

# Cairn Mhor: getting cash safely to care home staff during COVID-19 with Soldo

How prepaid cards from Soldo are helping care homes fight the financial strain of a pandemic, a customer story.

## CAIRN MHOR CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP



**INDUSTRY**  
Care Home



**COMPANY SIZE**  
15

### KEY OUTCOMES

- ✓ Quick fund distribution. The finance team can rapidly distribute funds to staff so they can buy necessities like toiletries for residents
- ✓ Petty cash and company credit cards have been replaced with pre-paid cards
- ✓ Fund distribution can be managed remotely

We've noticed important changes in how businesses are using Soldo during the coronavirus outbreak. Care homes using our prepaid cards are exploring features they hadn't before; they're using the flexibility of Soldo to mitigate the fallout during lockdown – and laying foundations for brighter futures after it.

The people at Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership provide residential care for children and young people, across four houses located within central Fife, Scotland.

Diana, the finance assistant at Cairn Mhor, reached out to us to share her experience and the value their organisation has found in using prepaid cards from Soldo to distribute company money among staff.

## The challenge: the devastating effect of COVID-19

Members of staff at care homes are working under extremely challenging circumstances. Care homes don't typically operate in big teams, and high turnover of staff is not uncommon in the sector, even without a pandemic keeping people at home.

As a result, homes have been forced to rely on more expensive agency staff during the outbreak to meet the intensity of this demand.

Coronavirus will have a profound impact on the care home sector and its long-term viability, with issues such as staff shortages, lower occupancy rates and the soaring prices of PPE demanding a tighter grip on finances.

For many care homes, regardless of the age of their residents, the financial and safety concerns are equally urgent. They're overwhelmed.

## The problem with company credit cards

Before discovering Soldo and before COVID-19, a cook at Cairn Mhor was using a company credit card to buy food for two of the houses. When this cook stopped working at Cairn Mhor, they looked for a more practical payment option to cover expenses.

The ideal option, even before the coronavirus, was a type of card that didn't require a name on it and could then be used by anyone on the team.

Cairn Mhor consulted with other care home managers to find the right option. One of them was using supermarket vouchers, which the managers at Cairn Mhor thought was too restrictive. Another local care home suggested they check out what they were using: Soldo prepaid cards.

## The challenges of COVID-19

Before the pandemic, this is how they distributed money to the staff:

1. The finance assistant would withdraw cash from the bank;
2. Then, she would save it in a standard, vulnerable cash tin;
3. She would go back to the office to issue it to each house;
4. And, finally, the managers would drive to the office to sign for the money and then take it back to the houses.

This method stopped being suitable once lockdown began. For starters, the finance and office team at Cairn started working remotely.

On top of that, a lot of places weren't accepting cash to stem the spread of the virus. The care home needed a card.

The organisation went from trusting one person with a credit card under their name to make big purchases, to having to trust new or temporary staff to use company cash for anything.

## The solution: replacing petty cash and credit cards with prepaid card

Cairn Mhor ordered four prepaid cards from Soldo, one for each house.

**“ I found it really easy to get up and running. I did it all within an afternoon. Got it set up, ordered my cards, put money into my account, and it was all really, really easy. ”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership

As the COVID-19 situation worsened, and given that many shops weren't accepting cash, they started allowing staff to use the cards for any petty cash purchases they needed.

The old method of withdrawing that cash from the bank to then distribute among the houses gave way to remote top-ups.

**“ Just now from my house, I have the ability to top up the cards to the required amount. I can put a restriction on it if I need to. If not, then they can use it for any purpose and it's just so easy. It's been brilliant.”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership

## Making a difference with Soldo

**“ And that's when you guys came in really useful... ”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership

Now, when employees need to purchase anything, they can have the right funds (and no more) in a matter of seconds. They can buy what they need and go back to their job helping residents straight away.

Care homes are providing new starters with a Soldo card so they can share funds with them without feeling like they're risking company money or overexposing the organisation.

**“ At the moment, I've lifted all restrictions because they're not getting their normal cash into the house. They're sometimes having to order things that I would have previously ordered for them online, which is really useful for them to be able to do.”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership

The freedom that comes with using a contactless card during this crisis is not understated. But controlling that freedom is just as important.

The Soldo web console can help care homes tighten their budgets and keep track of money in real time, avoiding any surprises.

## Exploring the perks of Soldo

There's a variety of options available with Soldo to help care homes control expenses. Using the Soldo web console, you can:

- ✓ Prevent the cardholder from using the card online or at a cashpoint;
- ✓ Set the balance to a certain amount daily, weekly or monthly;
- ✓ Set up limits to restrict spending per transaction;
- ✓ Choose which types of expenses can be put through the card, with dozens of options to choose from;
- ✓ Automatically lock the card after one transaction – once the card's been used, it can't be used again until you unlock it.

Cairn Mhor started using Soldo for any petty cash purchases. Employees were authorised to withdraw money from cash machines should they need it, having the freedom to do so.

With the web console, Diana could enforce any of these rules remotely, while keeping track of spending. She tells us she checks it two or three times a week to make sure each house has got enough money.

## The results: a swift and safe improvement

**“ Cards were really, really easy for us to order, and anybody in the house could take it to the supermarket, do the shopping. And we didn't have to have a card specifically named for every member of staff, which was brilliant.”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership

Care homes are using our prepaid cards to transfer money safely and more effectively.

Setting restrictions and instantly topping up the cards saves time that would otherwise be spent going back and forward with a cash tin.

And the good doesn't stop there – once you start using Soldo to cover expenses, you stop having to keep track of everything manually. You put an end to unsafe storage methods. And, at the end of the month, expense reporting and reconciliation take substantially less time.

**“ It has been an absolute godsend for us.”**

- Diana Valentim, Finance Assistant, Cairn Mhor Childcare Partnership



Soldo cards are a fast, safe, and secure way to distribute emergency funds in this difficult time. [Learn more](#) about how Soldo can help your care home.