

Dear Supplier

I am writing to you to ask for your help in relation to a new scheme that we have launched. "Bridging the Digital Divide" seeks to provide laptop devices to young people who need them for educational purposes.

It became apparent during the last lockdown that some young people did not have laptops to access work that was being set at home, this scheme looks to close the tech gap.

We have partnered with End of Life IT Services (EOL), based in Maldon, to take our old devices (from ECC, partners, public etc) and either recondition them for future use or sell them and then use the residual value to purchase Google Chromebooks for ECC children who need them.

We prioritised our own devices as the first 'pilot' of the model & also asked staff for personal donations. EOL have processed our first batch of donated laptops (500) – the reconditioned laptops or their residual financial value is 100% redirected into devices for ECC children.

Our education colleagues quickly identified colleges as a place requiring the most support, as they are the education establishments offering a consistent blended learning offer. We have already distributed 160 devices to colleges with 200 more in the pipeline. However, for the scheme to be truly successful we need as many devices as possible.

Phase 2 of the programme involves asking the public, our suppliers and businesses for donations. Whilst during the current lockdown, we are not able to take individual donations from the public due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we will still be going ahead with asking for donations from businesses and our supply chain. This is where we could do with your help! We have had indications already from businesses that they are willing to donate to this scheme. It would be great if I could get your support and help in promoting this scheme.

I share below some information on the roll out of the project and ask whether you could share this with your business contacts?

Should you require any further information, please let me know. I would be grateful for your help.

Kind Regards



Nicole Wood
Executive Director – Finance and Technology

A chance for you to help

Laptops for children who need tech...

During lockdown, local authorities including Essex County Council (ECC) were involved in a Department of Education (DofE) programme to provide free laptops to disadvantaged children to help them in their learning and development, safety and wellbeing.

Access to technology can be so important to supporting a child's progress and personal development and there are many children out there who do not have the luxury of a device or online access. During the COVID pandemic it has become apparent the digital divide grows ever wider and at ECC we want to continue to do all we can to help.

Colleagues from Technology Services, Education, Finance and social care were instrumental in the campaign earlier this year and will be again in making this next phase happen and we have been able to provide 160 devices to colleges across Essex to support students with access to the remote learning programme they are delivering. However, we need to grow the scheme now, and for this we need you! We are gathering old laptops that will be sent to our partners EOL IT Services to have all data erased (utilising Blancco software) and all identifiable markings removed, prior to processing and cleaning in preparation for deployment to children and young people in Essex, giving you a fantastic opportunity to deliver a great social good for young people in Essex

If you have old or unused laptops device gathering dust in your business, or your running a refresh programme and need help getting rid of your old devices, we would ask you to help us support young people in Essex by donating them to our scheme. It could make the world of difference to a child and family by giving them access to online resources and learning. This is particularly prevalent as we now find ourselves in a second lockdown and we need to look to the future around how young people will access remote learning as they self isolate.

If you have any devices to donate you can do the following:

If you have over 50 devices to donate please contact TSLaptop.Donations@essex.gov.uk with details and we will arrange for EOL IT Services to contact you to arrange a suitable collection time direct from your premises.

If you have less than 50 devices all you need to do is drop them off at one of the office hubs, listed below:

- Essex House, Colchester
- Ely House, Basildon
- Goodman House, Harlow
- Magnet House, Clacton
- Reception, County Hall, Chelmsford

Laptops will then go to our third-party provider who will get the laptops ready for issue. It won't always be possible to reuse a laptop. In those cases, the device will be dismantled and sold for

parts and the money raised will be put into a fund we can use to buy other laptops for the cause.

Working with Education colleagues all devices will be allocated around the county to schools who will issue them to those who need them most, mainly focussed on secondary school and college age children in the first instance and expanding based on how successful the scheme becomes. With your help we could support a huge amount of children and families with their learning.

If you have any queries email TSLaptop.Donations@essex.gov.uk. We can't wait to see what we can do with this scheme with your help.

Don't forget if you are visiting one of our offices to donate, to help keep us all safe, make sure you are familiar with COVID-19 guidance around social distancing measures and complete the induction if you haven't already.