

## Technology guidance notes

This briefing signposts you to useful information and tech resources during the COVID-19 outbreak. We will update this briefing regularly as more resources and advice become available.

Many of the links in this document are to external websites. We share these in good faith but we have no control over their content or accuracy.

During the current crisis, several tech vendors are making their services available for free or at discounted rates. You can find details at <https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/coronavirus-tech-offers-available-to-charities>.

Digital technologies offer a lifeline to keep your organisation afloat. Here are some key digital consideration to help you adapt to the Covid-19 situation. We're looking at three areas:

**Staying in touch** – for service delivery as well as planning and team working

**Diversifying** – changing what you do or how you do it

**Taking payments** – maintaining an income for what you do

### STAYING IN TOUCH

It's important to find ways to stay in contact with your staff (who may be working at home), customers and other stakeholders. With face-to-face communication not possible right now, digital technology is undoubtedly the best (if not only) option.

#### Website

If you have a company website, make sure its updated so that customers know whether you're open for business and how they can access your products and services. You may also want to provide information about how they can contact you.

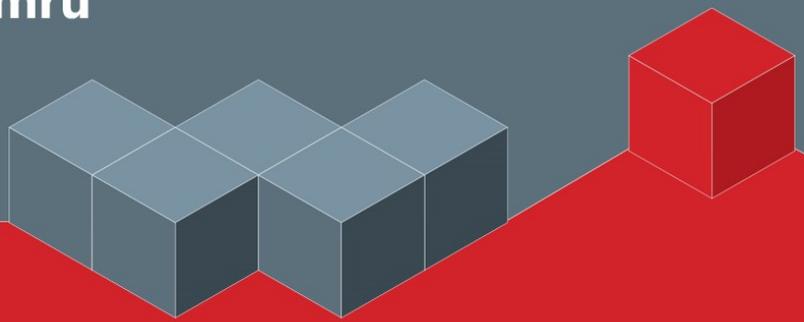
#### Email

If you have a client email database, don't forget to use this to keep your customers up to date with your social business. Bear in mind that people are getting lots of emails from companies at the moment, so keep the information brief and to the point. Make sure you continue to comply with GDPR data protection regulations. The Information Commissioner's Office has useful guidance for organisations handling data during the Covid-19 outbreak. <https://ico.org.uk>

#### Social Media

The easiest way to reach your clients may be via social media channels. If you haven't already, create a Facebook or Twitter account for your business and use this to tell people what you're doing. You can also reach new customers through these platforms. Learn My Way has a free online tutorial on using





Facebook <https://www.learnmyway.com/courses/using-facebook/>

Instagram Stories are an effective way to promote any calls to action you have.

Use Facebook Messenger to communicate with customers privately and to take orders from them

### Video conferencing

With your staff and board members all working remotely, video conferencing is an effective way to hold meetings, either one to one or for a group. If you haven't already, try:

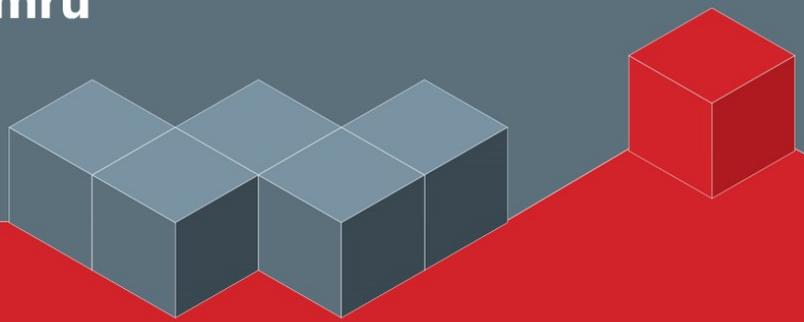
- Skype – Microsoft video conferencing
- Whatsapp – encrypted conversations and video conferencing for up to 4 people
- Zoom – free web video conferencing with extended paid for functions. Zoom has good video tutorials <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>
- Teams – also from Microsoft, useful for conferencing if using the Teams product
- Hangouts – Google's Video Conferencing option

There is a guide from Good Things Foundation here if you need to help some team members with video conferencing <https://www.learnmyway.com/subjects/more-internet-skills/#resources>

### Work collaboration tools

Microsoft Teams, Slack, Trello, Basecamp, G Suite (or Google Suite) and Whatsapp are some of the options for workplace collaboration. They all allow for communication between your teams, direct messaging and sharing information and documents across your organisation. All are available to use on a computer or on a mobile device. These guides maybe useful:

- Microsoft Teams may already be available to you through your licence if you use the Microsoft Suite of applications. [Microsoft Teams Introduction Video https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/video-welcome-to-microsoft-teams-b98d533f-118e-4bae-bf44-3df2470c2b12](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/video-welcome-to-microsoft-teams-b98d533f-118e-4bae-bf44-3df2470c2b12)
- Slack is available for free, or more greater functionality you can upgrade with a paid subscription [Slack Introduction Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYqxQGmQkVw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYqxQGmQkVw)
- Trello works as a shared 'to do' board so that tasks can be allocated to people and everyone knows when something has been completed <http://trello.com>
- Basecamp is another well-know project management tool which includes a message board, to do list and group chat features. It is available for free <https://basecamp.com/>
- G Suite is a suite of cloud computing, productivity and collaboration tools, software and products which you can access online wherever you are. You may qualify for G Suite for Non-Profits [https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en\\_uk/features/](https://gsuite.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/features/)
- Whatsapp is a free app for mobile devices is great for sending text



messages. You can create a Whatsapp group for your Board or your staff team and communicate quickly with the whole group at the same time. Download it from your mobile app store.

### **DIVERSIFYING**

During the Covid-19 outbreak you may need to re-think your service or product proposition.

- Could you offer a digital service which meets current needs in your community and attracts new customers?
- Do you need to make your service or product available online rather than in person?

### **Changing your product or service and reaching new customers**

If you've previously offered services face-to-face, technology can enable you to offer them online.

Video conferencing platforms such as Skype, Teams, Zoom and Lifesize can be used to deliver a range of activities from coaching, mental health counselling, dance lessons, cookery demonstrations, small scale arts performances and more. Think creatively about what people in your community need right now and how you can deliver this online.

You could also start attracting new customers by offering the following:

- Advance payments – offer vouchers for a service that can be claimed in future
- Pay it forward – enable people to purchase goods or services for someone in need
- Create an online resource – develop something useful for parents with children at home
- Volunteer time – if your services can't be used, can your equipment or staff offer help in another way?

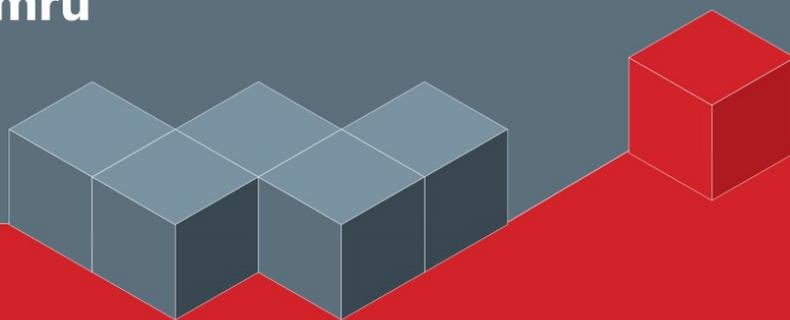
### **Selling your products/services online**

If you've always sold your products through a physical shop, consider selling online. You could start selling through established sites such as e-bay and Amazon.

- For guidance on how to start selling on e-bay, visit <https://www.ebay.co.uk/help/selling/selling/start-selling-ebay?id=4081>
- For guidance on how to start selling on Amazon, visit <https://services.amazon.co.uk/services/sell-online/international-selling.html>

Alternatively, consider setting up your own online store. There are several e-commerce platforms that enable you to do this, such as Wix or Shopify. This website has guidance on the process of setting up your own online store <https://www.websitebuilderexpert.com/building-online-stores/>

You will need to think about distribution if you are going to sell online and find



a suitable delivery service (such as Royal Mail, Hermes or DHL for example). You may be able to deliver the product to customers yourself.

Selling food online, whether in the form of ingredients or ready-made (takeaway) meals is an option for social businesses running cafes. This is currently permitted but check the latest government guidance. You'll also need to comply with Food Regulations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses>

NCASS have produced a guide to different food delivery platforms, such as Deliveroo and Just Eat <https://www.ncass.org.uk/coronavirus/online-ordering---what-you-need-to-know>

*You will need to follow some extra hygiene steps such as sanitising between deliveries.*

### **TAKING PAYMENTS**

Do you need to change payment methods to enable people to pay you remotely online?

Getting cash into your account is probably priority now. Taking online payments avoids the risk of contamination from cash and could enable you to adapt delivery for online channels. You could look at taking payments via your website, over the phone or on delivery.

#### **Online payments & invoicing**

To take payments online you will need to set up a merchant account or gateway. Common payment gateways include PayPal and Stripe. Compare the charges and services of different providers (around 2-3% + a set fee of around 20p per transaction). Here is a useful comparison guide of providers <https://startups.co.uk/best-payment-gateways/>

If you run a Wordpress website you can add an ecommerce plugin such as Woocommerce which is free. This can integrate the merchant platform of your choice. Other website builder type websites may offer this function automatically.

You can also invoice so clients can pay direct into your account. Services like Quickbooks, SageOne and Xero offer online invoicing and also track expenditure. These accountancy packages are compared here. Packages start at around £10 per month for a basic package. Add-ons include payroll. <https://www.cloudpro.co.uk/finance/5331/sage-one-vs-quickbooks-online-vs-xero>

#### **Mobile payments**

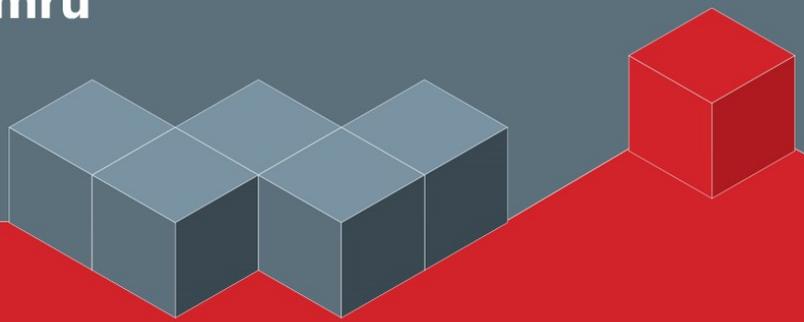
Card payments are ideal where you might be out delivering services or stock or offering a takeaway product from premises. Comparisons of different services like iZettle, Stripe and Paypal can be viewed here <https://merchantmachine.co.uk/credit-card-machine/>

# Busnes Cymdeithasol Cymru

## Social Business Wales

Yn fentrus gadarnhaol

Positively enterprising



### Crowdfunding

If you need to fundraise urgently, crowdfunding could be one solution as community action is strong at present. Platforms include Indiegogo, Kickstarter and Crowdfunder – this platform specialises in social enterprise projects. Check which platform is best for your business as the fees and amounts raised vary.

Nesta have produced a list of the best fundraising platforms for social projects <https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/9-crowdfunding-platforms-for-charities-community-groups-and-social-entrepreneurs/>

Crowdfunder is currently offering a 0% service to help businesses during the pandemic. You can crowdfund and offer 'payitforward' type rewards. <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/pay-it-forward>

You will need to plan your crowdfunding campaign including budgeting, telling a compelling story and ideally producing a video. There is a good guide to how to plan here <https://about.spacehive.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-crowdfunding/>

### Pay It Forward

The original idea with 'Payitforward' was to offer an option for customers to help others in the community by paying for the next one as well as their own. This is also known as 'suspended coffee' in a cafe. Try this to stimulate sales for a service you provide later and bring in cashflow now. <https://suspendedcoffees.com/cafes/>

These platforms offer the option to pay forward support for the creative industry, without offering a physical service.

<https://www.patreon.com/>

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/>

Tech based solutions that address a social need are known as #TechForGood Look out for more information from us on this and possible funding streams for these kinds of projects.

Events are moving quickly and we are working as a team to develop specific tools, advice and resources that will become accessible in the coming days and weeks so please watch out for our email updates and check on our websites <https://wales.coop/covid-19/> and <https://businesswales.cgov.wales/socialbusinesswales> regularly too.

If you want to talk to one of our Business Advisers give us a call on 0300 111 5050 or e-mail [sbwenquiries@wales.coop](mailto:sbwenquiries@wales.coop) **and we can arrange a call back.**

