Essex County Council is inviting local organisations to donate unused devices and help residents get online - known as a bridging the digital gap.

Currently, 20% of residents in Essex are offline because they lack the technology, connection or skills needed to go online.

The council’s Digital Essex team supports the government's recently announced [IT Reuse for Good](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/it-reuse-for-good-charter/the-it-reuse-for-good-charter) charter to help bridge the digital divide.

This means businesses and individuals can now help local communities by donating old electronics like phones, tablets and laptops through the county council.

Donated devices will be refurbished for children in Essex schools, including those receiving benefits such as free school meals, to help them stay connected and continue learning.

It is part of the [Essex Year of Opportunity](http://www.essexyearofopportunity.co.uk/), the council’s campaign to remove barriers into work, education and career advancement for millions of residents.

The campaign opens doors to essential skills by promoting courses, certificates, skills hubs and resources for all ages.

Organisations and individuals can contact devices.donations@essex.gov.uk to donate digital devices.

**Councillor Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Economic Growth and Prosperity, said:**“Having access to laptops and other digital devices is key in today’s world and all part of developing a skilled, digitally strong workforce to help us grow the Essex economy.

“Since we first launched the scheme in 2020, nearly 9,000 devices have been given to vulnerable young people and local organisations. Our brilliant Essex businesses and schools have been key to our success and I thank them for all of their generous contributions. They have supported our efforts to get more people online and provide access to devices.”

**Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said:**"We are excited to support the Devices Donation Charter. It's a great way for businesses to give back and make a real difference in young people's lives.

"The Essex Year of Opportunity shows our commitment to our children's future. By donating devices, we provide access to technology and create endless opportunities for the next generation."

**Cllr Peter Schwier AIEMA**

**Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction & Recycling**

**Chair, East of England Regional Climate Change Forum**

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