
Extending Opportunity

Final Report of the Minister's Taskforce
on Home Access to Technology

July 2008

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Introduction

1. The Home Access Taskforce was announced by Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Learners in January 2007. The Taskforce was charged with considering and advising on ways in which home access to technology can be delivered for all school-aged children in England, ensuring that any plans include and promote safe and responsible use. In particular, the Taskforce provided a mechanism for partnership working by creating a forum in which issues affecting home access to technology could be raised and addressed. It advised the Schools Minister on the effective development, delivery and sustainability of home access.
2. The Taskforce considered the current policy context throughout its deliberations. A number of key policy priorities provided the foundations for the Taskforce's work.

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3. Home access to technology clearly has major potential for supporting the *Every Child Matters* agenda. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:
 - be healthy
 - stay safe
 - enjoy and achieve
 - make a positive contribution
 - achieve economic well-being.
4. The importance of home access is clearly flagged in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) *Children's Plan* published in December 2007, which states:

There are significant educational benefits associated with having access to technology at home. This availability of technology gives learners greater choice about where, when and how they study. Research shows that this helps to motivate learners and improve attainment. We also know that learning technologies in the home can serve as a focal point for parents to become more actively involved in their child's education. This collaboration between learner and parent can further enhance a pupil's engagement and their achievement.... At the moment, there are over a million children with no access to a computer in the home. These children are disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds, and their limited access to technology reinforces attainment gaps.
5. The *Children's Plan* recognises that all children and parents should have the confidence and knowledge to make the most of today's varied media and communications technology.
6. In January 2008, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham launched a consultation on *Informal Adult Learning* to stimulate debate and shape future Government policy, looking to ensure the best possible arrangements for securing vibrant and fulfilling informal adult learning for the 21st century.
7. It is also important that any organisation involved with or supporting others in providing services to children considers new ways of working to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.

8. In March 2008 Dr Tanya Byron published her review, *Safer Children in a Digital World*, about the needs of children and young people in a technology-enabled world. It focuses on preserving their right to take the risks that form an inherent part of their development by enabling them to play video games and surf the net in a safe and informed way. The review highlights that technology offers extraordinary opportunities for members of society, including children and young people, and that in its wealth of opportunities, online communication can also bring risks, often paralleling the offline world. The review's findings have been considered in the development of this report with the aim of identifying practical and sensible approaches to helping children manage risks in the 'real' world.
9. In June 2008 Becta published the revised Harnessing Technology Strategy. It promotes a technology-related learner entitlement, and aims to close the gap for disadvantaged learners to enable all learners to access and use technology effectively, safely and purposefully in support of their learning. Home access is a key component of this entitlement for all learners.
10. Finally, with the appointment of a Cabinet Minister for Digital Inclusion, Government is developing its ability to respond to the challenge of exclusion for 17 million adults in an increasingly 'digitally dependent' world. In particular the UK has commitments to the Riga Declaration on e-Inclusion, for example to halve the digital divide by 2010. At the National Digital Inclusion Conference the new Minister, Paul Murphy, called for support from policy makers and service managers, inclusion practitioners and industry to stop the web "being a great divider in our country and instead make it a great and powerful equaliser". He was supported by Jim Knight, who said that "Digital inclusion can translate to social inclusion and in today's world this is therefore about social justice". A cross-government team is developing a broad programme of work and any future home access programme could clearly make a considerable contribution to these efforts.
11. This report offers an overview of the evidence to support the home access agenda, a summary of the work of the Taskforce and its supporting organisations, along with recommendations for future activity which would have a significant impact on the context described above.
12. Working collaboratively, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and Becta each took on specific roles in managing and developing the evidence supporting the home access agenda.

The DCSF and Becta acted as joint secretariat to the taskforce. The DCSF acted as secretariat undertaking the public consultation, impact analysis and economic model with input from other Government departments.

Becta managed the stakeholder involvement and developed the supporting analysis. Becta also ran the Programme Board (see Appendix 3 for Taskforce Work strands). As part of the Solutions strand work Becta also ran the Proof of Concept study on behalf of the Taskforce. (See 3.1 para 79).

Executive Summary

Strong evidence exists for the potential educational, economic and wider benefits of home access to technology. Despite this growing body of evidence, approximately 35 per cent of families still do not have access to the internet and the digital divide is not being narrowed. It is clear that cost is a major barrier to access and, whilst costs of home access are falling, they will not do so quickly enough to prevent a large number of low-income families from being excluded from the educational and wider benefits of home access. This exclusion of low-income families results in an inequitable exploitation of home access and means that it is impossible for all learners and their families to experience these educational benefits without some intervention.

The Taskforce has identified evidence of market failure and is convinced there is a compelling business case for Government investment in support of widening opportunities to home access. The educational benefits alone justify such investment, but there will also be significant personal, social and financial benefits from any programme.

The Taskforce has established a set of underpinning principles and an educational vision for future interventions. This includes the requirement to address the wide range of inclusion issues and to ensure that any solutions provide safe and secure access to technology. It is proposed that the aim for any future intervention should be to bring benefits to all learners aged 5 to 19, and their families, by increasing opportunities to make better educational use of home access to technology.

Following a range of investigations and detailed analysis of the home access landscape, the Taskforce identified numerous examples of excellent practice in locations across the country. However, it is clear that practice is both inconsistent and that its impact is both limited and variable. Schools and local authorities need support and guidance to fully exploit home access. Some parents have a device and connectivity in the home, but have not fully considered the potential it has for supporting their children's progress. Some parents have not considered providing access at home, whilst others find financial and other economic barriers (credit rating, lack of a bank account) inhibit their ability to purchase home access, even where they realise the potential. Finally, there are groups of learners with particular needs whose situation requires additional intervention to ensure they can take advantage of access to technology beyond the school gates.

In this light the Taskforce proposes that any future programme should address equally three key work strands of activity:

- Maximising the benefits of home access by all
- Increasing the perceived value by parents
- Removing the barriers of cost for families with low incomes.

The Taskforce has taken into consideration the potential costs and other variables and recommends that Government financial assistance should offer low-income families an affordable opportunity to enter the market place for home access solutions, whilst working with industry and other organisations to address the other economic constraints on purchase.

Taking into consideration the key issue of sustainability and the aim of encouraging all families to appreciate the potential benefits of home access, the Taskforce recommends that any future initiative should be voluntary and should focus on supporting individuals, whilst embedding the flexibility to aggregate purchase, for example at the school level.

In conclusion, the Taskforce recommends that the Government should make a positive funding decision on home access based on the strong educational business case and the potential wider benefits to society. It is recommended that this funding must enable a coherent and rounded initiative which addresses the human components of support, guidance and change management, and drives parental awareness of the benefits as well as funding support for the most disadvantaged groups. It is proposed that Government should aim to target, possibly with different levels of financial support, families whose income represents the lowest 15 per cent.

To this end the Taskforce recommends that appropriate preparatory activity is commenced immediately to facilitate the launch of a programme in 2010 which would aim to ensure affordable opportunities to home access for all that want it.

1. Taskforce overview

12. With a scope covering all learners between the ages of 5 and 19 in full-time maintained education, the aim of the Taskforce was to identify possible solutions that could be differentiated according to needs and circumstances (Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 2). To support the Taskforce a Programme Board was established with seven work strands, led by members of the Taskforce (Appendix 3). The strands and their purposes are described below:
 - *Solutions* – to provide recommendations on delivery models, equipment and connectivity of sufficient scale and ease of administration to deliver opportunities for all school children aged 5 to 19 to have home access to ICT.
 - *Funding* – drawing on a wide range of expert sources, to provide a number of financial options to fund the recommended products and services that will ensure every child can access online learning resources and support from home.
 - *Stakeholder and communications management* – to develop a communications plan to include appropriate levels of PR and stakeholder engagement and support action.
 - *Safety and security* – to consider and define the range of safety and security issues to be addressed in order to ensure that children and young people covered by the Home Access Programme operate in a healthy, safe and secure online environment.
 - *Learning and change* – to research, evaluate and recommend a range of pedagogies which effectively support home learning, and ensure that online activities are fit for purpose and support the development of higher-order skills.
 - *Support* – to work with potential indirect beneficiaries and supporters of home access (parents, community representatives and others) to investigate their needs and requirements, including ongoing training provision and support.
 - *Cross-cutting* – to join up policy across Government and policy across DCSF (including Becta). Additionally, to examine research evidence and evaluate the development and potential delivery of home access and to ensure the programme promotes inclusion and recognises diversity.
13. The programme operated in two phases. Phase 1 was concerned with establishing the evidence base and principles to underpin any proposition in which each of the strands led research and analysis. In Phase 2 much of the work of the strands was drawn together in the detailed assessment, consultation and trialling of a wide range of components which would inform the final proposition and possible solutions which could be implemented and would be recommended by the Taskforce to the Minister.

2. Phase 1 – Identifying the evidence base

2.1 The evidence base for home access

Full references to citations can be found in Appendix 6.

2.1.1 Overview

14. Recent figures (BESA, 2007) indicate that around 1.4 million learners in schools in England do not have access to the internet at home, while around 1 million learners do not have access to a computer at home. There is a strong body of evidence which shows that socio-economically disadvantaged groups have historically been over-represented among those that are 'digitally excluded' (Valentine *et al.*, 2005; Livingstone and Bober, 2005). The latest figures from Ofcom (2008) show this is still the case, with only 35 per cent of socio-economic group DE being connected to the internet in 2007.
15. A review commissioned by UK Online Centres (FreshMinds, 2007) found a strong correlation between social exclusion and digital exclusion:
 - three quarters of socially excluded people are also digitally excluded (15 per cent of the adult population)
 - socially excluded people are three times more likely to be internet non-users than users.
16. The review also found that the number of internet users has reached a plateau, with little or no growth since late 2004. Furthermore, while the width of the digital divide is largely static, the increasing range of social and economic benefits associated with use of the internet means that the depth of digital exclusion is increasing for non-users. The review suggests that this situation is unlikely to be remedied by market forces, demographic changes, or technological developments. Internet-enabled mobile phones and digital TV, for example, have done little to reduce digital exclusion: only 1 per cent of people who access the internet via mobile phone or digital TV do not also access the internet via a computer.
17. There is also a body of evidence, detailed below, that suggests that access to ICT in the home has a positive impact on learning and achievement. A lack of intervention could therefore risk not only deepening the 'digital divide' but also increasing the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from better-off homes.

2.1.2 The case for home access

18. The most direct impact of home access is on educational outcomes for the learner, and specifically:
- impact on attainment
 - impact on the development of ICT skills, and learning skills more generally
 - impact on motivation and engagement
 - increased access to resources enabling self-directed learning
 - increased continuity of learning between different learning environments (home and school).

2.1.3 Educational achievement

19. There is evidence that ownership of a computer at home is linked with higher attainment: Schmitt and Wadsworth (2004) found a statistically significant relationship between households owning computers and higher GCSE results, even when other factors such as socio-economic status were taken into account.

 *With the intelligent use of ICT my school has raised its attainment levels from the bottom 5% to the top 27% in the last three years.* 
DCSF, Home Access to Technology Public Consultation, 2008

20. However, other studies suggest that it is the *type of use* which is key to higher attainment. OECD tests in maths and reading show that when computers are used for educational purposes, pupils with home access perform significantly better than those without; however, if computers are not used for educational purposes, they can have a negative impact on attainment (Fuchs and Woessmann, 2004). Similarly, a 2005 DfES study noted a statistically significant positive association between pupils' home use of ICT for educational purposes and improved attainment in national tests, while use of ICT for leisure activities was associated with decreases in attainment (Valentine *et al.*, 2005). This is of particular concern for disadvantaged households, where parents may lack the cultural capital to help their children make best use of ICT, and where children are more likely to use computers unsupervised (Bradbrook *et al.*, 2008).

2.1.4 ICT skills development and 'learning to learn'

21. Home access also seems to have a positive impact on learners' confidence and skills in using ICT (see for example Passey *et al.*, 2004; Somekh *et al.*, 2005). Learners learn new skills related to ICT in school and then practise these at home.

22. Home access also seems to help deepen more general learning experiences started in the school. For example, Passey *et al.* (2004) suggest that pupils who use ICT at home show a greater capacity to learn independently. Similarly, Kent and Facer (2004) have shown that home access to computers fosters a more independent, exploratory and iterative approach to learning. Home access makes 'anywhere anytime' learning possible and allows greater continuity of learning between school and home. In this way, home access can contribute to objectives of related educational policy agendas, such as personalising learning and the *Harnessing Technology E-strategy*.

Pupils have become more involved and more motivated, often recommending resources that they have found on the internet and being more critical of those which are provided at school.

Clare Hindley, ICT Test Bed Manager, Shireland Hall Primary School

2.1.5 Motivation and engagement

23. Learners appear to be more motivated in their studies as a result of being able to use a computer at home (Passey *et al.*, 2004, Valentine *et al.*, 2005). ICT makes homework less boring – by increasing the range of resources that learners have access to – and more efficient, by enabling learners to write and revise documents electronically rather than by hand. ICT also enhances the presentation of learners' work, giving them a greater sense of pride in their work. This increased motivation can lead to greater engagement with learning, which in turn can lead to less classroom disruption and help foster an improved learning environment for all learners.

We'll have access to a computer then we can do things when we want to and when we need to do the work.

NfER, Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008

2.1.6 Interaction with other policy agendas

24. The evidence base underpinning the home access initiative is largely centred around the educational benefits that could be accrued from it. However, it was also understood that the initiative might also contribute to a number of other policy agendas, including personalising learning, narrowing the attainment gap, raising standards to increase the competitiveness of 'UK plc', and assisting the transition to a knowledge-based economy, as outlined in the Lisbon Strategy [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon_strategy_en.htm]. Although the primary beneficiaries of the initiative would be learners aged 5 to 19, it was understood from very early in the scoping stages that the initiative could have important spin-off benefits for parents, teachers and the wider community.

25. Recent research (Makings *et al.*, forthcoming) indicates that the implementation of a home access scheme in schools can facilitate greater use of schools' learning platforms/VLEs. The scheme, in some cases, stimulated teaching staff to populate their learning platforms with resources, thereby turning an under-used resource into a valuable tool for learning. Home access may also encourage teachers to set electronic homework more often (Kitchen *et al.*, 2007).

2.1.7 Impact on parents and carers

26. Home access to technology has an impact not only on the learners themselves but also on their parents or carers. Research has identified parental engagement as a major factor in improving learner educational attainment (Harris and Goodall, 2007; Feinstein and Symons, 2005). Home access has the potential to increase parental engagement with their children's education and strengthen home-school links. Evidence suggests that parents take a greater interest in their children's school work when this involves technology (Comber *et al.*, 2002; Somekh *et al.*, 2005). Where home access also enables parental access to learning platforms, the ability to monitor their children's attendance, behaviour, achievement and activities at school is also likely to have benefits for learners.

 *It's not just about the pupils...it is about supplying computers for the whole family.* 

NfER, Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008

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27. There are also a number of benefits to parents/carers that are not related to their children's education. Evidence from existing home access schemes (Passey, 2005; David Perry Associates, 2005; Somekh *et al.*, 2005) suggests the following benefits:
- increasing parents' ICT skills
 - empowering parents in accessing government services online
 - empowering parents when they access job-related websites
 - increasing participation in online learning, thereby improving parents' chances of employment.
28. Although not directly related to the learners themselves, these benefits would have a positive impact on the economy by improving the skills base of the national workforce or increasing the cost-effectiveness of government service provision. It has been estimated that each digitally engaged citizen could contribute £200 towards GDP over three years (FreshMinds, 2007).

2.1.8 Economic benefits

29. An economic analysis by PwC (Makings *et al.*, forthcoming) shows that if targeted well, an intervention such as home access could provide benefits to the UK economy. Gains would mainly be in improved earnings for beneficiaries of the programme but there would also be some gains in decreased social funds needing to be targeted at unemployed members of society. However, the analysis suggests that the benefit ratio would strongly depend on how the intervention is targeted. For example, it suggests that the greatest benefits would be achieved if the initiative was rolled out for Key Stage 4 learners primarily. It is important to note, however, that the analysis is based on limited available evidence – the lack of longitudinal data in particular means that it is difficult to estimate the impact of home access from a younger age. Further economic analysis (DCSF, 2008) has suggested that the net benefits are estimated at between £0.80 and £1.00 for every £1 spent by Government, industry and parents in 2008-2011. The total financial costs to Government, industry and parents would be between £0.5 billion and £1.4 billion and benefits could be in the region of £1 billion to £2.5 billion and include educational benefits for pupils, employment benefits for parents and wider societal benefits.

2.1.9 Wider benefits of home access

30. Finally, there is a broad evidence base indicating that improved educational attainment can have positive impacts on a range of social outcomes (Gutman and Feinstein, 2008). For example, higher levels of education and greater educational engagement can lead to improved health, reduced crime rates and greater social cohesion. There exists an argument that social and digital exclusion are co-related (Dutton, Di Gennaro and Millwood Hargrave, 2005). Such benefits may be difficult to quantify, but it is plausible that interventions such as home access schemes, which operate at the interface of formal and informal learning, will have positive impacts on social inclusion. A commissioned study, 'The evaluation of models for learner home access to technology', expected in September 2008, may shed more light on the educational experience of a number of beneficiaries in some pathfinder projects aiming to deliver home access.

Recommendation 1

The Taskforce recommends that Government should intervene to overcome the existing market failure and growing digital divide with the aim of ensuring that all children and families can benefit from home access to technology.

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2.2 The existing home access landscape

31. The ability to exploit access to technology beyond the classroom has been something that many schools and organisations have explored and supported in different ways. The approaches adopted by individuals, schools and local authorities have varied enormously, often with very different starting positions, targeted outcomes and funding solutions. The strategic aims have included:
 - enabling pupils to carry on working on school activities beyond the school day
 - increasing parental engagement in their children's schooling
 - stimulating adult civic and economic participation
 - motivating pupils and improving engagement
 - practising skills and catch-up activities
 - increasing family ICT awareness and capability
 - improving adult life chances and reducing isolation
 - improving community cohesion.
32. These have been achieved in many ways, including:
 - offering content for use at home via websites or learning platforms
 - loan schemes for equipment (including recycled computers)
 - school or LA purchase of equipment (sometimes for key year groups)
 - local authority schemes for general access to the internet
 - exploiting community centres and other community-based venues, such as faith centres and libraries
 - national schemes such as Quality Protects, Playing for Success and UK Online Centres
 - third-sector or regeneration support for learners and individuals
 - corporately sponsored initiatives, such as Switched on Communities (DSGi)
 - mobile computing centres such as ICT buses
 - ICT-focused support for those out of school – either because of exclusion, mobile lifestyle or illness
 - opening school resources for extended periods beyond the school day.
33. Three specific examples of initiatives or schemes which have supported and promoted home access are listed on the following pages.

2.2.1 E-Learning Foundation

34. The e-Learning Foundation is a national education charity, formed in 2001, with a mission to eradicate the digital divide affecting schoolchildren in the UK; specifically, its aim is that every child should have access to learning technologies when and where they need them, and especially at home.
35. Since that time the Foundation has been heavily involved in a range of activities directly connected to home access. In 2001 it was asked to project manage the schools dimension (£5 million) of the Wired up Communities initiative, working with 33 schools in seven deprived areas in England. That was followed by its involvement in the ICT Test Bed Project, where the Foundation provided detailed guidance and case study material.
36. In 2006 the Foundation was invited to join both the Steering Group and the Evaluation Committee of the Computers for Pupils programme, and formed part of the launch of the programme to local authorities in October 2006.
37. Throughout this time a small team of advisers have worked with hundreds of schools ready to start addressing home access to learning technologies. As a result, about 50,000 pupils from just under 300 schools now have personal access and many more schools are poised to launch their own schemes. The programmes that have brought this about share some common features including equity (every child has the same opportunity to take part regardless of parental ability to contribute), home access (it is a condition of any grants provided to schools that equipment must be loaned for home use) and sustainability through the involvement of most parents making small but regular donations. The Foundation also provides a service to collect the donations from parents, relieving the schools of a potential administration burden.

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38. Grants in excess of £8 million have been provided to help schools initiate home access programmes, and over half of all schools that start their programmes continue to offer it to subsequent year groups without further grant aid (it is worth noting that these are mostly schools serving disadvantaged communities). While much of the funding has come from Government, the private sector has also contributed to the e-Learning Foundation, notably Microsoft, Graham Wylie (of Sage), DSGi and The Mercers' Company.

2.2.2 ICT Test Bed project

39. The ICT Test Bed project (2002–2006) was a £34 million scheme to explore the impact of pervasive access to technology in three clusters of schools in deprived areas over a four-year period. With regard to extending access, schools and local authorities involved explored a wide range of solutions to the issues surrounding home access and the digital divide that posed barriers to achieving the aspirations of the project. These solutions ranged from provision of laptops and mobile devices in rural areas to provision of desktop computers to cohorts of learners in urban areas. Unfortunately, funding was not sufficient to tackle the provision of broadband connectivity to home devices and this limited the impact of the home access provision on uptake and use of learning platforms by learners and parents. Despite the connectivity problems, the home access provided across the project achieved some of the key aims of strengthening the links between home and school and in particular, raising levels of parental engagement and interest in their children's learning. The lessons learnt from the ICT Test Bed project have been incorporated into Becta's self-review framework to help to ensure that schools recognise the importance of being aware of the needs of learners and families in their local communities and develop the appropriate capacity to support the extended opportunities for learning that home access brings.
40. As part of the ICT Test Bed project implementation in Sandwell, over 1,600 desktop computers were provided through schools to families within the local communities.
41. In Barking and Dagenham vertical clusters of schools provided over 2,000 devices to families to ensure provision and continuity of learning experience during transition between schools. These devices gave unprecedented levels of home access to families in the schools involved in the project, allowing greater opportunity to use school-provided software at home, access the developing learning platforms and make use of the information and resources provided through school websites – including content developed to help parents support their children's learning. ICT Test Bed schools within the authority benefited from centralised procurement, creation of bespoke content (developed at Barking College) to meet local needs and contexts along with centralised provision of management information systems and portal services.

42. In Durham laptops were used by primary schools to increase the level of home use and access to ICT, and Bishop Auckland College supported the roll-out of refurbished computers to families at the secondary and special school. This allowed schools to make creative use of ICT so that the schools and learners were able to produce media-rich content to share with, and support, parents.

2.2.3 Computers for Pupils

43. The Computers for Pupils initiative aims to provide equipment and a safe internet connection to the homes of around 100,000 pupils in the most disadvantaged areas of England. Covering more than 1,000 secondary schools and two-thirds of all local authorities, the two-year, £90 million programme (2006–2008) is focused on students living in the 10 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
44. Schools themselves, with advice from the local authorities, decide on the most appropriate equipment for their students, providing a desktop computer, the latest laptops or mobile/handheld devices. Connections to the learning network, educational resources in school and a filtered internet service can be through fixed lines (DSL) or mobile (3G) services, and several areas in aligned initiatives are installing wireless connections covering whole communities.
45. The initiative will help narrow the gap between these pupils and their peers by offering the same opportunities to support learning, engagement and achievement. In many areas, the programme is also being used to provide home access for particular disadvantaged groups, including looked-after children.

 *It's a cultural change for teachers as well as pupils.* 

NfER, *Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008*

46. In a very tight timescale, the schools and local authorities have overcome considerable challenges to implement the programme and significantly improve the life chances for this group of learners and their families.

2.2.4 Conclusions

47. The analysis of the existing landscape illustrates that there are a number of different initiatives which have had some impact at either a local or national level. However, the Taskforce is convinced that the myriad of ambitions and approaches previously undertaken, whilst broadening the audience and/or recipients, will not provide the reach, coherence and sustainability to resolve the increasing digital divide at a national level.

Recommendation 2

The Taskforce recommends that Government should aim to accelerate change by investing in a national coordinated intervention with the aim of achieving universal home access within five years.

2.3 Guiding principles for future home access activity

48. Following discussion and valuable activity by a number of the strand groups, the Taskforce considered and agreed the core principles for guiding the work were that:
- the programme is fundamentally driven from the needs of learners, their families and communities, rather than being a technology-led development
 - its aim is to improve the quality of learning through supported access to technology for all learners
 - any intervention should be national but targeted on those most in need (as determined by measures of deprivation operative from 2008), suitably differentiated to recognise the specific needs of particular groups (such as children in care), and align with programmes aimed at supporting those groups in order to maximise impact and secure value for money
 - the programme should aim for sustainability beyond the next Comprehensive Spending Review
 - the investment should represent value for money and give the best educational and social returns possible
 - the system should be simple to administer and not place a significant additional burden on schools
 - the programme should focus on the whole family as well as the individual learner.
49. These principles underpinned the development of an educational vision which the Taskforce agreed should set the parameters for further work and any future home access programmes.

2.3.1 Educational vision

50. The core vision of the Home Access Taskforce is:
- Home access to technology providing all learners with access to learning where and when they need it, achieved through providing:
 - increased opportunities for all learners to engage with the curriculum and interact with its resources beyond the confines of the school day
 - increased opportunities for all learners to extend their learning into areas that match their personal interests, abilities and aspirations
 - increased opportunities for all learners to develop the skills they need to pursue and drive their learning independently
 - increased opportunities for all learners to become more involved in supporting their own and their families' learning
 - increased opportunities for families of learners to maintain the skills needed to participate in their communities and an increasingly 'connected' world.

- Many of these benefits are already being delivered for some learners in some schools (for example, in ICT Test Bed schools). The aim is for *all* learners to be able to reap these benefits. However, the delivery of the benefits will be differentiated according to need, with any central intervention focused on the most disadvantaged.
- The benefits for learners of having home access to technology will only be realised if there is agreed support for learners and their families from education practitioners and the wider community. In turn, education practitioners and the wider community will benefit from the improved and increased opportunities for engagement by learners.
- By having access to technology in their home the learners and their families will be able to gain a greater understanding of:
 - what the learner is doing in their education and why
 - what the education provider is doing to support them in their learning and why
 - how digital technologies can support them to engage in activities that are meaningful to them and meet their needs and interests
 - how and why the family can actively support learners
 - how the education provider and the community can support them and how they can also benefit from the fact that learners have home access to technology.

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Recommendation 3

The Taskforce recommends that the principles and educational vision developed by the Taskforce should form the basis for any Government funded intervention

2.4 Work strand activity

51. The Taskforce established seven work strands, each of which was led by a Taskforce Member. The strands drew upon a wide range of expertise both from within the Taskforce and the organisations represented on it, and by reaching out to include expertise from a wide range of stakeholders. The Taskforce would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who gave up their time and contributed to the deliberations of the different strands. A full list of those who supported the strands can be found in Appendix 3.
52. Most of the groups established regular meetings and all initiated a range of activity and projects to examine appropriate issues with a view to identifying specific recommendations for future activity.

2.4.1 Solutions

53. This work strand was largely formed from the Industry group (as part of a market sounding activity) that had been previously advising DCSF and Becta on the early stages of programme development since the summer of 2006. Other members included representatives from local authorities, government agencies and third-sector organisations. The group was always open to new members and drew in other expertise as required.
54. Outputs from the group included the following:
 - The group developed and explored in detail four potential solution models for the delivery of Universal Home Access, producing a paper which allowed the Taskforce to advise on those which it considered practicable to take forward. The Taskforce commissioned the group to do further work on 'school supported' and 'school led' models and to cease work on 'public provision' and pure 'voucher' models. The group's work on these models led to development of a new school-supported 'incentive' model which led to the launch of Home Access Proof of Concepts at the end of 2007.
 - The group produced the Functional Specification for Home Access solutions (Appendix 5) which was approved and adopted by the Taskforce in September. This involved taking the educational vision produced by the education group and rapidly turning this into a set of user-focused functional requirements for any home access solution.

2.4.2 Funding

55. The Funding strand assessed a wide range of issues associated with funding from both the demand and supply perspectives. There was a strong link between this group and the Solutions strand and the leads attended each other's working groups to contribute and ensure convergence. The group investigated funding from a range of perspectives, including looking at sources (European funding, level of required funding and parental contributions, for example), procurement approaches and issues (such as leasing, gift aid and government capital schemes) and the implications of the audience which the initiative is designed to support (eligibility criteria, how families currently buy technology, the cost of truancy and exclusions, and additional costs for pupils with special educational needs, for example).
56. This research initially contributed to a number of specific outputs, including:
- a model to assess the level of impact the programme would have on the digital divide given different levels of Government funding and different price predictions on device and connectivity costs
 - a range of funding options for consideration that summarise the implications of the above model, including a 'do nothing' option
 - a paper on the dilemma facing schools and LAs in trying to interpret current guidelines on using lease finance for home access programmes
 - a paper on the issues facing individuals on low incomes and/or with poor credit ratings when trying to acquire IT for home use, including developments in paying through pre-paid cash cards.
57. The content of the strand was then synthesised into the main Taskforce reports.

2.4.3 Stakeholder and communications management

58. The communications contribution in support of the Home Access Programme fell into three related strands:
- communications strategy
 - proof of concept communications support
 - links with Becta's Next Generation Learning campaign.

59. The first output was the drafting of an over-arching communications strategy, produced at the start of the project, which set out:
- core messages – key background information on the project, its management, aims and objectives, rationale and scope in FAQ format
 - a standard presentation which could be adapted and used in conjunction with a core script as a starting point for discussing home access
 - partner communications – a plan for communicating the work of the Home Access Programme to partners
 - an activity calendar – an activity grid created for external and partner communications activity and events, showing potential opportunities for including home access messages within existing partner communications.
60. Second, a welcome pack was produced to support the proof of concept pilots, which included a covering note; a safety CD from ChildNet (Know IT All), a DVD specifically about Home Access; and a Questions and Answers document, setting out further information about the pilot.
61. Third, in parallel with the proof of concept pilots, linkages have been considered between home access and Becta's Next Generation Learning campaign, which aims to target parents, learners and employers with messages about the benefits of technology in learning. The intention is that target audiences will become sufficiently informed and motivated to then engage with their local school, college or training provider about the optimum level of technology provided by these institutions to support learners.

2.4.4 Safety and security

62. In considering the underpinning need to ensure 'that any plans include and promote safe and responsible use' a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted. An expert reference group was drawn from local authorities, industry, CEOP, HSE and children's charities representing looked-after children and Travellers. Additionally, further consultation was undertaken with the member of the Home Secretary's Taskforce on Child Protection on the Internet – Education Subgroup.
63. Initially the group identified the range of safety issues that would need to be addressed and offered a paper to the Taskforce to ensure it was kept abreast of current thinking.

 *The provision of a clear set of nationally produced safety standards with supporting advice and guidance for parents is essential.* 

DCSF, Home Access Public Consultation, 2008

64. As part of the proof of concept pilots, care was taken to ensure that safety issues were fully considered. Considerable input was provided to the initiative to ensure that all solutions were able to consider and then implement appropriate safety options. Initial findings have illustrated that it is possible for suppliers to provide appropriate e-safety applications, pre-loading and pre-configuring as required. The PoC pilots have also indicated how parents and carers can be reached to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities as well as the risks of being online.
65. Building on the Byron Review and discussions at the Taskforce, it was clear that improving safety for young people needed to be a vital component of the Home Access Programme irrespective of whether the Government is providing financial support to a family or not. As a result, the options on funding and ownership were reviewed and a range of solutions for embedding improved safety features in the programme was proposed to the final Taskforce meeting.

2.4.5 Learning and change

66. This strand discussed the implications of home access from an institutional perspective, both in terms of the pedagogical changes required to exploit technology in the home, and from the workforce and business management perspective. The group brought together expertise from a diverse range of stakeholders and contributed in the first instance to refining the detail of the educational vision and functional expectations from an institutional and learning perspective. Inclusion issues were also raised and informed further work on the topic.

 *[Home access] will help teachers to accept that ICT is important and setting ICT-related work is an important part of the curriculum.* 

NfER, Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008

67. The discussions were wide ranging and addressed topics such as how schools need to support the learner, the alignment of the programme with other initiatives, and incentives for the workforce. It was recognised that strong leadership is essential to engage teacher commitment to approaches that exploit technology at home. Home access issues need to be embedded within high-quality lesson planning, coaching, consistent scaffolding skills, and mentoring. The group also recommended that if schools were to maximise the benefit of home access from a workforce perspective, it was essential to plan for different technologies being available within the school, as well as practical management issues such as being prepared for homework being returned early.

 *Help pupils who... have to stay behind to do homework to get better access.* 

NfER, Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008

68. The group helped to develop an understanding of the impact home access could have on schools including implications for:
- training and communication, such as how to actively involve families and build the learning relationships
 - enhanced information literacy skills for both children and families
 - the school structure and effective workforce engagement
 - parental engagement opportunities and extended schools
 - the school culture and approach to learning and teaching.
69. A paper was provided to the Taskforce and informed the dialogue that subsequently took place with strategic partners on maximising the benefits of home access. The group also worked with the Support strand in the development of a DVD of exemplars of existing and developing practice.

2.4.6 Support

70. The Support strand set out to provide a clear understanding of support needs for any home access proposition, which was illustrated and exemplified through existing practice, knowledge and experience.
71. Central to this work was establishing an understanding that 'support' was understood as the mechanisms and activities by which families and communities can be informed, engaged and enabled to support the home access initiative, so they are best able to support the learners with whom they are concerned.

 *In order to keep up with the child's computer skills it is necessary for parents to update their own skills.* 

Families Consultation

72. It soon became clear that a more complex model of engagement exists around support, in terms of who provides it, in what ways, and which ways may have extended benefits. This model was used as the base for the development of a DVD which illustrated existing practice in different areas of the country. Developed in partnership with the Learning and Change Strand, this exemplified some of the possibilities for home access, especially among different community groups. The development of the DVD illustrated:
- that some schools, through pilot or other activities, have begun to develop and make use of home access
 - those that have undertaken this can see the benefits, as can their learners and their families
 - that this is not a simple school-to-learner interaction as there are broader benefits for the school and the learner, the family and the community and associated interactions and support for one another can be obtained.

73. The major contribution of the Support strand was a report which outlined the support requirements and expectations of families and the community. Key findings from the report included that:
- the majority of families have used computers but they lack confidence in supporting their children
 - they would welcome training provided by the school in supporting their children to learn by using technology, and in modern teaching methods
 - families felt a need to know what was expected of them in response to having personal information made available
 - technical support in the form of help-lines is considered essential
 - consideration should be given to the role of children in inducting parents to adult support modules as part of their own school work.

2.4.7 Cross-cutting policy

74. This strand focused on coordinating with policy teams and government partners and obtaining the additional evidence required to support the Taskforce. The first task was to produce a 'policy map' outlining key initiatives and policy which would have relevance to the programme. This was used to identify key groups who should be offered opportunities to comment on Taskforce papers.

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75. The strand engaged the analysis team at DCSF in the development of an economic model, based on government methodologies which could provide an assessment of the return on investment. This was helpful for considering options and in particular, to establish the return on investment which contributed to the Impact Assessment.
76. During the life of the Taskforce the group has engaged with other sections of DCSF and other Government departments to ensure they have been made aware of Taskforce developments. The findings from this interaction then fed into appropriate groups and the broader process.
77. This strand has also been important in supporting the second phase of establishing the proposition. The team of departmental officials has collated material and managed the process for the Impact Assessment (Section 3.6) and the public consultation which ran from January to April 2008 (Appendix 8).

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3. Phase 2 – Confirming the landscape

78. With key principles established, the second phase of Taskforce activity focused on two parallel streams of activity; one to trial or investigate key ideas and issues whilst confirming a range of evidence, and the second, to develop the proposition. This section outlines the first of these streams of activity, which covered:
- trialling aspects of implementation in 37 schools
 - evaluating safety issues
 - researching and assessing inclusion issues
 - dialogue with Government and stakeholders
 - completing a public consultation
 - completing a government regulatory impact assessment.

3.1 Proof of concept trialling

79. In response to a proposal put to the Taskforce in October 2007, the Solutions strand worked with Becta to plan and establish a range of pilots to explore a number of aspects which could inform future decision making. These included:
- cost models, including the propensity to spend when offered discounts on home access devices and connectivity
 - safety solutions for a range of delivery models
 - logistics for delivery and support in a number of scenarios
 - variables influencing take-up of offers.
80. Home access proof of concept (PoC) trials were established in 37 schools across eight local authorities. Of these, 17 were based on existing equity and Computers for Pupils schemes and 20 schools based on an incentive model. In the incentive model, families with children eligible for free school meals have received discounts of between 50 and 75 per cent of the cost of equipment for home access. Apple, PC World Education and RM have designed new business processes, produced bespoke marketing material, and worked closely with schools to support the incentive model pilots.
81. The PoCs were not full trials, but focused on investigating specific elements of future delivery models, in view of time constraints.

82. The trials have highlighted a number of common issues that have contributed valuable lessons as the range of potential solutions is reviewed, including developing a scalable administrative model. The PricewaterhouseCoopers research team will continue to monitor and analyse progress in the PoCs to draw out further lessons. Initial findings show that the keys to success for the incentive model are: simplicity, access to cash and/or payment methods that do not involve credit checks, embedded safety packages, multi-channel marketing, and strong school leadership and support (including promotion of access to school information and learning materials through a learning platform, for example). Some early findings from the evaluation of the incentive model PoCs include the following:
- Parents in all income groups show a relatively high level of interest in the incentive model offer – with an average conversion rate (turning attendance at a parents' evening into an actual order) of 76 per cent – irrespective of whether they were eligible for a subsidised discount.
 - 94 per cent of parents with low household incomes eligible for the discounted offer, and who attended a parents' evening, have indicated that they intend to take up the offer. Word of mouth is already having an impact, as orders from low-income families are running higher than the numbers who attended a parents' evening to have the offer explained to them.
 - New hardware on the market has led to device pricing, with the discount, as low as £3 a month for low-income families in schools running the incentive model. (It should be noted, however, that this is a specific device with a low specification.)
 - Connectivity pricing remains an issue – take-up of both 3G and ADSL options has been low overall; however, there is evidence that parents have been able to take advantage of low-priced 'bundled' offers from alternative service providers after the hardware has been purchased.
 - Major suppliers have begun to show willingness to create special price structures to support this programme (particularly for low-income families).
 - Features such as insurance against accidental damage, three-year warranty, pre-loading of internet safety measures, and avoidance of credit checking may, in varying degrees, influence the decision to order.

3.2 Safety

83. Since the Taskforce was established, the Prime Minister asked Tanya Byron to conduct an independent review looking at the risks to children from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games. The recommendations of *Safer Children in a Digital World* were accepted in full and an action plan is being developed in response.

“Parents need to be supported and encouraged to set boundaries, discuss e-safety and encourage appropriate online behaviours with their children.”

DCSF, Home Access Public Consultation, 2008

84. The Byron Review recognised that through the right combination of successes against three objectives – reducing availability, restricting access and increasing resilience to harmful and inappropriate material online – it is possible to adequately manage the risks to children online. The review recognises existing efforts in pursuit of these objectives, and identifies the need for a more strategic approach if industry, families, Government and others in the public and third sectors are going to work together effectively to help keep children safe.
85. The review proposes the establishment of a UK Council on Child Internet Safety which will lead the development of a strategy with two core elements: better regulation and better information and education. To build on this there are specific ambitions regarding both tools and technology that can be promoted and developed to help support parents and children to manage online risks, and how improved information and education about e-safety can have a real impact.

 *Appropriate use [of technology] doesn't just happen – it needs to be guided by parents being brought on board as partners.* 

Parents and campaigning in DCSF, Home Access Public Consultation, 2008

86. The Taskforce recognises the value of this intervention and proposes that any future home access initiative works closely with the organisations responsible for putting the Byron recommendations into place. The investigations and assessments carried out by the Safety strand, combined with the safety element in the PoC trials, provided further insight into the specific issues in the context of home access. As a result, the Taskforce recognises the need for a balanced and comprehensive strategy, which aligns with the Byron recommendations, but also addresses the particular issues of home access. There are a number of areas which must be addressed within this strategy:
- Safety settings and accounts – where any Government funding or accreditation is in place, approved safety software should be pre-configured so it is set for the intended audience and an appropriate account should be pre-configured for the parent or guardian.
 - Accreditation – in any accreditation scheme for appropriate devices and connectivity, safety features and standards must be embedded in any accredited suppliers' solutions; activity will be required to ensure suppliers are made fully aware of the issues.
 - Training and support – the need for training and support for different elements of the delivery chain will need to be addressed to ensure that provision can be offered at the appropriate point in the chain. In particular, while high-quality existing materials should be made available, new activities launched in response to the Byron Review must also be taken into account.
 - Legal framework and guidance – there is a need for a comprehensive but user-friendly legal and good practice framework to be developed and disseminated so that all partners in the delivery and support chain understand what is expected of them.

- Risk assessment – all schools are required to consider risk assessments of pupils who fall into a range of vulnerable categories, and any home access provision should now be included in such risk assessments.
- Pre-owned machines – older pre-owned machines are not acceptable for any universal home access scheme. Where more recent pre-owned machines become available all solutions will need to comply with the functional specifications and service requirements developed as part of the home access initiative, which would include ensuring the machines are thoroughly cleaned and appropriate guarantees are provided. It must be ensured that no social stigma is attached to the ownership or acquisition of pre-owned equipment.
- Further research – this is a fast-changing arena and as such will require ongoing review. There are also areas which are both complex and legally unclear, such as monitoring, which will require further research.

Recommendation 4

The Taskforce recommends that any home access initiative must fully address the safety agenda by complementing and building on the Byron Review by:

- establishing and disseminating a robust legal and operational safety framework for all
- building safety requirements into any device or connectivity schemes which support learners and parents
- ensuring that support and guidance are available in appropriate ways for all involved.

3.3 Inclusion and home access

3.3.1 Inclusion

87. There are a range of learners who for a variety of reasons are 'hard to reach' and may be unintentionally excluded from the home access initiative and/or find it difficult to engage in it. A number of measures have been taken to counteract this, including convening focus groups for those working with socially disadvantaged groups, ethnic minorities and disability organisations. Discussions have also taken place with other departments about how current initiatives can both contribute to, and be strengthened by, the Home Access initiative. Meetings have taken place with the Bercow Review team at the DCSF, the Gypsy Roma Traveller Team and the Child Poverty Unit amongst others.

88. Alongside this, seminars have been held (and will be reconvened at regular intervals) to consult groups such as National Children's Homes, Gingerbread, e-LAMP, the Inclusion Trust, and organisations working with learners with disabilities and special educational needs. Becta's own SEN Expert Reference Group has also devoted one of its meetings to underlining specific issues for all hard-to-reach groups.
89. While home access will not be able to deliver all the needs of all marginalised learners, it must take specific actions and work with partners to ensure full inclusion of all learners. Many of these learners are represented by voluntary bodies which have in-depth understanding of their needs and well developed networks to support them. It will be vital during the planning for any implementation of home access to work with these organisations, in order to benefit from their knowledge and networks to trial specific activities.

“Parents with access have become more involved with the children's work, and a key benefit has been that they have also communicated significantly more with staff through the medium of the network. Parents now email staff or the head regarding their children's schooling.”

Clare Hindley, ICT Test Bed Manager, Shireland Hall Primary School

3.3.2 Pupils with special educational needs

90. There are a range of issues with regard to pupils with special educational needs and in particular those that require some form of support to make use of technology. In January 2007 the Office of National Statistics recorded that 229,110 pupils (2.8 per cent of the school population) have statements of SEN and 1,333,430 pupils (16 per cent of the school population) are identified by schools as having SEN but no statement. Provision to meet the specific needs of these learners is made through the local authority identified in the SEN statement, or by the school, or by parents/carers. Although regulations apply to all local authorities and schools, the quality and effectiveness of provision varies greatly across England.
91. One group in particular presents a challenge to home access: those for whom computer access is ineffective unless supported by assistive technology. The patchiness of expertise in matching pupils' needs to the provision of assistive technology cannot be remedied through this programme since it is a much broader issue, but there are certain points that must be considered so that the benefits of the programme are maximised for these learners.

92. Issues for consideration include:

- The current situation of patchy provision of assistive technology means that the ability to benefit from home access to learning is inconsistent and risks creating a division between those who have and those who have not, been involved. As the programme is implemented, close contact will need to be maintained with all those involved in the provision of assistive technology, in order to ensure that it is used to best effect. The experience of those involved in home access should feed into the outcomes of the Bercow Review, and influence the implementation of 'Priorities for Action' identified in the DCSF response to the Education and Skills Committee report on Special Educational Needs (October 2006). In particular is the commitment to 'build capacity in the children's workforce to identify and meet children's needs' and 'promote a flexible continuum of local provision'.
- As the benefits of access to learning from home become clear, demands from parents, carers and learners themselves to be fully included and equipped with the appropriate assistive technology will increase. This will also exacerbate the need to produce guidance and influence any training programmes for this group of learners and those caring for them.
- There will continue to be some learners who would benefit from assistive technology but are still not provided with the appropriate technology and support through statements or through their school. In these cases the programme itself will need to consider the provision it is able to make as part of its work on 'removing barriers to cost of home access'. It is difficult to estimate what this cost will be as it will depend on provision from other sources. However, it is likely to be in the region of £5M capital costs per year, based on the funding for the Communication Aids Project (CAP) 2001–2005. Moreover, capital cost is only one element of making provision for these groups.

3.3.3 Conclusions

93. The analysis of the needs of hard-to-reach groups has identified a number of changes and adjustments at several levels within the system that would be required if the initiative is to meet its intention of being inclusive of all learners. They include strategic and policy changes as well as clarification that existing approaches and provision need to include consideration of access to learning from home. Funding for assistive technology is a key element for home access, and provision would need to align with outcomes from other initiatives such as the Bercow Review as well as giving consideration on how provision (if any) could be made as part of funding to support future home access.

94. The need to develop pedagogical practice in the area of supporting disadvantaged groups must be built into any work on broader professional development and home access as well as looking at ways to develop regional expertise that schools, local authorities and others can draw on. Maximising the benefits for these groups will need to draw in all those that support them and work through a range of partners to ensure the offer is presented in a way which clearly meets their needs and aspirations.
95. The Taskforce recognises the good work that has been undertaken and is still under way to ensure home access developments cover the needs of all learners, whatever their circumstances and individual needs. This work should continue so that learners with specific needs have the means and understanding of how to access the supportive technologies they may need. Teachers, other professionals and carers should appreciate how the use of technology can assist pupils who have particular needs, and be clear of the routes and agencies responsible for supplying these.

Recommendation 5

The Taskforce recommends that any home access programme should be fully inclusive.

In particular:

- agencies providing assistive technology and resources to enable those with individual needs to access learning should consider how best to complement any home access initiative
- those working with hard-to-reach groups should be provided with opportunities for training and development in assessing individual needs
- any communications activity should explicitly reference the needs of learners in hard-to-reach groups.

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3.4 Dialogue with Government and stakeholders

3.4.1 Partner dialogue

96. The Taskforce was convinced that the challenge of achieving universal home access would necessitate effective dialogue and joint working between any lead agency and a range of partner agencies and stakeholders. As a result of work in the Support and Learning and Change strands, it was proposed that it would be valuable to take more detailed evidence from, and explore a range of issues with, key organisations whose current activities could support future home access activity.
97. Meetings were arranged during March and provided the opportunity for Sir Mark Grundy and Derek Wise from the Taskforce to engage with senior colleagues from the organisations below:
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
 - National College for School Leadership
 - Training and Development Agency for Schools
 - Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
 - Partnerships for Schools
 - National Association of Head Teachers
 - Association of School and College Leaders.
98. The findings from these meetings are summarised in Appendix 7, and the key issues raised included the importance of:
- agencies working together to offer consistent messages on home access and to ensure that universal home access can act as a catalyst for more coherent services to families
 - the support required by schools to change pedagogy and practice
 - consulting and engaging local authorities in the programme to encourage joining up at a local level
 - exploiting the many synergies that exist across current education initiatives by better joint working arrangements.

3.4.2 Departmental and cross-government dialogue

99. The Home Access Programme has the potential to deliver wide benefits to families that are related to policy objectives within DCSF and those of several other Government departments. Within DCSF meetings have been held with policy colleagues across the Department to ensure a joined-up approach to programme development and afford an opportunity for stakeholders and partners to become actively involved. The policy areas are listed below, together with their particular relevance for home access:
- Building Schools for the Future (BSF) – as the appropriate use of technology will be key to developing the new education spaces of the 21st century
 - Extended Schools – as these schools work with the local authority, local providers and other schools to provide access to a core offer¹ of integrated services including access to technology outside school hours
 - Home–School Agreements – as these offer schools the opportunity to communicate their ethos and to engage parents in their children's learning through technology out of school.
100. We have also looked closely at how the programme can help deliver key departmental agendas and reviews, including:
- *The Children's Plan* – home access will contribute to several of the Children's Plan 2020 goals including 'All young people participating in positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote well-being and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk'.
 - *Every Child Matters* – home access supports several of the outcomes planned through policies and approaches involving children's services.
 - The Byron Review – the Taskforce is keen to ensure that its recommendations for safeguarding children's use of technologies will be applied in home access to technology.
101. It is equally apparent that there are much wider benefits to the Home Access Programme than those solely related to education. For example, by helping to close the digital divide, the programme can improve the skills of family members, help build community cohesion and improve social and life chances. Full realisation of these benefits is unlikely, however, unless Government departments (and other agencies) work closely together to build on synergies across programmes.

 *The school was so good at teaching computer skills that we both learnt from each other.* 

Families Consultation

1. www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools

102. In order to achieve this and maximise the benefits to families of the programme, officials from DCSF have held a series of meetings with counterparts from other departments to look at how the programme could be aligned across Government. These meetings to date have involved the following:

- Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS) – to discuss and evaluate how home access will increase the level of IT skills within families and the contribution this will make to improving longer term education and employment opportunities.
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – to examine the challenges and barriers to closing the digital divide and how disadvantaged communities could benefit in terms of greater cohesion and empowerment through increased access to technology.
- Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) – to analyse issues around the availability of high-speed fixed line and wireless internet access, and look at the levers needed to ensure 100 per cent coverage across England. Discussions have also taken place on the difficulties that some families have in obtaining affordable credit.
- Central Office of Information (COI) – to ensure that communication activities around home access are closely aligned with related campaigns and to discuss how Myguide² could be a key tool for families when accessed through UK Online Centres.
- Ofcom – as the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, Ofcom has been keen to support our communications activity to maximise the benefits of the programme, promote the value of universal home access and increase levels of media literacy.

This dialogue between officials within DCSF and with colleagues in partner organisations and other government departments is an ongoing, evolving process that will ensure that as the Home Access Programme moves from planning to delivery phases, it will continue to maximise its benefits to families and constructively join up with other government programmes.

2. www.myguide.gov.uk

3.5 Public consultation

103. In spring 2008 a public consultation was held to help the Taskforce and officials make better informed decisions by allowing them to check assumptions, bring in new ideas and gather broader views from a wide variety of individuals and organisations.
104. The consultation was available online between 9 January and 4 April 2008 at www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/. It attracted 148 responses from a wide variety of sources, with many responses representing a group of individuals or organisations. Whilst it is not possible to say with accuracy how many individuals' views were included in the responses, it is likely to exceed 500.
105. The responses have been analysed and a snapshot of the views is provided below with more in-depth analysis of the responses at Appendix 8:
 - There was overwhelming approval of the aims of the programme and agreement that the Government should encourage the use of technology and the internet in the home.
 - Both computers and access to the internet were viewed as essential to modern-day living and enablers to educational achievement, lifelong learning, employment and networking.
 - It is essential that this needs to be backed up by support for those who are unfamiliar with such technology or who have concerns about its use.
 - Government should ensure safe use of the internet even if this raises the cost of home access by providing training, guidance, pre-installed safety measures.
 - Financial help should be targeted at families from the lowest income groups, although it was felt that other disadvantaged groups should be considered, such as those with limited disposable income, those with disabilities or special educational needs and those living in remote rural areas.
 - Views were mixed on whether technological devices should be owned, leased or borrowed, the majority opting for the last, given that this would relieve families of the responsibility for upgrading their equipment and arranging for technical support.
 - A list of equipment, which met minimum functional requirements, was thought to be a good idea to help those families who would otherwise be unable to determine what technology they needed. The need to review the list regularly and base it on functionality rather than equipment, was proposed as a way to keep it up to date with advances in technology.
 - Industry has an important role to play in enabling the sustainable success of home access, by developing technology to make it more affordable, accessible and safer, providing technical support and supplying equipment.

106. A wide range of comments was received as part of the consultation from individuals and organisations in the public, commercial and charity sectors.
107. Detailed results of the consultation are available online [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations].

3.6 Regulatory Impact Assessment

108. The DCSF is currently preparing a Regulatory Impact Assessment of the Home Access Programme. Impact Assessments provide an assessment of the costs, benefits and risks of a proposal on individuals and organisations within the private, public and voluntary sectors. They identify and assess all the options, both regulatory and non-regulatory and determine whether the benefits justify the costs. The Home Access assessment looks in detail at the following areas.

3.6.1 Research and evidence base

109. A review of existing studies, literature and other evidence was gathered from experts, partner and stakeholder organisations to ensure that the programme is evidence informed. The published studies used in the review included recent notable reports including *Children and the internet* (Ofcom, 2007).
110. This review allowed policy makers to construct a robust evidence base that made sound arguments for the programme and covered a diverse range of topics including:
 - learner motivation, attainment, behaviour and attendance
 - expectations of benefits to families
 - increased parental involvement in a child's learning
 - the impact on schools and colleges
 - the relationship between technology and personalised learning
 - teaching practice in the classroom
 - teacher workloads and other burdens on the workforce
 - remote access to the school from home
 - changes to school ICT infrastructure
 - removing the barriers to home access for all families.

3.6.2 Economic appraisal

111. This section assessed the validity of government intervention in the market for home access and analysed the costs and benefits of the programme in financial terms. This pointed to two specific reasons why the benefits to society will be greater if there is government intervention:
- Firstly, access to technology in the homes of disadvantaged families is low, and has remained low over recent years even as prices have fallen. Households are unlikely to have the necessary funds available to purchase a device and connectivity and they are also likely to be unwilling or unable to obtain credit to fund such expenditure. Even when households are able to afford the technology, parents are often unaware of the range of benefits that the technology can bring and the positive impact on future life chances.
 - Secondly, the Home Access Programme has a positive equity impact, an important Government objective. The programme will target available funding at low-income households so the scheme also has a positive distributional impact; it also helps to narrow the opportunity gap between the rich and poor. Improving the life chances of those from low-income groups also helps to increase social mobility, which helps create a more equal society.

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112. The economic appraisal found that the Home Access Programme has a potential positive net present value. The net benefits are estimated at between £0.80 and £1.00 for every £1 spent by government, industry and parents in 2008–2011. The total financial costs to Government, industry and parents would be between £0.5 billion and £1.4 billion and benefits could be in the region of £1 billion to £2.5 billion and include educational benefits for pupils, employment benefits for parents and wider societal benefits.

3.6.3 Specific Impact Tests

113. This series of individual tests looked at particular aspects of the UK society and economy. Through the completion of the tests the Home Access Programme demonstrated a number of positive impacts that make a clear contribution to families' wellbeing. In addition, the programme was not found to stifle, restrict or over-regulate the UK economy in any way. The programme will, however, contribute to an increase in carbon usage and as a result, various offsetting measures are being considered.
114. The tests covered the following areas:
- competition assessment
 - health impact assessment
 - small firms impact test
 - race equality
 - legal aid assessment
 - disability equality
 - sustainable development
 - gender equality
 - carbon assessment
 - human rights
 - environmental impact
 - rural proofing
115. The Impact Assessment process as a whole has helped policy makers to study the rationale, scope, delivery and consequences of the programme, improved the quality of advice to ministers and encouraged informed public debate.
116. The Impact Assessment will be published on the DCSF website³

4. A universal home access proposition

117. The Taskforce considered a wide range of options and agreed that any programme which supports achieving home access must set its sights on ensuring the system as a whole will benefit from the universality. As a result future programmes would need to deliver benefits:
- *for all learners*, including increased opportunities for learning experiences and enhanced outcomes
 - *for all parents*, including better access to school and opportunities to engage more easily in their children's learning
 - *for all learners and parents*, through access to affordable, high-quality, tailored home access solutions that are age appropriate and have safety embedded
 - *for families with low incomes and children with specific needs*, by providing discounted (subsidised) home access solutions and the associated benefits of cost savings on goods and services, improved access to government services, and all other benefits of being digitally included that the majority of families now increasingly take for granted.
118. The Taskforce agreed that a set of more refined principles should underpin specific implementation planning. Any initiative should:
- focus on wider family as well as individual learner benefits
 - be both universal and progressive, that is, benefits should be for all learners and families, but funding should be targeted at those family households that need it most
 - focus financial benefit on individual learners and their families rather than on institutions
 - achieve sustainability by promoting the value of home access and encouraging parental contributions whenever possible
 - develop a national delivery model which is efficient, ensures funds are spent appropriately and has the absolute minimum of administrative burden for LAs and schools
 - ensure a national delivery model for providing financial assistance to low-income households which allows flexibility for local tailoring; that is, one which empowers parents to choose to use any financial assistance they receive to support local whole-school or LA-wide 1-2-1 computing schemes, or for parents to receive 'top ups' to their financial support if local schools or LAs wish to do this.

119. Delivering and accommodating the benefits and principles above will require joined-up working across the education sector (and other government departments) and between central and local government. The scale and nature of the challenge requires a multi-stranded approach that will deal with issues on both the demand (parents and learners) and supply (LAs, schools and teachers) sides of education as well as industry, government and third-sector organisations.
120. In this light the Taskforce agreed that any future programme should address three key work strands of delivery activity:
 - maximising the benefits of home access for all
 - increasing the perceived value by parents
 - removing the barriers of cost for families with low incomes.

Recommendation 6

The Taskforce recommends that Government should invest on a significant scale and focus on delivering tangible benefits to all learners and their families, whilst targeting funding to support low-income families. To be successful, any large-scale home access initiative must be established as a major government change programme designed to address the three key work strands above.

4.1.1 Maximising the benefits of home access

121. This component is vital if the programme is to make its full contribution to raising standards and increasing family engagement through home access to ICT. The other two components must be seen as enabling this core aspiration. In particular it will be important that any provision of devices and connectivity is presented as one part of the framework and not as a stand-alone programme. There should be as much capability and effort devoted to developing the activities identified in this framework component as devoted, for example, on developing the proposition for a mechanism for supporting the disadvantaged.

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122. The benefits of home access for all families need to be underpinned by changing school policies, developing teaching practice, uplifting school ICT infrastructure to support home access, engaging parents, and encouraging learners to use ICT safely and purposefully. This will not be something which schools do in isolation and it is recognised that a wide range of opportunities exist for schools to use the technology to support each other, including increased opportunities for schools to:
- work collaboratively in developing and providing access to appropriate curriculum resources
 - work in partnership with families and the wider community.
123. Home access needs to be perceived as an enabler for other opportunities and a key part of other agendas and initiatives which schools are seeking to address. The opportunities that home access brings should be embedded within the school vision.

Recommendation 7

The Taskforce recommends that any intervention must deliver a programme of support for learners and their families, schools and local authorities to ensure that the opportunities of exploiting home access to technology are achieved.

124. The current digital divide acts as a barrier to change in schools and teaching practices because of concerns about inequity of home access. Achieving universality in home access potentially unlocks significant benefits for all education providers, teachers, learners and families but it is important not to wait until we achieve universality to begin to realise the benefits of home access.

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125. The Taskforce is convinced that if the benefits of home access are to be achieved, it will be essential to ensure that schools, learners and families have the capacity and capability to confidently embrace all aspects of home access (as defined in the home access functional expectations). The Taskforce recognises that any support should be aligned with, and exploit, existing programmes and channels. Key lines of activity which would be required to contribute to maximising benefits should include the following:
- Support for schools and teachers through development of dedicated guidance (both provided directly but also via other complementary opportunities such as Standards Funding, Building Schools for the Future, and school development planning and CPD). This would need to include advice on:
 - leadership
 - parental engagement
 - pedagogical issues
 - the potential impact on school infrastructure of greater use of home access.
 - Support for learners' families with appropriate advice and guidance which exemplifies and encourages good practice in the use of home access and highlights the agencies they can engage with to maximise opportunities. This might include working with a range of government and community organisations and third-sector groups.
 - Mobilising practical local support, such as UK Online Centres for families, to ensure they get full benefits of home access; this would include high-quality guidance on safe and purposeful online learning for their children.
 - Alignment of policy levers so that home access is supported and embedded in the activities of the key agencies that have an impact on change in education and supporting families.
 - Promoting supplier support to ensure they provide communications and advice which are aligned to and reinforce the benefits that can be gained, and signpost other sources of support.
 - Revision of the guidance for future BSF and the Primary Capital procurements to make clear that school infrastructure should support 24/7 home access to learning materials.
 - Ensuring that the potential for home access is considered and exploited in any changes in the system, including the introductions of the 14–19 Diplomas, and in particular to ensure a wide range of learning opportunities for learners in rural areas.

Recommendation 8

The Taskforce recommends that Government ensures that the home access and digital inclusion agenda is included within the remits of appropriate agencies and partners.

126. Lessons learned from previous programmes show that it is important not to overlook support for managing the change in schools. It will therefore be important to ensure that existing change management tools are exploited, and if required, built on. It is also vital to ensure that home access and home-school links are wherever possible integrated within other existing major school change initiatives.
127. The Taskforce agreed that families should be encouraged to exploit the wider benefits of home access to technology. There are a wide range of potential benefits to families which might include:
- access to existing and new online education information and services such as applications for education maintenance allowance
 - access to a wide range of online government services through DirectGov, including benefits and health services
 - developing skills for employability
 - pursuing personal interests, hobbies and social networking
 - access to internet shopping and banking
 - being empowered to campaign and participate in local and national democracy
 - accessing global resources and networks.
128. The Taskforce recognised that some families will need support to help them unlock these potential benefits and that in any activity should be work to explore how practical local support for families can be achieved, including how UK Online Centres and MyGuide might support access, support and training needs.

Recommendation 9

The Taskforce recommends that inter-departmental cooperation is established to ensure alignment of targets and activity with the aim of increasing the successful realisation of benefits.

4.1.2 Increasing the perceived value of home access

129. The Taskforce is convinced that this element is fundamental to success and should be developed whatever decision is reached about future funding for an initiative. The research on digital inclusion in the UK and elsewhere consistently highlights two factors as key barriers to take-up alongside that of cost. These are lack of awareness of the benefits of ICT, and a lack of the motivation to use it. We can therefore assume that for families with low incomes, and for those on relatively higher incomes who lack home access, we will have to overcome these barriers by increasing their awareness of the benefits of ICT for educational purposes and for wider family use.

 *Families should make a contribution towards the scheme – as things provided for free are often perceived to have no value.* 

DCSF, Home Access Public Consultation, 2008

130. Evidence from a range of schemes, including evidence from UK Online Centres and the trials carried out to support the Taskforce, illustrates that take-up of any scheme by families with low incomes will depend partly on the affordability of devices and connectivity packages but also on families' awareness of the benefits of home access and the perceived value of the offer.

Recommendation 10

The Taskforce recommends that funding is identified for increasing the perceived need among all families and that this should take place irrespective of other funding.

131. Marketing and communications activities are key to this component of future activity. To be effective this will need to be conducted in partnership with other organisations as well as across all sectors and in the broader public domain. In January, Becta launched its 'Next Generation Learning' campaign. This will support the home access framework and help to drive the take-up of home access and any funded support for the disadvantaged.

Recommendation 11

The Taskforce recommends that Becta's 'Next Generation Learning' campaign should be used to support any initiative and should incorporate a strong 'Home Access' series of messages with appropriate calls to action.

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132. Activities in support of this component of the framework could include:
- nationally supported marketing and communications activity delivered by a partnership of organisations as part of the Becta 'Next Generation Learning' campaign to support home access take-up by parents
 - local LA and school level communications with parents
 - targeted partner communications with teachers and schools through NAACE, teaching unions and others
 - targeted partner communications to parents through UK Online Centres (including partnering with the annual Get Online Day), ContinYou, third-sector and commercial partners
 - partner communications with industry, for example co-branding opportunities for industry education-focused campaigns.
133. There is an expectation that marketing and communications activity will have universal benefits and that it will be part of the offer to all parents. There will need to be a balance of communications activity between that which supports universal ambition to 'raise the bar' for everyone and the marketing and communications support needed to ensure high take-up of any scheme which is put in place.

Recommendation 12

The Taskforce recommends that the campaign should start with those who can afford home access yet remain to be convinced of the benefits.

4.1.3 Removing the barriers of cost for families with low incomes

134. All families in England with school age children should benefit from the first two components of the programme. Cost is a significant barrier to home access and the Taskforce was convinced that to overcome the digital divide, funding is required to support the most deprived sections of society and for some learners with particular individual needs who slip through the existing system.
135. For learners with particular individual needs (such as children in care, and learners with a disability), removing barriers to cost may require provision of particular technology or support funded in collaboration with government departments who have responsibility for these groups.

“It better not be a second-hand one, that won't help us.”

NfER, Computers for Pupils Initiative: Evaluation Interim Report, 2008

136. The Taskforce agreed that to address the principles above, an allowance scheme would be the most appropriate approach and that 'Education Technology Allowances' (ETAs) should be introduced by the Government to remove cost as a barrier to home ICT access and connectivity for low-income families.
137. The Taskforce accepts that detailed eligibility criteria for ETAs and the level of each family ETA award should be subject to further research and that decisions on these issues are for Government and linked to funding availability. However, the Taskforce notes that if ETAs were targeted at households with an annual income of less than £15,000, then just over 1 million low-income families could benefit from their introduction. Ideally, ETAs would be gradated according to family income and any particular individual needs of learners. The Taskforce assumes that whilst all families should be asked to make a contribution, that families on very low incomes, for example less than £10,000 per annum, would receive an ETA that would cover the significant majority, if not all, of the cost of a home access solution.
138. The Taskforce has overseen proof of concept trials to test demand from parents and ETA delivery options. PwC research of the PoCs draws a number of conclusions about the attributes of a successful delivery model. Future roll-out would benefit from being:
 - *simple* – to encourage uptake and adoption, any future scheme should be simple, ensuring that it is easy to understand and administer. A scheme that is easy to grasp is likely to reassure schools that the administrative burden will not be too onerous and parents that there are no hidden pitfalls – that the offer is not 'too good to be true'. Within this concept of simplicity, schools should be freed up to concentrate on the educational elements of the programme, leaving the technical and logistical elements to others.
 - *communicated widely* – to increase take-up rates, it is important that the offer is communicated to parents and schools as widely and clearly as possible. This could mean attempting to reach parents through a range of different marketing channels, such as through retail stores, community venues and schools. Schools and teachers must be included and communicated with, as they will play an important role in the success of any future home access programme.
 - *distinct and timely* – in marketing any future offer, effort should be made to convey to parents why the offer being made is distinct from anything being offered on the high street (the concept of an education-specific device, lower costs, increased online safety and technical support are all factors that could be stressed). Ordering should not be confined to a limited period of time and marketing efforts should be coordinated with seasonal peaks seen in the ICT retail industry.
 - *financially accessible* – efforts should be made to keep prices as low as possible, and parents should be presented with a variety of payment methods.

- *connected* – as take-up of connectivity offers was low, emphasis in any future implementation should be placed on increasing home access to the internet. This could include only offering devices with a connection to the internet through home access, or educating parents more about how they could get online outside the home access scheme. Connectivity is important to enable learners to benefit from remote access to school learning platforms.
- *flexible* – at present the schools, suppliers and local authorities are driving the initiative locally. A future scheme should be flexible enough not to rely on those within schools or LAs to provide learners with home access – that is, learners should be able to obtain home access whether their school supports the programme or not.
- *safe* – it is imperative that any future roll-out is as safe as possible for all users, providing access to appropriate content, and protected as far as possible from undesirable intrusion.

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139. As a result, the Taskforce is convinced that any scheme should:

- ensure any system provides a high-quality service, which reduces the risk of fraud, and has a low administrative cost
- be voluntary and take account of existing ownership
- use a more appropriate determinant for eligibility than free school meals
- ensure smoother delivery across education providers and sectors, and mitigate against 'traditional' problems at transition stages
- allow LAs to play a more strategic local role and promote more cost-effective and consistent administration
- enable LA opportunities to exploit other funding routes.

The key functions that should be managed nationally to support ETA delivery and take-up are:

- accreditation (with supporting home access branding) of suppliers which will allow parents to make guided choices of appropriate equipment and connectivity which support safe and responsible use, without the necessity of national or local procurement
- an ETA account facility to ensure efficient and nationally consistent administration of helpline, applications, and payments processes for all learners and their families
- coordination of home access marketing and communications – schools and LAs should have access to high-quality nationally produced materials and templates to support take-up by local families (in addition to any national advertising by government or local or national supplier activity to publicise the scheme).

140. The Taskforce acknowledges that whilst a central ETA administration will provide a consistent offer to parents it runs the risk of not allowing sufficient local tailoring, particularly by those schools of local authorities already playing a leadership role on home access. The Taskforce therefore suggests that the following local flexibilities are built into the ETA delivery model:

- every possible encouragement to schools and LAs to promote home access and ETA take-up locally by for example ensuring that marketing materials can be customised
- an option for schools, or LAs, to ask parents with ETAs to use them to support more ambitious school or LA led 1-2-1 computing schemes, for example to support e-Learning Foundation 'equity' schemes
- an option for schools, LAs and local businesses to 'top up' ETAs for their local learners and families, for example as part of a local regeneration programme.

141. The Taskforce notes the financial support available to 16–19-year-olds through Educational Maintenance Allowances and proposes that the government consider whether a simple uplift would deliver an opportunity for affordable access for ICT for all learners in this age group.

Recommendations 13, 14, 15 & 16

The Taskforce recommends that:

- any scheme must be able to target funding support appropriately, be focused on the individual and voluntary, whilst being flexible enough to be able to take advantage of other funding sources
- Government financial assistance should offer low-income families an affordable opportunity to enter the market place for home access solutions. Intervention should encourage suppliers to better tailor solutions for safe and appropriate educational use.
- national central solutions are established for administering and delivering funding and accreditation of technology suppliers who can provide safe, appropriate solutions
- Government and its agencies work with industry and other organisations to ensure that financial and other barriers to personal take-up are reduced.

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5. Cultivating the landscape for further action

142. The Taskforce appreciates that the implementation of a national initiative which will require joint working between the appropriate policy areas, organisations, expertise and funding will require coherent and robust planning and management. With this in mind, a range of actions are required during the coming months.

5.1.1 Computers for Pupils (CfP)

143. The existing funds for CfP will continue to be spent throughout the first five months of 2008/9 in line with Standards Funding guidance. This will result in large numbers of pupils receiving computers and connectivity during the early autumn term of 2008. The investment in these learners and their families has potential to be further developed so that the benefits are maximised. It is planned to build on the good work already carried out (as well as the evaluation carried out by NFER) to work with a number of leading local authorities to develop guidance and strategies for realising the benefits for schools, learners and families. Where possible, links to the broader community will also be explored.
144. Many local authorities have been eager to extend the excellent work and impact they have achieved. In some cases LAs have identified specific groups such as looked-after children and those attending PRUs, whom home access funding could support. Funding home access activity for these groups would provide the opportunity to test approaches and identify good practice which could then be integrated with any future home access initiative. There will be an opportunity to support the e-Learning Foundation's 2008/9 grant round for schools.

5.1.2 Delivery Model Testing

145. The Taskforce is recommending the establishment of a large-scale programme for encouraging, supporting and exploiting home access as an initial step, and Becta is planning to pilot the proposed solution in a number of local authorities during the current financial year. The activity will test delivery of the funding (via a third party to suppliers), supply of appropriate devices and connectivity, local marketing and communications, draft support material for schools and parents, and examine how local support can be aligned appropriately. Additionally, the activity will explore any requirements for improvements to school and LA networks to allow large-scale access to online learning services.

5.1.3 Liaison with industry and suppliers

146. In parallel with the discussions with industry members at the Taskforce, Becta and DCSF officials have maintained a dialogue (as part of a market sounding activity) with this sector to explain the background to home access. Many providers now understand that the full range of the population will be the target for any initiative. To continue the momentum and to prepare the ground for any future activity, national and regional briefings are taking place with industry. This will also enable feedback from the industry and suppliers on any potential issues.
147. This activity will include further discussions with a range of commercial organisations that might facilitate the channels of funding to support different segments of the target groups. For example, further discussions are needed with supermarket chains over their potential to support any future scheme.

5.1.4 Technical assessments

148. Whilst schools and LAs have been working towards Government targets (for learning platforms, for example) and the specifications issued by Becta, the approaches and solutions devised are variable. It is planned to carry out research to support the further development of the specifications and associated guidance to ensure that schools and LAs can adequately support the future requirements of home access and consider, for example, the challenge of the 'nomadic' learner.

5.1.5 Government, agency and third-sector alignment

149. Whilst home access will be discussed under the banner of the Digital Inclusion agenda, this phase of work has identified a wide range of opportunities for alignment with other government departments, agencies and third-sector organisations. In particular, there are clear opportunities for joint working between existing activities, networks and initiatives, such as UK Online Centres. It is anticipated that further dialogue will take place to prepare the ground and identify specific opportunities for collaboration as part of Becta's work plan this year.

Recommendation 17

The Taskforce recommends that further research and testing is conducted to establish:

- an effective roll-out programme for available funding
- detailed approaches to successful development of school and LA infrastructure in support of home access
- guidance for schools on the use of Harnessing Technology and other funding in relation to home access
- profitable relationships with commercial and non-commercial organisations who can offer financial and other support to home access targets

5.1.6 Campaigning to increase the awareness of home access

150. Becta's Next Generation Learning campaign provides significant opportunities for awareness raising and preparation to support future activity. Becta plans to continue activity in three areas:
- Research – a full market analysis of current attitudes among core demographic target group(s), in particular checking existing assumptions around perceived barriers, both financial and attitudinal, and levels of current understanding of the benefits.
 - Communications – based on the research above, to consider ways to stimulate interest in any scheme among target group(s), both in terms of broad awareness and in converting interest into take-up of the scheme; this would also involve testing potential routes to marketing the scheme.
 - Metrics – developing a system to track take-up rates over time, and any communication-based links to these take-up rates, using both attitudinal and behavioural measures.

Recommendation 18

The Taskforce recommends that Government considers a review period in line with the current comprehensive spending review, enabling future planning for the 2011–2014 CSR.

5.1.7 Future trends

151. The Taskforce has proposed a flexible approach to implementation which is intended to accommodate any new opportunities that might arise. At the same time, economic and social changes in society may well have an impact on the target audience and their propensity to purchase and exploit technology in the home. Adverse economic changes in particular could affect the impact of the Home Access initiative on the Riga Declaration target. As a result, the Taskforce feels it would be appropriate to have an agreed review period built into future activity.

6. Appendix 1 – Summary of recommendations

The Taskforce recommends that:

- i. Government should intervene to overcome the existing market failure and growing digital divide with the aim of ensuring that all children and families can benefit from home access to technology
- ii. Government should aim to accelerate change by investing in a national coordinated intervention with the aim of achieving universal home access within five years
- iii. the principles and educational vision developed by the Taskforce should form the basis for any Government-funded intervention
- iv. any home access initiative must fully address the safety agenda by complementing and building on the Byron Review by:
 - establishing and disseminating a robust legal and operational safety framework for all
 - building safety requirements into any device or connectivity schemes which support learners and parents
 - ensuring that support and guidance are available in appropriate ways for all involved.
- v. any home access programme should be fully inclusive. In particular:
 - agencies providing assistive technology and resources to enable those with individual needs to access learning should consider how best to complement any home access initiative
 - those working with hard-to-reach groups are provided with opportunities for training and development in assessing individual needs
 - any communications activity explicitly references the needs of learners in hard-to-reach groups.
- vi. Government should invest on a significant scale and focus on delivering tangible benefits to all learners and their families, whilst targeting funding to support low-income families. To be successful, any large-scale home access initiative must be established as a major government change programme designed to address the following aims equally:
 - maximising the benefits of home access by all
 - increasing perceived need of parents
 - reducing the barriers to ownership for families with low incomes.

In order to maximise the benefits of home access by all, the Taskforce recommends that:

- vii. any intervention must deliver a programme of support for learners and their families, schools and local authorities to ensure that the opportunities of exploiting home access to technology are achieved
- viii. Government ensures that the home access and digital inclusion agenda is included within the remits of appropriate agencies and partners
- ix. inter-departmental cooperation is established to ensure alignment of targets and activity with the aim of increasing the successful realisation of benefits.

In order to increase the perceived need by parents, the Taskforce recommends that:

- x. funding is identified for increasing the perceived need among all families and that this should take place irrespective of other funding
- xi. Becta's 'Next Generation Learning' campaign should be used to support any initiative and should incorporate a strong 'Home Access' series of messages with appropriate calls to action
- xii. the campaign should start with those who can afford home access yet remain to be convinced of the benefits.

In order to reduce the barriers to ownership, the Taskforce recommends that:

- xiii. any scheme must be able to target funding support appropriately, be focused on the individual and voluntary, whilst being flexible enough to be able to take advantage of other funding sources
- xiv. Government financial assistance should offer low-income families an affordable opportunity to enter the market place for home access solutions. Intervention should encourage suppliers to better tailor solutions for safe and appropriate educational use
- xv. national central solutions are established for administering and delivering funding and accreditation of technology suppliers who can provide safe, appropriate solutions
- xvi. Government and its agencies work with industry and other organisations to ensure that financial and other barriers to personal take-up are reduced

The Taskforce recommends that:

- xvii. further research and testing is conducted to establish:
 - an effective roll-out programme for available funding
 - detailed approaches to successful development of school and LA infrastructure in support of home access
 - guidance for schools on the use of Harnessing Technology and other funding in relation to home access
 - profitable relationships with commercial and non-commercial organisations who can offer financial and other support to home access targets
- xvi. Government considers a review period in line with the current comprehensive spending review, enabling future planning for the 2011–2014 CSR.

7. Appendix 2 – Home Access Taskforce terms of reference

Ministerial taskforce for home access to technology for children

Terms of reference

Aims

1. The aims of the Home Access Taskforce are to:
 - Consider and advise on ways in which home access to technology can be delivered for all school-aged children in England, ensuring that any plans include and promote safe and responsible use.
 - Support an evidence-based approach to implementing home access to technology with a view to raising educational standards, narrowing the achievement gap between learners and increasing participation of pupils and their parents/carers.
 - Provide a mechanism for partnership working by creating a forum in which issues affecting home access to technology can be raised and addressed.
 - Act as an advisory body to the Schools Minister that will ensure the effective development, delivery and sustainability of home access.

Objectives and tasks

2. The principal tasks for the Taskforce will be to:
 - Assess the current scale of access to technology at home for young learners, with particular reference to disadvantaged groups.
 - Advise on the activities of work strands focusing on contributions from Industry, the Third Sector and the educational community, as well as other interested and influential bodies.
 - Gather and review evidence, including oversight of pathfinder activities to inform the evidence base and future policy.
 - Receive and review evidence and recommendations from work strands and provide a forum for debate and decision making.
 - Act as the focus for cross-Government policy teams and other advisers to contribute to the development and implementation of this policy.

The objectives will be kept under review and may be amended over time.

Scope

3. The work of the Taskforce covers all aspects of home access for children in England. The emphasis is on children of school age and their families.

Governance

4. The Taskforce will be chaired by the Schools Minister, Jim Knight. The Taskforce will be supported by a joint Becta-DfES secretariat, which reports to the Chair.
5. The Taskforce will meet three times per year, commencing in Spring 2007, to be determined collectively by Taskforce members, to take account of work strand priorities and schedules, members' availability and the constraints of the academic year. Particular elements of the Taskforce's work may be conducted through smaller steering groups or delegated to work strands, as required.
6. Discussion at Taskforce meetings will take place under Chatham House rules and members accept this condition. Exceptionally, the Taskforce may wish to make a public statement which will be agreed in advance with the Chair and his officials.
7. The Taskforce will agree a timetable and mechanism for the completion and closure of its work. The Taskforce is likely to exist for 12-18 months.

Responsibilities

8. Members should be in a position to develop and share research, resources and insight as required, and should be prepared to contribute on an organisational or individual basis and through work strands or Taskforce groups, to inform the development and support the aims and objectives of the Taskforce.

Home Access Taskforce Secretariat

Updated June 2007

Taskforce Membership

Jim Knight MP	Minister of State for Schools and 14–19 Learners
Graham Badman	Managing Director for Children, Families and Education, Kent County Council
Mary Barker	General Secretary – NAACE
David Butler	Chief Executive – National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations
Iain Campbell	Director and GM Public Sector – Dell UK
John Carr	Secretary, Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety
Stephen Crowne	Chief Executive – British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)
Sue Davies	Deputy Headteacher – Balsall Common Primary School
Gordon Frazer	Managing Director – Microsoft UK
Jim Gamble	Chief Executive – Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
Karine George	Headteacher – Westfields Junior School, Yateley, Hampshire
Sir Mark Grundy	Headteacher – Shireland Collegiate Academy, Sandwell
Professor	
Sonia Livingstone	Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics
Andy Macleod	Business Development Manager UK Public Sector – Cisco
Jean McEntire	National Governors' Associations (NGA)
Lord Mitchell	Chair – e-Learning Foundation
Mark Palmer	Client Director, UK Central Government – IBM
Tim Pearson	Chief Executive – RM
John Petter	Chief Operating Officer – BT Retail
Elizabeth Reid	Chief Executive Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)
Jerry Roest	Managing Director – DSG International
Dominic Savage	Director General – British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA)
Mike Short	Vice President Research and Development – O2 UK Ltd
Ben Stimson	Director of Corporate Responsibility – BSkyB
Ralph Tabberer	Director General for Schools Directorate – DCSF
Tristan Wilkinson	Director Public Sector – Intel
Derek Wise	Headteacher – Cramlington Community High School, Northumberland

8. Appendix 3 – Taskforce details

Taskforce Work Strands

The Taskforce Programme Board was supported by seven work strands which were led by the following people:

- Solutions, led by Graham Walker of Gov3
- Funding, led by Valerie Thompson of the e-Learning Foundation
- Stakeholder and communications management, led by Ian Adams of Becta
- Safety & Security, led by John Carr of Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety
- Learning & change, led by Derek Wise of Cramlington Community High School
- Support, led by Sir Mark Grundy of Shireland Collegiate Academy
- Cross-cutting issues, led by James Ashbridge of DCSF

Taskforce meetings

The Taskforce met five times at the Department for Children, Schools and Families between March 2007 and April 2008; the table below provides an outline of the topics covered at the meetings.

Dates of Meeting	Agenda items and topics covered	
March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taskforce Membership • Terms of Reference • Educational outcomes and home use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry support, the third sector and future work • Identifying the key issues
June 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Access Programme Scope, Structure and Governance • Educational Vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions Strand – progress update • Evaluation Framework
October 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic direction – Evidential rationale for universal home access – Overall direction as set out in the core principles and educational vision – Functional expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivering the functional expectations – Delivery and accreditation models – Segmenting the learner population – Approaches to funding – Safety and security
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister's BETT speech • Home Access implementation framework – Maximising the benefits of home access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increasing the perceived value of home access – Removing the barrier of cost
April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Pupils with Special Educational Needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with partners • Taskforce final report and next steps

9. Appendix 4 – Acknowledgements

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Bury	Broad Oak High School
Essex	Burnt Mill School, De La Salle School, The King Edmund School
Hampshire	Staunton Community Sports College
Northumberland	Bedlingtonshire Community High School
Portsmouth	Miltoncross School
Southampton	Testwood Sports College
Stockton-On-Tees	Bader Primary School, Mill Lane Primary School, St John the Baptist School, Tilery Primary School, Yarm Primary School
Warrington	St Bridget's RC Primary School
Worcestershire	Arrow Vale Community High School, Birchensale Middle School, Chadsgrove School, Trinity High School

e-Learning Foundation (eLF) schools

Birmingham	Alston Primary School, Aston Manor School, Aston Tower Community School, Broadway School, Castle Vale School and Specialist Performing Arts College, Conway Primary School, Handsworth Wood Girls' Visual and Performing Arts Specialist College and Sixth Form Centre, Mansfield Green Primary School, Prince Albert School, St John Wall Catholic School, Washwood Heath Technology College
Hartlepool	Dyke House School
Leicester	Babington Community Technology College
Liverpool	Broadgreen High School
Newcastle upon Tyne	Hilton Primary School
Tower Hamlets	Central Foundation Girls School
Wirral	Bebington High School

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10. Appendix 5 – Functional expectations

Introduction

This document sets out the functional expectations for the Home Access Taskforce Programme. It builds upon the Education Vision presented to the Minister and Taskforce at the June 2007 meeting. It builds on the Educational Vision, starting from the learner's needs, and purposely does not pre-determine any specific technical solutions.

This document relates to all learners, regardless of their individual needs or disabilities. It recognises that, to achieve the aims, certain learners will require specific technical and personal support that must be individually considered.

Many functional expectations are based around the learner's experience. However, there are some critical expectations that impact mostly on educational infrastructure or support, both technical and educational. Without these, a purely learner-focused programme will not achieve its potential. For example, unless the school embraces the pedagogical implications and considers its technical infrastructure, learners will not see the full benefit of home access.

This document will need to be revisited regularly to reassess any major political, social, technical or market changes that may have impact on potential solutions.

Although primarily focused around the learner, the programme aims to deliver benefits to other stakeholders including parents, the community and schools and colleges themselves. These benefits may not be directly linked to formal education itself, such as increased access to online government services such as NHS Direct.

Home Access solutions must be considered within a safe, secure, and physically accommodating environment.

Wording conventions

The following wording conventions apply to the specifications set out in this document:

- The word '*shall*' (italicised) defines a *mandatory* requirement of this specification.
- The word '*should*' (italicised) defines a *highly recommended* but not mandatory requirement of this specification.
- The words '*Home Access users*' can imply either the learner themselves or potentially the parent or carer of the learner or both depending upon the context.

Functional Expectations – One-Page Summary

Learning experience

- Home Access users *shall* be able to use solutions to access information on their personal learning goals and progress against them.
- Home Access users *shall* have access to a wide range of online learning resources.
- Home Access users *shall* have access to a wide range of tools that allow the creation and manipulation of multi-media texts.
- Home Access users *shall* be able to access multiple applications and services simultaneously.
- Home Access users *shall* have access to a range of collaborative tools and opportunities to share and work with others.
- Home Access users *should* feel 'ownership' of their personal educational experiences and the home access solution.
- Home access *should* deliver benefits, especially to families and the community, beyond involvement in the formal educational experience.

Learning environment

- Home Access users *shall* have access to the online learning platform services used by the establishment(s) the learner attends.
- Home Access users *should* be able to experience identical online learning experiences both in-school or college and out-of-school or college.
- Home Access users *shall* be able to continue learning experiences begun in-school when out of school, and vice versa.
- Home Access users *should* experience a familiar set of learning experiences over a reasonable length of time.
- Home Access users *should* have a wide choice of home access solutions.
- Home Access users *shall* be entitled to a solution that protects the user from inappropriate contact and content and ensures data security and integrity regardless of location.
- Home Access users *shall* have access to solutions to recover data in event of failure or disaster and restore their ability to engage in their learning in a reasonable timeframe.

Learning support

- School, college and other educational infrastructure *shall* be capable of supporting a variety of services to all home access users concurrently.
- Educational establishments *shall* be supported, motivated, and measured against changing pedagogy to take advantage of home access.
- Home Access users *shall* have access to formal user support (educational and technical) when needed and within a locally agreed timeframe.

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12. Appendix 7 – Partner roles and contributions

Following meetings between two members of the Taskforce and the organisations listed below, the key points were summarised and presented to the Taskforce for consideration in the deliberations on future direction for future home access activity.

- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
- National College for School Leadership
- Training and Development Agency for Schools
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
- Partnerships for Schools
- National Association of Head Teachers
- Association of School and College Leaders

Summary of key points

All the organisations felt that the notion of Universal Home Access (UHA) had potential for providing a valuable contribution to reducing the digital divide and for supporting a range of other developments in education. The discussions were extremely valuable and covered topics from strategic considerations to very specific and detailed issues. This short paper aims to offer a flavour of the key issues which were raised in the meetings and to illustrate some of the potential solutions identified, or areas where further exploration is still required.

Points to consider for any programme messages and awareness raising

- Provision of effective illustrations of how home access can lead to schools achieving better measurable outcomes.
- The need to emphasise the wider benefits of home access beyond education and the potential to others in the community and to other aspects of local and national government agendas.
- Provision of initial awareness raising for school leaders in advance of the roll-out of any nationwide programme
- Ensuring UHA implementation is not seen as an additional requirement by clearly linking it with other initiatives, with consistent messages.

Resource or funding issues to be addressed in any implementation

- It will be important to balance the reduction of any administrative burden on schools with the ability to offer flexibility in addressing local requirements.
- Local Authorities were felt to have an important role, e.g. children's services synergy, accessing different funds, etc., though there were different views about capacity and capability.

- Local Authority input will be required and consideration is needed of how this is supported.
- The programme will involve some initial increase in workload for the school workforce, after which it offers new opportunities; however, there seems to be a general perception that workload will continue to increase.
- The challenges of providing connectivity to homes and community locations.

Areas where there are potential synergies or opportunities

There is a need for more effective and better joint working between agencies and organisations which will need to be facilitated for UHA to be successful.

Examples include:

- Inclusion and consideration of UHA principles in the review and roll-out of current national curriculum developments (primary, KS3 and 14–19).
- Inclusion of home access opportunities at the visioning stage of the different phases of the BSF and PCP initiatives.
- Embedding strategic implications of UHA within initial teacher training and leadership courses such as NPQH; e.g. NCSL and Becta work together on the production of case studies about how UHA can make a difference to children, their families and their communities.
- Exploiting the experience gained in workforce reform particularly the change team concept (part of the workforce remodelling remit at TDA), whereby members of staff, parents, the community and students would come together to develop and resolve the issues arising from UHA.
- Exploiting the expertise, networks and relationships that SSAT have with their community.
- Using the Becta self-review framework as a focal point for reflection, and action planning and integrating UHA activity into strategic ICT planning in schools.

Points to consider in the future programme development

- The opportunities that can be utilised to ensure the potential benefits of home access are embedded in schools working practices.
- Support for changing pedagogy and practice, in view of the increased opportunities facilitated through UHA, such as project-based work, or enquiry-based learning. The discussions showed real confusion on this issue and it must be addressed if UHA is to be successful.
- Supporting a change in school leadership towards the leaders of learning rather than the leaders of an institution.
- Organising existing and developing further support material to enable schools see how home access can transform classroom practice and increase personalisation for the learner.
- A planned and coordinated programme of support for the communities, families, local authorities and schools, building on existing material in conjunction with key partners.

Further activity

Whilst this process has been valuable it is clear there are a number of actions which need to take place before any initiative is implemented:

- Exploration of appropriate pedagogical support to ensure the benefits of home access are realised
- Engagement with a wider range of organisations to explore the detailed scope and mechanics for establishing partnership working to support future activity
- Trialling appropriate methods for providing support, prior to roll-out to ensure suitability to the workforce and to ensure synergy with other initiatives.

13. Appendix 8 – Analysis of Home Access Public Consultation responses

1. **Evidence suggests that access to, and appropriate use of, technology in the home benefits all family members. Should this access and use be encouraged by Government?**

95% Yes 2% No 3% Not Sure

Respondents recognised that the Government has an important role to play in promoting technology as a means of reducing the digital divide, bringing about equality of access and, as a result, creating a more inclusive society.

2. **There is also evidence that suggests that a child's level of attainment, and breadth of educational experience, may increase as a result of their appropriate use of technology, including in the home. Do you agree appropriate use of technology in the home can achieve this?**

96% Yes 3% No 1% Not Sure

Respondents highlighted use of the word 'appropriate' as key. It was felt that, if levels of attainment and breadth of educational experience were to be improved, it was important that children and young people were encouraged and supported by their parents and teachers to use technology for this purpose.

3. **Do you agree that encouraging safe family internet use should be a priority for Government even if this raises the cost of home access solutions?**

90% Yes 6% No 4% Not Sure

It was considered that safety was paramount given the risk that children could access unsuitable material, be the victims of cyber-bullying or become vulnerable by revealing personal details on social networking websites. Respondents believed that cost should not be an issue and that the safety of children should not be compromised by financial considerations.

- 4a. **Given the evidence about the benefits of home access, should Government encourage all parents to provide access to the internet in the home for their children?**

88% Yes 4% No 8% Not Sure

Many respondents felt that it was increasingly becoming essential to everyday life and was considered by some to be the 'fifth utility'. Respondents were also of the opinion that Government should only *encourage* parents to provide access to the internet and there should be no compulsion to do so. It was felt that parents should not feel pressurised into getting the internet and they should not be penalised or considered to be bad parents if they did not.

4b. **Do you agree that any Government funding should be targeted at the most disadvantaged families?**

57% Yes 26% No 17% Not Sure

On the whole, respondents accepted that it was right to provide financial support for those who did not have the means to purchase technology for themselves, given that this would redress inequality of access and reduce the digital divide. However, some respondents felt that disadvantaged families were too often prioritised in Government initiatives and greater consideration should be given to families with children with disabilities and families who have a low level of disposable income once other outgoings are taken into account.

4c. **If financial support is provided for low-income and disadvantaged families which covers all or part of the cost of a home access solution, should these families own the devices that they may contribute towards or should they lease/borrow from a central agency or other organisation?**

40% Lease/Borrow 27% Own 32% Not Sure

Respondents accepted that there were advantages and disadvantages associated with families owning devices or leasing/borrowing them and suggested that families might be offered the choice. The majority of respondents, however, opted for the latter, citing a number of reasons why leasing/borrowing devices from a central agency or other organisation was preferable to owning them including ease of support, upgrade and repair.

5. **Given the evidence that home access to the internet has a positive impact on educational attainment, should all parents be encouraged to view technology in the home as an important part of their children's education?**

94% Yes 5% No 1% Not Sure

Few respondents disagreed that parents should be encouraged to view technology in the home as an important part of their children's education given the evidence that home access to the internet had a positive impact on educational attainment. Respondents did stress that parents may need support to use technology in the home, particularly where they had no experience, in the form of advice, guidance and training.

6. **Government is keen that the opportunities for learning in the home are maximised for all pupils without placing undue burdens on the education profession. What steps should be taken to ensure that any burden is kept to a minimum?**

Respondents generally accepted that any new initiative would inevitably increase the workload of the education profession. However, it was believed that schools had to embrace change and modernise their working practices in order for the benefits of out of school learning to be realised. It was noted that greater use of technology should allow schools to make efficiencies in the way that it had for many other organisations.

7. **It is felt that a third party organisation may have a key part to play in ensuring consistent national quality of helpline, applications and payments services to families. What type of organisation/body should be responsible for these functions?**

Almost a third of respondents believed that local authorities (the most popular choice) were best placed to take responsibility for ensuring consistent national quality of helpline, applications and payments services to families. However, opinion among respondents was wide ranging and quite evenly divided with commercial organisations, charities and central government also featuring in responses.

8. **There may be an important strategic role for local authorities, in supporting schools in their locality, to ensure maximum benefit for learners and their families. Is it appropriate for local authorities to be requested to undertake this strategic role?**

66% Yes **11%** No **23%** Not Sure

Respondents noted that local authorities had the advantage of having a strategic overview of education within their area, given that they were responsible for overseeing initiatives such as Extended Schools, Building Schools for the Future, Harnessing Technology and Every Child Matters which tied into the Home Access scheme.

9. **It is proposed that a list of equipment, which meets minimum functional requirements, is provided to guide acquisition of appropriate technology. Is this the right approach to take?**

66% Yes **12%** No **21%** Not Sure

The majority of respondents considered that this approach would have a number of advantages, such as helping families to evaluate options available to them, make procurement easier and ensure all families were given access to an established standard requirement.

10. **It is recognised that the technology industry has a role to play in enabling the sustainable success of home access. What role or functions is it appropriate for government to expect industry to undertake?**

Almost half of respondents (47%) thought that industry should reduce the cost of hardware, software and internet access to make it more affordable for low-income families. It was believed that industry should be encouraged to keep prices down by developing low-cost packages, reducing ongoing costs, providing discounts for teachers and offering savings through bulk buying for government procurement. Many respondents also noted that industry was well-placed to provide technical support and advice but this needed to be carefully tailored to parents who are unfamiliar with technology.

11. **Other comments made**

Over half (60%) of respondents believed that the programme demonstrated the Government's commitment to redressing the digital divide, increasing inclusion, improving attainment and enhancing the global competitiveness of the UK.

Just under half (40%) of respondents highlighted the need to consider the difficulties faced by those children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. It was acknowledged that such children were likely to need specialist equipment and software at home which could be expensive and that their parents might need support to enable them to fully engage in their children's learning.

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