

Hundreds of thousands more laptops to support disadvantaged pupils learn at home

The government has today announced a further 300,000 laptops and tablets to help disadvantaged children and young people learn at home.

Part of the Get Help with Technology Programme, the 300,000 boost takes the total number of laptops and tablets for disadvantaged young people up to 1.3 million.

Data to be published today by the Department for Education will show that over 700,000 laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools to date. Over 100,000 were delivered last week alone and by the end of the week three quarters of a million will have been delivered to schools and local authorities. The vast majority of secondary schools have already received devices and we are delivering more this week. Schools that are yet to order devices can still do so.

The additional 300,000 devices lifts government investment by another £100 million, meaning over £400 million will have been invested in supporting disadvantaged children and young people who need the most help with access to technology through the pandemic. The additional devices will support schools and colleges across England, with top-ups to their original allocation, offering further support to disadvantaged children. Device allocations have been made with the aim of prioritising those most in need. Schools being able to order even more devices, should they require them, will allow for more devices for these children if needed.

This devices programme, which has been distributing laptops and tablets since May last year, goes hand in hand with the government's work with the UK's leading mobile network operators, enabling schools to request free uplifts in data for disadvantaged families. The government's work to support young people with access to technology sits alongside strengthened minimum standards for remote learning, with schools now expected to offer pupils online lessons and a set number of hours of high-quality remote education for pupils – increased from the government's previous minimum expectations.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I know just how difficult the past year has been for parents and teachers, now more so than ever. I want nothing more than for every child to be in the classroom with their friends and teachers, but with that not possible we are doing everything in our power to support schools with high-quality remote education.

These additional devices, on top of the 100,000 delivered last

week, add to the significant support we are making available to help schools deliver high-quality online learning, as we know they have been doing.

Our guidance reflects the increased number of hours pupils should benefit from, and schools publishing their plans lets parents know that their children are not missing out on the great education they deserve.

The government will also today publish a remote education framework to support schools and colleges with delivering education for pupils who are learning from home. The frameworks will help them to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in the lessons and teaching they provide remotely, and points towards resources that can help them improve where needed.

The frameworks should be adapted by schools and colleges to fit their individual context. They are voluntary, and were developed in partnership with sector leaders. They have been tested with schools and colleges, and welcomed, with feedback suggesting they are valuable in helping deliver quality remote education for their pupils.

The EdTech Demonstrator network is also in place to offer advice, guidance and training on ways technology can be used to enhance remote education arrangements. This includes weekly webinars and support alongside bespoke advice and training.

Today's announcements follow confirmation from Oak National Academy last week that major mobile operators Vodafone, 02, Three and EE have committed to working together to make access to the site free – and from BT, on Monday 11th January, that BT and EE customers will be able to access BBC Bitesize resources for free from the end of January. The BBC has also committed to providing a vast array of educational content across its channels, providing even more support for home learning.

Notes to editors

Remote learning

The remote education provided by schools should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently. The amount of remote education provided should be, as a minimum:

- Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
- Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day
- Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day

On Friday, the Department updated [guidance](#) for FE colleges to reflect delivery expectations of remote education: Further education guidance for restricting attendance during the national lockdown

Devices All schools have now been invited to order devices. Based on BESA ICT Survey 2019 data survey, it is estimated that schools already owned over 1.9 million laptops and nearly one million tablets before the pandemic.

Internet access Schools can request free mobile data uplifts for disadvantaged families, via the Department for [Education's website](#). The level of additional data for families will vary by provider, but Three and EE customers will receive unlimited data. Other providers supporting the offer include Tesco Mobile, Smarty, Sky Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone and O2. This is in addition to 4G wireless routers already provided, with free data for the academic year, and we continue to provide 4G wireless routers where children need to access remote education.