

## Written evidence submitted by Mr Ian Clough

### NOTES FOR EDUCATION COMMITTEE – THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON EDUCATION

#### **Background**

6G are an internet service provider who deliver on a network currently being developed by Internexus.

<https://www.6ginternet.com/>

<https://www.internexus.co.uk/>

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahir\\_Mohsan](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahir_Mohsan)

**6G have committed to making up to 20% of their service available free of charge to enable home internet access for families on lower or uncertain incomes.**

Work has already been undertaken with Community Centres and social landlords but the main emphasis has been around trying to engage with schools.

**This is because there are a significant minority of school aged children with no home internet access. This is an inequality, made starkly visible to all heads by the school closures resulting from the Covid 19 virus, that should not be allowed to continue without intervention.**

In Blackburn for example the process has been for the schools to identify children without home internet access (some have done this by "questionnaires" other have relied on the class teachers knowledge) One identified 6G have connected the property to an free "always on" 10Mbps unlimited connection, boosted to 20Mbps between 4pm - 8pm Mon to Fri and 9am - 9pm Sat & Sun. In some instances links have been created with other organisations to access free recycled devices where needed - one without the other is of little value. One such example was reported in the Lancashire Evening Telegraph.

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/18191755.pupils-blackburn-offered-free-broadband-computer-equipment/>

As the Internexus network expands, 6G are keen to add value to schools across wider geographic areas. The network is currently most developed in NW England, Greater Manchester and pockets of the West Midlands. However, it is not national and will not be so for several years.

#### **Proposal**

The Government already has a "voucher scheme" to enable faster internet connection.

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/how-do-vouchers-work/>

**In principle, could similar vouchers be provided to schools to be used to allow families with no connection (rather than slow connection) to connect?**

From 6G's perspective the voucher would cover the cost of installing a receiver and route {on going connectivity would remain free to the householders - 6G are currently covering both the cost of installation (c£200) AND ongoing connectivity (c£200pa)}

From a national perspective of ensuring that there are no school aged children in the UK unable to access the internet at home, all suppliers could accept the voucher to subsidise the monthly cost to

the customer (albeit temporarily) Other suppliers may even be persuaded to follow the 6G example and allow free access throughout the period that there are school aged children in the household.

A £300 voucher would adequately cover the cost of installation, connectivity, and, crucially the cost of a suitable device.

The proposed vouchers would be made available through schools and managed by schools.

May 2020