

## onHand

onHand is an award winning volunteer matching solution. IBM describes us as an “Uber for Volunteering”. Our mission is to make it simple for businesses all over the UK to engage employees whilst also giving back to communities. Our on-demand volunteering app makes it fast and easy for people, charities and organisations to receive help. Our solution has the ability to capture the huge rise in social good to come out of the Covid pandemic and harness that good for all our futures and across the UK.

Today, onHand matches vetted volunteers with older adults and vulnerable people who need help with simple tasks such as shopping, medicine collection/drop offs, urgent errands and other essentials. By tapping into the sharing economy we can address one of society’s most pressing issues, at a time when NHS resources are most strained. Prior to Covid, onHand’s volunteer matching platform had established itself as a disruptor to the care industry, using tech to simplify the way volunteers and older adults connect. The response to our platform has been applauded by various industry experts such as the National Innovation Centre for Ageing and across the media.

Charities and organisations refer their clients and activities to onHand so that we can use our tech to match them with local, vetted volunteers. We work closely with the British Red Cross, NHS referrers, Age UK, Independent Age,

Pret Foundation, North and South London Cares, W12 Together, The Youth Group and Surfers Against Sewage to support their causes.

## **Above and beyond**

There are several different areas of the business which have gone above and beyond what we expected for onHand in 2020.

### UK expansion

Prior to the Covid pandemic, onHand expected to grow at a steady pace. We started by helping hundreds of older and vulnerable people across London with basic tasks like shopping, changing a lightbulb and companionship, and we were considered a disruptor to the care industry. 2020 and the Covid pandemic saw the greatest outpouring of civil society in a generation. When the outbreak hit the UK, we saw an opportunity to help more people. We developed our app within two to four weeks of the first UK lockdown, and are now helping 10,000s of people across the entire country. We didn't expect to be operating nationwide this quickly and efficiently.

### Employee wellbeing

We knew that volunteering had a positive impact on wellbeing when onHand began, but the pandemic saw a huge rise in loneliness and mental health issues. The CIPD 2020 Health and Wellbeing Report named mental ill health as the single most common cause of long term absence from the workplace.

Employers not only needed a way to engage employees who were working remotely or on reduced hours, they were also taking a much greater and necessary interest in supporting staff wellbeing.

77% of employees surveyed by Deloitte say that volunteering is “essential to wellbeing.” In order to help even more people, we altered our business model. Today, onHand partners with corporations to help them support their employees; offering them wellbeing resources and engaging them in volunteering activities. Volunteering with onHand throughout the pandemic has given employees a purpose when they needed it most.

The response to our platform has been applauded by various industry experts such as the National Innovation Centre for Ageing and across the media. We’ve been named the ‘uber of volunteering’ by IBM and have now partnered with over 50 businesses that want to do more social good. Whilst there are incumbent organisations providing Corporate Volunteering programmes, we know of none that are able to enable local and safe opportunities, solving for remote, shift, seasonal and office based employees. With onHand, volunteering is kept close to the employees location and so works for remote or office teams.

onHand now holds regular webinars with other professionals to help corporations further support their staff in all different areas of wellbeing – financial, social, physical, emotional etc. We also offer our partners free

wellbeing content to combat stress, loneliness and burnout, as well as company culture resources.

In our North East Impact Report, created in association with the National Innovation Centre For Ageing and Newcastle Building Society, 80% of volunteers surveyed said volunteering through onHand has had a positive or very positive impact on their wellbeing.

### Friendship and loneliness

onHand was already helping to tackle loneliness pre-Covid, but on a small scale. Our expectation was to steadily continue providing older people with companionship and expand nationwide eventually. Covid-19 saw loneliness in the UK reach peak highs and the group most affected were 16-44 year olds (ONS). Thanks to our matching technology we were able to create intergenerational friendships all over the UK and build 'social capital' for tens of thousands of people of all different backgrounds and age groups at a time when it was needed the most.

Neil, a Newcastle Building Society employee was matched with Jean, an elderly resident in the North East who lives on her own. What started as a few gardening 'missions' grew to weekly phone calls and, when social distancing rules were eased, ended with socially distanced dog walks. Neil helped Jean find the confidence to go out for walks – something she wouldn't have been able to do alone.

“I don’t think Jean realises, as much as I’ve helped her, she’s helped me too. Having that human contact, albeit socially distanced, has helped me with my own mental health and wellbeing, by being able to get out and about, talking with people I wouldn’t have otherwise been able to meet.” – Neil

“It really has brightened my life. Neil is a guardian angel. He’s such a nice young man. I’ve never experienced any volunteer help before. I’m so pleased to receive the help.” Jean

Jean wasn’t able to find help from other volunteering organisations because she lived too far outside of Newcastle, where fewer volunteering organisations operated. Without onHand Neil and Jean, much like hundreds of our other matches, most likely wouldn’t have met.

### Other areas of growth

The unexpected expansion that onHand had in 2020 allowed for us to grow in other areas and have a bigger reach. We recently introduced different volunteering opportunities to put the user in the driver’s seat and have the ability to choose activities that really interest them, creating even more of a strong sense of purpose, and a better user experience for the volunteers.

In February we added Youth Mentoring opportunities to our app for the first time. Within just a few weeks we were on track to schedule over 500 Youth Mentoring sessions. We just started tackling food waste, partnering with the Pret Foundation to take excess food to homeless shelters. We’ve also added

environmental support in some areas of the UK, organising beach cleans for our partner volunteers to take part in, as well as tasks to increase biodiversity in other areas. We've built an even stronger sense of community in our volunteer base by adding in a wider variety of opportunities.

## **Impact during the pandemic**

Every interaction we enable generates social impact. From a simple call to walking someone's dog. We track all activity from incoming requests for help, to being live on app, matched, completed, and repeated. We produce regular case studies for referrers and partners, gathering statistics and feedback from beneficiaries to keep track of impact.

Since January 2020, we have delivered over £80,000 worth of food, equating to ~45,000 meals (based on ONS data) and spent over 2 months on befriending calls (when adding all our calls together).

A new report conducted in association with the National Centre of Innovation for Ageing also has showcased the North East impact on service users receiving help and employees who are giving help.

- 91.7% of respondents said that using onHand has made them feel either a lot, or a little, better than usual. Reasons for this include having someone to talk to, building confidence, and benefiting their mental health.

- Hardly any of the requesters who responded to the survey had concerns about using the onHand service. Although, 91.6% were concerned that it was 'too good to be true.'
- 100% of people requesting help from onHand said that it had either a positive or very positive impact on their life.

#### Volunteer impact:

Micro-volunteering using the onHand app has also had a positive effect on employees. 80% of employee respondents said that onHand volunteering has had a positive or very positive impact on their own wellbeing, with 46% adding the app has helped them combat feelings of loneliness or isolation by providing them with someone to talk with, and helping them forge connections.

#### Referrer impact:

Covid-19 has left a huge strain on the NHS and councils that have limited resources. onHand has helped relieve some of that strain and the charities and organisations we work with have expressed how much of a positive impact our volunteers have made on them and the people they refer to us.

- “Your ability to find befriending volunteers is invaluable to our clients. The fact you can provide this for all age groups is also an added bonus as

befriending support for under 60's is indeed very difficult to find and almost non-existent.” – Age UK Islington

- “Just A BIG THANK YOU!! You guys have been amazing for the past year... Thank you on behalf of everyone you have supported... Keep up the great work! “ – NHS

- “Great communication from the team, which enables us to see the outcome of our initial referral. Also, all the referrals made have been responded to quickly, and volunteers matched to our referred Service Users very promptly. Great service all round.” – British Red Cross

## **Innovative ways of working**

Prior to COVID-19, onHand was a charged-for service, with the person receiving help paying £10p/h (80% going to charity, 20% going towards DBS costs and staffing). onHand has now waived all charges for those who can't afford it, thanks to our partnerships with corporates wanting to do more social good.

We developed our tech to meet the growing need for help within 2 to 4 weeks of the pandemic starting. Our project now delivers systems innovation, using tech to find and automate matching of volunteers with people in need. The onHand app has the ability to vet and track volunteers and allows volunteers to instantly claim shopping refunds, payment of which are then automated back to the volunteer. No other app has this level of functionality built in,



proven and easily activated. As a result, the number of onHand volunteers has grown by 250%+ since the start of 2020 and the number of people requesting help has more than doubled.

#### Council Partnerships:

During the first Covid peak, with local services overrun and spiralling food parcel costs, Lambeth council partnered with us to help deliver food to isolating residents. They purchased bulk packages of hours from us to help them support their residents. Our matching tech could help 1000s of people quickly and save the council from the crippling costs of food parcels.

Volunteers are continuing to help out in the London borough.

#### Some quotes from the people we've helped in Lambeth:

- “I love my weekly phone calls with Donna, I feel like I can talk to her for hours. Chloe, who does my weekly shop, is amazing. She can find everything in Tesco so quickly and easily. She didn't even mind going out in the rain for me!” – Ernest

Ernest lives alone and has regular phone calls with volunteers to keep him company. He also received regular shopping help from onHand as he's vulnerable and shielding. Donna had similar kind words to say about Ernest as well...

- “He’s such a lovely guy, I feel like I’ve known him for years, not months” – Donna

The partnership between Lambeth council and onHand helped to combat loneliness in younger people too. Intergenerational friendships have been formed through the service, creating a sense of community.

- “As usual, Walter was a ray of sunshine and happy to have his paper and a window chat. It’s like having a grandfather all over again!” – Alexander

#### Corporate Partnerships:

onHand now partners with businesses to get their employees volunteering. As well as creating social impact in local communities this aids with employee engagement and wellbeing by making team’s feel good by doing good. So far in 2021, onHand has seen a 240% growth in corporate partnerships. These include large organisations like Newcastle Building Society and Softcat plc and high growth companies, like FinTech leader, GoCardless, and FemTech pioneer, Elvie. Most recently we have partnered with the Trainline.

Businesses give employees an estimated 11m days of volunteering time every year and Deloitte reports 70% of employees want to volunteer more often.

However, “traditional” corporate volunteering simply does not work.

Engagement in employee volunteering is just 14.3% (London Benchmarking Group), meaning 200 million hours of corporate volunteering go unused.

With numerous studies finding career choices, especially for millennials, are

increasingly based on an employer's social impact, the opportunity has never been stronger to help corporations engage their employees in volunteering en masse. It was always our view to expand onHand and provide help to the entire country. To do this we partnered with businesses wanting to engage their employees in social good.

We've seen first hand how volunteering can have a huge impact on wellbeing, for the volunteer and for the person they help, with our "Heroes" saying that they're "the happiest [they've] been in a long time" thanks to onHand.

## Awards

Sanjay Lobo, onHand Founder and CEO was awarded with the Tech for Good Great British Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2020. Following this, he was presented with the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. onHand won the Lord Mayor's Community Partners Award for their 'Innovation During Covid' and successful partnership with Lambeth Council. Winning awards has given onHand wider exposure, supporting our growth and sustainability.

## Governmental Support

onHand was developed with the support of a £75,000 grant from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's Healthy Ageing challenge via COVID fast track funding. This allowed our team to automate the end-to-end volunteer matching experience – including built-in automated ID and DBS checking, the ability for volunteers to search for help opportunities and contact the person

in need directly through the app, as well as submission and daily automated refunding of reimbursement (such as for shopping).

onHand has benefitted the lives of 10s of thousands of older and vulnerable people all over the UK over the past 2 years. The help that they have been given by volunteers has enriched communities and boosted morale for employees who take part in volunteering activities. One employee even said “If I could do this full time I would!” Our aim is to continue to grow our pool of corporate partners and further expand our variety of volunteering opportunities to be even more diverse and accessible to more people and causes. We want to go from 10,000s of missions to 100,000s.