other areas of the UK, and beyond.

2. To understand the social impact of limited and unlimited data usage, within the context of the Get Box service.
The aim was to gain insight on the differences between limited and unlimited data, the differences between household size, the types of activities Get Box users engage in, and the impact this has on their lives.

The research team took a mixed method approach, combining a literature review, baseline survey for end users (n=34), partner surveys (n=11), semi structured interviews with end users and partners (n=23) and quantitative analysis on digital traces from the Get Boxes over an 8 month period.
The team used inclusive and participatory methods, including the development of a new deck of cards for non-traditional card sorting.
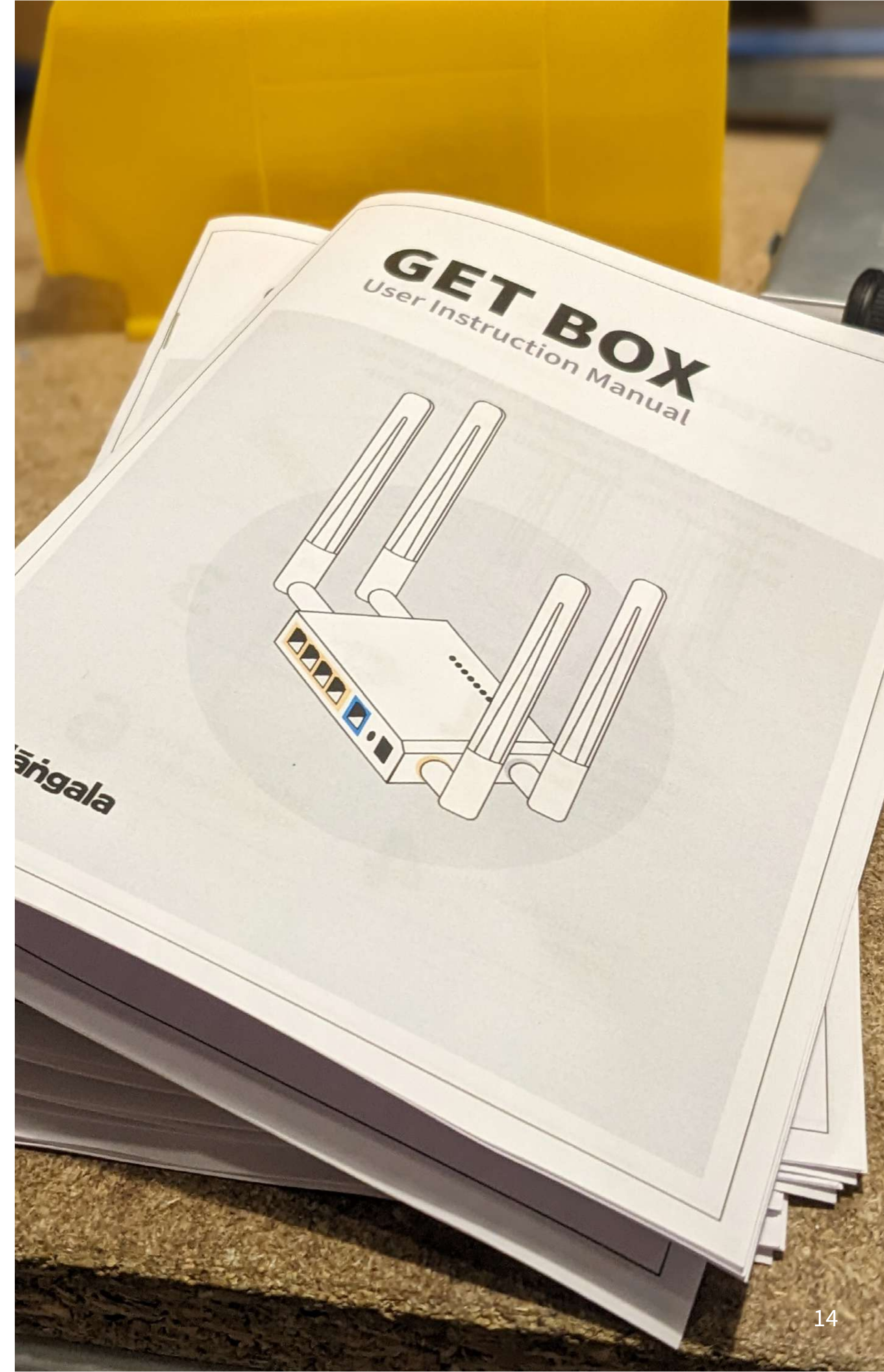
How the pilot was set up

STEP 1

Partnerships: The #CovConnects and Jangala project team identified potential delivery partners locally. After a series of discussions and onboarding calls, each delivery partner signed a partnership agreement with Jangala and agreed to distribute a number of Get Boxes to end users.

The Get Box devices, delivery and service costs were provided for free to delivery partners and the majority of data costs were covered by O2 SIM cards from the National Databank, funded by Virgin Media O2.

STEP 2

Distribution: 200 Get Boxes were distributed on long-term loan to the 12 delivery partners. 140 boxes contained SIM cards with 25GB per month data packages. 60 boxes contained SIM cards with unlimited data. The boxes were marked with coloured stickers; red for limited, blue for unlimited. The data limits were transparently communicated to delivery partners.

Coventry City Council then distributed these Get Boxes to 12 delivery partners via the #CovConnects Device Bank. The delivery partners then either a) delivered these boxes to end users in their temporary accommodation, or b) installed the Get Boxes in shared accommodation spaces, such as hostels. Get Boxes were set up either by the delivery partners themselves, or end users.

STEP 3

Monitoring and evaluation: The #CovConnects and Jangala project team then had a series of calls, email interaction, surveys and interviews to understand the impact of the Get Boxes.

Pilot Delivery Partners

The below table summarises the delivery partners in this pilot.

Name	Key user groups	Quantity of Get Boxes received	Interviewed for evaluation?
P3 People Potential Possibilities	Families	60	Yes
Valley House	Survivors of Domestic Abuse	50	Yes
Coventry Cyrenians	Single people facing homelessness	19	Yes
Green Square Accord	People rehabilitation from the criminal justice system	14	Yes
Salvation Army	Single people facing homelessness	5	Yes
NHS Coventry Family Health & Lifestyle Services	People at risk of homelessness	5	Yes
Panahghar Safehouse	Survivors of Domestic Abuse	5	Yes
Hope into Action	People at risk of homelessness	1	Yes

Part 1/2

Pilot Delivery Partners

The below table summarises the delivery partners in this pilot.

Name	Key user groups	Quantity of Get Boxes received	Interviewed for evaluation?
Ashley Community Housing	People at risk of homelessness	6	No
Coventry Citizens Advice	People seeking advice	20	No
Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre	Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants	10	No
Coventry Family Nurse Partnership	Families	5	No

Context

Coventry context

Coventry City is the second-largest Local Authority in the West Midlands region and has a population of 345,300 people (Census Day 2021). With two large universities, the population has a high number of students, but also a growing older population. 45% of the population identify as being part of an ethnic minority, higher than the 26% in England as a whole. (1)

Coventry has seen high numbers of migration in recent years and has been recognised as a City of Sanctuary and International City of Peace and Reconciliation. This area ranks in the top quarter of deprivation levels in England and 14% of the city's neighbourhoods are in the 10% most deprived areas of England. In 2022, Coventry had gigabit availability across 96.4% of residential premises and 99.5% of premises had access to decent fixed broadband. This means that fixed line infrastructure is widely available across the area. (1)

#CovConnects, an initiative within Coventry City Council, follows a community-based model. This is based on the 100% Digital Leeds model for digital inclusion and health participation. The initiative works collaboratively across all sectors to reduce digital inequalities across the city and embed meaningful digital inclusion support and initiatives.

Residents can access skills support in community venues and SIM cards via the National Databank. As of December 2024, there were 103 Digital Inclusion Hubs and 63 National Databank Hubs in Coventry, with over 15,000 SIMs with data sent to these hubs. At the time of writing, the #CovConnects Device Bank had distributed over 3,500 digital devices to community organisations, council teams and service areas to support residents on their digital journeys.

Voluntary, community, charity and social enterprise organisations can access digital devices through the #CovConnects Device Bank, which can then be distributed to communities and residents. The initiative also supports local organisations to access and apply for funding opportunities and provides information for holistic services, including an interactive map on their website to discover support.

Coventry was ranked second in 2023 for being one of the most digitally inclusive cities due to their commitment to reduce digital inequalities. (2)

As a Marmot City, #CovConnects highlights digital inclusion as a wider determinant of health. This frames their approach to developing and delivering change across services, civic functions of the council and community-led action. #CovConnects works closely with the Health Determinants Research Collaboration to bring together their relationships with VCSEs, the council's internal policy makers, Coventry University and the University of Warwick researchers. This is with the aim of embedding evidence-based policy change and decision-making across every sector of the city.

Limited vs unlimited data context

Early data from Jangala prior to this pilot indicated that 25GB per month in a Get Box would be suitable for some users and not others. However, sample sizes were small and use cases were limited.

Existing digital inclusion research indicated that limited data can have an effect on social impact. Researchers working with the Welsh Government exploring the Minimum Digital Living Standards (MDLS) found that participants managing limited data faced multiple barriers; worrying about running out of data, balancing individual and family needs within a household, parents prioritising children's data usage over their own and using alternative sources of internet (friend's and public Wi-Fi) to supplement limited data. (3)

Researchers from the Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research outlined the impact of limited data in the context of supporting participants into employment;

"People with access to unlimited broadband tend to experience greater opportunities online than those who have limited data." (4)

This evaluation focused both on improving the Get Box services and exploring the differences in user experience between limited and unlimited data packages.

Temporary accommodation context

What is the context for people living in temporary accommodation?

Temporary accommodation (TA) is a place to stay provided by the council while social housing is organised. People in the UK can stay in TA for around 12-24 months, sometimes longer, while they wait for permanent housing. TA can be flats, houses, hostels or rooms in shared houses. 123,100 households were in temporary accommodation as of June 2024.(5) A record high of 151,630 children were living in temporary accommodation, as of March 2024.(6)

Many people living in TA experience **social isolation** and **instability** while they wait for permanent housing. Many move in with **minimal possessions**, especially if fleeing domestic abuse. Residents often have limited funds and are in receipt of government benefits. **Poor mental health** is common and many are living far from loved ones. Many residents report feeling a **lack of safety**, especially if they have moved far from their support networks and are **living amongst strangers**.

> **There's isolation for them because they've come to a new country, they don't know anything about the country.**

Support Worker, Panahghar Safehouse

> **I moved in here with nothing. Apart from a few pictures of my Mum and two pictures of my family.**

End User of Get Box

See appendix for more detail on temporary accommodation context.

What internet access do people have in temporary accommodation (TA)?

The most common internet access for residents is **a smartphone with mobile data**, which they pay for themselves. Sometimes they share data with family, and it is common for people to monitor usage or go for days at a time without data. Some pay for unlimited data SIM cards.

Many residents supplement their data packages using **public Wi-Fi** in libraries, eateries or other places. Residents often **borrow or share internet** with friends and family.

Some **temporary accommodations** offer internet access as part of support but it can be slow, patchy or only available in communal spaces, which can lack privacy.

What are the barriers to internet access in temporary accommodation?

The main barriers to internet access in TA are **financial**. Not being able to afford the internet was the most commonly cited barrier by residents; 82% of survey respondents cited **cost** as a barrier. Other key barriers are lack of access to good **mobile signal** and being unable to get good access where people are living or staying.

Fixed line internet is often inappropriate for TA residents because of uncertainty and instability; many do not know how long they will stay or have access to stable income. Some temporary accommodations do not offer internet as part of services and prohibit installation of fixed line services. Where internet is provided in TA accommodations, the quality varies.

Residents also face barriers such as lack of **digital literacy** or access to **devices**. Many report phones overheating due to persistent use and hotspotting.

Some residents are embarrassed at being unable to do tasks online and struggle to seek help. Many face language barriers and a small number of residents are unable to access the internet due to their licence conditions upon leaving custody.

"**Where my room is, it's quite far away from their office. The signal's bad. So yeah, they have got their own network for Wi Fi, but I don't use it to be honest with you because everyone's on it. So it's quite slow.**

Temporary accommodation resident

"**Oh yeah, overheating and I'd have to constantly put my phone on charge cause as soon as it put my hot spot on and you've got more than one or two devices, it just sucked the life out of your battery.**

Temporary accommodation resident

21

Demographics and social barriers

Many people living in temporary accommodation face a complex interplay of challenges. As an example, users of Get Box in this pilot could be a migrant recently arrived in a new country who is also fleeing domestic abuse. Another end user might have experience of the criminal justice system, mental illness and a physical disability. To protect anonymity, this study does not outline real-life cases of these interplays; the diagram below shows some of the groups with which participants identified. Many would identify with more than one group.

A demographic breakdown of survey respondents, including social barriers faced, is available in the appendix.

From interviews and wider data gathering, people using Get Box in this pilot identify with one or more of these groups:

Living in temporary accommodation (all of the end users in this evaluation)

Survivors of domestic abuse	People with disabilities	Families with low income/complex lives	Families with children under social care
People with a history of substance misuse	People with learning disabilities	People with mental and physical health challenges	Over 65s
People who are out of work	People who have been in custody	People who are neurodiverse	Refugees, asylum seekers or migrants

The importance of internet to end users

Across this evaluation, the internet was perceived as highly important or essential. 8/11 partners described it as 'essential' while the other 3 described it as 'very important'. Multiple end users emphasised how important the internet was to them and how difficult it is to live without it.

One partner shared with us how some individuals value internet access so highly, they turned down temporary accommodation places which do not provide it.

> **It's a necessity for them now, more so than having a pair of trainers, because it's something that they live by.**

Valley House

> **I'd say life is pretty much impossible without Wi-Fi now.**

End User of Get Box

> **Everything now is online man. It doesn't matter if it's housing, social, doctors, everything's online.**

End User of Get Box

How Get Box overcomes key barriers to internet in temporary accommodation settings:

Free loan: the Get Box is on a free loan and the data is provided by O2, in partnership with the National Databank. So the internet is free to end users and partner voluntary organisations.

No contract: there is no expectation for a minimum amount of time or money.

Quick, easy installation: Get Box does not require technical knowledge to install, and is quick to set up.

Portable: the Get Box is not fixed to the property. It does require any adjustments to the property for installation.

Comparison point: existing solutions for internet access

End users and partners outlined how other existing interventions in this context can have limited effect:

Fixed line internet provided in temporary accommodation was sometimes low quality or slow, especially when shared between many users.

Hot spotting from a phone often resulted in phones overheating and draining the battery, creating anxiety in users about the phone breaking or going flat.

Fixed line internet did not always reach the bedrooms of hostels, resulting in residents only being able to access the internet in kitchens or communal spaces, which lack privacy.

Get Box use cases

This evaluation produced example use cases to bring to life how Get Box is used in a variety of ways:

House sharing: A young man house-sharing puts the Get Box near the TV in the living room, for shared use with two other residents.

Family: a single Mum puts box high up in kitchen so her young child can't reach.

Living alone: A person in their own flat puts the Get Box in the living room

Hostels: An end user goes into the kitchen to use the Get Box a hostel worker has installed. The signal also reaches some residents' bedrooms.
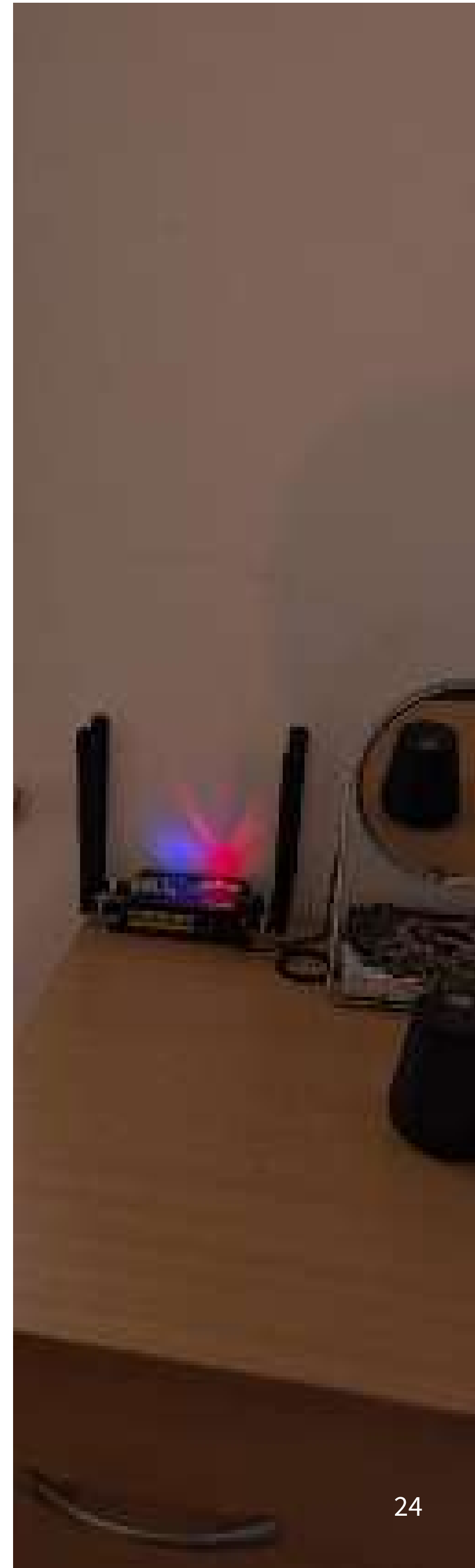
Case study 1:
Meet Pete*

Pete was recently rough sleeping and is trying to rebuild his life. He went from having a successful career to losing a lot and becoming homeless. He feels digitally excluded and relies on email through public libraries as his main form of communication.

The cost is always the big thing. I went from a good career and paying my bills to not having any money for a device or the internet. The only place I would know is a library that is free. For someone who has been through a lot, being in a big public library doesn't help with anxiety.

In his temporary accommodation, Pete has access to communal computers which use the Get Box Wi-Fi. Pete describes how now he doesn't have to plan how he's going to access the internet, he has internet accessible as and when he needs.

This has been incredibly beneficial for Pete. He's at a point where he's looking up information about future jobs, housing options, areas he might want to live. He says when he's online he's "part planning, part fantasising", dreaming about what's possible in the future and building a sense of hope.

Pete has recently found and applied for a drug rehabilitation centre through the internet. He's proud to have been able to have done this himself independently rather than rely on support services.

"I use [the internet] to look at how I can get my life back on track. I'd say I use the internet predominantly for a development of a blueprint of how I can get my life back on track. It's how to keep the flame of hope burning"

Having computers eases that digital poverty a bit. The internet has helped me massively with access to rehab and going to rehab. I've researched rehabs, done self-referrals by having the internet and I've been accepted into a rehab. Googling and looking at options and doing referrals, it provided me the opportunity to be more proactive.

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity

Get Box Product and Service

This section outlines the user experience in relation to the Get Box and key improvement suggestions.

User Experience

Many end users and partners described setting up the Get Box as quick, simple and straightforward.

"It's simple innit. Plug it in, turn it upside down, get the password, upload it. Yeah, it's easy man. One of the most simplest things." End User of Get Box

There were a few reports of the SIM card being put in the wrong way round or a box needing replacement. Sometimes end users received troubleshooting support from Support Workers.

Some partners expressed that getting users to set up their own box is empowering.

"I got the tenant to install it because it's good for him to feel empowered to do that." Hope into Action

"Me I did it all myself. I took it from the box, put it like this like this and set it up… It was very easy for me. I believe in 3 minutes it's done." End User of Get Box

Multiple users and partners reported the set up and instructions were easy to understand.

"It was straightforward. OK, there was no problem setting them up. The instructions were quite straightforward."
Panahghar Safehouse

Some partners commented that the instruction manual was not needed much. Another commented that neurodiversity in end users may mean that some do not typically take time to read through an instruction document.

Partners value simplicity and portability in the Get Box.

"Here's a box. Put a SIM card in, plug it in. It's very easy for us to support people doing it. We don't need an IT wizard to come out and help us and show us." P3 People Potential Possibilities

"In that sense it's good, it's accessible there and then." End User of Get Box

"It's such a good device in that way, it's just plug and play almost." Coventry City Council
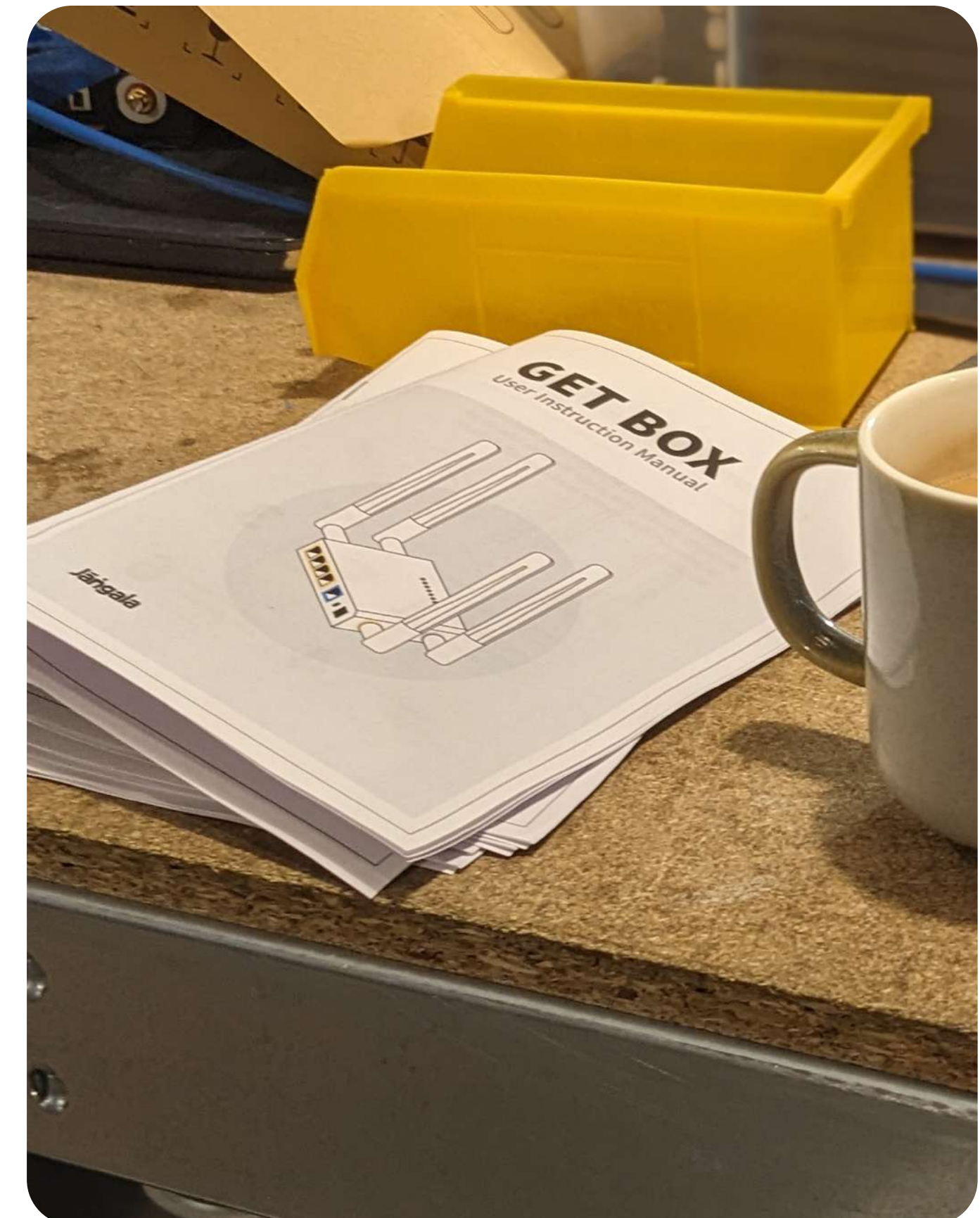
Some end users found it difficult to place the Get Box somewhere which provides the best possible signal. The Get Box is likely to work best near a window because it reduces signal noise between the Box and the nearest mobile mast. However, end users had many factors to consider when positioning the box.

These included:

- The mains plug sockets, where the cable would reach to
- Limited furniture to put the box on, especially in temporary accommodation
- An optimal distance between the Get Box and their device (such as a phone, laptop, TV)
- People house or flat-sharing have to put the Box in a communally accessible space
- Parents/carers with young children are concerned to keep the Box out of reach
- Health concerns about mobile signals
- The bright lights on the Box, especially if they are in the room where they sleep

So finding a good signal with a plug socket, it's not necessarily straightforward. No, it's quite trying to match them both. I mean, in flats, it's ok because you've got your counter top here and you got the window here. So it was easier in a house, not like the plug sockets down here, but the window sills up here.

P3 People Potential Possibilities

Running out of data

The biggest concern about the Get Box service is the number of end users who ran out of data. This is revisited in the Limited data section of this report.

Connecting Devices to the Get Box

The average user connects 2-3 devices to a Get Box. Some connected only 1 device, others connected more, up to 6 or 7. Many were connecting 3 devices.

The most common devices connected to a Get Box were smart phones, TVs and tablets. Other devices linked to the Get Box included: Xbox, Playstation, laptop, Alexa, stereo, lightbulbs, chromebook.

Many end users reported no problems at all connecting devices to the Get Box. "Easy yeah they put the little information for the password and all that literally next to the box. So it was a case of just taking a quick photo within five minutes. And yeah, absolutely brilliant mate." End User of Get Box

Experience & speed

Many users say they were happy with the Get box performance. Others reported that the boxes were slow.

"It's quick as I need. No issues with the speed." End User of Get Box

"I think slower than what they expected." Panahghar Safehouse

A minority of users reported difficulties with the speed when connecting multiple devices, especially in communal areas. Sometimes, partners set expectations about the quality of what the Get Box can offer. Some end users reported turning down video quality to improve performance.

End users reported that the box internet cuts off unexpectedly sometimes. Some users noticed that the Wi-Fi on Get Box doesn't work as well when it's raining.

> **And yesterday, when it was starting to rain and all that, I noticed that the Wi Fi was playing up a bit.**

End User of Get box

Lights

End users used the lights to understand the signal strength and move the box around. However, some found the box lights confusing or misinterpreted them. Multiple users reported finding the flashing lights annoying, and making it difficult to sleep. One end user reported that they found the box lights triggering. Some users cover up the box lights with blinds on a windowsill or with clothing.

"I've got that flashing flashing which makes it hard for me to focus on trying to sleep… So I just threw my hoodie over like that." End User of Get Box

Missing information

The data showed us that some key information was missing. This included:

Visibility on data use and refresh: end users and partners were keen to have visibility on how much data was left and when it would run out.

What happens at the end of the pilot: end users and partners did not know, some asked repeatedly and it was clear this information was important, especially for people living with very low income and high levels of uncertainty.

How the box works: Multiple end users showed interest and wanted to understand how the box works, who Jangala is, where the box comes from.

"I'd like to learn how [the Get Box] works because I've never been to college and studied nothing about it." End User of Get Box

Product improvement suggestions

More or unlimited data
this was the most common suggestion from partners and end users.
It is discussed further in the limited data section.

Cable
Partners and end users explicitly suggested the mains cable be made longer, to help with placement.

Antenna
Some end users would prefer not to have antenna on the box, to make them safer to have around children and to be more comfortable to have in the house.

Increase speed & signal strength
to reach more people and be faster.

Lights
The main suggestions were to reduce the brightness of the lights, change the flashing, clarify the meaning of the lights, or create a cover.

Clarification
End users who encounter the box in a hostel setting may not necessarily know what the box is or does.

More information
Many users wanted to know how the box works and access to more information online about troubleshooting.

Video information
to support people with low literacy or differences in neurodiversity

Visible key information
partners requested key information be made clear and visible, such as the monthly date on which the data renews, the data limits, data remaining and the pilot length.

Get Box distribution and service model

This section outlines some of the key learnings around the service model.

Partner selection and relationship building

Most partners in this pilot heard about the scheme from Coventry City Council via the existing digital inclusion #CovConnects network.

Coventry City Council found that having individual conversations with potential partners upfront took time and resource, but helped build strong relationships and partner engagement. They identified that partners who have limited or one-off contact with end users might struggle to get the box back at the end of the pilot, and so chose to not onboard some partners based on these terms.

Even with a thorough selection process, the Council noted that some partners have been more engaged than others, and one or two had dropped off in their engagement due to heavy workloads or big organisational changes.

The Get Box programme helped Coventry City Council deepen existing relationships with local community organisations, and build new ones. The Council now has a new offer of digital inclusion support fit for temporary accommodation organisations, which they reported as a positive outcome from the pilot.

Awareness and end user selection

Some partners proactively identified end users most in need and distributed boxes on this basis. This included supplementing Wi-Fi in hostels where existing internet does not reach.

"We were doing a little cooking lesson and it came up about internet and I told him, look, literally, I walked into my room and shut the door and the internet, the Wi-Fi signal just goes. So they come and had a look and tested it and then, yeah, within a week, the Wi-Fi box was there."

End User of Get Box

I think for the large part, the pilot has gone really really well.

Coventry City Council

Get Box distribution and service model

Partners allocated limited or unlimited SIMs based on household size, user usage and social situation. Most end users who were offered Get Boxes wanted them. Some partners decided some end users were ineligible, such as people who were moving out soon, already had unlimited internet, or licence restrictions. Some partners found it hard to prioritise which end users should receive the boxes.

"Everyone who was offered it wanted it. I think everyone could see the benefit of having Wi-Fi

P3 People Potential Possibilities

Distribution learnings

Coventry City Council used an existing distribution process whereby partners booked in to pick up Get Boxes. Although this was convenient and partners described it as easy and straightforward, it did result in delays.

This meant that boxes did not reach partners for 2-8 weeks after reaching the Council, with a knock on delay to reaching users. Coventry City Council found they needed considerable capacity and resource to store the devices and deal with the logistics of distribution to partners.

In future, the council and Jangala have agreed for Jangala to deliver the Get Boxes directly to partners.

Information loss

One key observation from this evaluation was the impact of information loss. Because the model relies on distribution across multiple layers of staff, the information that Jangala provides can be lost to the end user. This has helped us reconsider which information is most vital and how to communicate it.

Jangala

↓

Cov Council

↓

Partner

↓

Support/Maintenance Worker

↓

End User
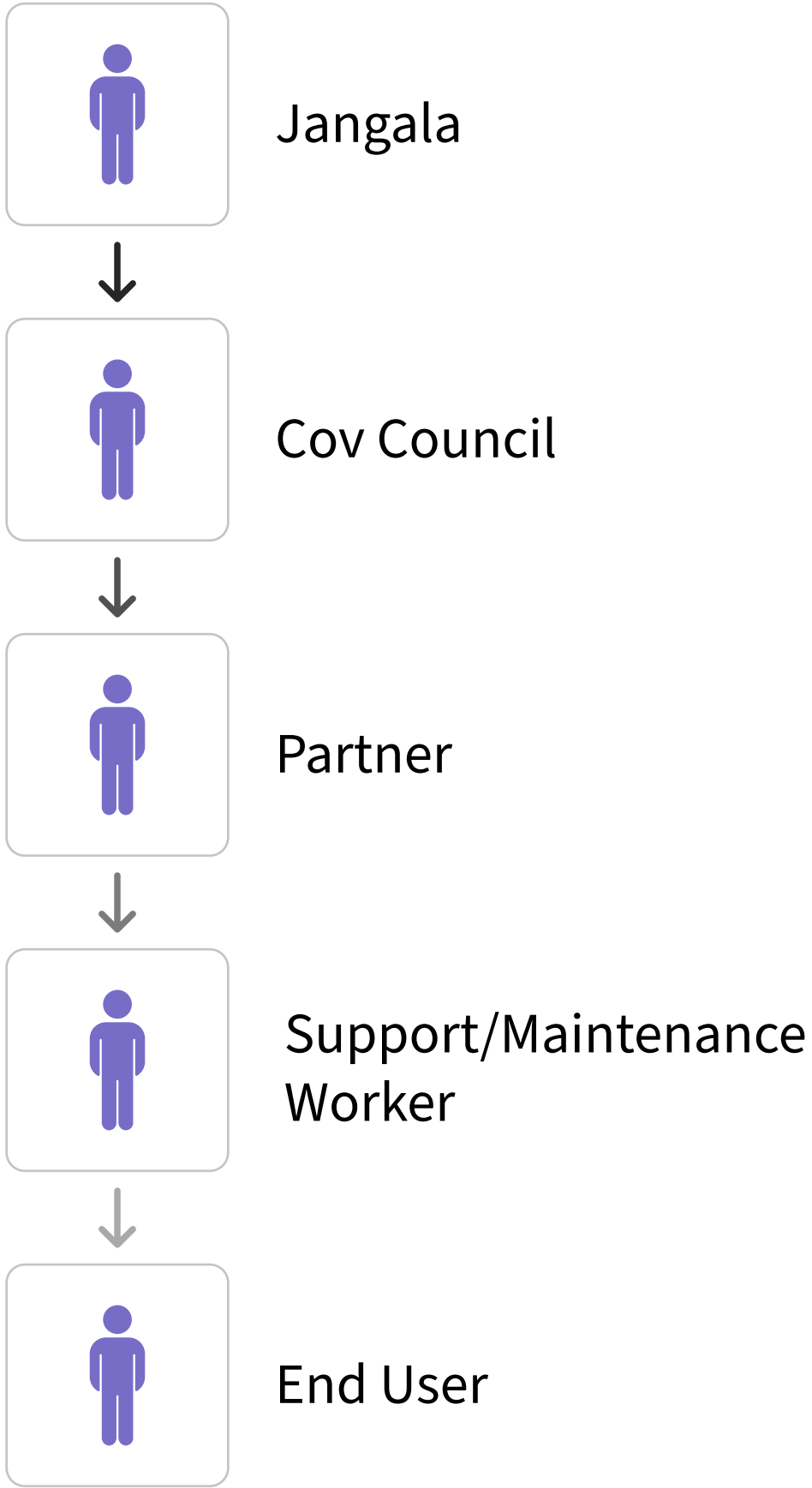
Key adjustments made to the programme

As a result of the pilot findings, the following adjustments to the programme are being made (at the time of writing):

Longer cable: the mains cable length has been increased to 2.5m

Direct delivery: Jangala will deliver Get Boxes directly to delivery partners in future, instead of via the council

A new information leaflet for partners and end users will explain clearly key

Instructional videos on the Jangala website to improve accessibility

Updated website information on the Jangala website, to fill in key information gaps, with QR codes to direct end users to FAQs and instructions

An updated onboarding pack to help explain the partnership agreement

Explorations of developments to Jangala software to change light brightness
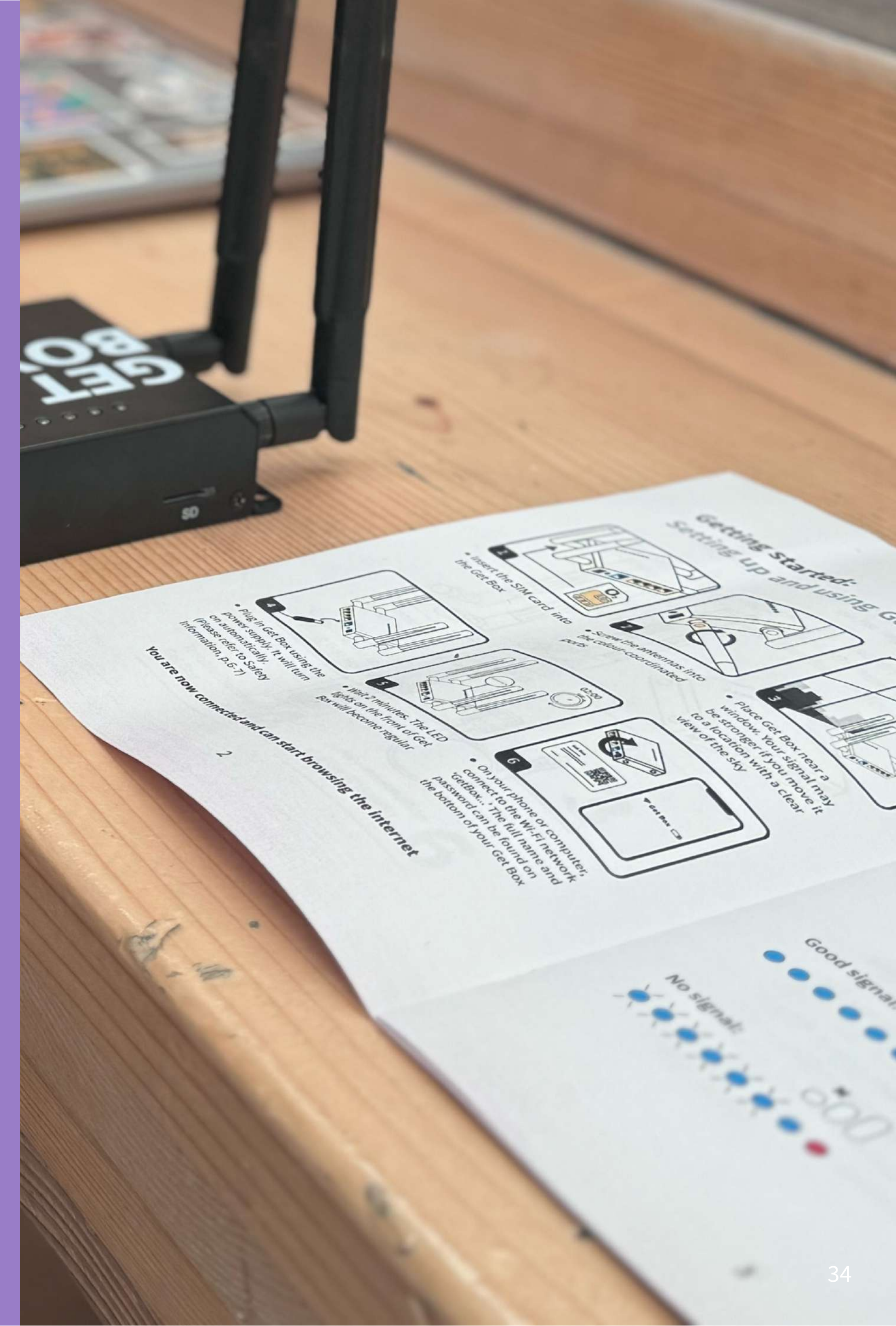
Case study 2: Meet Jackie*

Jackie came to this temporary accommodation with very little, having fled an abusive relationship. She suffers with anxiety and doesn't like to leave the house often.

> **I moved in here with nothing. Apart from a few pictures of my sister and two pictures of my family.**

Jackie hasn't used the internet much in the past. She knows she needs to use the internet to help her get a new home, but her dyslexia makes it hard for her to read and write. She is doing some computer courses offered by local services and they have found her a device, which is helping her literacy.

> **It done me head in [not having internet]. For me to get a new home I need to, like, bid on houses and stuff like that. I couldn't do it. But then I did a computer course here. And they've given me a free laptop. And do you know what I've learned how to spell a lot better as well. And I've learned how to write, know what keys are.**

Having the Get Box has helped Jackie in learning and practising new digital skills such as emailing and using Homefinder. It means she can be in regular contact with the police over email, who provide updates about her perpetrators' whereabouts.

Jackie loves being able to watch anything she wants on YouTube, such as scary films or listening to Ella Fitzgerald, music that reminds her of her sister who has passed away. Listening to music has become really important to her since having the Get Box, as it helps her get to sleep at night.

> **If I didn't have music I wouldn't go to sleep at night. It's made me feel, like, a little bit more comfortable. It calms me down as well. The Get Box has done a lot for me**

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity
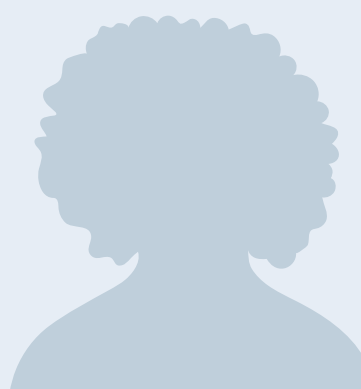
Get Box
Social Impact

This section outlines how participants use the internet and the social impact of increased connectivity through Get Box.

End user activities using Get Box

Jangala's Get Box is used to do activities online mainly across 5 key areas:

These five key areas were developed through synthesis and analysis of user responses. The team acknowledges other ways of framing internet usage, such as The Periodic Table of Internet Elements (10), but made the decision to be user-led in this analysis, by this particular group.

Accessing essential services such as housing, universal credit

Practical everyday activities such as online banking, googling, or travel information

Communication with friends, family, community

Entertainment through streaming, gaming, music, social media and reading

Learning and development

37

Accessing Essential Services

Housing

Using Homefinder (an online platform to find social housing) weekly is essential for most people in temporary accommodation. If users don't respond quickly, they risk sinking down the housing waiting list. Partner organisations help review tenancy agreements over WhatsApp, and help service users work out their next steps.

Health & Mental Health

This includes organising GP appointments and accessing prescriptions, seeking health information online such as nutrition, fitness, relaxation, children's health; researching and self-referring into services and rehabilitation units to support addiction treatment; using online services for mental health support, such as online therapy sessions, insomnia support; and listening to soundscapes to help sleep.

Work & Income

Activities included looking for jobs online consistently to secure Universal Credit payments and using online universal credit portal and journal. One partner reported that sometimes when people cannot log in, they can have their UC payments withheld. Some also go online to work from home, review documents, access work portals and shift rotas.

Support services

End users go online to find further support services online, such as mental health, therapeutic services, rehabilitation centres or food banks. They also fill in online self referral forms, communicate with support services, schedule appointments, attend online meetings, access information and, for DA survivors, exchange emails with the police.

Accessing Essential Services

" **Obviously being in Salvation Army I've got to apply for housing practically every week**

End User of Get Box

" **My work portal, I have to check my rotas, like, booking some time off, I have to do all that online. So, yeah, it is handy having a decent speed and that because there's a lot of documents I had to sign as well**

End User of Get Box

Practical EveryDay Activities

The Get Box is being used for daily functional uses such as:

Searching for information: general search engines to look up information for personal interest or practical uses, including local information such as community groups or events.

Parenting: providing entertainment for children, access to a favourite TV show or iPad, easing parenting for solo parents and helping settle children in times of distress. Parents also went online to communicate with school, access homework portals, parenting information and advice online.

Banking & Budgeting: participants used online banking to help stay on top of finances, debts or payments. For some neurodivergent individuals, being able to bank online (instead of a phone call) made it more manageable.

Translation: participants used online translation apps such as Google Translate or ChatGPT for letters from services (eg. doctors, lawyers) or to help with specific words.

Faith-based activities: such as listening to religious music or sermons, the Bible, watching spiritual videos, finding their local Gurdwara, or attending a Church meeting on Zoom.

Artificial Intelligence services: using AI practically for translation and understanding immigration or creatively for digital art creation or to scan and read aloud a book, using a text to speech generator such as ElevenLabs.

Government services & Immigration: addressing immigration issues online, speaking with lawyers and exchanging documentation. Some used passports and driving license services.

Shopping & bills: Shopping for clothes and cheap furniture, using Amazon, or ordering food shops online. Being able to shop and pay bills online helps ease those responsibilities for some, especially for those with children or if they struggle with energy bills.
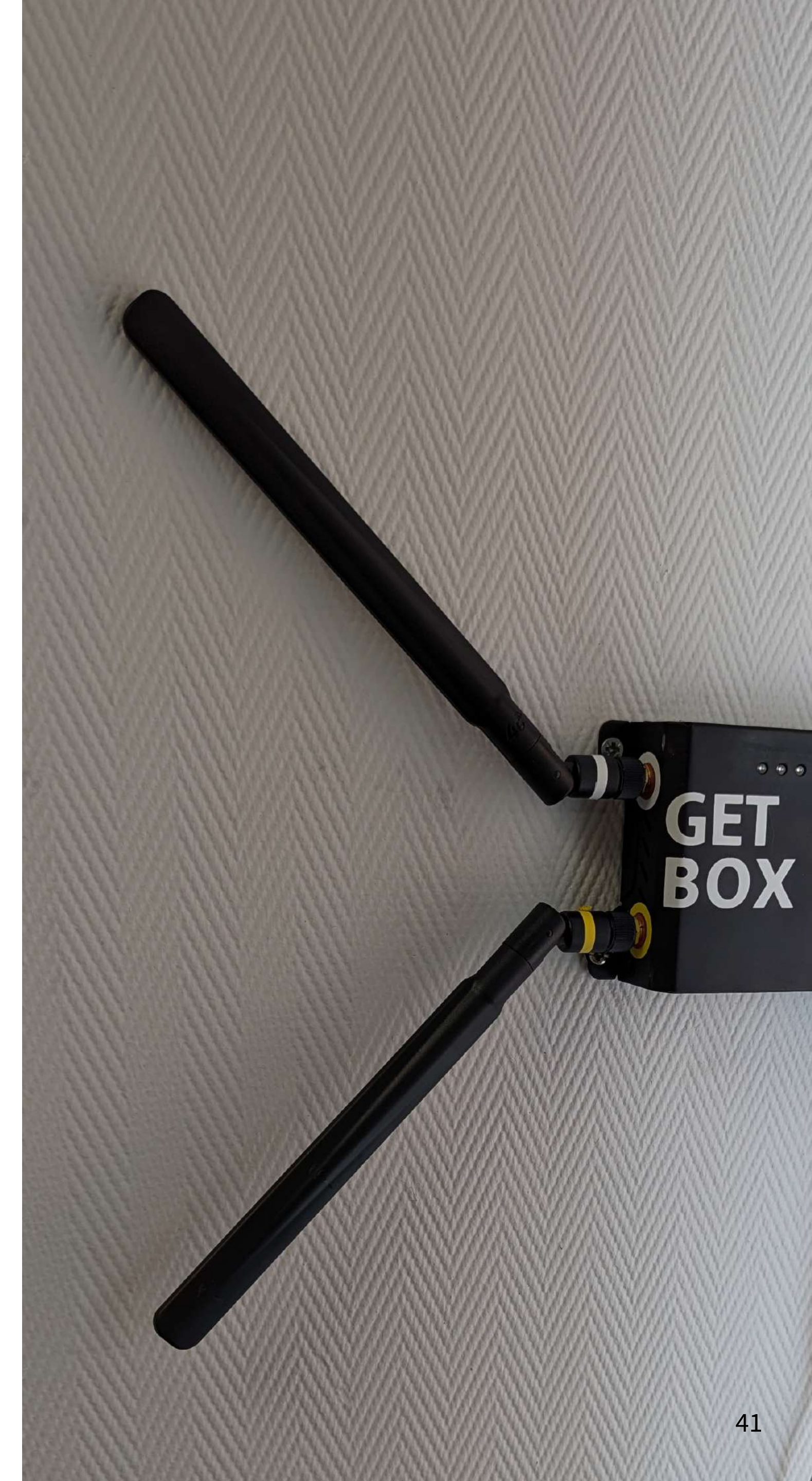
Practical EveryDay Activities

"
I'm especially listening to God's music in my phone, going to youtube and trying to find out for my service, songs

End User of Get Box

"
So banking, it would definitely be my first just because it's more important to me because I have to make sure that I'm limited and I'm paying people on time because I lend money off my family.

End User of Get Box

Communication and Socialising

End users are consistently using the Get Box to increase communication and social connection:

Calls and messages with family and friends: staying in touch with people who are far away through a mix of video calls, voice calls, messages, gaming chat and social media. The Get Box enabled end users to have a greater and more consistent channel of communication, for example being able to WhatsApp for an hour every day rather than occasionally.

Online gaming: For some users, gaming and socialising are closely linked. Some participants' social lives mainly exist online, and this can be particularly beneficial in the context of neurodiversity or social anxiety.

Broadcasting: on social media such as TikTok, as well as live streaming through gaming platforms such as Twitch.

Community connections: looking up community groups online, finding opportunities for in person connection in their local area, or support groups available online.

" One of them talks to his kids over Skype, over video call. So his kids, his kids are a long way away. So he speaks to his kids and his ex partner over the over video call and that's made a huge difference to him. It's just a sense of confidence, he's just a lot lighter. He was really depressed, really heavy. He couldn't speak to his kids and now he's got access to that, he's generally a lot happier.

Salvation Army

Entertainment

Get Box is providing end users with access to an abundance of entertainment content. End users are using Get Box for:

Streaming: watching TV, films, cartoons, sports and clips online. YouTube was the most highly referenced application, for the wide variety of content available and YouTube Kids for families, alongside Netflix and other streaming services. Video streaming was used for sports and entertainment, but also linked to learning, such as English as a second language and driving theory.

Music: typically streaming music on Spotify or YouTube, using their phone, smart TV or bluetooth speaker. End users often prioritised music as being especially important to them, with direct links to mental health and sleep.

Gaming: connecting consoles such as playstation to Get Box and gaming online, or gaming on phone apps. For those who describe themselves as 'gamers', they are socialising through online gaming, speaking with friends and family within gaming, such as on Party Chat.
Some end users played games on their phones occasionally to relax and have some 'me-time' after a long day of parenting.

Social media, civic participation and other media: TikTok came up as one of the most used social media platforms.
Many talked about the importance of being able to store and organise photos and documents online, some like to be able to access books and audiobooks online, and a minority reading the news online and signing online petitions.

> They're looking at those online strategy games and, while that might sound like a frivolous use of time, it isn't because again, it's those problem solving skills. It's keeping people thinking, it's keeping people's brains moving. So they're not just sat in their little room staring at the walls, they're actually doing something they're thinking about what they're doing.

Salvation Army

43

Learning and development

End users use the Get Box to learn online. Learning comes in various forms:

Life skills & online courses: End users go online to prepare for driving lessons and learn English as a foreign language. Language learning included formal courses, watching TV dramas or listening to sermons in English. Some participants were using online courses to learn digital skills, including advanced digital skills and AI.

Informal learning: being able to search for information and informal learning (subjects included nutrition, motorbikes, coding, wines, food preparation, cleaning, AI). Exploring future careers and opportunities.

Formal learning & study: such as home work for schools, college or university, as well as applications. Younger service users use the internet to help them study and complete their school work.

"Because I told you my English is a bit weak... so now I'm watching for more, English dramas, TV. Not too much dramas because it's frustration. But I'm sitting with my kids and watching and I'm learning for reading and writing and more time spent like books or anything.

End User of Get Box

"I have a Masters in politics. I used to read three broadsheets a day. But I've had so many issues. But I use it to keep reading things.... It reminds me and brings me back to normality. It will be handy for a job interview in a year's time. I use it for that stuff. It's like a bridge back to normal living. I need to know this kind of information for my job interview. The internet is keeping me up to date with knowledge

End User of Get Box

Relative importance in card sorting

No formal quantitative card sorting was completed in this study. However, when asked to rank activities by importance, users consistently placed more 'essential' and 'leisure' activities side by side.

The research team noted that the three areas of most importance to users were entertainment, communication and accessing essential services. Calls and messages, and streaming video content were the two most prominent uses, across almost all discussions.

The YouTube effect

An unexpected finding was the near universal use of YouTube for end users. Described by some partners as the 'main media', YouTube seemed to offer a broad appeal due to its vast range of topics and learning opportunities.

Users watched cartoons in their native language, learned English and streamed video on an incredible range of topics. Individuals who showed limited digital skills (such as not being able to use email or log in to an account) still were able to use YouTube.

Apps and platforms

Apps and platforms mentioned by participants in this study (in no particular order)

ElevenLabs
Facebook
YouTube
WhatsApp
TikTok
Paramount Plus
Netflix
Facebook Messenger
Spotify
Amazon
Audible
Amazon Prime
Disney Plus
ITV Premiere
GoogleMeet
ChatGPT
Pinterest
Whoosh
Kindle
Snapchat
Party Chat
Discord
Instagram

Case study 3: Meet Sabaa*

Sabaa lives with her baby son in temporary accommodation, having recently fled an abusive relationship. Sabaa's friends and family live in another country, and she is still learning English.

> " I don't have any family here. So I spend most of the time inside the house using the internet.

Sabaa speaks to her family and friends using WhatsApp or GoogleMeet. When she is using data on her phone, sometimes it runs out and she will let her family know that she won't have data for a few days. She tops it up when she has enough money.

"I use it for contact with my family and friends. [When data is] finished then, I wait till I get some money. So I put some internet on it."

When she has data, Sabaa finds it helpful to use ChatGPT to help with translation of documents or letters. She also likes using YouTube to listen to stories and audiobooks in Arabic.

> " It's very good. It helps me like everything like I translate it. Now there is a new app, ChatGPT... I can talk like anything like in Yemeni, I write anything and he understands me. It's AI. Some people say that it makes people more stupid but no, everything I ask like if I have a problem with the lawyer or I want to understand something about the law here in the UK, everything, everything

Having the Get Box enables Sabaa to be able to go online whenever she needs to, and takes off the financial pressure of buying more data. She can be in more regular contact with family and friends, and has more consistent access to apps and information she needs such as Chat GPT, NHS or checking bus times.

Sabaa is also enjoying being able to let her little boy watch the occasional kids programme on YouTube. He's very active and it keeps him settled for a few moments while she can make the dinner or do the housework.

> " It's helping me with the contact with my family and this is good for my mental [sic]. And also spending my time like instead of being bored, feeling bored or something, I use the youtube and the social media

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity

3 themes: social impact of Get Box internet

We observed the Get Box impacting end users in nine key ways across **three themes**.

Social Impact of Get Box Internet

Emotional and mental wellbeing

- Providing comfort and normality
- Reducing anxiety
- Improving mental health

Empowerment

- Fostering independence
- Enabling freedom
- Creating opportunities for learning

Vital connection

- Social connection
- Enabling swift access to essential services
- Helping stay safe

48
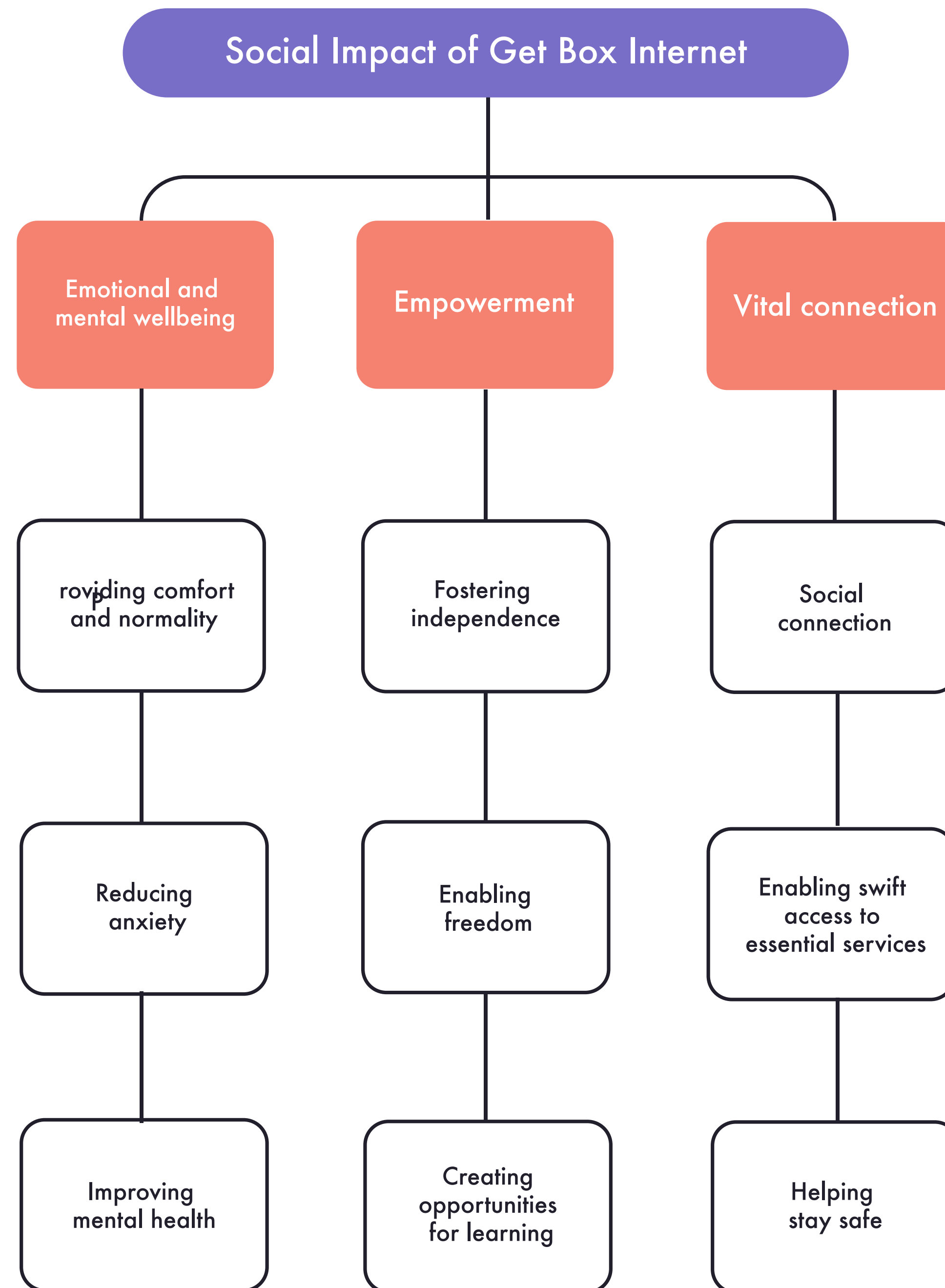
Emotional and mental wellbeing

When people enter temporary accommodation it is often a time of uncertainty, significant loss, change and increased financial pressure. People in temporary accommodation have often experienced trauma, adverse experiences and may have poor mental health or mental illness. The internet can be an important tool in supporting their needs at this time.

Improving mental health

Greater contact with close family and friends had a big benefit on end users' mental health. Participants reported feeling more connected and less cut off from loved ones. When end users could access preferred entertainment content online, this helped them feel like they could cope better with mental or emotional difficulties they were going through. Having internet access also improved end users' independent access to mental health services and information.

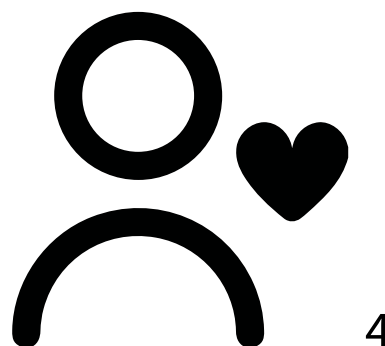> I use a lot of podcasts to get me to sleep or to relax

End User of Get Box

> Well, these are the things that get me through the day - books, audiobooks and music

End User of Get Box

> Just to have that familiar cartoons or something familiar, for the child, is really important.

Panahghar Safehouse

49

Emotional and mental wellbeing

Providing comfort and normality

Internet access within temporary accommodation can provide a sense of normality to end users. Through Get Box, end users can access favourite TV shows, music, or consistently message with friends and family. This is especially important for families, providing children with comfort & familiarity during a time of change.

"I feel it's the most important thing for families going in... it helps settle the kids in a situation that's so so scary. Just that comfort of being able to go, well, I'm gonna watch my ipad or I'm going to go on Netflix and watch my show. It gives them a little space so that they're safe and they're comfortable in a situation that is not nice for anybody.

P3 People Potential Possibilities

"I know it is entertainment but I think it just helps a lot with mental health and it takes that isolation away from them. Especially with what they've been through, it gives them a bit of normality in their life

Panahghar Safehouse
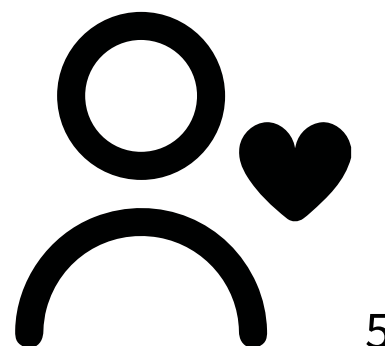
Emotional and mental wellbeing

Reducing anxiety

The Get Box reduced anxiety by reducing financial pressure on end users and reducing the worry of running out of data. With increased data allowance, users can call family, relax, self regulate and do the things they need to do.
For end users with a Get Box in a flat, house or where it reached to a bedroom in a hostel, being able to go online privately felt more comfortable and reduced the social anxiety of having to go to public places.

> It just makes it easy just having access without worrying about how many gigabytes and minutes you've got.

P3 People Potential Possibilities
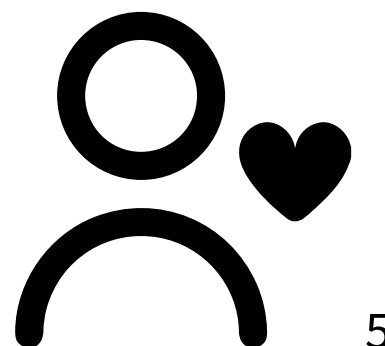
> It's been a big improvement on me and financially as well. It's saved me quite a bit of money over the last few months. I'd say it's probably 20 pounds less a month

End User of Get Box

> It's just a box where I can come to and I know that's my box and I haven't got to worry about it for six months until all that runs out. So until then I've got peace of mind.

End User of Get Box

Emotional and mental wellbeing

Bereavement

A surprising number of interviewees talked about how using the internet to listen to music or watch media helped them feel connected to a loved one who had died.

> It's to watch anime, which is something that my mum used to do before passing away.
> And I did it with her constantly.
> So I still watch it today as a sort of reminder that, you know,
> a comfort thing

End User of Get Box

> When I'm at home, and I've got the music on, it's like she's there

End User of Get Box

Storage & media

End users valued media storage highly, because it gave them connection to memories and previous moments in their life.

Many users ranked storage highly in importance.

"When they enter temporary accommodation, they're not allowed to take a lot of their belongings, they can have things on their phone and you know, memories and stuff like that. So a lot of the time I've seen it where they've gone "Oh but look at these photos" it gives them a sense of like the good times of what was. And then I also like to say, well, look, you've had this before. When you get your own place, it can be like this again. You know, it gives them a sense of hope as well. So yeah, storage media and definitely like photos. It's massive, massive."

Support worker, P3 People Potential
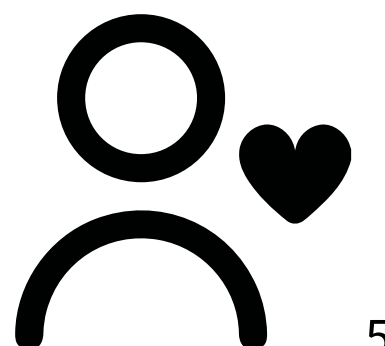
Emotional and mental wellbeing

In person social connections

Some end users reported improved or increased in-person interactions from being online, such as watching TV with kids or finding a local group or course.

"So we support an 81 year old man who didn't want to get the internet himself because he didn't think he'd use it very often. We gave him the box and he's on it every day researching trains, cos he's really into trains. Now, we can check the train times using the Wi-Fi rather than having to go into town to check the train times. His grandchildren are now coming to see him more because when they're there, they can connect to the Wi-Fi. So they're not bored. It's made a massive difference to him.

P3 People Potential Possibilities
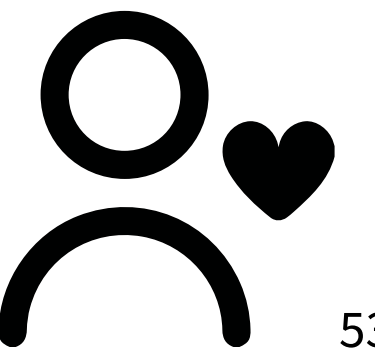
Empowerment

Temporary accommodation services often have a big emphasis on encouraging independence for their service users. Part of the journey of support is helping end users rebuild their lives. Having a Get Box supported End Users in:

Fostering Independence

Increased access to the internet means end users can access services and organise their lives, where previously they might have had to use communal computers or ask their Support Worker. End users told us they want to be able to live independently and not have to rely on staff or ask for things. A delivery partner reported that when people have internet, they are less likely to ask for something right away, and more likely to look for themselves.

> **So I think it's, I think it's that sense of independence, to be honest, I think having to come to us and be dependent on us for things like looking at your universal credit account going on to home finder**

End User of Get Box

"And then I've had some people that, now that they're able to job search, they've not got to go out to the library, they've not got to go and use a friend's laptop and things, they can just go and do it themselves. They've been a lot more independent."

P3 People Potential Possibilities

Empowerment

Enabling freedom

With fewer data limits, end users have more freedom to do what they want when they want to online. End users who previously hot-spotted to their phones now have more personal freedom in their homes, to move around and have continued connection. For those who have previously been in abusive relationships, this might be the first time they've been able to use the internet for what they want.

"Some of our service users have been coerced. So they weren't allowed to have that freedom almost to, to watch what they want or to, you know, browse on what they wanted to

Valley House

Creating opportunities for learning

Increased internet access means end users have better access to resources and information, through both formal and informal learning sources.
Being online more gives end users more autonomy, more ability to re-skill, up-skill and stay curious. Some end users showed increased digital literacy and confidence from using the Get Box.

"I need to know this kind of information for my job interview. The internet is keeping me up to date with knowledge... It's like a bridge back to normal living

Valley House

"It's just, like, time consuming and as well to pass the time and to learn something new and hopefully find something more interesting to do."

End user of Get Box

Empowerment

Insight example

Support Worker John* was visiting a family when he noticed that Abel* seemed unhappy. He asked his Mum what was wrong, and she said he was getting in trouble at school for not doing his homework. But he couldn't do his homework, because he didn't have internet.

John got them a Get Box, and within weeks, Abel was back on track. When John last saw them, Abel showed him his GCSE results. He'd got what he needed to go to Sixth Form

> I was over the moon, just by me enabling him to set up that Wi-Fi box, it was amazing. It's a massive achievement for the family. Who knows, he could go on to be someone, and I was part of his story, just by giving him a Wi-Fi box. It's one of the things you go home, and say, yeah, I made a difference today

John
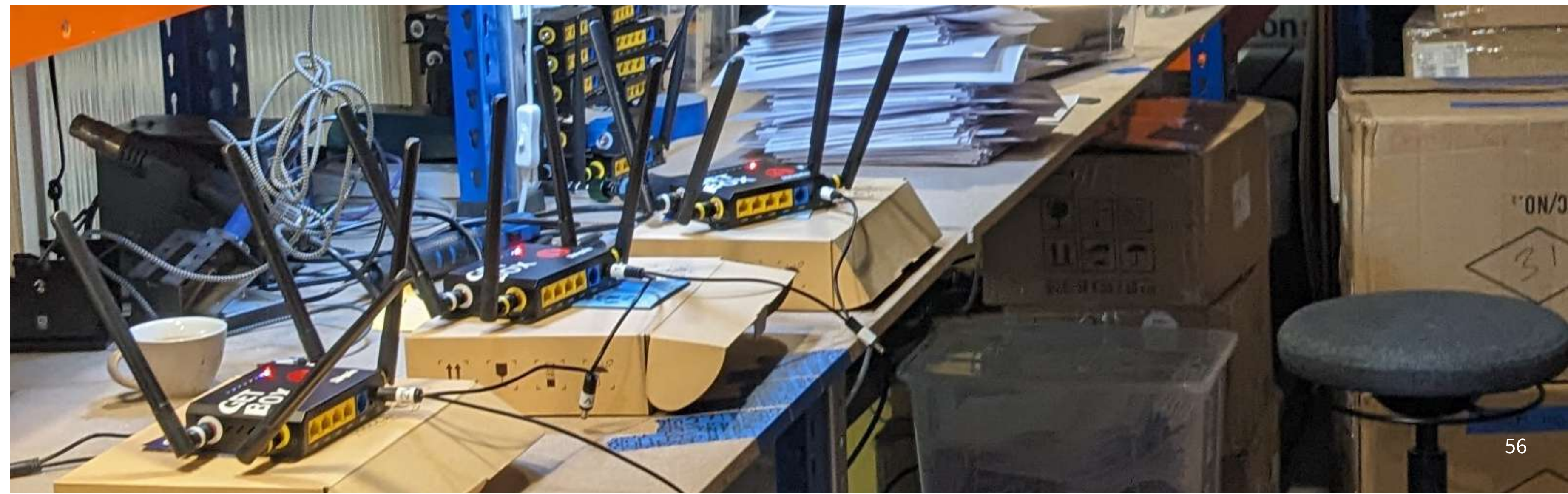
Vital Connection

Many people living in temporary accommodation need to be online quickly to stay safe, stay connected to their loved ones and get the support they need.

Social connection

For some end users, their social lives exist online. Some rarely leave their accommodation, for complex reasons. For end users separated geographically from their family and friends, the internet is a vital lifeline of support. With increased internet access, end users reported feeling more socially connected, both to loved ones and the outside world.

"[My worker] came and gave me the box with the internet and I was very happy and I cried because I can speak more with my family. I don't see my family for one year, I don't have a holiday, I don't go. I stay only in the home."

End User of Get Box

"Without Wi-Fi my brain goes somewhere else. Too much stress. Watching things online keeps me busy. Calling family and friends feels nice. I am lonely but then I feel nice, feel relaxed."

End User of Get Box

Enabling swift access to essential services

Many essential services have timeframes in which they need to be accessed; bidding for housing, Universal Credit journals, job applications. Get Box is quick to set up and use, so end users had swift access when they needed it. This is markedly different from waiting for an engineer or for a fixed line charitable project to be installed. This is especially important to domestic abuse survivors who have fled, to stay safe.
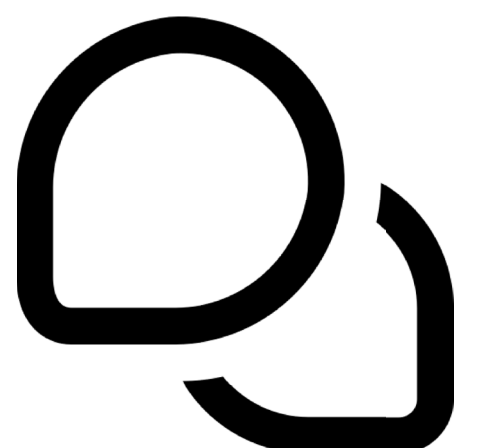
Vital Connection

Helping stay safe

For survivors of domestic abuse, being able to access bills, banking and health appointments quickly is a matter of safety, so that they can keep safely away from their perpetrator. Some survivors of DA also use navigational apps to ensure they are using safe routes away from their perpetrator, communication apps to tell family they are safe and email to stay in touch with police.

> **And sometimes when I can't speak my mom and I know for my mom is these days because she knows the situation my family and she worried because my phone is not working. So she worried what's happening if she panicking....But I'm trying to, I explain my mom, I'm ok. You don't worry. I'm in the home.**

End User of Get Box
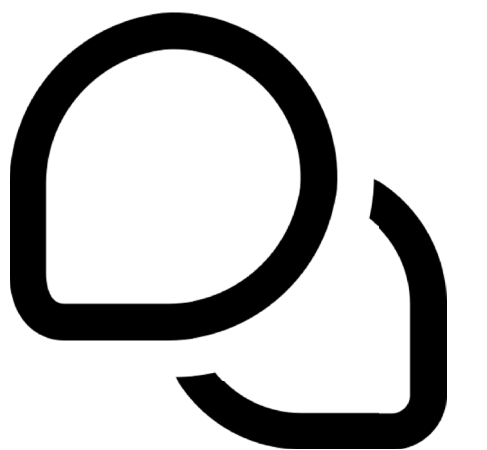
Focus point

How internet supports access to services

100% of delivery partners reported that providing end users with internet helps them access the support the delivery partner organisation provides.

Support Workers found that it is easier to stay in touch with end users via email or WhatsApp, and check in on service users when they are regularly online.

"If they are on WhatsApp, that's really key because then at least I know they've read my message, whether they come back to me or not, it gives me some indication that they're ok. And I can share that back then obviously with the safeguarding meetings."

Coventry NHS Health & Lifestyle Services

"It's quite easy to go through WhatsApp calls. It just helps them stay connected and it helps with the isolation. It helps with their mental health to be able to talk to somebody. I think for a lot of our women, it's difficult because of culture and they don't have that family backing. But even if there's one person who they're able to speak to and they're able to communicate with, it just helps.

Panahghar Safehouse

"It's almost impossible for me to do my job unless I can get onto the internet in their homes."

Hope Into Action

Support workers talked about how they are encouraged to be paperless, for environmental reasons, but that this can cut off individuals from care and key information.

"Most services now, they want you to reduce that paper footprint, making it more digital, because it's more environmentally friendly."

Coventry NHS Health & Lifestyle Services

Signposting and sharing information online were already built into services, such as mental health and parenting information, but **users who were offline struggled to access this support**. Support Workers found that sharing key information directly linked to delivering a service, such as safe sleep, vaccines or tummy time, was only possible for end users who were online.

Support Workers also noted the broader beneficial impacts of internet access

"It felt really good to actually give [the Get Box] cos it's like, even though it wasn't from me personally, it is like giving them a gift and what a powerful gift that is. It's opening up a big wide world to them, isn't it, being connected to the internet."

Coventry NHS Health & Lifestyle Services

Unexpected finding: Services using Get Box to build a case for internet

Some services shared that they were using Get Box as a complementary intervention, to help build a case internally for upgrading the internet. They saw the Get Boxes as a useful way to understand usage and reliance across different accommodation types, and to trial Wi-Fi before investing in installation.

I wanted to build a case about damages, especially because if they haven't been damaged, then I wouldn't be worried about putting routers into some properties.

Panahghar Safehouse

I wanted to monitor it, to say we do need internet. Because in the last few years, the more stuff's going online. You physically can't go into a job centre now to speak to somebody... You can't even phone them up... So internet is something we need to be looking at. And especially since Covid, when a lot of services went online, some of our residents were suffering because they didn't have online access

Panahghar Safehouse

Case study 4: Meet Kai*

Background: Kai has recently been released from prison, and is living in a hostel. He has bipolar disorder and is working hard to get his life back on track.

> I was in jail for 11 years. But, come out trying to change my life. I've got bipolar too and I'm very volatile sometimes, unpredictable. I can be low. I can be high and I need support in my life. I've never lived on my own. This is the first time in my life I've lived on my own. I was with my dad or my auntie because they've always known about my mental health. So I've come here to try and get a bit of independence.

> My mental health dictates a lot of my life. My medication sort of helps, but it's only like a buffer, I'll never be cured. So, yeah, it's just learning how I can develop myself as a human and better myself as a man I'd say.

Streaming series and films is what keeps Kai's mind occupied and how he passes the time. He enjoys getting absorbed into binge-watching series and feels like he learns a lot from online streaming. He describes how he watches '24/7', it helps him cope with his insomnia and shares that it 'keeps me sane'.

Kai watches everything from his phone using an unlimited data package. He's tried hotspotting from his phone to a TV in the accommodation but the hotspot doesn't work on his second-hand phone so he watches everything from his phone. He wishes he could get broadband and set up his firestick on his TV but he's not allowed to where he's living; it's against the policies of the organisation.

"I just watch programs because I'm the most comfortable when I'm in my room. I don't go out a lot, you know, I go and get my medication every day and I might go to the shop, do shopping, but I don't go out a lot. I feel comfortable watching programs. Because it calms me down the most. It just keeps me in here. It makes me feel safe."

When receiving the Get Box, Kai hoped he'd be able to connect his TV to the Wi-Fi and have Wi-Fi in his room that he could rely on. But, because he was given a limited SIM card for the Get Box, the data runs out in 2 days. It isn't enough to connect to his firestick/TV for any length of time.

> All I do is stream, I don't watch live TV. You know what I mean? And like they give me the box and a 25 gig for free. Don't get me wrong. Well, appreciate it. It is not enough for me. I need unlimited.

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity

Limited and Unlimited Data

The second part of this evaluation is observing key differences of internet usage and behaviour between limited and unlimited data packages, using digital traces and anonymised data in aggregate. Data is drawn from 2nd April until 2nd December 2024, but most boxes came online after 15th April.
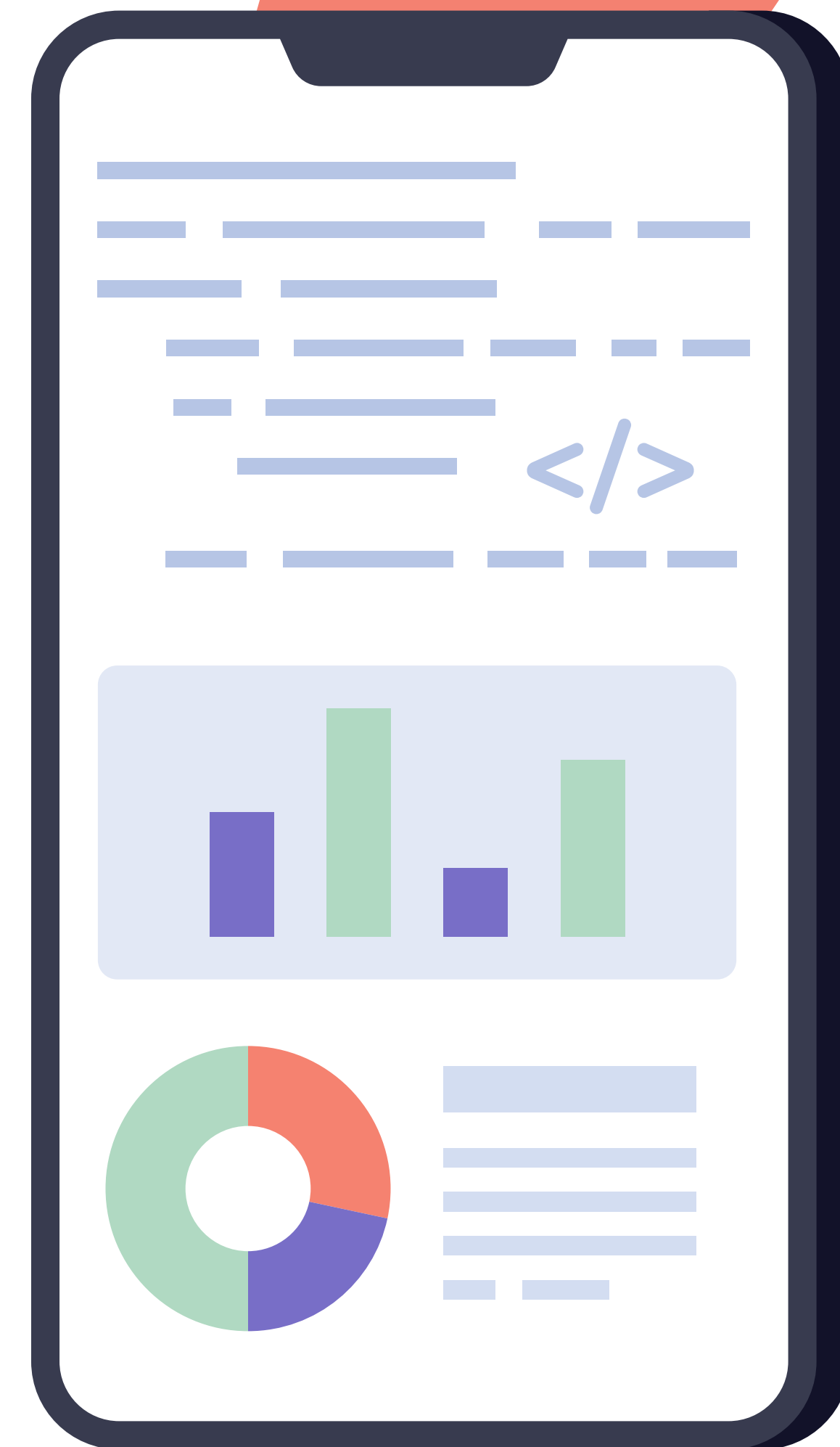
Context

limited & unlimited SIM evaluation

Of the 200 Get Boxes in this pilot, 140 had SIMs with 25GB of data/month and 60 had SIMs with Unlimited data.

Total boxes	Limited data (25GB/month)	Unlimited data
200	140	60

All delivery partners were informed of the mix of limited and unlimited data packages. Boxes were labelled with coloured stickers and partners had access to a written list of boxes with serial numbers and data packages, to enable cross referencing of which data package matched each box.

Deciding not to blind test

During evaluation design, the research team and stakeholders discussed creating a blind test, whereby nobody knew how much data was in each SIM. This would in many ways have created a stronger dataset to compare usage and behaviour. However, the decision not to do this was taken mainly because:

There were ethical concerns with distributing data packages randomly, particularly where residents living close to each other might notice neighbours' data lasting longer.

It is possible to remove a SIM card from a Get Box, put it into a smart phone and request a data balance. Partners or end users who discovered this could skew the results.

The unlimited SIM cards are a valuable resource. There was concern they might accidentally not be used in a blind test.

The research team therefore decided to be transparent about data packages, and acknowledge the bias this creates in the data.

How boxes were distributed

Delivery partners were able to distribute boxes as they saw fit. Some partners chose to give unlimited boxes to larger families, gamers, larger houses or shared spaces. Some single person households also received Unlimited SIM Get Boxes. In this way, the evaluation cannot compare like-for-like comparison of data usage. Instead, it compares how Get Boxes are used in different circumstances.

Digital traces & anonymised data

Jangala collects anonymised data from Get Boxes. Jangala cannot see what the internet is being used for or websites names and we do not store MAC addresses. Jangala collects an anonymised identifier created from a MAC address to analyse repeat usage.

The data collected includes the sum of upload and download data, signal strength, the number of unique devices. This data was reviewed in aggregate and per box to understand differences in usage.

Timeframe and challenges

The limited boxes contained SIMs with 25GB data per month. However, some operational complications arose which meant that end users actually had more than 25GB per month for several months of the study.

Firstly, due to delays in distribution of some Get Boxes, some limited data packages went through 2 monthly top up cycles before being used. Therefore, some users started using their Get Box with 50GB of data, instead of 25GB.

Secondly, on analysing the data the research team discovered that many end users had used more than 25GB during some months of the pilot.

Upon exploration, a pattern was discovered of 50GB top ups across July, August, September and October. This is likely the result of a promotion run by O2 over these months to double the data allowance of Pay as you go SIMs, which was unknown to Jangala at the time.

Therefore, many end users had 50GB of data each month, instead of 25GB. End users with limited data packages were made aware that they had 25GB data by their Support Worker, but they did not have a way of monitoring the data, nor receive alerts.

Therefore, this evaluation has some limitations in understanding behaviours and usage of limited data packages, due to the disparity between how much users believed they had and how much they used.

Behaviour and usage

Once a device is connected to a Get Box, it appears the same devices continue to be used with that Get Box (across all data packages).

The following graph demonstrates that as more Get Boxes came online over the pilot duration, more unique devices appeared in a similar correlation. This suggests that, on the whole, individuals attached a device and continued to use it with the Get Box. This suggests there was not a large number of people who visited to use a Get Box once, and never again.

A comparison of Get Boxes online and unique devices online (across limited and unlimited data packages)

Boxes online — Unique devices
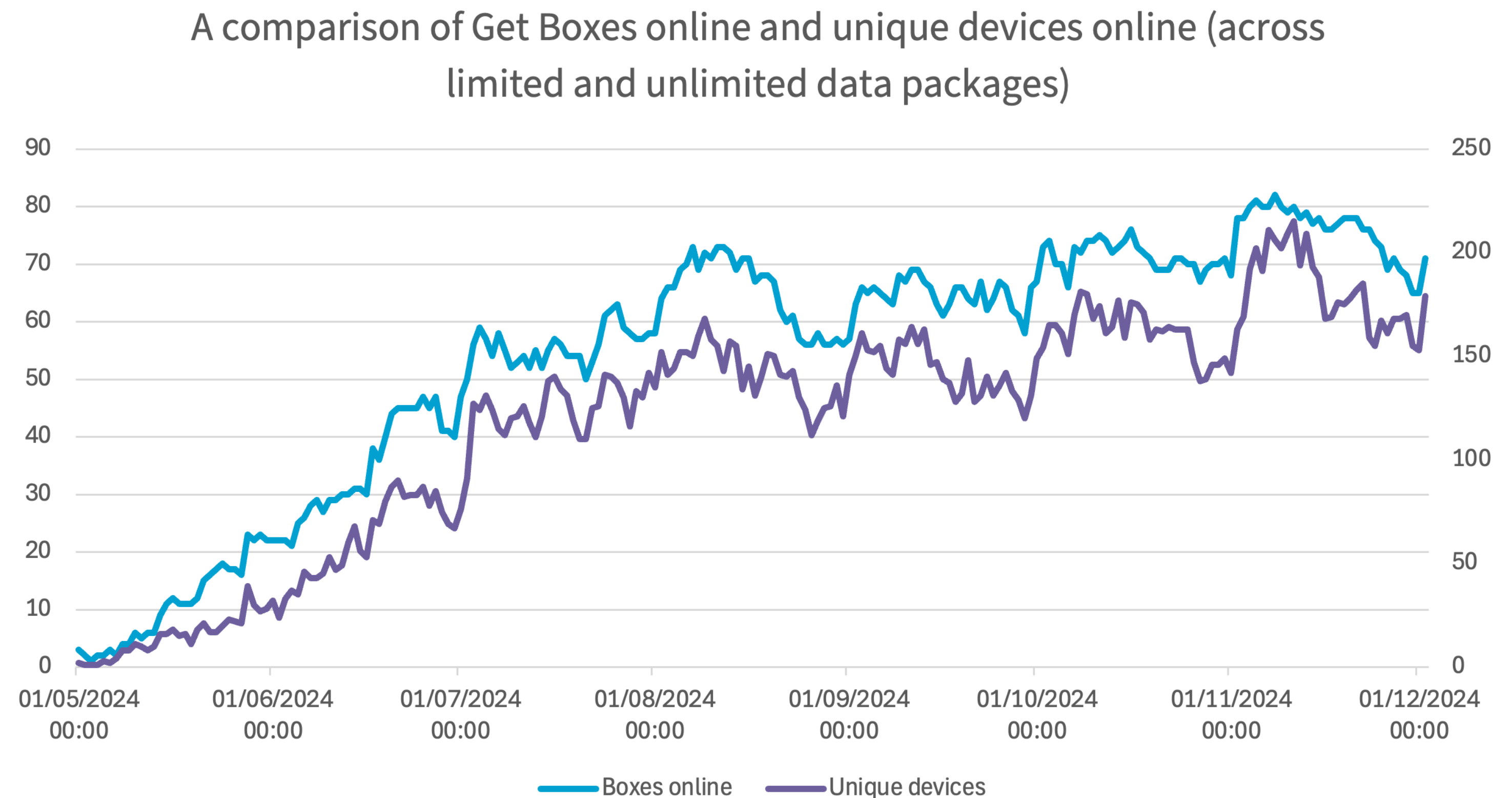
Devices:
comparing limited and unlimited Get Boxes

Unlimited data enabled greater connectivity.

The Get Boxes with unlimited data SIMs had more devices connect to them on average.

This is likely because Get Boxes with unlimited data SIMs were more likely to be put in larger houses or communal areas of hostels.

It could also have been because visitors to households used the internet.

*Device averages will not completely agree with box numbers and unique devices.
See end notes on calculations.*

Get Box SIM data package comparison - box and devices (02/04/24 - 02/12/24)

Metric	Limited	Unlimited	Totals
Total boxes distributed	140 Get Boxes	60 Get Boxes	200 Get Boxes
Boxes that downloaded more than 10MB data	105 Get Boxes	45 Get Boxes	150 Get Boxes
Boxes that downloaded more than 100MB data	97 Get Boxes	43 Get Boxes	140 Get Boxes
Total unique devices connected across all boxes	682 devices	404 devices	1,086 devices
Average number of unique devices connected per box*	6.78 devices / box	9.51 devices / box	7.57 devices / box

Data usage: comparing limited and unlimited Get Boxes

End users with unlimited data on their Get Box used four times more data than limited boxes.

In comparing limited and unlimited usage across 140 Get Boxes (97 Get Boxes with limited data and 43 boxes with unlimited data), boxes with a limited data package used on average 25.42GB of data. This compares to 102.81 GB data per month for Get Boxes with unlimited data packages.*

This suggests that Get Boxes with Limited data packages could well be limiting possibilities for end users, even taking into account the differences in situation of Get Boxes with different packages.

*Exclusion criteria and limitations

In this analysis, any box which had downloaded less than 100MB across the entire 6 months of the pilot was excluded, as this was not a meaningful use of the box. Most of these boxes had only been used across 1 month.

A further 4 boxes were excluded from the limited data pool where it became clear the box had a different SIM card swapped into it. This is identified in Jangala's systems through identifying boxes where modem data download has occurred but no O2 SIM card is in use.

This data does have a key limitation; it includes months where the box was not used for a full month. This includes the month in which the box was switched on. This means the average monthly data use shown here is likely lower than the reality.

Average data downloaded per month (GB)

	Limited Get Box	Unlimited Get Box
	25.42	102.81
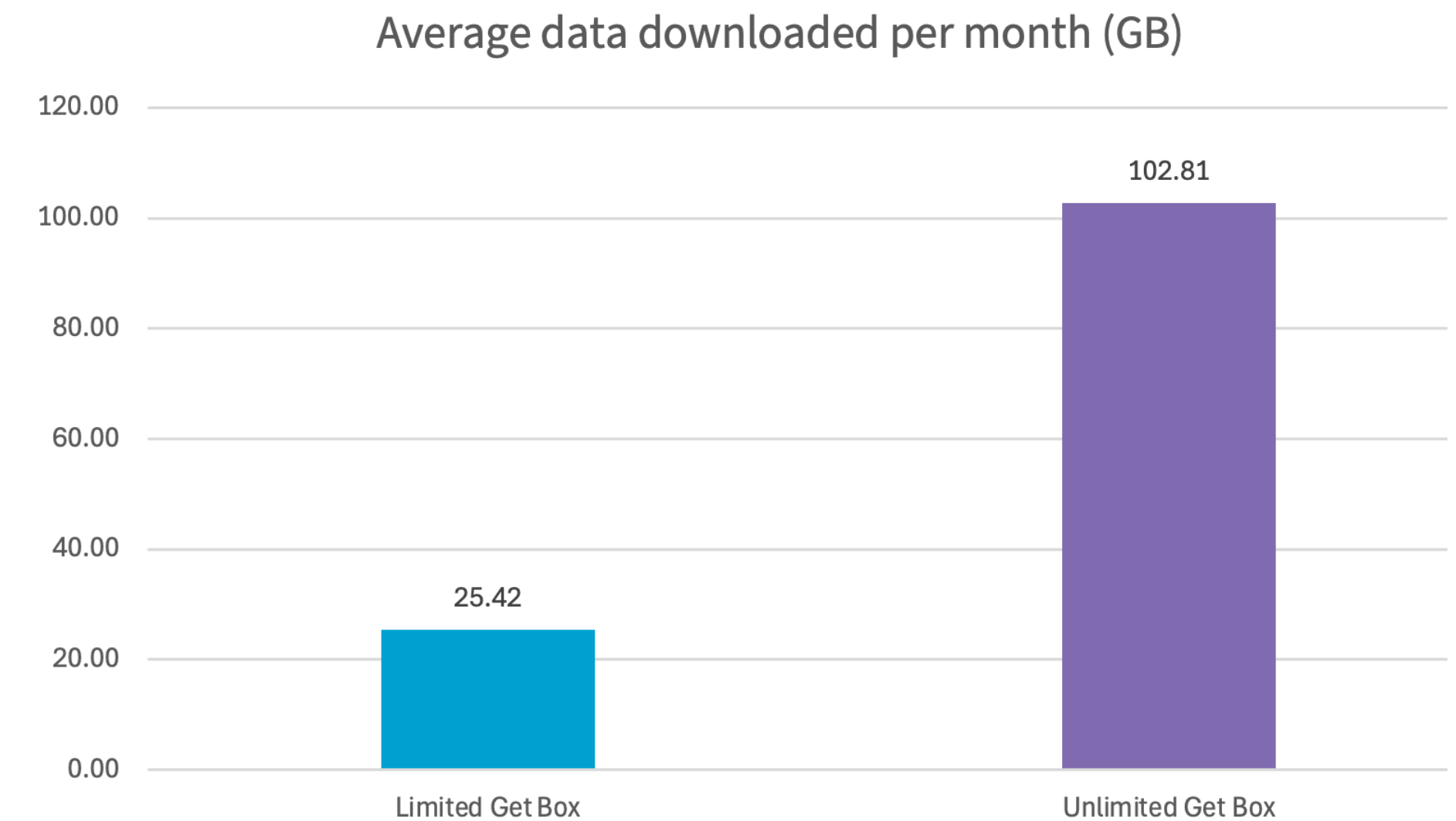
Analysis of limited data running out

Where users started a month with 25GB on their Get Box, 43% ran out of data before the month ended.

It took around 2 weeks on average for users to run out of 25GB on their Get Box.

By analysing months of data where Get Boxes with limited SIMs started with 25GB, it is possible to take a view on how long that data lasts. Due to unexpected top ups (detail above), 77 occasions over the pilot were recorded where a Get Box began the month with 25GB of data. Of those months where an end user started with 25GB data, 43% ran out data before the month ended. It took an average of 13 days to run out of data (n=77).

Analysis of 25GB data running out

Total number of months where a box began the month with 25GB data	77 months
Total number of months where a box began the month with 25GB data and subsequently ran out during that month	33 months
Percentage of months where boxes ran out of 25GB	43%
Average number of days 25GB took to run out	13.36 days

Notes on data and calculations

A small number of the unique 'clients' are testing devices, as part of Jangala's quality assurance process before dispatch; approximately 6 devices.

In four cases, a SIM card was removed from one box and put in another box. This skews the data, because aggregate data is collected by box serial number, not SIM card. Wherever possible, these anomalies are removed.

Due to using a unique identifier created from the MAC address, there is a miniscule possibility that 2 clients with similar MAC addresses could be mistaken for each other. This is statistically insignificant, but acknowledged as a possibility.

User experiences of data limits

End users with limited vs unlimited data had starkly different experiences.

Data running out quickly and suddenly

Many end users and partners reported that the 25GB SIMs were running out quickly.

This caused frustrations for the end users, especially as they didn't know when it would run out, making it sudden and unexpected.

"Well obviously when they've done the first time they put it on, they'd only bought a certain amount of data. So it got used quite quickly by all four of us. Within about a week."

End User of Get Box

"The only thing that they are not satisfied with is obviously the data runs out really quick because the 20GB or whatever it was they were flying through it"

Coventry Cyrenians

Partners reported some users find the 25GB data limit sufficient.

Delivery partners identified that unlimited data packages are not well suited to all end users, if they use the internet more often.

" The 25GB SIMS are not really of any use to the tenant because it does not support online gaming and streaming as the 25GB runs out in a matter of days

Hope into Action

"The internet usage was quite high and the usage would finish within days of renewing. This was the main issue we faced as the users were heavy users of the internet"

Coventry Cyrenians

"Not everyone has had that issue. There's a handful of people for who the data is not enough, but some of them, I'd say probably about 50%, find that the data is sufficient."

Green Square Accord

Two end users had experienced a switch from limited to unlimited which dramatically changed their experience of Get Box. Some services reported swapping SIM cards around to get users more data.

"But [the data] really didn't last long and it always went off at midnight, which is really annoying watching something. I was pretty fed up with the Get Box then, but I've changed, obviously now, [the unlimited SIM version is] different, completely different."

End User of Get Box

69

User experiences of data limits

Increased anxiety

Partners highlighted the negative impact to service users when the internet provision is not consistent and data runs out sporadically.

End users also spoke about the stress this can cause. There was a strong link between running out of data unexpectedly and a negative impact on mental health.

"It also helps deal with it because we have people with anxiety and depression. So obviously some of them use the internet as a coping mechanism, you know, watching YouTube and doing various searches and stuff like that, but it's just created slight anxiety in that sense because of not knowing"

Coventry Cyrenians

[25GB] is not enough for me. I need unlimited... It lasts me 2.5 days. If that

End User of Get Box

"Some of the people we have here, they struggle to control their emotions. And I think when all of a sudden it stops working... the level of frustration can just go through the roof very, very quickly"

Salvation Army

Partners explained that having advance warning of data running out is really important, so that end users do not miss appointments or suffer adverse effects on mental health.

"[It can] cause them a lot more stress as well because if they're in the middle of, you know, trying to settle their children at night and all of a sudden the internet's gone."

Valley House

And so you think there's a bit of an emotional impact both for them but also for their kids as well because it's like, well, why have we got this and now it's run out? What do you mean we've got to wait another 10 days for it to renew?

P3 People Potential Possibilities

User experiences of data limits

Partners also identified underreporting when the internet had run out, indicating end users may not feel comfortable alerting Support Workers when they don't have data .

"It did cause them quite a lot of distress knowing that the internet's not working or, you know, they may have needed to log into their accounts

Valley House

"When the 25GB ones ran out they did not feel able to come forward and say they weren't working"

Salvation Army
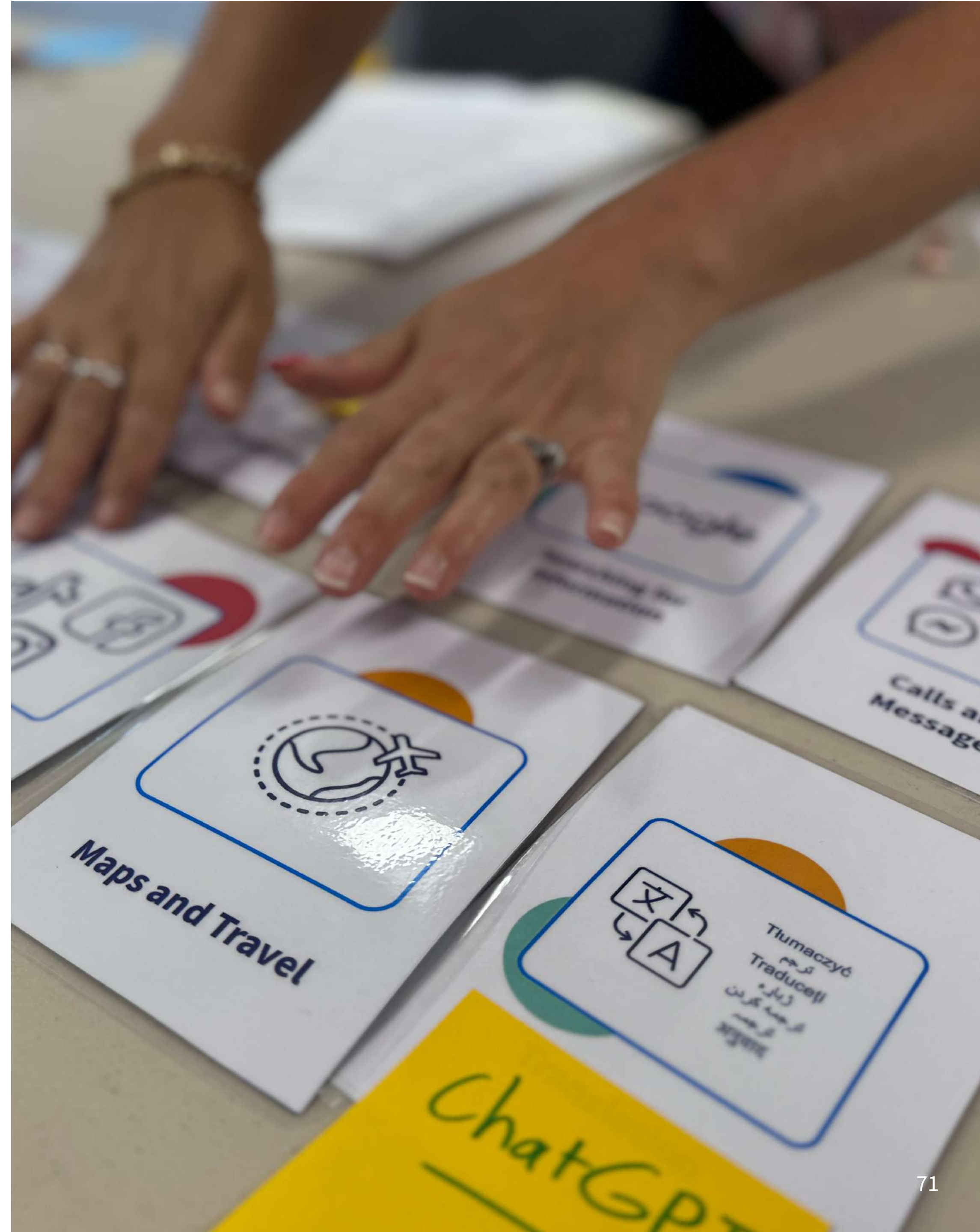
Summary: Key differences of internet usage and behaviour in people with limited data packages

Emotional and mental wellbeing

A sudden, unexpected loss of internet can have a negative impact on wellbeing

Family support services highlighted that data running out can cause high emotions and instability for children

Limited data can cause anxieties about data usage

Empowerment

Limited data inhibits people's ability to use the internet as and when they need

Less data reduces freedom, because data needs to be rationed and prioritised

Limited data reduces informal and formal learning opportunities. Many users talked about the value of being able to look things up and engage in curious, ongoing learning

Vital connection

Limited data limits the amount and regularity of social connections. When end users communicate via gaming, impacts are especially limited

When end users run out of data, they must ring their Support Worker and rearrange appointments urgently or request help

Limited data offers some ability to stay safe.
But, because many of the activities are urgent or time-limited, the impact may also be limited
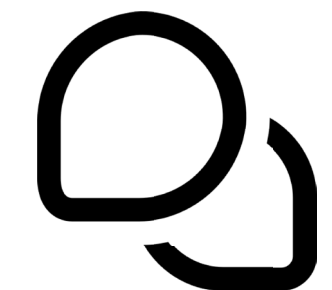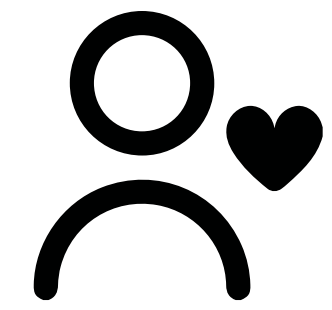
Although Unlimited Boxes may have been used in different circumstances, it was clear that single-person users and small households also preferred unlimited data.

Case study 5: Meet Harry*

Harry is neurodivergent and in his early twenties. He's recently moved into shared temporary accommodation and is passionate about video gaming. Gaming is his main form of communication and how he socialises with close friends and family that live far away.

> **With the gaming, it's just how I communicate with people. It makes it a lot easier not being face to face. It feels really uncomfortable if that makes sense. It's the way I communicate to most of the people that I talk to these days.**

Harry has been paying for his own unlimited phone data package and hotspotting from his phone to his XBox. Sometimes the connection isn't strong enough and the online chat he has with his friends will drop, or his phone will overheat. He finds it anxiety-inducing having to leave his phone in his room when he needs to walk around the house amongst other residents.

> **Wi-Fi is kind of a big thing for me. So, before we had the get box, I was using my phone using my data and all that because I had unlimited, which helped out quite a bit until the box was here. I was pestering [service] for Wi-Fi for ages, because I suffer with social anxiety. So I struggle to talk to people, especially if there's someone here that I don't know.**

Now he has a Get Box in his room, Harry knows he can access his online games uninterrupted, has a better connection and smoother gaming experience. He's relieved to be able to take his phone with him to other rooms in the house, and feels more relaxed going down to the kitchen or communal areas with his phone in his pocket.

Beyond gaming, Harry uses the internet for practical things such as online banking. He also watches anime online because it reminds him of his Mum, who passed away. Having Wi-Fi at home brings him comfort and he describes it as 'more relaxing and comfortable'.

"It is a really relaxing thing knowing that I can have my phone with me downstairs in case if they wonder where I've gone, if I'm going with them or if I just want to go downstairs for a few seconds…I don't have to worry about the phone overheating or gaming on my phone."

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity

Learning
& Recommendations

for addressing the digital divide

Learning 1: Temporary housing residents face a Catch-22 of needing internet without having good access to it.

Residents are penalised if they do not bid weekly for permanent housing, but are often on low incomes and cannot install internet in their temporary homes.

Learning 2: For residents of temporary housing, increased internet access through Get Box resulted in vital social outcomes.

These include improved emotional and mental wellbeing, increased independence and freedom, improved opportunities to learn, increased social connection, increased safety and improved access to essential services.

Learning 3: Many users place 'essential' services with equal importance to 'leisure' activities.

Users place a high value on connecting to loved ones and streaming services, and to 'leisure' activities which are fundamental to a sense of freedom, normalcy and wellbeing. If programme providers and evaluators try to rigidly differentiate activities under 'essential' or 'leisure' categories, this can undermine the social impact of internet access.

Recommendation A: All temporary housing providers should provide Wi-Fi internet access for residents.

This internet should be unlimited, of a reasonable speed and available to residents in physical spaces of privacy, not only communal spaces. This could be achieved with Get Box, fixed line or other portable Wi-Fi solutions.

Recommendation B: Connectivity programmes, including Jangala's, should recognise and be designed to address the diversity of user needs.

Intervention design should acknowledge that the freedom for users to access a variety of activities results in key social impacts, such as improved wellbeing, increased sense of freedom and reduced social isolation.

Learning & Recommendations

for the Get Box Programme

Learning 4: Jangala's Get Box is especially suited to swiftly addressing gaps in digital access in temporary accommodation settings.

Because it is portable, easy to install and free to end users, it can provide internet quickly to people who need it urgently.
Although suitable to a range of contexts, it is especially compatible with supporting temporary accommodation providers to get people the internet they need.

Learning 5: In this Get Box pilot, boxes with unlimited data used more data per month (approximately four times) than Get Box users with limited data.

This is partly because of differences in situational usage, but also because many end users require more data.

Learning 6: Many end users with 25GB of data run out by the end of the month.

End users experience distress and frustration when they run out of data, especially if it is unexpected.

Learning 7: The improved social outcomes of increased internet access are reduced by limited data packages.

Improvements in mental health, freedom and independence and other domains, are inhibited when end users run out of data or must ration their data.

Learning 8: Key elements of the Get Box product and service can be improved to offer a better user experience.

These include visibility of data usage, key design elements and information provided.

Recommendation C: The Jangala Programme should extend its support of residents of temporary accommodation with Get Boxes.

This could provide vital support and get residents online, quickly.

Learning
& Recommendations

for the Get Box Programme

Recommendation D: The Jangala Programme should increase the data limit of Get Boxes, offering unlimited data packages wherever possible.

Data limits could be increased in line with need; with higher limits for larger families or hostels and lower limits for individuals who need less.

Recommendation E: The Jangala Programme should review and iterate the Get Box product and service, using direct improvement suggestions by end users in this evaluation.

This review should include product design, information, and distribution model in the context of an intervention which supports freedom and empowerment, using the insights of this evaluation.

Conclusion

The Jangala Get Box in temporary accommodation in Coventry is supporting residents to rebuild their lives, through improved mental health and wellbeing, empowering freedoms and vital connections to loved ones and essential services. All partners surveyed (n=11) reported that providing end users with internet helps them access the support the delivery partner provides, and all partners surveyed reported finding working with Jangala 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

At the time of writing, Jangala and partners are implementing improvements to the programme based on the suggestions of these findings, including increasing data packages, adjustments to the product, and increased available information. With the successful implementation of these suggestions, the wider Get Box programme is well placed to support positive social impact by

Case study 6: Meet Dikembe*

Dikembe* is in his mid-50s. He's living in a temporary accommodation hostel after a few months in prison. His Support Worker, Elijah*, set up the Get Box in his bedroom shortly after he arrived.

Dikembe stays in his room a lot. He describes himself as not very tech-savvy and struggles with logging in to different platforms. If he could get rid of all the messages on his smartphone and just use it for phone calls, he would.

> **Email addresses and all that. That's the bit that bothers me. Do you know what I mean? I can't help it, just, I can't get my head around it all**

Dikembe would like to use the BBC iplayer app and Netflix, but he finds it confusing to log in.

> **I'll go through it and think I wouldn't mind watching that. Press press. We need your email address. You need your password. Do you see? Now I'm stuck**

Dikembe gets frustrated talking about trying to do things online and he says he can't be bothered. But sometimes his friends show him how to use his phone. When he talks about being able to talk to family, his face lights up.

"I done a video call for the first time the other week. My niece was in Brazil. That was nice."

Dikembe hasn't used the internet for services, like the NHS app or Universal Credit. His Support Worker Elijah set up an email address for repeat prescriptions, but Dikembe would rather call on the phone

He likes using his Get Box internet to watch spiritual videos and informational videos about ancient cultures. Dikembe finds YouTube much easier to use. He likes the variety of options, even more so than watching TV. He also loves listening to music on YouTube.

"It's uplifting innit. It's music innit. It's your mood. Everyone's got a favourite song, your go-to song or your album or whatever when you're down. Every different song's got a meaning."

Dikembe is using a limited data package on his Get Box and he finds it runs out before the end of the month. He'd prefer it to last longer and he dislikes having to ask his Support Worker for more data.

> **And then we've got to go through Elijah, like we're kids. Just give us a number so we can call them ourselves.**

*names and key details have been changed to protect anonymity
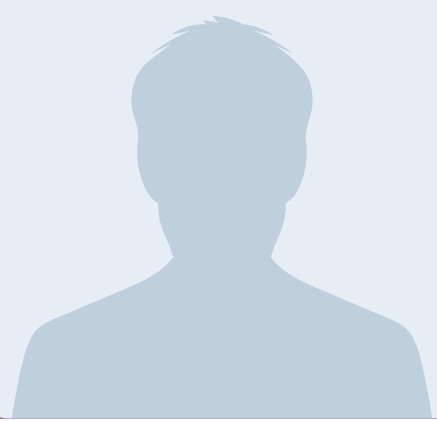
Appendices

Appendix 1

Spotlights on user groups

Spotlight

Neurodiversity & internet access

For people facing digital exclusion who are neurodivergent, the internet can be exceptionally important. The research team spoke to people with autism, ADHD and dyslexia, all of whom placed a high importance on being able to get online.

Organising appointments on the phone can be challenging for people who are neurodivergent. Being able to book a GP online, for example, felt more manageable.

Users with dyslexia can find autocorrect helpful, and users reported increased digital access increased their digital and literacy skills.

Online gaming and streaming video or audio content was frequently referenced as a way to self soothe and self regulate. Watching films can be comforting, as a form of hyperfocus. Gaming can be a safe way to communicate.

Community groups online can form an important support mechanism, such as autism support groups on Facebook.

> It's a comfort for me. I've always been really into watching movies. I'm autistic so it might be hyper-focus

End User of Get Box

> With the gaming, it's just how I communicate with people. It makes it a lot easier not being face to face.

End User of Get Box

This information was gathered as part of the evaluation of 'Get Box' a collaborative programme from Jangala and VMO2 to tackle digital exclusion in the UK through increased connectivity.

Spotlight

Mental health, mental illness & internet access

For people facing a time of poor mental health or mental illness, internet access can be a lifeline. People facing mental health struggles cited internet access as especially important because:

Internet access meant they could stay in touch with family and friends and have low friction access to a support network. This was especially important if going outside the house felt difficult.

Familiar TV shows, videos, podcasts, music, games or online content formed an opportunity for calming and self-soothing.

Sometimes, internet access resulted in increased in-person interactions This included shared activities, such as watching TV with their kids.

Some end users accessed counselling sessions on Zoom, Others spoke to their mental health team almost every day, via the internet.

Streaming music or sleepcasts were popular, amongst research participants to help with sleep, and also to raise the mood at home. Some end users preferred to listen in their own languages, reducing isolation.

Support services provided mental health signposting, mainly to online services such as Samaritans.

End users reported accessing spiritual and religious content online, such as a Church service online, sermons and Bibles, directions to a local Gurdwara or music.

Having access to the internet reduced the fear and panic of being disconnected and unable to do things they needed to do.

"

I suffer with social anxiety. I struggle to talk to people... I feel really uncomfortable [without the internet] if that makes sense. It's the way I communicate to most of the people that I talk to these days

End User of Get Box

"

I don't go out a lot. I feel comfortable watching programs. Because it calms me down the most. It just keeps me in here. It makes me feel safe

End User of Get Box

This information was gathered as part of the evaluation of 'Get Box' a collaborative programme from Jangala and VMO2 to tackle digital exclusion in the UK through increased connectivity.

Spotlight

Survivors of Domestic Abuse & internet access

For survivors of domestic abuse, quick access to the internet is vital for their safety and health, to them and any dependents. Internet access is especially important to survivors of domestic abuse because:

For survivors who are far from family and friends, the internet can be a core way of letting loved ones know that they are safe.

If a survivor has fled a dangerous situation, **they must quickly rearrange any appointments** that a perpetrator might know about and then go to, such as with the GP or midwife.

Survivors must engage with services such as Universal Credit to **change their address** and ensure they continue to receive payments. They may have to engage with utility bills or banking in joint names to make sure they do not become liable for bills. Where relevant, survivors need to engage with immigration and the right to remain.

Receiving calls over the internet can help individuals **know who is calling**, reducing fear of an unexpected call from a perpetrator. This can also be applied to video doorbells, which help survivors know who is at their front door.

Signposting from domestic abuse support groups, such as materials about the signs of healthy relation-ships, is often provided as online resources. Some support groups take place virtually.

For individuals who have been coerced, **the freedom to watch or browse what they want online** is a **powerful form of rehabilitation**.

For survivors with children, engaging with schools, supporting their mental health and creating **a sense of normalcy** can be an important part of transition. This could be watching cartoons together in their native language, for example.

Routes to independence, such as learning English or driving theory, can be especially important to survivors of DA.

This information was gathered as part of the evaluation of 'Get Box' a collaborative programme from Jangala and VMO2 to tackle digital exclusion in the UK through increased connectivity.

Spotlight

Survivors of Domestic Abuse & internet access

"With doctors appointments it's ultimately about keeping them safe... because he's probably aware of that appointment too.

Support Worker

"And sometimes when I can't speak my mom and I know for my mom is these days because she knows the situation my family and she worried because my phone is not working. So she worried what's happening if she panicking....But I'm trying to, I explain my mom, I'm ok. You don't worry. I'm in the home

End User of Get Box

Spotlight

People leaving custody & internet access

For people who have recently left custody or have experience of the criminal justice system, internet access can be vital for rehabilitation. It is especially important because:

Housing applications, banking, job applications and access to government benefits are all online and are a core part of rehabilitation.

Many people **do not have access to digital materials in prison**, or their access may be sporadic. On release, their digital skills may not have kept up with the pace of technology.

Some individuals leave prison and **do not have an email address**, or the skills to make an account.

Licence conditions, for some particular offenses prohibit individuals from accessing the internet upon release.

A combination of financial challenges, poor credit history and lack of digital skills can make **financial inclusion** or very challenging, which is exacerbated by poor internet access.

"If someone's in custody for a long period of time, things have moved on significantly. Now, a lot of things that you can't just pick up the phone and ring somebody. You have to send an email or you have to go online or register. A lot of people are left behind in that whole process.

Even like claiming benefits, you can still phone, but a lot of the time they want you to complete your journal entry [online]. It's a struggle and a strain for someone who's been out the loop for a period of time, or sometimes never really got into the loop in the first place. In many cases it's a struggle with literacy and just basic skills."

Support Worker

This information was gathered as part of the evaluation of 'Get Box' a collaborative programme from Jangala and VMO2 to tackle digital exclusion in the UK through increased connectivity.

Appendices

Appendix 2

A note on the definition
of digital exclusion

A note on the definition of digital exclusion

Digital exclusion has an evolving definition. The 2023 House of Lords inquiry on digital exclusion in the UK identified that digital exclusion "typically refers to sections of the population not being able to use the internet in ways that are needed to participate fully in modern society", citing affordability, access and ability as key barriers. (11)

In 2020, Nesta defined digital exclusion as "those individuals, households or communities who cannot afford sufficient, private and secure mobile or broadband data to meet their essential needs." (12)

However, in 2024, the Minimum Digital Living Standards work led by Liverpool and Loughborough Universities outlines:

"A minimum digital standard of living includes, but is more than, having accessible internet, adequate equipment, and the skills, knowledge and support people need. It is about being able to communicate, connect and engage with opportunities safely and with confidence." (13)

For the purposes of this work, the Jangala research team developed a working definition of digital exclusion:

People who are digitally excluded are unable to do what they want and need to do online.

The research team acknowledges some of the limitations of this definition and welcomes further research to iterate broader ideas and definitions of this social challenge.

In September 2024, after the Jangala research team agreed this definition, Good Things Foundation offered a similar definition to their work reviewing UK datasets, "Digital inclusion is being able to access the internet and engage online - safely and confidently - when you need and want to." (14)

Appendices
Appendix 3
Evaluation methodology

Research Questions

To explore the evaluation aims, the team posed the following research questions:

How do people experiencing digital exclusion in Coventry engage with and use the Jangala Get Box service to access Wi-Fi in their homes and communal areas, and how can this service be improved?

What are the key differences of internet usage and behaviour in people experiencing digital exclusion in Coventry when they have limited or unlimited data (when using the Jangala Get Box service to access Wi-Fi internet)?

Methodology overview

The evaluation used a mixed method approach. As much as testing our research questions, we were also testing which evaluation methods would work within the delivery model.

1. A literature review, focused specifically on the impact of limited data.

2. A baseline survey for end users, gathering demographic information and barriers to internet access (n=34). This paper survey with a pre-paid envelope was included inside the Get Box packaging , as part of distribution. It included an optional QR code to complete the survey online on the survey platform Kobo Toolbox. Postal paper responses were recorded by Jangala staff on Kobo Toolbox, once received.

3. 2 x end user experience surveys, gathering experience data of the Get Box from end users. This was sent out as an email or text message to users who had participated in the baseline survey. The response rate was low (survey 1, n=3 and survey 2, n=5) so no statistical information is gathered here. But, freetext responses were analysed and included.

Partner surveys (n=11), gathering experience data and logistical data on the number of boxes distributed. This was conducted online using the Kobo Toolbox survey platform. Out of a possible 12, 11 partners responded to the end-of-pilot survey.

Semi-structured interviews (n=23), with both end users (n=13) and delivery partners (n=10). Interviews were conducted using a mix of virtual GoogleMeet calls, in-person interviews in community centres and end users' accommodation and phone calls. Interviews were 30-60 minutes long.

All calls were recorded using Otter.ai transcription software and anonymised. Transcripts were uploaded to Dovetail software and tagged to identify patterns. Tags were mapped in Miro software, with multiple rounds of synthesis and analysis.

Quantitative analysis on box data, anonymised and reviewed in aggregate. Box data was gathered over a period of 8 months, 2nd April until 2nd December 2024. This considered data points such as anonymised data usage, when boxes were online and in use and number of devices connecting to a box.

Notes on methodology

Participant selection

Coventry City Council connected the Jangala research team with delivery partners to complete interviews with staff, including managerial and frontline roles. The team recruited end users through working collaboratively with delivery partners to select participants. Interview sessions and housing visits took place during a 3-day fieldwork visit (10 end user interviews and 2 partner interviews). Leaving flyers in one of the hostels after a visit resulted in 3 telephone interviews.

Inclusivity

The evaluation was designed with inclusivity in mind, participatory methods where possible and with a trauma-informed approach. This included sending out paper surveys with pre-paid return envelopes, alongside the option to complete digitally. The option for survey translation was made available. The team sent out visually-designed invitations to partners, with names and faces of who participants would meet and clear explanations, to support trust-building.

For interviews, end users were recruited through partners. The research team offered phone or in person interviews and offered options for locations, travelling to community centres and people's homes, to help meet people where they were comfortable and on their terms.

Support workers were present during interviews where participants preferred it. Consent forms were in large print and accessible online forms and the research team covered verbally before interviews started. The research team adapted the interview script to individuals and used participatory methods to aid conversation, offering space to discuss important topics whilst steering the discussion away from potentially re-traumatising experiences or stories.

Incentives

Experience surveys and interviews were incentivised with cash or vouchers. Partners were offered a donation to take part in the evaluation. This is in recognition of the time and energy offered by participants and partners. The first survey was not incentivised.

Participatory method:
Digital inclusion cards

During in-person interviews with end users, and sometimes delivery partners, pairs of researchers used a deck of 25 cards designed specifically for this pilot.

The cards were labelled with types of internet use on each, and an accompanying graphic.

These were used as a participatory method to open up conversation, help participants relax and understand the complexity of internet use.

Participatory method:
Digital inclusion cards

The 25 cards offered types of internet use, such as bills, books, music, doctors appointments and prescriptions, benefits, shopping - all examples of activities that can be done online. The cards enabled data gathering in key ways:

Reduced implicit hierarchy:

Much digital exclusion research puts an implicit or explicit emphasis on economic, health or education outcomes. By offering cards with equal size and significance, the 'essential' and 'leisure' uses were placed side by side with equal importance. Users could lead with what they felt was important.

The cards helped individuals relax and share:

As with many participatory methods, a set of cards helped individuals hone in on important areas to them, lay out activities on surfaces (tables, carpet), and point to or hold an object during discussion. This helped the research team discover activities and the resulting social impact.

A more positive interviewee experience:

Some users treated the card sorting like a game and 'threw away' cards that weren't relevant. The research team think this may have helped navigate some of the shame that can be present when individuals are not able to complete certain tasks online. Some users created 'would like to do online' piles of cards.

Increased accessibility:

The cards had pictures on them, with large letters. It is unclear how much this helped with language barriers, but it may have helped. The research team noted it seemed to provide a focal point for discussion for some neurodivergent participants.

In some ways the cards may have increased bias, by offering a selection of activities. There was an attempted mitigation to this by bringing post it notes and asking participants to fill in gaps. Some categorisation was challenging; watching a YouTube video on nutrition could be categorised as streaming video, learning or health. The cards attempted to be user led but there are always limitations to this. This was one of the reasons no quantitative card sorting data was drawn from this study. Overall, the cards resulted in richer data, more user-led response.

The cards are now available as an <u>open-source resource</u>, hosted on Jangala's website.

Limitations of this evaluation & recommendations for future study

Key limitations

Sample sizes: It would be useful to repeat the work for a longer timeframe and with more participants to gain more depth of understanding. This was somewhat affected by delays in delivery and operational challenges.

Devices and skills support: Delivery partners organised devices and skills support for residents, without which the Get Box intervention would be unlikely to be impactful.
This evaluation does not account for the impact of these complementary interventions.

Online safety: The research team did attempt to collect data from partners on online safety but found nothing to report. This does not mean that no concerns were present.

Reciprocity bias: The Get Boxes were provided for free to end users, meaning some data will be skewed towards a positive bias. The research team noted that end user residents seemed reluctant to complain or report troubleshooting issues. Most of these came from delivery partners.

Improved survey responses: a reasonable baseline survey response was followed by a low response rate for follow up surveys. In future studies, the research team would improve both the method and contact time for survey follow up. It may be that paper surveys were easier and/or more trustworthy than outreach via SMS and email.

Recommendations for future study

A small pool of participants (n=4) said that the Get Box was saving them money. This ranged from £10-£20/month, which over 6 months would amount to £60-120. The aim of the evaluation was not to review money saved, but this could be a feature of a future study.
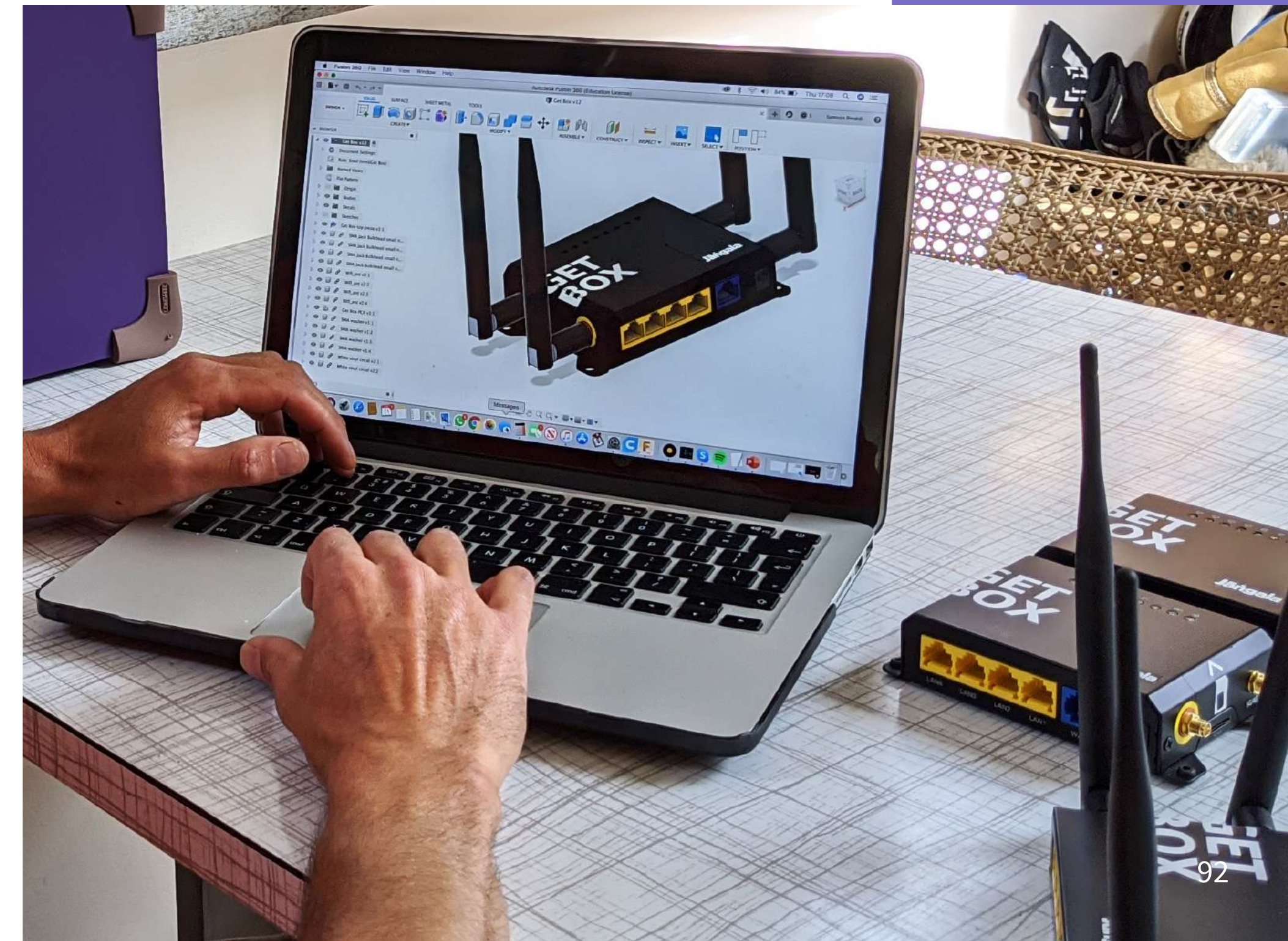
Appendices

Appendix 4

End user demographic profile
and information

Using information from our first survey (n=34), we can gain some understanding of the end users of the Get Box.

Demographic information

- 19 respondents were male; 15 were female
- 3 respondents did not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth
- The majority of respondents were aged 25-34, with a range of ages. No respondents were aged under 25. 3 respondents were over 65.
- Most respondents identified as either White (13) or Black, African, Carribean or Black British (total 10).

Survey respondents by ethnic group

Survey respondents by age group
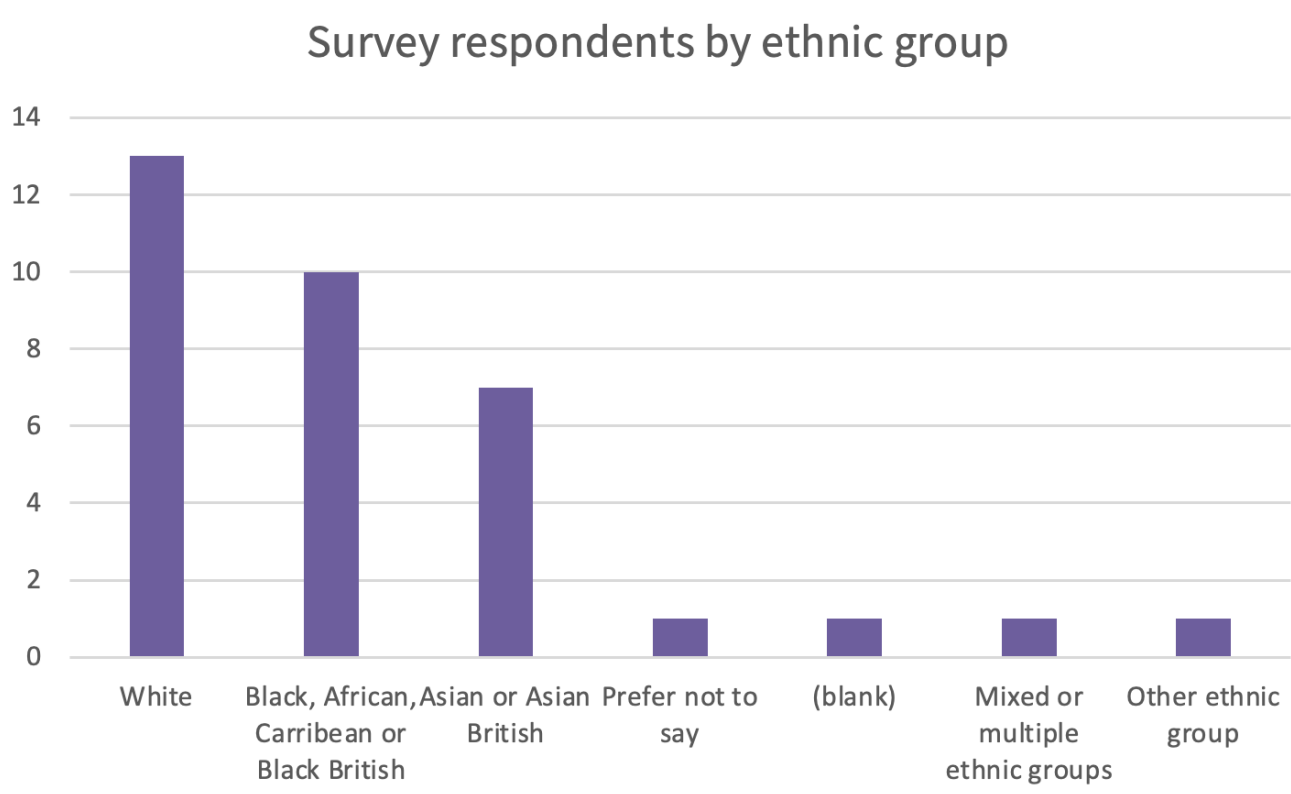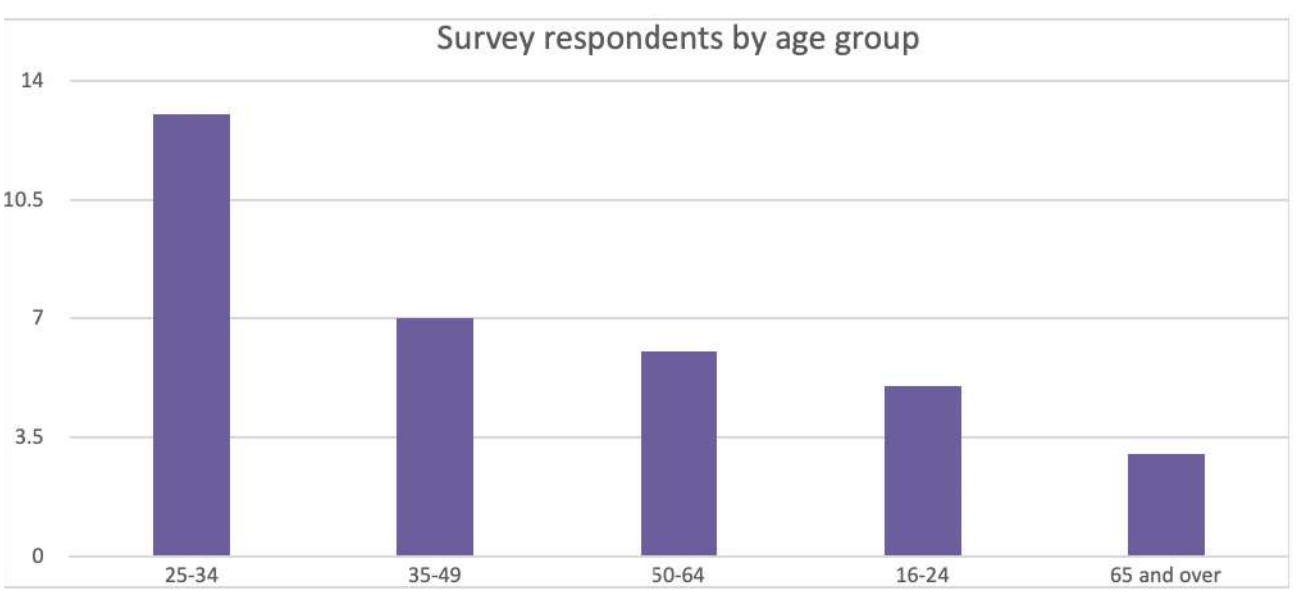
Relevant characteristics

- 91% (31) respondents were receiving government benefits
- Half of respondents had a physical or mental health condition lasting 12 months or more (17)
- 1 in 3 respondents (13) were in debt
- 18% (6) respondents are or have at some point have been a refugee or asylum seeker
- No respondents reported caring responsibilities

Respondents in receipt of government benefits
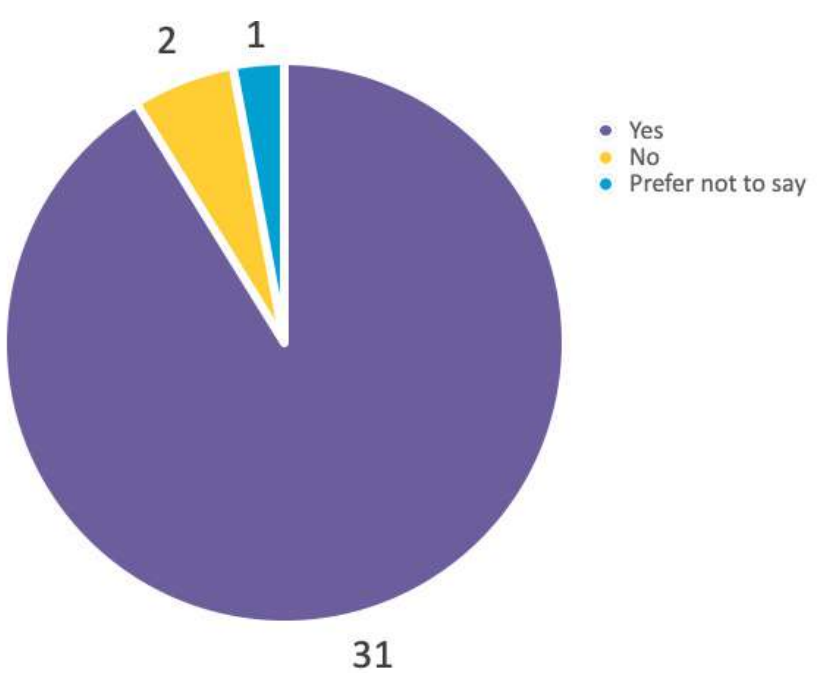
Respondents in debt
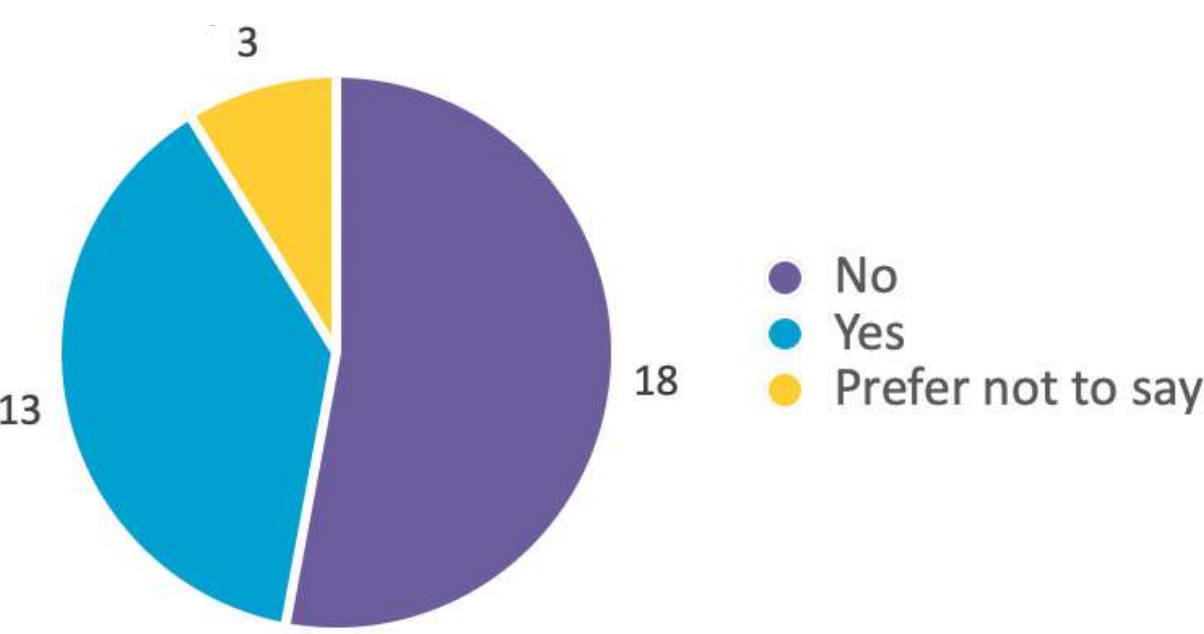
Respondents who are or have been a refugee or asylum seeker

Commentary

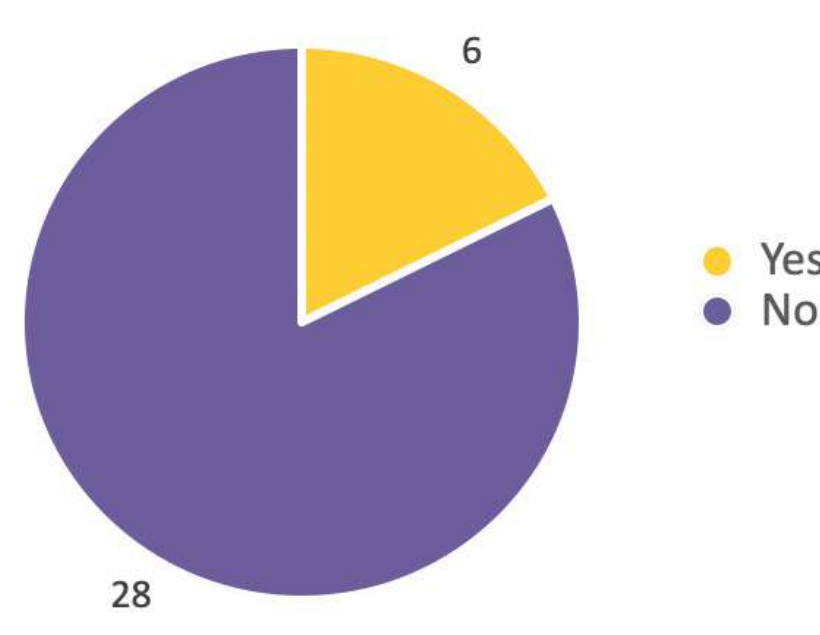The small sample size means it is not possible to extrapolate widely. However, the high number of participants on government benefits and reporting debt alongside the number who cited cost as a key barrier to internet access suggests financial barriers are linked to digital exclusion. This would support existing research identifying the link between financial and digital inclusion, such as the UK Consumer Digital Index 2024 (7) and research linking digital exclusion with deep poverty (8).

This first survey was not incentivised but it was made clear future opportunities to engage surveys would be financially incentivised.
This could produce a selection bias on income-related results.

Primary user group split by partner

The partner surveys enable an understanding of approximate profile of the end users of Get Box. 11 delivery partners estimated that the 179 Get Boxes which were distributed reached 429 individuals in total.

The following graph demonstrates the relative number of people in the primary user group identified by the delivery partner. Many users fit into multiple groups, meaning this is not exact, but provides an indication of the profile of Get Box users in this pilot.
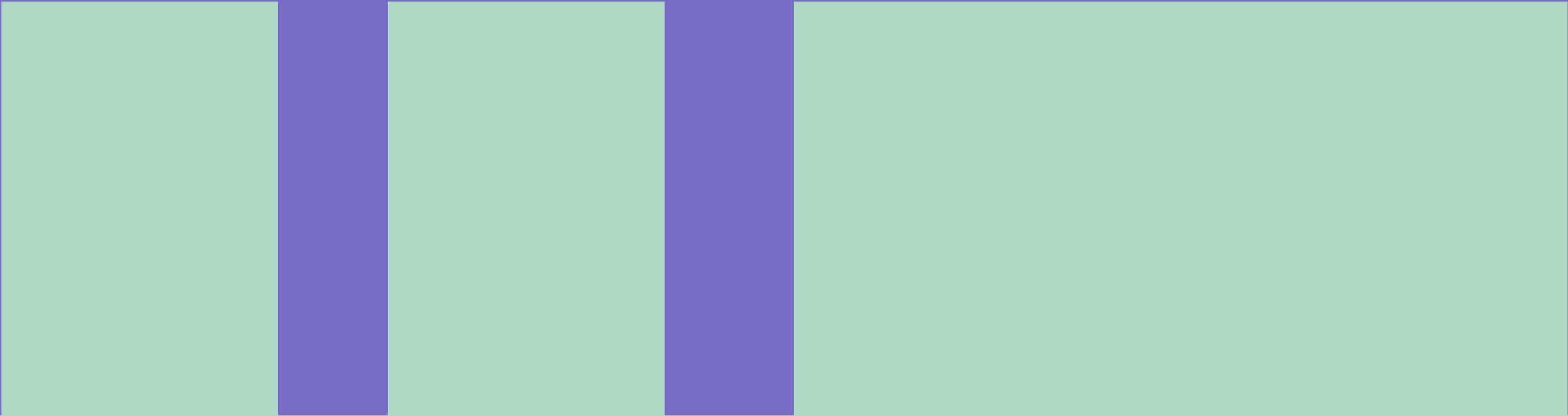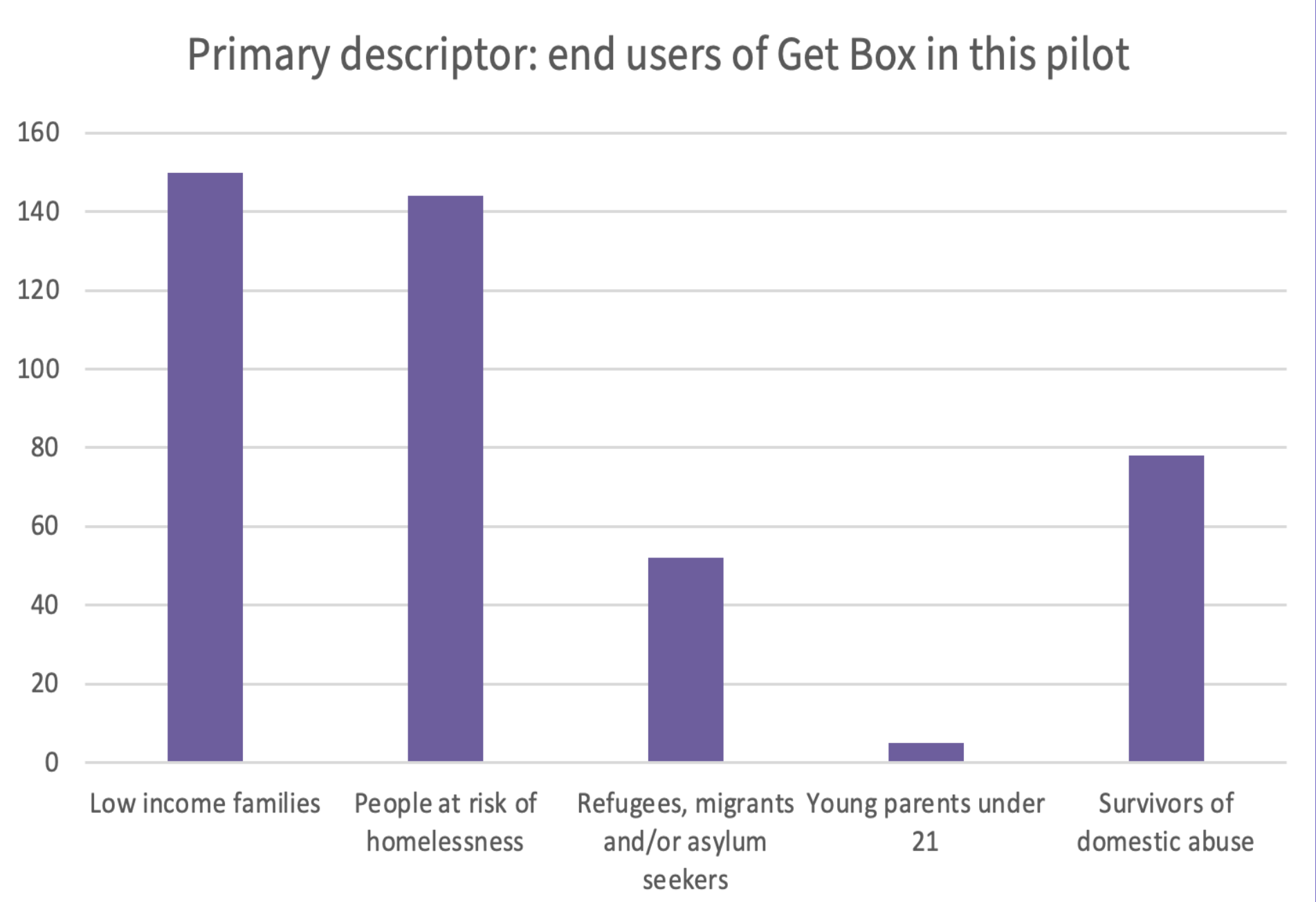
Primary descriptor: end users of Get Box in this pilot

**From interviews and wider data gathering, people using
Get Box in this pilot identify with one or more of these groups:**

Living in temporary accomodation (all of the end users in this evaluation)

Survivors of domestic abuse	People with disabilities	Families with low income/complex lives	Families with children under social care
People with a history of substance misuse	People with learning disabilities	People with mental and physical health challenges	Over 65s
People who are out of work	People who have been in custody	People who are neurodiverse	Refugees, asylum seekers or migrants

Appendices

Appendix 5

The context of living in temporary accommodation & digital exclusion

This appendix gives a more detailed description of the context of temporary accommodation and the barriers to internet access and digital inclusion.

What is temporary accommodation (TA)?

Temporary accommodation is a place to stay provided by the council while social housing is organised. People in the UK can stay in TA for around 12-24 months, sometimes longer, while they wait for permanent housing. TA can be flats, houses, hostels or rooms in shared houses.

What is the context for people living in temporary accommodation?

These descriptions and characteristics are derived from this research:

Social isolation: Many people live in dispersed properties, far from family, friends or local connections, or who speak their native language.

Instability: Many live in temporary accommodation for 1-2 years, with little sense of when they will get more permanent social housing.

Poor mental health: Many people have poor mental health, due to recent trauma, high levels of uncertainty and isolation.

Minimal possessions: Some move in having fled their situation or country. Survivors of domestic abuse who have fled often have almost nothing when they arrive.

Limited funds: Many people living in TA are not in employment, training or formal education. Some have sanctions or no recourse to public funds.

Far from loved ones: There are high numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in UK TA at the time of writing, who are very far from their family and support networks.

Lacking safety: Many tenants struggle to feel safe in temporary accommodation, especially survivors of domestic abuse.

Amongst strangers: Many people do not know their neighbours, or speak their neighbours' language, despite sharing facilities and spaces. Children often have to move schools, and start again to build social networks.

> **There's isolation for them because they've come to a new country, they don't know anything about the country**
>
> Support Worker, Panahghar Safehouse

> **I moved in here with nothing. Apart from a few pictures of my Mum and two pictures of my family**
>
> End User of Get Box

What internet access do people have in temporary accommodation (TA)?

A smartphone with mobile data: most people living in TA have limited data which they pay for themselves. Sometimes they share data with family, and it is common for people to monitor usage or go for days at a time without data, if they cannot afford to top up. Some TA residents pay for monthly unlimited SIM packages.
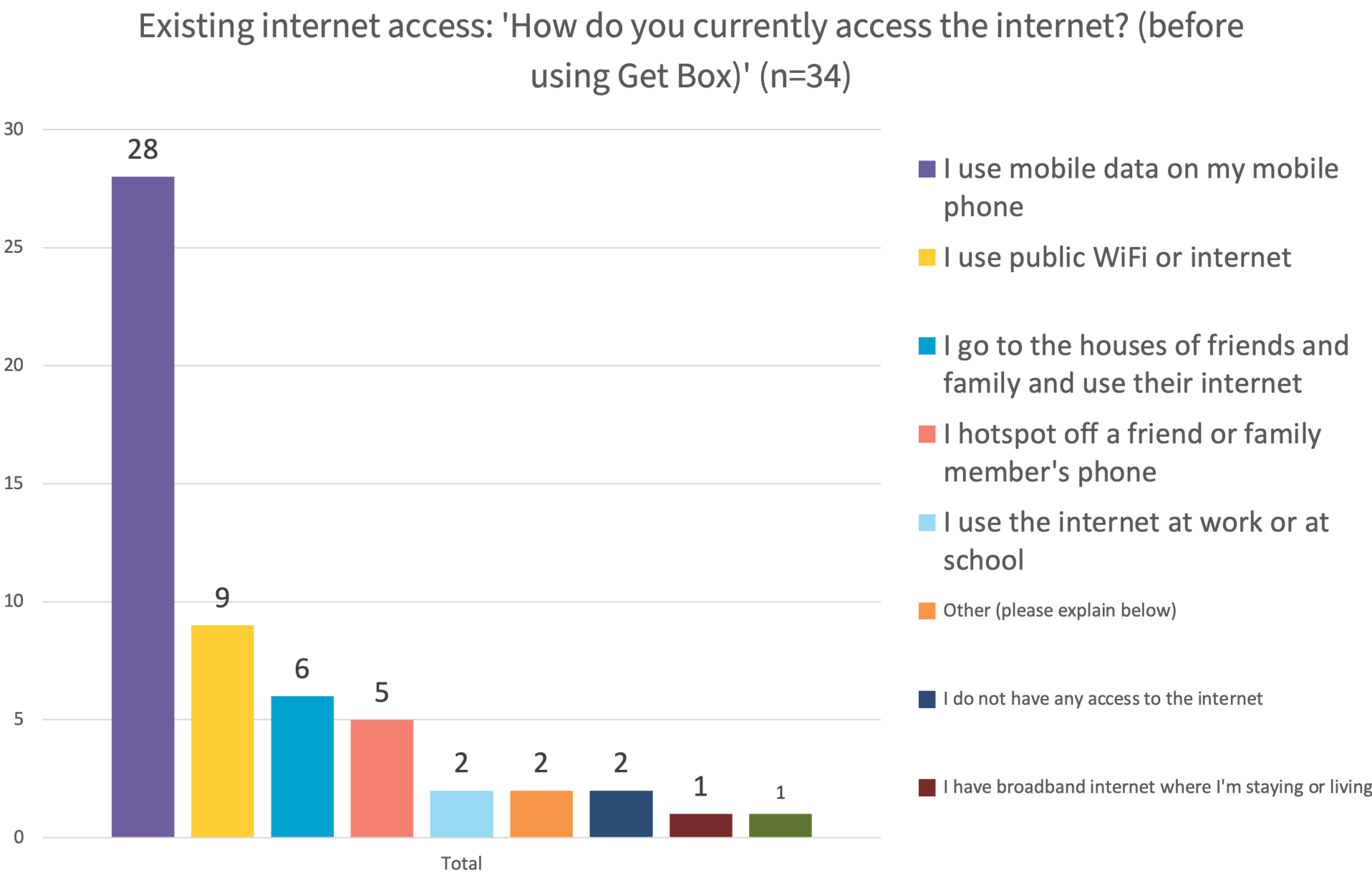
Public Wi-Fi: Many residents supplement their data packages by using public Wi-Fi, in libraries, eateries or other places.

Poor mental health: Many people have poor mental health, due to recent trauma, high levels of uncertainty and isolation.

Borrowing or sharing internet: residents often borrow or share internet with friends or family.

Broadband internet: Some temporary accommodations offer internet access as part of support, but it can be low quality, patchy or only available in communal spaces. Many organisations included in the pilot did not offer broadband for residents, but were actively looking for a solution. In some instances, residents can pay for fixed line broadband if they can afford it, although some accommodations have policies against this.

In the initial survey (n=34), respondents were asked 'How do you currently access the internet?', with the option to select as many relevant options. Mobile data on a phone or public Wi-Fi were the most common responses.

Existing internet access: 'How do you currently access the internet? (before using Get Box)' (n=34)

- I use mobile data on my mobile phone
- I use public WiFi or internet
- I go to the houses of friends and family and use their internet
- I hotspot off a friend or family member's phone
- I use the internet at work or at school
- Other (please explain below)
- I do not have any access to the internet
- I have broadband internet where I'm staying or living

What are the barriers to internet access in temporary accommodation (TA)?

Financial: many people living in TA have low or no income, or no recourse to public funds.
People living in TA must pay charges to stay there, which can fluctuate, such as energy bills.

Mobile Signal: given most access the internet through a smartphone, their access depends on signal strength; 12/34 respondents in the survey (35%) reported mobile signal to be a key barrier.

Transience: because residents do not know how long they will be living in TA, it is often inappropriate to install fixed line broadband, with a minimum contract length. This is especially true when people are living on very low and unpredictable incomes.

Prohibited: some TA housing providers do not allow residents to install fixed line internet. Some housing providers do not provide internet, but do not allow it to be installed either.

Quality: some TA providers do offer internet, but it can be patchy, slow and shared. Sometimes it often does not reach bedrooms or private spaces.

Privacy: many TA residents live in hostels or shared houses. Internet may be available but may require residents to be online in shared spaces, using a shared connection with strangers or desktop computers. This creates safety and privacy issues and can discourage residents from being online.

Digital literacy: the participants interviewed had a vast range of digital skills and literacy. Some were highly confident, fairly advanced users; others lacked basic digital skills.

Devices: many participants do not have access to phones, tablets, laptops, TVs and cannot afford to replace broken items. Where individuals hotspot from their phones, many report this overheating the phone and draining the battery.

Embarrassment: many participants expressed shame and embarrassment at being unable to do tasks online, and felt uncomfortable seeking support.
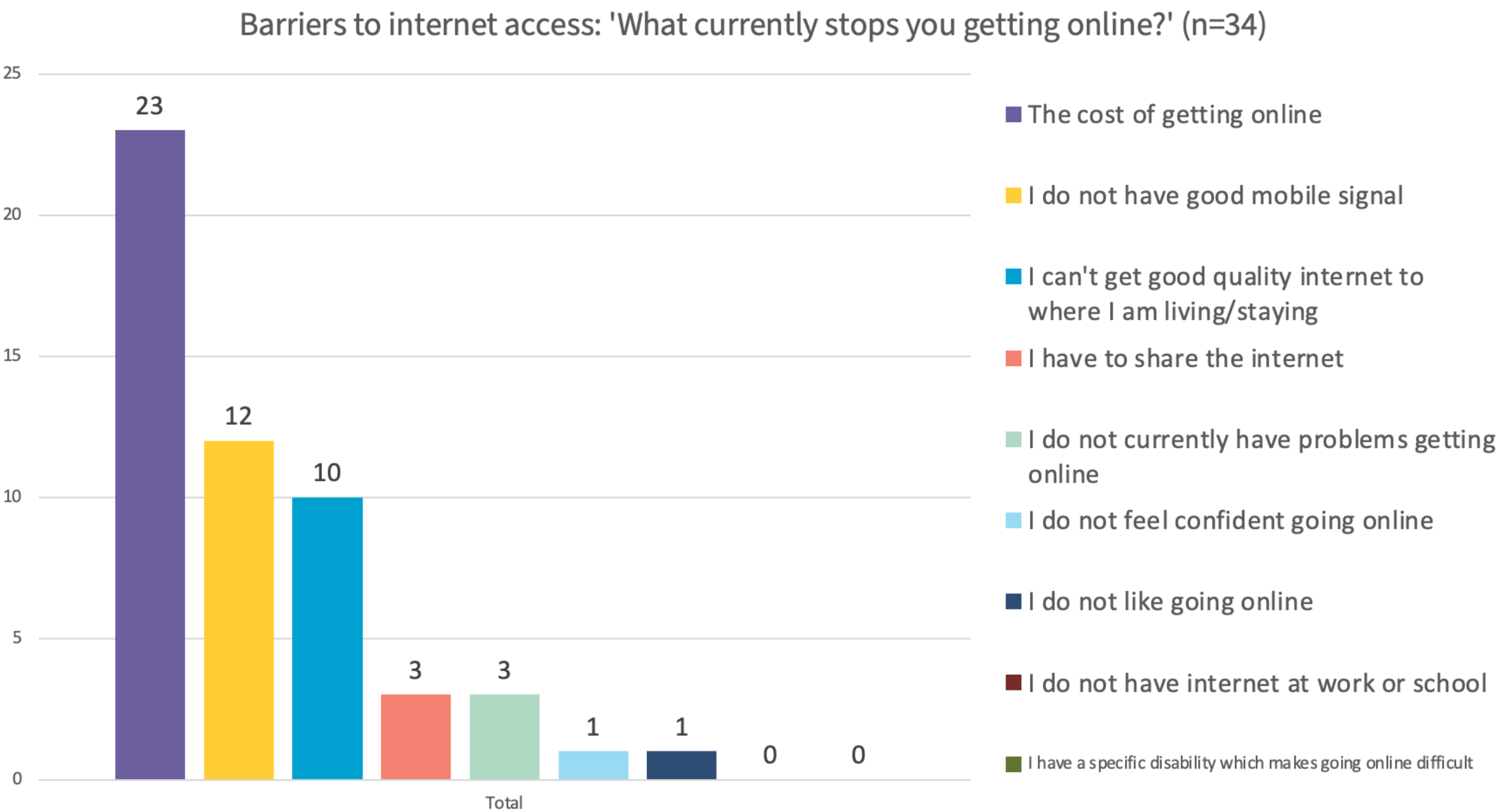
Language barriers: some participants do not speak English as a first language and have a range of English competencies. This barrier is exacerbated when combined with low digital literacy.

Licence conditions: a small number of residents in TA are unable to access the internet because it is included in the terms of their licence conditions upon leaving custody.

In the initial evaluation survey (n=34), respondents were asked 'what currently stops you getting online?', with the option to select multiple options. Cost and mobile signal were the two most prominent causes.

The research team acknowledges 'basic digital skills' is not a highly specific term.
Although no formal testing was undertaken, the research team identified that some interview participants did not have Digital Foundation Skills, as outlined by the UK Government Essential Digital Skills framework (2019). (9)

Barriers to internet access: 'What currently stops you getting online?' (n=34)

Legend:
- The cost of getting online
- I do not have good mobile signal
- I can't get good quality internet to where I am living/staying
- I have to share the internet
- I do not currently have problems getting online
- I do not feel confident going online
- I do not like going online
- I do not have internet at work or school
- I have a specific disability which makes going online difficult

Bar values: 23, 12, 10, 3, 3, 1, 1, 0, 0

"Where my room is, it's quite far away from their office.
The signal's bad. So yeah, they have got their own network for Wi Fi, but I don't use it to be honest with you because everyone's on it. So it's quite slow.

Temporary accommodation resident

"Oh yeah, overheating and I'd have to constantly put my phone on charge cause as soon as it put my hot spot on and you've got more than one or two devices, it just sucked the life out of your battery.

Temporary accommodation resident

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