

The Home Access Grant

What is the Home Access Grant?

The Home Access Grant is a government programme providing low-income families with a grant to purchase a computer and internet access to get online at home.

Are you eligible?

If you answer yes to the three questions in section one and yes to at least one question in section two you could be eligible for a Home Access Grant.

Section 1 Are you a parent or guardian responsible for and living with a child:

- who is in school years 3 to 9, which normally means age 7–14?
- who attends a state-maintained school in England full-time?
- who has not already had a computer from a Home Access Grant or any other similar programmes, such as Computers for Pupils?

Section 2 Do you receive *at least one* of the following:

- Free school meals for your child
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and an income of less than £16,040 (£16,190 from April 2010)
- Guaranteed Pension Credit (not Savings Credit)
- Income-based Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

If you are a foster carer for Looked After Children in years 1 to 13 then you could also get a Home Access Grant.

If you think you may be eligible for a Home Access grant simply call the Home Access Grant Helpline on 0333 200 1004 to get an application form.

Hertfordshire County Council
Children, Schools and Families

Telephone: 0300 123 4043
www.hertsdirect.org/csf



What if I don't qualify for a grant?

Families that are not eligible for the Home Access Grant can purchase the Home Access packages at a reduced cost directly from suppliers. Information can be found via: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/homeaccess>

There are also lots of places you can access the internet in your local community, for a small fee or even for free. Ask at your local library, community centre or get in touch with UK online centres for free on 0800 77 1234 or at www.ukonlinecentres.com

What exactly does the Home Access package consist of?

The Home Access package will consist of:

- One computer/ device per household with step by step instructions on using the package
- Filtering software to be controlled by parents and carers
- 'Know It All' digital content - eSafety advice for families
- Various assistive software
- Productivity software
- 1 years 3g dongle internet access; additional broadband options may be added depending on uptake later in the year.
- Anti-virus and firewall software with pre-paid updates for 3 years
- Warranty, service and support for 1 year

Who will the Home Access package belong to?

The Home Access Grant is yours and does not need to be paid back, even after your child finishes school. At the end of the 12 months you can decide if you want to keep the internet; you won't be locked into anything that you don't want or can't afford.

Why get online?

Children, who go online for learning at home, get on better in school. With a computer and the internet at home, everyone in the family has the chance to learn more.

If you would like to find out more about how children can use technology at home - <http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/>

Your Home Access Package and Your Money

The internet is a useful way of finding out about things that matter to you, to get information and to benefit from great money-saving deals. Listed below is a guide to some sites that will help you make the most of your money.

Benefits and Tax Credits You can check that you are getting everything you are entitled to and find out if there is any other help available on the following:

www.hertsdirect.org/benefits	Information about benefits and free downloadable fact sheets.
www.directgov.uk	Financial help available through benefits and taxes, advice on self-employment, student finance and managing money.
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk	Details on claiming, how to find your local office and help and advice on finding work.
www.hmrc.gov.uk	Information on tax credits, a tax credits calculator and what to do if things go wrong.
www.turn2us.org.uk	Accessing money through additional sources of financial help and grant-giving organisations.

Debt The following all offer **free** and confidential advice on debt:

www.adviceguide.org Citizen's Advice Bureau's website	Advice on managing your debt, your rights, and details of your local CAB.
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk	Advice and downloadable fact sheets on debt, an online personal budget tool, and access to a telephone information and e mail advice line.
www.cccs.co.uk	A charity that offers telephone and online debt counselling and money management advice

Your Money and Your Fuel Bills There are many sites to help you manage the cost of fuel. The following offer the most useful advice:

www.consumerfocus.org.uk	What's available through grants, discounts and government financial help plus useful energy efficiency tips.
www.energymadeclear.co.uk	Setting out all your options, so that you can make the right choices and save money on your fuel bills. Information on payment methods, special tariffs and switching suppliers to get the best deal.

Managing your Money

www.moneyadeclear.fsa.gov.uk Financial Services Authority	The official guide to making the most of your money and what is right for you. Free online step-by-step guides on a variety of money-related topics as well as simple budget and loan calculators.
www.experian.co.uk www.equifax.co.uk www.callcredit.co.uk	To monitor your credit status or order a credit report.
www.abcul.org	The benefits of saving and borrowing with a credit union, a community-based savings and loan co-operative. Details of a credit union near you and a useful loan calculator.
www.choosingandusing.com	Understanding how your credit card works, factors to consider when choosing one, and tips on the best way to use it.
www.lenderscompared.org.uk	A guide to interest rates for home collected and other loans.
www.directgov.uk/stoploansharks	Illegal lending, your rights and how to report loan sharks in complete confidence.
www.identitytheft.org.uk	Preventing identity theft, what to do if you are a victim and what help is available.

Your Money and Your Rights

www.clsdirect.org.uk	Information about how to find a local legal adviser or solicitor, your legal rights on debt, employment, redundancy and dismissal, education and training, housing and homelessness, family and relationships, and a legal aid eligibility calculator.
www.consumerdirect.gov.uk	Clear practical advice on consumer issues from faulty goods, scams, dealing with disputes and making a complaint.
www.moneysavingexpert.com	Advice, guidance, tips and best deals on cards, loans, utilities, banking and insurance, and shows you how to make small changes that could make a big difference to your finance.

For further information visit the A-Z of benefits on Herts Direct at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/caresupport/bnftsadv/benatoz/>

This information can be made available on request in other formats, including large print, Braille, audio and other languages.