

We're working together with South Norfolk and Broadland Council to close the digital divide faced by people experiencing homelessness.

"We had been struggling to stay in contact with rough sleepers due to their lack of connectivity. The devices provided by Tesco Mobile have been transformational." Rebecca, South Norfolk and Broadland Council

To maintain anonymity, a pseudonym of 'Lucas' will be used.

For one young man who had reached a crisis point, a mobile phone has been fundamental in helping him reconnect to society.

Lucas, who has mental health issues and learning disabilities, was rough sleeping and had a history of drug use that resulted in loss of contact with family and friends. He had no-one to turn to for support.

At 6am on a freezing cold morning, South Norfolk and Broadland's Rough Sleeper Coordinators found Lucas asleep behind some pallets he'd turned into a shelter. He had nothing but a thin sleeping bag and was cold, wet and hungry. The coordinators talked to him about his needs and risks, and left him with a mobile phone, agreeing to find him somewhere to stay that day.

Thanks to South Norfolk and Broadland Council's First Step Project and devices donated by Tesco Mobile, Lucas is now living in safe accommodation and uses his mobile phone to search for jobs, make appointments, set reminders and alarms, as well as to stay in touch with South Norfolk and Broadland Council for ongoing housing and benefits support. Lucas has even been able to make contact with his family.

Rebecca Adamson, Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Coordinator at South Norfolk and Broadland Council said:

"Due to their lack of connectivity, we had been struggling to stay in contact with people who had previously been rough sleepers but were now receiving support through FIRST steps. The phones provided by Tesco Mobile have been transformational as we are now able to maintain ongoing communication and support. This is vital in providing residents with basic human needs such as accommodation, food and clothing.

"The phone, data and calls have been a lifeline for Lucas, he is extremely grateful."

At Tesco Mobile, we care for human connection, and this is what drives us. Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the Tesco Mobile Little Helps scheme has been donating phones and data to people and organisations that need them most, like South Norfolk and Broadland's First Step Project. Having access to a mobile phone and data connects those in need with vital support services that can help end their homelessness for good.

The scheme forms part of Tesco Mobile's Reconnects mission, which connects vulnerable people to society by donating devices and data-loaded SIM cards to community organisations.

So far, Tesco Mobile Reconnects has donated over 27,000 devices, over 28,000 SIM cards and 1.7million GB of data to charities and organisations across the UK. Our care for human connection continues as we aim to help more vulnerable and disadvantaged people reconnect to society.

Organisations or charities can find information on requesting devices or SIM cards at:
tescomobile.littlehelps@tesco.com.