

# Computers for foster carers

Devon County Council Children and Young People's Services



## Spend up to £600 on computer equipment for your home

Devon County Council is providing a computer and internet connection for the use of every child or young person in foster care. It's primarily to give them educational opportunities, so they won't be at a disadvantage with their peers. But inevitably they'll also use it for social networking, chat-rooms, videos, games, music, photos, all the normal things young people do. That's fine, as long as both you and they know how to do things safely.

## What can I buy?

You can either use the grant for a completely new set-up, or to supplement your existing computer facilities. But the new equipment must stay in your house for the next placement.

You could buy anything you need from this list:

- computer
- scanner
- security lock
- warranty
- printer
- wireless router
- anti-virus software
- software to help with studies

Webcam not included. With careful shopping, you could probably buy them all.

The one-off grant covers the purchase of equipment, software and warranties, and there's an extra allowance of £15 a month towards providing a broadband connection.

## How do I claim the computers for carers grant?

You simply sign and return the enclosed contract, and the full grant of £600 will be paid to you in the normal way you receive fostering payments. Arrangements will then be made to pay the £15 a month broadband allowance.

- 1 choose where you want to buy from
- 2 make your purchases of items from the approved list (not including webcams)
- 3 send your receipts along with your full contact details to: **Pauline Browning, Children and Young People's Services, Parkers Barn, Parkers Way, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5UF**
- 4 your computer facilities will then be included in your next annual review.

The scheme is open to all of Devon County Council's approved fostering households, with one grant being paid per home. New carers will be eligible on approval.

If you've got any questions about the scheme, or the eligibility of certain items, call Roger Perry on **01392 380736** or email [roger.perry@devon.gov.uk](mailto:roger.perry@devon.gov.uk)





## Foster carers keep a watchful eye

The internet can be full of possibilities for young people, but unfortunately it also has lurking dangers and it's your responsibility as a carer to protect young people from harm, and help them develop resilience. The main threats are grooming by paedophiles on social networking sites and cyberbullying.

### Basic tips:

- The computer must be easily accessible to the child or young person you're fostering.
- It must be in a living area where people come and go, and where you can keep an eye on their online activities not in the privacy of their bedroom, where they're much more vulnerable to predators and bullies.
- Desktop computers are preferable, because laptops can easily be carried to more secluded areas.

It's important to keep up to date because the technology, and the way people use it, continues to develop. For more information, try these websites.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying)

And if you're a beginner to computing and the internet, there's free tuition available at:

[www.bbc.co.uk/computertutor](http://www.bbc.co.uk/computertutor)

[www.bbc.co.uk/webwise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise)

## Young people get wise, stay safe

If you use the web properly, you can avoid problems. But if they happen, you need to know what to do.

- **Be careful what you say**, and what images you send online.
- **Think before you send**, anything sent can be made public very quickly, and could stay online forever.
- **Keep your password to yourself**, only give your personal website address or your mobile number to friends you trust.
- **Don't arrange to meet anyone you've met online**, they may not be who they say they are.
- **Learn how to block or report someone** who is behaving badly online.
- **Don't retaliate or reply** to bullies or people you're suspicious of.
- **Save the evidence** of offending messages, pictures or conversations.
- **Make sure you tell your foster carer or another adult you trust**. Call a confidential helpline like ChildLine on **0800 1111** or talk to a member of staff at school.

These websites will help you stay safe online.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk/Info/Pages/OnlineSafety.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/Info/Pages/OnlineSafety.aspx)

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/CrimeAndJustice/KeepingSafe/DG\\_10027670](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/CrimeAndJustice/KeepingSafe/DG_10027670)

