

Satellite-powered app to spot loneliness in hotspots in UK cities

The satellite-enabled Care View application tackles social isolation and loneliness in urban areas by enlisting the help of an army of professional volunteers across a city, including police officers, postal workers and charity workers, who register on the app when they see signs people may be experiencing social isolation. The app provides a digital tool to help volunteers find people in need of help.

Today's announcement comes on what is known as Blue Monday (18 January), said to be the most depressing day of the year with post-Christmas blues and dark cold nights.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The social restrictions necessitated to tackle coronavirus, while essential, have brought into sharp focus just how much we all rely on face-to-face interaction in our everyday lives.

Addressing loneliness in our communities is an issue that is particularly close to my heart and this pioneering satellite-enabled app will tap in to the goodwill of our heroic frontline workers and volunteers so that they can identify and help those most in need of support through the pandemic and for years to come.

People out in a community can tap the app when they spot signs that a householder may be struggling, like rubbish dumped in the garden or curtains that always remain shut. Through satellite technology, this 'App Tap' generates a heat spot on a web-based map of the city, and if there are multiple 'App Taps', this creates heat-maps pinpointing streets and homes where people might welcome assistance of some kind.

The heat map – generated by the GNSS data – shows where volunteers can best focus their outreach efforts, with homes then leafleted and visited to create referrals into the NHS social care process. By helping people reach services like counselling or housing support, the app increases the likelihood of finding people in urgent need and helps prevent many people's issues from becoming more acute. Joining people up with support services at an early stage helps to avert the need for more costly interventions.

Experts are worried about rising numbers of people across the UK experiencing loneliness, particularly among young people and older adults. According to figures published by the Office for National Statistics, around 6% of adults in England are always or often lonely.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

Many of us have learned this year that pandemics can be lonely times, and that we all benefit from some amount of companionship.

This application channels the power of space to help locate and give a helping hand to people in need of help. It may rely on satellite data, but its real power comes from the altruism of its users.

Social support is incredibly important in times of stress, and I am delighted that this application we have backed is going to help lift people out of solitude and isolation.

Care View, which runs on almost all types of smartphone, was developed by the Urban Sustainable Development Lab and has been used by Public Health teams, charities and Fire and Rescue Services to discover and support vulnerable people.

The application helps join up healthcare provision – something that every Council is trying to achieve – by supporting collaboration between charities, the Council and emergency services.

Abhay Adhikari, founder of the Urban Sustainable Development Lab, said:

During the pandemic, the opportunity to work with teams from West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester has been a humbling experience. Everything we've learned so far will help us ensure that Care View continues to play a role in helping cities support socially isolated communities in the coming months and post-COVID recovery.

Jon Hindley, Public Health Localities and Primary Care Team at Leeds City Council, said:

Care View has allowed us a window into the sometimes lonely and isolated world of vulnerable citizens within our poorest neighbourhoods. This has been the catalyst to help people we wouldn't have otherwise known about to reconnect with their communities, improve their health and keep it that way.

The UK Space Agency funding has allowed senior commissioning managers at the council to recognise Care View's importance and consequently incorporate Care View into council-commissioned outreach services currently under review such as Better Together.

The new technology that has been added will enhance the effectiveness and drive the dynamics of our community health outreach teams more than ever before. This dynamism and technological functionality can play a vital part on the road to recovery and resilience for our local Leeds residents in a post pandemic world.

The app does not require additional storage space on a smartphone, and its potential for social good has been recognised by Nesta and The Observer, who named it one of the UK's most radical social innovation projects.

In 2017, the government appointed the first Minister for Loneliness, Tracey Crouch, and in December announced an extra £7.5 million funding package to help tackle loneliness over the winter period.

[Global Trading Europe Ltd placed into provisional liquidation](#)

Global Trading Europe Ltd has been placed into provisional liquidation following a hearing at the High Court in Manchester on 8 January 2021 after application by the Insolvency Service on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Official Receiver has been appointed as the provisional liquidator and has responsibilities to protect the company's assets pending the outcome of a petition to wind up the company in the public interest.

As provisional liquidator the Official Receiver will:

- take control of the company from those currently responsible
- take steps to protect the company's assets
- provide a point of contact for those who have had dealings with the company

The provisional liquidator also has the power to investigate the affairs of the company to protect assets including any third party, or trust monies, or assets in the possession of, or under the control of the company.

The case is now subject to High Court action and no further information will be made available until the petition is heard on 16 March 2021.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 2 Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester, M1 3BN, or via PIU.North@insolvency.gov.uk.

Global Trading Europe Ltd – company registration number 10983973 – was incorporated on 27 September 2017. The company's registered office is at Unit 3 Car Wash Part, Upchurch House, Abbey Gate, Leicester, LE4 0AA

The petition was presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986. The Official Receiver was appointed as provisional liquidator of the company on 8 January 2021 by HHJ Cawson QC, a Judge of the High Court.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the

Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). [Further information about live company investigations is available here.](#)

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available here.](#)

Billions of pounds of support helps businesses up and down the country

More than 1.4 billion loans have supported businesses and protected jobs across all sectors. The figures show that the retail and construction sectors have benefitted the most, demonstrating how government support is helping those impacted hardest by the pandemic.

Support has been spread across the country, with regions receiving loans proportionately to the amount of businesses located there. This shows that government support is helping those who need it. These loans are in addition to furlough, the self-employment income support scheme and business grants, as part of the government's unprecedented £280 billion support package to protect jobs during the pandemic.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Throughout this crisis, we have provided more than £280 billion of support to protect jobs and livelihoods up and down the country.

We are committed to continuing to ensure jobs are protected and opportunity is created.

Companies right across the UK have benefitted from support through government-backed loans, including Preston cheesemaker, Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese, who took out a CBILS loan to support their firm.

Graham Kirkham, director of Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese, said:

Once I found out our loan had been approved, the relief was immense. The funding, combined with the help and publicity we received, has really helped us to get through the past few weeks. We were able to join a box scheme run by Neal's Yard in collaboration with Jamie Oliver that allowed cheese producers like us to supply customers directly.

Without the money, it's highly likely we wouldn't have been able to continue and our three-generation family business would've ceased to exist, through no fault of our own.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

These figures show very clearly that we have delivered on the solemn promise we made to support businesses across every part of the UK.

While there are still tough times ahead, we will continue to offer all the support we can to protect jobs and keep businesses afloat so we can look to not only restart our economy, but build back better from the pandemic.

At the start of winter, the Chancellor announced that more than a million businesses who took out a Bounce Back Loan will now receive further protection from the Covid crisis through flexible repayments, under the new Pay as You Grow system, which gives businesses more time to repay. Since then, the government has extended the loans schemes until March, and given businesses the ability to 'top-up' their loans if they need to.

The government has invested more than £280 billion throughout the pandemic to protect millions of jobs and businesses, including extending the self-employed and furlough schemes through to April to give businesses the certainty they need to plan over the coming months. This includes the £4.6 billion the Chancellor announced last week in one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the spring.

Further information

CBILS

Region	Value of loan offered (£)	Number of loans offered
East Midlands	1,297,778,540	5,273
East of England	1,766,950,464	7,460
London	3,847,934,021	12,495
North East	493,314,081	1,994
North West	1,959,152,472	7,563
Northern Ireland	496,806,683	1,501
Scotland	982,517,603	4,144
South East	2,824,103,231	11,260
South West	1,534,026,632	6,416
Wales	503,355,434	2,228
West Midlands	1,486,023,928	6,077
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,260,361,190	5,415

Region	Value of loan offered (£)	Number of loans offered
Unspecified	67,328,939	190

Bounce Back Loans

Region	Value of Loans Offered (£)	Number of Loans Offered
East Midlands	2,684,725,529	91,348
East of England	4,192,234,249	137,741
London	9,946,815,769	295,692
North East	1,249,741,795	44,858
North West	4,512,329,695	152,188
Northern Ireland	1,172,538,374	38,181
Scotland	2,496,404,756	86,062
South East	6,018,627,864	199,574
South West	3,275,798,746	116,063
Wales	1,524,813,850	55,094
West Midlands	3,520,737,158	114,715
Yorkshire and The Humber	2,986,264,487	101,197
Unspecified	62,547,705	2,017

Qualifications review consultation response

Ofqual supports the government's intention to increase confidence in level 3 qualifications, ensuring that there are clear opportunities for learners to progress from high quality qualifications into skilled employment or further study. Independent regulation will play a critical role, both in achieving this intention and ensuring an effective qualifications market is available to learners.

This response was sent to the Department for Education on Monday 4 January 2021.

Secure video calls help all prisoners maintain essential family ties during

pandemic

- over 90,000 calls made so far, connecting families in the UK and overseas
- technology helped teenager communicate again with his deaf mother and allowed a prisoner to meet his baby for the first time

Secure video calls are now running in all public and private prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs) across England and Wales, helping to maintain vital family ties and boost rehabilitation during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Offenders with strong family ties are less likely to reoffend, which costs the taxpayer around £18 billion per year, while 97% of prisoners say that video calls have a positive impact on their mental health.

With the final installation of video call technology taking place last month, in just over 6 months, over 90,000 video calls have been made totalling almost 45,000 hours and connecting families in more than 100 countries, while social visits were suspended to help reduce the spread of the virus, save lives and protect the NHS.

The secure video calls are allowing prisoners to see their toddlers take their first steps, say goodbye to a terminally-ill loved one and helping those struggling with their mental health.

Prisons Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP said:

Video calls have been a huge success in our response to COVID-19 in the prison estate, with staff and offenders overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the technology.

Prisoners have seen drastic changes to their daily routines to save lives and to protect local health services. Part of that has been the loss of social visits – something we know plays a huge role in prisoners' wellbeing and rehabilitation and these calls are allowing them to keep this vital family contact.

The video calls take place on secure laptops in a designated area in each prison. Safeguards are in place to prevent misuse with all participants checked in advance, calls are monitored by prison staff and restrictions have been built into the software to ensure safe use.

Graham Barrett, Governor at HMP Wandsworth said:

Video calls have been an incredibly positive step forward in what has been a very difficult time. It has revolutionised the way that people can communicate with loved ones and having such a user-

friendly service has ensured that the men in our care can keep in touch with family and friends all over the world.

A Prisoner at HMP Thorn Cross said:

It has been a complete game-changer for me. I can't imagine not seeing my children for the past nine months, so the peace of mind of knowing that they are ok, and for them to see me and know that I am ok has really helped all of us.

My family do not live locally, so I would like to continue to use video calling to speak to them, even after visits and ROTL are running again.

The new technology builds on the [2017 Lord Farmer review](#) which found that close bonds between prisoners and family members can significantly reduce their risk of reoffending.

Plans are being implemented for the long-term. In the meantime, video calls remain in place for prisoners and their loved-ones while social visits are restricted.

Notes to editors

- Video calls are a complementary resource to help maintain family contact not a replacement for social visits and where face-to-face visits can safely be delivered and remain the preference, no prisoner will be asked to substitute that for a video call.
- Time-limited calls are made either by prisoners making a call request to their designated contact or by families who can request a time slot through a mobile app or directly with the establishment.
- In March the government introduced temporary restrictions in prisons to prevent the virus taking hold – a decision that has saved the lives of staff, prisoners and children in custody, and protected the NHS.
- These measures, backed by Public Health England, included:
 - Creating distinct areas where vulnerable prisoners can shield, the symptomatic can isolate, and new arrivals can quarantine
 - Creating an additional 1,200 temporary cells so people are better able to social distance and we can limit the spread of infection
 - Making important adjustments to prison life – including placing prisoners in social 'bubbles' so they could safely spend more time out of their cells for vital education, work, and exercise
- We are further bolstering our defences to reduce the risk of transmission by:
 - Temporarily stopping social visits for adult prisoners in line with the new national restrictions. However, visits for compassionate reasons, visits to children in custody and official or legal visits will continue.
 - Introducing routine testing of frontline staff and prisoners who

arrive from court or transfer from other jails to catch infections earlier.

- Making more Personal Protective Equipment available to staff who come into close contact with offenders, so they can protect themselves and the offenders in their care.