

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 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 phased rollout across England from December 2009. 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.

Meeting the needs of families

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 an embedded link to the dedicated Our 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. There will be additional provision available for those learners with complex needs. To ensure that this process is as effective as possible it will begin in early 2010.

Working with schools

Schools can play a vital role in helping their pupils and parents benefit from home access. The first step is to have up-to-date knowledge of levels of home access amongst pupils and to make sure that those families who may be eligible for a Home Access Grant know where to get more information. Schools can also explore ways to encourage other families to purchase a

Home Access computer and share the benefits of getting online with them at parents evenings or through school newsletters.

With more pupils gaining access to technology at home, schools have an opportunity to:

- embrace learning at home as part of a personalised, inclusive and engaging curriculum
- narrow the achievement gap between free school meals pupils and others
- make more effective use of the learning platform
- develop pupil's digital literacy and e-safety skills
- extend the school to offer activities and support to families
- engage parents through online reporting.


“Home Access is reducing the technological divide and allowing parents with children to access technology that they would not otherwise have done.”

Primary school, Oldham


Home Access Grant helpline:

Tel: 0333 200 1004
Minicom: 0121 748 1471

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 www.homeaccess.org.uk

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