



Education Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Robert Halfon MP, Chair

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP

Sanctuary Buildings

Minister of State for School Standards

20 Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

21 May 2020

Technology support for children and schools

Dear Nick,

During evidence before us, the Secretary of State set out the Government's programme to provide £100m of funding for 200,000 laptops to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We would like to explore how this scheme is operating with you during our questioning next week and so we thought it would be helpful, if possible, if you could prepare responses to the following questions beforehand. In particular, we are interested in the following areas:

- On what basis was the £100m budget set?
- What assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure devices are finding their way to those children and young people most in need and to the specific groups identified by the Government?
- How is funding for devices being shared across the country? Will funding to local authorities, academies or schools be managed or capped in any way? How will the Department publish information on how funding has been distributed?
- How does the scheme fit in with existing arrangements run by local authorities which already provide IT equipment to children in care?
- How will funding be split between providing devices and access to the internet?
- What is the position for those schools which have already taken early action to use their own current contingency funding to provide devices and internet access to their pupils in need of connectivity?
- To date, how many devices have been approved and delivered?
- What are the ongoing arrangements for the scheme? For instance, are devices being loaned to individual pupils with an intention to redistribute them to others at a later date?
- Finally, how will DfE monitor and measure the benefits of this scheme?

We would be grateful if you could provide a written response to these questions to inform our inquiry. The Committee can also cover this area with you along with others during the session itself. And thanks once again for agreeing to meet with us during the Whitsun recess.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Robert Halfon', written in a cursive style.

Robert Halfon MP
Chair of the Education Committee