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Home Access programme: One year on - summary

December 2009

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Foreword

Becta's challenge is to drive the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. We can only claim to have succeeded in this task if we have brought about improvements in educational opportunities for all, not just for some. In a world where education – both formal and informal – is delivered through technology, access is key.

In taking on responsibility for the delivery of the Home Access programme, we recognised that access to learning technologies is all too often determined by income, and that without intervention there is a risk of this continuing to the detriment of children, families and, ultimately, the nation.

Our Home Access programme seeks to reduce the division between those who do and do not have access to technology, to ensure that children's education is not held back by reasons beyond their control, and that families have a more equal chance to participate in the exciting and empowering opportunities that learning through technology can bring.

This is not an easy challenge, but we have the commitment and desire to bring about genuine change for this generation of learners. The Home Access programme will make a real difference to the lives of children and to their families. The early results from our pilot show that improvements are already being made.

Since the publication of the Minister's Taskforce report into Home Access in mid-2008, we have experienced some important changes in the economy, and these have translated into changes in the home access environment. In addition, our Home Access pilot has taught us much about how best to meet the challenge head on. We cannot ignore these factors: as the programme's senior responsible owner, I have a duty to reflect new information and new thinking in our approaches, and ensure that this programme remains as relevant as ever. This report explains how our experience and external factors have shaped the programme, and sets out our commitments for delivery.

One year into the programme, a great deal has been achieved. Over 29,000 households across England have already benefited from Home Access. This success is down to the effort of my staff and our delivery partners, plus the support of schools and local authorities involved to date. However, this is only the start.

Later this year, Home Access will open its doors as we head towards achieving our ultimate goal of making a difference to hundreds of thousands of families across England.

I await the two-years-on report with anticipation.

Stephen Crowne

Chief Executive Officer, Becta

Background

'Strong evidence exists for the potential educational, economic and wider benefits of home access to technology. Despite this growing body of evidence … 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.'

Extending Opportunity: Final report of the Minister's Taskforce on home access to technology (Becta, 2008)

In September 2008, the Prime Minister announced a commitment of £300 million to support the Government's aspiration to connect to a computer and broadband the estimated 1 million children who currently lack such access at home in England. This announcement closely followed the delivery of the final report of the Schools Minister's Taskforce into home access to technology.

Becta was tasked with the delivery of the Home Access programme – a targeted intervention 'to overcome the existing market failure and growing digital divide with the aim of ensuring that all children and families benefit from home access to technology'.

Becta has spent the last 12 months planning for the national delivery of the Home Access programme, including running the Home Access pilot in two local authorities. During this period, much has been learnt about improving the delivery of a national programme of this kind. Importantly, changes in the wider market for home access and external reviews of the programme have also taken place.

This document describes the significant progress and developments in the Home Access programme over the last year, and places these in the context of the Home Access Taskforce report and the impact assessment conducted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) – key documents setting out important parameters and the main ambitions of the programme. It also summarises the key recommendations of external reviews of the programme, and links these to action within the programme, where appropriate.

Programme funding

The DCSF has committed £240 million of funding (some of which is from Becta's own budget) during this Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period to the Home Access programme, of which £188.9 million is capital funding (primarily for Home Access packages containing a computer, broadband internet connection, service and support). Further funding may be available in next CSR period.

Of this capital, £162.3 million is reserved for the national programme; the remainder was applied in the Home Access pilot (around £8.6 million) and to support learners

at risk of exclusion from the main programme, via the Home Access for Targeted Groups initiative (£17.9 million).

Programme scope and focus

In November 2008, an Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway 0 Strategic Assessment suggested that the programme's focus should be clarified with the DCSF, noting the tension between serving all who are digitally excluded (regardless of income) and focusing only on those who cannot afford the technology.

Becta's Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Crowne, clarified the priorities of the programme with the DCSF, and subsequently received endorsement from the Minister for Schools to focus on low income and disadvantaged families in February 2009. Given this, the three key strands of activity within the programme were revised to:

- reduce the barriers of cost for families with low incomes, through government financial support
- increase the perceived value of access to ICT for learning at home for all eligible families with learners that receive a grant
- maximise the benefits of home access for all families with learners that receive a grant.

In addition, later in 2009, the Minister for Schools endorsed the establishment of the Universality Task Group outside the governance of, yet alongside, the main Home Access programme. The aim of the group is to investigate ways in which support can be provided to households without home access and ineligible for a Home Access Grant.

Programme targets

In light of the changes to the focus of the programme and the available funding in this CSR period, the programme's targets have been realigned to support 290,000 households through the strands of activity mentioned above.

Of these 290,000 households, around 29,000 have already been served through the Home Access pilot and the Home Access for Targeted Groups initiative, building on over 100,000 households served in the DCSF's Computers for Pupils programme – a precursor to the Home Access programme.

By the end of the current CSR period, Becta will have directly provided home access for 390,000 households, and will continue this work in the next CSR period (subject to the commitment of additional programme funding) to fully realise the initial vision set by the Prime Minister.

Programme benefits

When it has achieved its targets, the programme expects a number of benefits to be indicated by 'benefit-recognition events' – real-life events that show the positive effects that the programme is having. The key recognition events for benefits in the Home Access programme are:

- a decrease in the technology gap between the various income groups
- improved learning of eligible pupils
- increased parental involvement in children's learning
- an increased number of parents using technology for learning for themselves
- improved economic status of eligible families, caused by use of technology
- special needs learners in the programme gaining access to software or assistive technology appropriate to their needs.

Home Access Grants and eligibility

The Home Access programme provides financial support to low income households to enable them to purchase their own Home Access package of a computer, internet connection and support.

Broadly, Home Access Grants will be available to households with learners who are eligible for free school meals – the *de facto* standard for the identification of disadvantaged learners. A phased eligibility structure is in place, initially focusing on households with learners in Years 3–9 inclusive (Key Stages 2 and 3) on a one grant per households basis. Once this group has been served, the programme will look to extend eligibility to other groups in Years 1–11, should demand and funding allow.

Household co-payments will not be required – grants will be redeemable for a full Home Access package, although households can top up their grants with additional funds if they desire.

The value of the standard Home Access Grant will be a maximum of £520 – down from £600 in the Home Access pilot, without compromise to the functionality of Home Access packages. Other grant values will apply in certain circumstances.

Compared with the pilot, the Home Access programme will make greater emphasis on targeting households without existing broadband access at home. The wording of the application form and messages contained in demand-generation activities will dissuade households with existing broadband home access from participating in the programme, and regular monitoring will check the effectiveness of these efforts.

Connectivity gaps

In order to obtain the full benefits of the programme, including access to media-rich learning content, only broadband-speed internet connectivity will suffice. This has been established within the minimum specifications for Home Access packages.

The Home Access programme has always recognised that broadband connectivity is not universally available across England, and that this will limit the ability of the Home Access programme to deliver in individual circumstances.

Directly addressing connectivity gaps (including, for example, the establishment or improvement of connectivity infrastructure) is not considered part of the scope or aim of the Home Access programme. Becta will work with partners across Government (including the 'Digital Britain' departments of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport) in support of their role to improve access to broadband across England.

To improve the broadband connectivity options available within the Home Access pilot, Becta has reduced barriers for approved suppliers to include fixed-line connectivity in the programme.

Delivery models

Home Access will primarily be delivered through a 'consumer' model. Households apply to a central processing body for a Home Access Grant, which they can exchange for an approved Home Access package of their choice at approved suppliers across England.

This approach minimises the burden on schools and local authorities, and ensures that all households across England have an equal opportunity to participate in the programme, avoiding the regional variations involved in local delivery.

Assistive technology – the devices and software that enable those with additional needs to make full use of computer technology – will also be provided, where required, in three ways:

- Assistive software will be provided on all Home Access devices, providing support for the vast majority of needs at low cost and extending the benefits of access to other groups (eg those for whom English is not their first language or with poor eyesight).
- Basic assistive hardware will be provided for those with low level physical disabilities, on a request basis.
- Bespoke enhanced assistive technology packages will be provided for those with more complex needs and who meet additional eligibility criteria.

In addition, local authorities, schools and households can optionally participate in Home Access aggregation – a process whereby households' Home Access Grants are nominally allocated to their participating schools or local authorities. Schools or

local authorities then make bulk purchases on behalf of these households, providing greater support for households who are at risk of exclusion from the programme, and potentially realising added value through bulk purchasing.

Lastly, the Home Access programme provides specific support for groups at risk of exclusion from the main programme, through Home Access for Looked After Children, which will provide additional eligibility support for looked-after children aged 5–19, in line with the Care Matters agenda, through three- and six-monthly status reviews. A second mechanism, Home Access for Targeted Groups, provided funds directly to local authorities to address learners at risk of exclusion from the main programme. This initiative has now concluded; it addressed over 21,000 households.

Home Access Grants will be delivered via a payment card, similar to a debit card, which is restricted to use at Home Access approved suppliers. This allows households to choose the Home Access package that best meets their needs, minimises discrimination at the point of sale, provides secure transfer of funds (with appropriate management reporting to Becta) and aligns with existing retail practices to ensure minimal cost overheads for the programme.

Maximising the benefits of Home Access

Becta has begun engagement with schools, local authorities, national agencies and the third sector to develop models and approaches which will support households in receipt of a Home Access package to make the most of their equipment and realise the benefits of its use. Becta has a range of techniques to maximise the benefits of the programme:

- The You've Got It website is set as the default on all Home Access devices; it is designed to educate users on information technology and provide links to support services (such as other government services).
- Becta arranges stakeholder engagement and communications activities designed to keep local authorities and schools informed about the programme.
- Becta provides case studies to help schools and local authorities identify the benefits of the programme, and integrate the programme into learning initiatives.

Additionally, Becta is working across the sector to help realise the benefits. Selected initiatives in this area include working with the:

- Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) to establish a Next Generation Learning @ Home curriculum package
- Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to support the use of Home Access technology at home for learning and parental engagement, through a field force of 2,500 parent support advisors
- Local Government Association's Narrowing the Gap initiative to ensure that Home Access is embedded as a means for narrowing the gap in

educational outcomes between vulnerable and/or excluded children and others

- National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to ensure that school headteachers' training covers the issues and benefits of access to technology at home.

The Home Access programme's approach has been to align and work with other existing streams of Becta activity in this space, where appropriate and relevant. Some activities are therefore co-funded by Becta's business-as-usual operations budgets.

Managing the programme

Becta will retain overall management of the Home Access programme but will outsource the key administration functions, building on best practices and the experience of providers in the marketplace who have supported or are supporting similar Government initiatives. As the Home Access programme is time-limited, significant investment in administrative infrastructure (such as application processing facilities) which is unlikely to be reused is inefficient.

Outsourced providers will be responsible for:

- grant administration (assessment of eligibility for Home Access Grants and payment of approved suppliers)
- marketing and demand generation
- management of enhanced assistive technology requirements, including the provision of basic assistive hardware and all enhanced assistive technology packages.

Approved retail suppliers will be responsible for:

- provision of Home Access packages (including basic assistive software).

Becta will be responsible for:

- accreditation of approved retail suppliers
- overall quality and contract management
- programme assurance
- ongoing strategy and policy.

Home Access packages

A Home Access package is the combination of personal computer, broadband internet connection, software and support services supplied within the Home Access programme to enable improved access to learning at home and the wider benefits of the programme.

Minor changes in the specification of Home Access packages have occurred as a result of consultation with industry and analysis of the Home Access pilot. Primarily, the changes have reduced the cost of the Home Access package specification by stipulating requirements in line with consumer (rather than commercial) market offerings, while retaining support for key services (such as three years' anti-virus and filtering support).

Sustaining Home Access

Becta has built sustainability into its overall approach for delivering Home Access – that is, voluntary participation targeted at households (not schools or local authorities) ensures active participation and involvement in the programme. Having actively participated, households will see the benefits of Home Access, encouraging them to reprioritise household spending to continue their broadband connections.

This approach has been supported by the evaluation of the Home Access pilot, which showed that fewer than 10 per cent of participating households surveyed were unlikely to continue to pay for their broadband connections beyond the funded period.

This approach is supported by the work of the Universality Task Group looking at alternative funding sources (such as tax advantages) and savings schemes for home access.

Response to external reviews

This section documents the external reviews of the programme to date, and Becta's responses and actions taken in light of these reviews.

OGC Gateway Reviews

In line with standard government practice for significant programmes, two OGC Gateway Level 0 Reviews (Strategic Assessment) were conducted on the Home Access programme in November 2008 and September 2009.

The programme was given Amber/Red delivery confidence in 2008, rising to Amber/Green in 2009. The status Amber/Green reflects the complexity of the programme. In awarding the Amber/Green status, the reviewers noted that:

"… the Programme has reached this point successfully because of the constant high quality management of what is a very difficult task. It is only the scale of the challenge and the continuing need for constant attention that stops the delivery confidence assessment being Green."

The 2008 OGC Review cited a number of recommendations, which were followed up in the 2009 Review. The table below documents the original recommendations and OGC's subsequent comments on their completion, alongside Becta's responses where relevant.

2008 Recommendation 1 (Critical)	'The SRO needs to determine the priority of outcomes in conjunction with DCSF and communicate them widely to stakeholders and staff.'
2009 comments	'The Business Case and Benefits Strategy were updated and communicated to key stakeholders, including DCSF.'
Becta's response	Through discussions with the DCSF and Minister for Schools, the programme was prioritised to focus on two of the original three objectives. For more information, see Programme scope and focus.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

2008 Recommendation 2 (Critical)	'The Programme needs to increase their understanding of the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of the target customers, utilising the experience elsewhere in government of how to get this difficult group to act.'
2009 comments	'Formal focus groups were held with low income parents and learners. This provided insight into the messages and collateral. A detailed review was obtained from HMRC for best practice. The marketing strategy was updated to reflect these new findings.'
Becta's response	The programme conducted a series of activities to increase understanding of the target population, including: • commissioning research into trends and demographics • holding focus group workshops with relevant attendees • liaising with HM Revenue & Customs and reviewing its research • updating marketing strategies and key materials (such as the Home Access Grant application form) in the light of the findings above. The success of the Home Access pilot demonstrated that these activities successfully translated into effective targeting of this population.

2008 Recommendation 3 (Critical)	'The SRO needs to set up and resource a market creation team that understands the special attributes of this difficult market.'
2009 comments	'Workshops held and extensive market research conducted. The marketing strategy was updated to reflect these new findings.'
Becta's response	The results of efforts to increase understanding of the target population were fed into the development of the specification of requirements for Home Access packages. In conjunction with consultation with industry, this enabled a move towards more consumer-oriented offerings and enabled a greater alignment with the existing business processes of approved suppliers.

2008 Recommendation 4 (Critical)	'The Programme should identify a clear set of critical success factors which will keep all parties on track to deliver core outcomes and monitor progress towards them.'

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

2009 comments	'The … Benefits Strategy [was] updated and communicated to key stakeholders, including DCSF. The Minister [for Schools] signed off new CSFs.'
Becta's response	The programme's benefits strategy was updated to clearly reflect a series of six 'benefit-recognition events' to which all programme activity is tied. For more information, see Programme benefits.

2008 Recommendation 5	'The Programme should prepare a handling strategy to cover safety and security incidents prior to the commencement of the pilot.'
2009 comments	'Major risks included in risk log. Supporting Handling Strategy written and approved.'

2008 Recommendation 6	'The Programme needs to select only the most relevant issues to test in the Pilot and plan the timely integration of the findings into the procurement and roll-out plans.'
2009 comments	'A detailed test criterion created and evaluated against. All lessons learned were shared with the National Rollout team and Managed Service Provider [Home Access Grant Administration Service].'

2008 Recommendation 7	'The Programme needs to structure and manage its relationships with partners and stakeholders.'
2009 comments	'A Stakeholder Plan was produced and approved by the Programme Board. A Stakeholder Advisory Group and Children, Schools and Families Board now in operation.'

2008 Recommendation 8	'The Programme should prepare a realistic roll-out plan that reconciles: • agreed priorities of the stakeholders • creating a market that is sufficiently attractive to the consumer, delivery partners and supply chain • delivery of a sustainable solution.'
2009 comments	'A full and detailed rollout plan produced and signed off by key stakeholders. Included in the MSP statement of requirements. An end-to-end supply chain was created including marketing demand, processing centres and approved suppliers.'

2008 Recommendation 9	'The SRO should seek assurance from DCSF that the proposed treatment of the service support costs is approved.'
2009 comments	'The SRO obtained clearance on the service support costs from DCSF Finance and the DCSF Permanent Secretary.'

The 2009 Review cited no Critical recommendations.

Home Access programme evaluation

Becta has commissioned an ongoing independent evaluation of the Home Access programme, led by SQW Consulting in conjunction with Ipsos MORI and the London Knowledge Lab. This evaluation will continue into the summer of 2011, with the option to extend if the programme receives funding to continue beyond this point.

To date, one key report has been delivered: the pilot progress report (see details in Appendix A), which evaluated the Home Access pilot in Suffolk and Oldham, completed in October 2009.

This report was supportive of the pilot, noting that it:

- exceeded its targets in terms of the number of households served
- accelerated the adoption of home access by about 2.4 years on average
- made a material impact on closing the digital divide
- demonstrated positive indications around educational benefits for learners and wider benefits for households
- was received favourably by teachers, learners and parents, with regard to future impact on educational attainment.

The pilot progress report listed a number of recommendations (detailed below alongside Becta's responses).

Recommendation 1	Review the current combination of aims, objectives and benefit-recognition events to see whether these can be rationalised into a simpler set of programme objectives – ensuring that there are strong links back to the rationale for intervention – in conjunction with the objectives set for related activities.
Becta's response	Becta has developed a benefits strategy and plan, which clarifies the benefits of the programme. Importantly, this work links directly to the development of the programme to ensure alignment. For more information, see the full Home Access one-year-on report.
	Becta has clarified the term 'connectivity' to relate only to

	broadband access, to help assess whether programme targets are achieved. For more information, see Connectivity gaps.

Recommendation 2	Restrict the grant to one per household.
Becta's response	The Minister for Schools approved a move to one grant per household for the national Home Access programme in June 2009. For more information, see Home Access Grants and eligibility.

Recommendation 3	Focus the grant on households that do not have broadband internet access.
Becta's response	The Home Access programme will work, via the Home Access Grant Administration Service provider, to ensure that households with existing broadband home access are dissuaded from participating in the programme, and to enhance the targeting of households most in need.

Recommendation 4	Clarify the branding of the scheme.
Becta's response	During the Home Access Pilot, Becta's customer research pointed to some complexity and potential confusion around 'Next Generation Learning @ Home'. An option to adopt a brand primarily focused on the term 'Home Access' was proposed, while retaining a 'Next Generation Learning @ Home' sub-brand to maintain links with other related initiatives. In light of the research, in July 2009 the Home Access project board approved new branding to be applied in the national programme.

Recommendation 5	Develop and disseminate material to ensure that teachers are well informed about the scheme.
Becta's response	The Home Access programme has used a significant amount of effort in ensuring that the benefits of the Home Access programme are maximised, including through keeping teachers and local authorities well informed, while also minimising the burden on schools. Stakeholder newsletters, tailored communications and

	case studies are all in place to inform teachers about the programme and assist them in translating the provision of Home Access packages into benefits for learners and households. This is backed by integration with the work of the QCDA and NCSL to ensure that teaching practices and training for headteachers support the programme.
	For more information, see [Maximising the benefits of Home Access]().

Recommendation 6	Consider mechanisms for providing a stronger feedback loop to teachers in the classroom.
Becta's response	Becta is currently investigating the best mechanism to provide school-level or local-authority-level reports on the take-up of Home Access to enquiring schools and local authorities. Any approach must balance costs and Data Protection Act requirements against the benefits for schools.
	In recognition that take-up of home access outside the programme is equally important to schools, Becta encourages schools to build on their existing relationships with households to monitor the take-up of all forms of home access locally and integrate this information into updated teaching and learning practices.

Recommendation 7	Seek to ensure that fixed broadband becomes a workable connectivity option.
Becta's response	Becta has modified the requirements on approved suppliers to align better with existing practices in the wider market for fixed-line broadband to make it easier for fixed-line broadband to be offered within the programme.
	For more information, see the full Home Access one-year-on report.

Recommendation 8	Ensure that 'fair usage' download limits are clearly explained to beneficiaries before equipment is purchased.
Becta's response	Home Access approved suppliers are required to follow the Mobile Broadband Group principles of good practice for selling and promoting mobile broadband products. This requirement is set out alongside others in the approved supplier operational requirements document to which all approved suppliers must adhere to maintain their approved status. Specifically, the principles state: 'Pricing information should set out the relevant tariff options, including a description of any fair usage limits. There must an explanation of the consequences of the usage limit or fair usage allowance being exceeded.'

Recommendation 9	Seek to minimise the extent to which useful, appropriate content is blocked by parental control software.
Becta's response	The Home Access programme has adopted parental control settings established within the standard PAS 74:2008 Internet safety – access control systems for the protection of children online. This standard was developed by the Home Secretary's Taskforce for Child Protection, whose aim is to make the UK the safest place in the world for children to use the internet. In recognition that no filtering can be 100 per cent safe while still allowing effective access to learning and other useful resources, Becta will support households to increase their understanding of online risks and become discerning users through the standard inclusion on Home Access devices of 'Know IT All', the multi-award-winning suite of education resources designed to help educate parents, teachers and young people about safe and positive use of the internet.

Recommendation 10	Ensure that the beneficiary data-set is well defined and accessible for statistical and evaluation purposes.
Becta's response	Becta recognises the practical difficulties involved in accessing the appropriate data-set for evaluation of the Home Access pilot, resulting from inconsistencies between the two grant-processing bodies in the pilot local authorities.
	A single source of data will be available for the national programme, and the Home Access Grant Administration Service will be required to provide Becta and its evaluators with appropriate access to data for use in evaluation.

The recommendations above relate to the first stage of the programme's evaluation. Becta welcomes the findings of the pilot evaluation, which has enabled the programme to move forward on a more secure footing. Becta will establish a regular feedback mechanism, via the work of our independent evaluators, that will allow necessary adjustments to be made throughout the lifetime of the programme.

For full details of Becta's response to the recommendations arising from external reviews of the programme, the full report, *Home Access programme: One year on report*, is available on request. Please send requests via email to homeaccess@becta.org.uk

Appendix A: Further reading

The following key documents have helped to establish or shape the development of the Home Access programme. All of the documents below are considered essential reading in understanding the development and delivery of the programme.

Extending Opportunity: Final report of the Minister's Taskforce on home access to technology, DCSF and Becta, July 2008.
http://partners.becta.org.uk/upload-dir/downloads/page_documents/partners/home_access_report.pdf

Impact Assessment of Home Access, DCSF Chief Economist's Office, July 2008.
Available on request.

Evaluation of Implementation Models for Learner Home Access to ICT, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, September 2008.
http://partners.becta.org.uk/upload-dir/downloads/page_documents/research/evaluation_models_home_access.pdf

Evaluation of the Home Access Programme: Pilot progress report, SQW Consulting, November 2009.
URL

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment – Home Access (ID: 1402), Tim Bentley *et al.*, November 2008.
Available on request.

Prime Minister's Labour Party Conference speech, Gordon Brown, September 2008.
http://www.labour.org.uk/gordon_brown_conference,2008-09-23

Home Access launch speech, Jim Knight (former Minister for Schools), October 2008.
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0234

Appendix B: Summary of taskforce recommendations

A summary of the recommendations made in *Extending Opportunity: Final report of the Minister's Taskforce on Home Access to technology* are as follows.

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
- Government should aim to accelerate change by investing in a national coordinated intervention with the aim of achieving universal home access within five years
- the principles and educational vision developed by the Taskforce should form the basis for any Government-funded intervention
- any home access initiative must fully address the safety agenda by complementing and building on the Byron Review by:
  - o establishing and disseminating a robust legal and operational safety framework for all
  - o building safety requirements into any device or connectivity schemes which support learners and parents
  - o ensuring that support and guidance are available in appropriate ways for all involved.
- any home access programme should be fully inclusive. In particular:
  - o 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
  - o those working with hard-to-reach groups are provided with opportunities for training and development in assessing individual needs
  - o any communications activity explicitly references the needs of learners in hard-to-reach groups.
- 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:
  - o maximising the benefits of home access by all
  - o increasing perceived need of parents
  - o 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:

- 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
- Government ensures that the home access and digital inclusion agenda is included within the remits of appropriate agencies and partners
- 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:

- funding is identified for increasing the perceived need among all families and that this should take place irrespective of other funding
- 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
- 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:

- 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.'