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## **Tackling Digital Poverty Briefing**

# **North East Tenants Voice**

**Introduction**

Tpas has facilitated the creation of four specialist groups as sub-groups to the collective North East Tenants Voice to explore four key priority areas using the following three questions as a basis to form their response:

1. **What current action is being taken on this key priority?**
2. **What resources can be accessed or what areas of the sector can help raise the profile of this priority?**
3. **What role could NETV have in responding to the key priority locally, regionally and nationally?**

This briefing paper comprises of the findings produced by the ‘Tackling Digital Poverty’ specialist sub-group.

1. **What current action is being taken on this key priority?**

# In this day and age, access to the internet and digital technologies is something many of us take for granted. This was underscored by the seamlessness with which office workers and school children up and down the country simply adapted their household digital capabilities for working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. But what about those who did not have access to the internet or a computer? We ponder on what is happening to the unconnected and others who are in similar situations that have no access.

1. **What resources can be accessed or what areas of the sector can help raise the profile of this priority?**

We believe with the right research and resources from housing providers alongside charitable organisations, local and national government, the poverty gap can be significantly reduced and eventually closed. We have made various recommendations to that effect as per point 3 below.

1. **What role could NETV have in responding to the key priority locally, regionally and nationally? Key recommendations:**

# The government prioritises working with communities who are not connected via the internet at this time and consider working towards introducing fully accessible WI-FI for vulnerable low income groups coming out of this current crisis

# Opportunities are made available for digitally excluded, low income community members to design technological support packages to build skills, knowledge and confidence ensuring they are designed to best effect.

# Ask the housing associations to look at subsidised personal access with the reduced payments being added to rent or taken from benefits.

# Look at a bulk purchase of internet time / supplied to give greater access at a reduced rate.

# Have access to a fully furnished IT suite with computers and printing facilities

# Have access to subsidised equipment, on loan or to purchase again via rent or grants.

# Utilise the many universities in the North East by using them for outreach training with the young and venerable.

# We need to work closely with the up and coming IT centres and local companies like SAGE ANDROMADA SOLUTIONS and software companies.

# All the above will need careful consideration as both time and money are required.