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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### LLOYDS BANKING GROUP TEAMS UP WITH WE ARE DIGITAL, THE SILVER LINE AND MENTAL HEALTH UK TO OFFER PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE IN SOCIETY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

- Innovative partnership will see tablet devices delivered free of charge to over-70s isolated by Covid-19, to help keep them connected
- New dedicated phone line delivered by We Are Digital will provide guidance and remote training to vulnerable customers to help them stay connected with everyday digital activities, including online banking
- Working with Mental Health UK and The Silver Line (partner to Age UK), to provide both practical and emotional support to help mitigate the effects of Covid-19 on the nation's mental health

Lloyds Banking Group continues to provide support to the people, businesses and communities of Britain as we deal with the impact of the Covid-19 public health crisis. Among the existing package of measures we've announced, including mortgage and loan repayment holidays, today we're confirming additional partnerships and support which will help the UK's most vulnerable.

Vulnerable customers will be able to access even more free and practical support to help them stay connected online, thanks to a new initiative from Lloyds Banking Group and We Are Digital.

Through this unique partnership We Are Digital will provide a specialist phone line to help up to 20,000 customers access the internet, at a time where gaining digital skills will help people stay connected to their finances.

The partnership will also deliver up to 2,000 tablets to over 70s who don't have a suitable device to access the internet as part of its pilot phase. Our local branch and telephony teams across Lloyds Bank, Halifax and Bank of Scotland are contacting those customers who would benefit most from this initiative.

With guidance from We Are Digital's agents, users learn skills to help with everyday digital tasks such as online shopping and connecting virtually with family and friends, as well as online banking.

#### SUPPORTING THE NATION'S MENTAL HEALTH

The isolation many feel as a result of the current crisis means more and more people are experiencing challenges with their mental health. That's why we're increasing our support for mental health charities, so that the vital services they offer are available when and where they are needed.

With our support, The Silver Line, partner to Age UK, will continue to offer a 24/7 helpline and friendship services to those aged 55 and over who may be feeling lonely or isolated. The Silver Line



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has experienced a huge increase in calls since the outbreak of Covid-19 and this funding will help them meet this demand.

We're also providing more support to our long-term charity partner Mental Health UK. Our additional funding will help extend the Mental Health and Money Advice Service for those in financial difficulty.

## BEING THERE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

We know that this is a difficult time and we want to be there for our customers. This partnership package of support is on top of measures we've already announced, as well as ongoing volunteering efforts from our colleagues.

We've enhanced some of our existing services and found new ways to help those who need it. For retail customers this includes payment holidays on mortgages, loans and cards, access to a £500 interest free overdraft, removing fees for missed payments and access to fixed term accounts without charge.

We have also launched a new dedicated phone line for elderly customers and developed a new process to allow a trusted person limited access to an account for customers who can't get to one of our branches and don't bank digitally, and we have ensured that NHS staff calls are answered as a priority. We've sent over 80 million letters and 15 million SMS messages to customers explaining what's available, including a guide to how best to manage their money and stay safe from fraud.

## SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

We're continuing to support our charitable Foundations as they help tackle social issues in communities, from mental health to domestic abuse, homelessness and disability. All four Foundations have already publically and individually reassured charities that they are on hand to support with any concerns.

And our colleagues continue to provide practical support to people, businesses and communities, sharing digital skills and resources to support financial capability and mentoring charities and small businesses remotely, as well as volunteering their time to local communities at this particular time of need.

**Fiona Cannon, Sustainable Business Director, Lloyds Banking Group, said:** "For many right now, staying connected and accessing vital services is difficult – and for those experiencing isolation, this also can have profound effects on their mental health. That's why we believe offering practical and emotional support through initiatives such as these is so important in helping our vulnerable customers to feel more connected and in control. This is just one of the ways we are making it that bit easier for our customers to manage their finances and mental health during the current crisis."

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## Notes to editors

By 2020 Lloyds Banking Group is committed to training 1.8 million people, businesses and charities in digital skills. With the impacts of C-19 we will be helping more people through our Lloyds Bank Digital Skills Academy. With webinars for people and small businesses across the country, they'll be able to build up their digital skills and understand how to stay safe online.

On top of the announcements we've made today, we're proud to be part of the consortium of organisations supporting DevicesDotNow. Our contribution will see much needed devices given to those who need them, helping more people get online. For more information please visit the DeviceDotNow [website](#).

**Matthew Adam, Founder and Chief Executive of We Are Digital, said:**

"We are delighted to launch this much-needed helpline and remote support offering for Lloyds Banking Group's customers during such a difficult time for the UK. We Are Digital is all about impacting people's lives with our Digital and Financial Inclusion work across the UK and it's needed now, more than ever, through remote means. We help to tackle social exclusion by helping vulnerable people to develop technological skills, providing them with essential digital and financial training to enhance their everyday lives in an increasingly digitised world".

**Brian Dow, Chief Executive of Mental Health UK, said:**

"The effects of this pandemic are likely to be felt for months if not years to come and the impact it will have on people's mental health and financial situation could be grave without the right support. That's why we are incredibly grateful to Lloyds Banking Group for going even further than it already has, providing us with additional funds to meet more of the demand for our vital Mental Health and Money Advice service."

**Paul Goulden, Director of The Silver Line, said:**

"Thank you so much to Lloyds Banking Group for their fantastic support during this unsettling time. Older people are among those hardest hit by the outbreak of Covid-19 and The Silver Line services have never been more essential. Thanks to Lloyds Banking Group's generosity, our 24/7 helpline can continue to be there, offering a listening ear to those desperately in need of comfort and support."

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