

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

Committee/Panel:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	11 March 2010
Title:	Home Access Programme
Reference:	1292
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Sue Savory County Inspector/Adviser ICT

Tel: 023 92441442

Email: Sue.savory@hants.gov.uk

1. Summary

On 11 January 2010. The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown opened the Learning and Technology Forum and announced the national rollout of Home Access, a government programme managed by BECTA (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency), which provides grants for computer and internet access to low income families.

1.1. This paper:

- Informs the Executive Lead Member of the implications of the Home Access programme for low income families in Hampshire.
- Provide details of how this programme has been communicated to eligible families in Hampshire.

2. Contextual information

2.1. Home Access is the government programme designed to help to ensure that more children in state-maintained education in England have access to technology at home to support learning.

2.2. In 2009, the Institute of Fiscal Studies produced a report that provided evidence that having a computer at home associates with a 2 grade improvement in one subject at GCSE. This means that a pupil who would have got a D, could, with the effective use of technology at home, get a B at GCSE. They also found that children who have access to a computer at home are more confident and capable users of technology and more independent learners overall.

2.3. The aims of the Home Access programme are as follows:

- That there will be a reduction in the technology gap between varying income groups

- That special needs learners will have access to software or assistive technology appropriate to their needs
- That there will be improved learning amongst eligible learners
- That there is increased awareness, interest and parental involvement in their children's learning
- That the number of parents using technology to learn for themselves increases
- That families' economic status improves through effectively using technology

2.4. The following groups can benefit from the programme;

- Families with a child in key stage 2 or key stage 3 who are entitled to:
 - Free school meals
 - Income based job seekers allowance
 - Income support
 - Child tax credit but not working tax credit and an income of less than £16,040
 - Guaranteed Pension Credit
 - Income based Employment Support Allowance
 - Support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Any carer who is claiming child benefit for a 'looked after child' aged 5 to 19 who did not benefit from another similar run programme such as 'Computers for Pupils'

2.5. Eligible families apply:

- By calling 0333 200 1004
- Answering four questions identifying eligibility

They then receive an application form that they fill in and return.

Eligible families will then receive a credit card that they can use at an accredited supplier of Home Access machines. This will entitle them to:

- A computer
- One year's Internet access
- Service and support
- Safety features
- Assistive technologies where needed

3. Key Issues

The main issue associated with this programme is the communication of the relevant information to ensure that eligible families are made aware of the application process. The programme is run on a 'first come, first serve basis' so it is important that the information is communicated quickly.

The County Inspector/Adviser for ICT has co-ordinated the distribution of the information. The following groups were provided with available information in early December in readiness for the launch in January. These groups of people were provided with documentation and links to relevant websites when released.

- Extended services co-ordinators
- School Improvement Partners
- Heads of ICT and ICT co-ordinators in secondary schools plus ICT Leading teachers and Advanced Skills Teachers.
- Senior Inspector Inclusion
- County Inspector/ Adviser (EMTAS)
- Head teachers via Hampshire school communications
- Presentation and SICATS (secondary information communication and technology strategy group) and PICATS (Primary group)

The main responsibility for ensuring that all eligible families were informed about the programme was given to Extended Services co-ordinators. All were asked to provide the schools in the cluster with the relevant information and also address the issue of supporting families with low levels of literacy.

3.4 Different areas are addressing the needs of their parents in different ways:

- Many are informing all parents but then targeting low income families.
- Some are providing parent workshops where families can be helped through the application process.
- Some are also intending to provide workshops to inform families about E-Safety issues and how to use the parental guidance and antivirus software.

4. Finance

4.1. No additional funds for the management of this programme have been available therefore the County Inspector/Adviser for ICT has overseen the process. The financial commitment is satisfied from internal resources.

5. Performance

5.1. Ensuring that all eligible families in Hampshire are provided with the opportunity to benefit from the programme is a major task.

5.2. Capita have been tasked by BECTA to track the number of applications made by families in specific areas and how many of these were subsequently successful. This data will be accessed by the authority.

5.3. It is intended that an audit will take place before the end of the Spring term 2010 to identify how many families applied and then were successful in their applications. This audit will take the form of contacting a representative from the Extended Services clusters who will collect the information from the partner schools.

6. Future direction

6.1. The equipment becomes the responsibility of the families. Attainment of the groups of pupils who are entitled to free school meals are already intensely tracked in schools. With other intervention strategies taken into consideration, in the future, an increase in attainment amongst these pupils might be attributed to their access to ICT at home.

6.2. Within many of the offers Internet access is only free for a year. Families therefore have to carry the cost of broadband subscription. There maybe an opportunity to investigate how sustainable the impact of this programme remains after the first year.

7. Recommendation(s)

7.1 It is recommended the Executive Lead Member:

- approve the strategy for informing families of the programme.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. This programme is aimed at reducing the inequalities gap between children born into relative poverty and the rest of the population therefore this will have a positive impact on equalities.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. None

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? None

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? None