

The Home Access programme



“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 is the government programme which will help to ensure that more children in state-maintained education in England have access to technology at home to support learning. Evidence shows that home access can engage and motivate learners and support parental engagement. More recent evidence has suggested that learners who use a computer at home for schoolwork are more likely to gain over five GCSEs and one A-level, and improve the grades attained.

Following on from a successful pilot in Oldham and Suffolk local authorities, the Home Access programme begins its full rollout across England from January 2010. Initially the programme will target learners in years 3 to 9 inclusive. The programme aims to benefit more than 270,000 households by March 2011.

One of the key innovations of the Home Access programme is the choice of equipment. Low-income families who meet set eligibility criteria can apply to a central body for a Home Access Grant to purchase a compliant computer and internet package from a range of approved suppliers.

All your family could need

The Home Access packages have been designed with a family's needs in mind. They include one year's service and support, pre-set parental controls, installed office productivity suite, firewall and an anti-virus package. They also include the

award-winning e-safety guide 'Know IT All for Parents', enhanced warranty and reinstatement service in the event of theft, and educational guidance delivered with every package. All computers come with the dedicated Home Access website to help ensure families realise the benefits of home access. Home Access packages will be available for purchase by all.

Recognising that some learners will require additional support, Assistive Technology will also be made available. All of the Home Access packages come pre-loaded with a suite of Assistive Technology software that has benefits not only for learners, but for their families too. Alongside this families can also apply for Assistive Technology hardware such as adaptive mice or keyboard stickers. There will be a further provision available for those learners with more profound needs. To ensure that this process is as effective as possible it will begin in early 2010.

A partnership approach

To enable regional tailoring, local authorities and schools will be invited to run a Home Access aggregation scheme whereby parents elect the local authority or school to manage purchasing for them. Becta is also working closely with local authorities and other key providers to ensure that looked after children are provided for.

Becta and the Home Access programme will also work in partnership with key stakeholders, local authorities, schools

and the third sector to maximise the benefits of home access, as well as delivering the required support and guidance to families. Home Access can also support the realisation of local objectives to encourage adult learning, employability and regeneration, while simultaneously narrowing the gap in educational achievement between children from different income groups.

An independent evaluation of the programme will be conducted by SQW Consulting from 2009 to 2011.



“The Home Access scheme has made a big difference to us because it means we have got access to the internet when we need it, not just when we can get it at the library. I used to be worried about Evan getting left behind. It's been a big change because I can just look up jobs or apply to different courses and just do lots of things that I wouldn't have been able to do.”

Rebecca, Parent, Oldham

For enquiries and applications:

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 www.homeaccess.org.uk

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