Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware the Government has announced support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who do not currently have access to a digital device such as a laptop or tablet during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Council will receive an allocation for care leavers, children and young people aged 0 to 19 with a social worker, and the disadvantaged Yr 10 pupils at Local Authority maintained schools who do not have a social worker (Academy Trusts will receive an allocation for disadvantaged Yr 10 pupils who do not have a social worker at their school separately). The Local Authority and Academy Trusts will own the laptops and tablets they receive and loan them to children and young people.

The Council has established a project group to manage the co-ordination of the devices allocated to it by the DfE for the cohorts for which it is responsible. Over the last couple of weeks, the project group has been working with social work teams and schools to establish the needs of children and young people, as the Council allocation is insufficient for everyone eligible to receive a digital device and/or internet access. Where the allocation is insufficient for those with clear needs the LA will make a request for additional devices. The project group has also been working with schools to determining which types of device would be most suitable for whom.

These initial actions have now been completed and the Council is in the process of ordering and arranging delivery of these as soon as possible for those with clear needs. This could take several weeks, as we are dependent on the DfE’s delivery provider.

All laptops and tablets will have settings to make sure that they are safe and secure online and information will be provided about staying safe online, eSecurity and protection measures to reduce the risk of theft.

Social workers will arrange to deliver devices directly to care leavers and children and young people aged 0 to 19 with a social worker and the LA will contact schools to arrange delivery for disadvantaged Yr 10 pupils at Local Authority maintained schools who do not have a social worker. There is an expectation that the device will be looked after throughout the duration of the loan and parents/carers will be asked to sign an agreement on Terms of Use.