

# The Home Access programme

HOME ACCESS

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING



"Home Access aims to provide practical and financial support to low-income families who may not be able to afford a computer or the internet. We will support these families to ensure that the educational and social benefits of 21st century technology are available to them." Diana Johnson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Home access provides opportunities for saving money and time on communications, engaging parents who are hard to reach and getting them more involved in their child's learning.

## What is home access and why is it important?

'Home access' means access to technology and connectivity at home. Evidence produced by the Institute of Fiscal Studies shows that children with home access to a computer are more confident and capable technology users and more independent learners overall. This research also suggested that learners using a computer at home for schoolwork are more likely to gain over five GCSEs and one A-level and improve the grades attained.

Home access can also help to increase parental awareness, interest and involvement in their child's learning with schools able to update them on their child's progress more easily via online reporting.

## What is the Home Access programme?

The Home Access programme is the government scheme to reduce the technology gap between varying income groups that leaves some children at a disadvantage in their education.

Families across England will be able to apply for grant funding from January 2010 and the programme aims to benefit more than 270,000 households who currently lack access by March 2011. Low-income families who meet set eligibility criteria can apply for a Home Access Grant to buy a computer and internet package.

Recognising that some learners require additional support, assistive technology is also available.

## How can schools get involved in the Home Access programme?

Schools are key partners in delivering the programme. They can help raise awareness of Home Access Grants amongst families, promote the benefits of using technology for learning and make effective use of the learning platform to enhance the curriculum and engage parents in their child's learning.

As families apply directly to a central body for their grant, schools can make a choice as to their level of involvement. Those schools who wish to take a more active role and potentially look to combine the programme with other work aimed at providing access at home for learners could apply to run an aggregation scheme. This means parents elect their school to order their package on their behalf and schools can potentially benefit strategically and from economies of scale. Schools can learn more about the programme by calling the helpline number below or visiting the Becta collaboration space: <http://collaboration.becta.org.uk/community/homeaccess>. Schools can only apply if their local authority is not running an aggregation scheme and they have to be affiliated to the e-Learning Foundation.

The e-Learning Foundation works with schools, parents and other stakeholders to ensure that all children have access to technology and learning resources when and where they need them, both at home and at school.

Due to their independent status, Academies can choose whether to run their own scheme or take part in their local authority scheme. Durham, Hull and Shropshire Local Authorities have been confirmed as running aggregation schemes.

## How can school business managers make the most of increased levels of home access?

School business managers can play an important role in helping to deliver the benefits of home access by:

- promoting the use of the school learning platform in place of paper-based communications
- gathering accurate and up-to-date knowledge of the levels of home access amongst pupils
- becoming an advocate for home access in your school and sharing information with colleagues
- looking at ways to extend the school beyond the school day to provide a range of services and activities to pupils and their families via the learning platform
- engaging more parents through online reporting.

Home Access Grant helpline

Call: 0333 200 1004\*

Minicom: 0121 748 1471

Support the programme

[www.homeaccess.org.uk](http://www.homeaccess.org.uk)

Realise the benefits

[www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess](http://www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess)

\*Calls may be monitored or recorded to maintain high levels of security and quality of service. Calls to this number cost no more than a call to a 01 or 02 number and count towards inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone.