

We are in complete agreement that identifying and protecting the vulnerable is of immense importance for making communications available for all. Those who are vulnerable can benefit from increased access to communication, using it to contact sources of help and eliminate complications related to travel. We also agree that teaching will be key for vulnerable people getting the most out of communications. We would like to know if you believe the current definition of vulnerability is sufficient and if deducing vulnerability has the nuisance needed for its complexity.

The technical divide is more apparent than ever before, and its ramifications have never been so serious. People without access to communications technology or with tenuous access to the internet have had trouble adapting to the significant changes the pandemic has brought. Government assistance, such as the provision of I-Pads for school students, has mitigated this to some degree but communications provision has plenty of improvements to go through in the coming years. We would ask about how you plan to bridge geographical divides as rural areas have an economic and connectivity disadvantage for communications, despite having a lot to gain from using them.

You pointed out that communications providers need to take greater responsibility for their customers in financial difficulties. We understand that companies have slipped in their standards of addressing those struggling to pay. Your objective is to keep debt and disconnection policies at communication providers proactive and helpful to the customer. We agree that if providers sought out struggling customers early and provided reasonable repayment options, disconnections would drop. We are interested to know more about how providers can be persuaded about this and what standards you think they should follow.

Communication has not only become increasingly important for consumers of the course of the pandemic but has also been of benefit to organisations giving help and support related to it. We agree that collaboration between organisations using communications technology has made discussion of important issues possible on a regular basis without travel concerns. We would ask how regular and easy contact can be maintained after the pandemic. Firstly, communications technology and scheduling of collaboration must be maintained to the same standard. Secondly, it will have to work around the return of staff to their offices and the more limited timeframes for such collaboration.

**Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.**

John Craft

Policy Executive

[john.craft@advice.scot](mailto:john.craft@advice.scot)

Advice Direct Scotland, The Mercantile Building, 53 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 6TS  
Charity registered in Scotland - SC034473

