



northern grid

Press Release

Exciting New Online Learning Opportunities Across the North East Region

Pupils in the North East can now benefit from the most advanced learning platforms available. Schools and Local Authorities will benefit from greater cost efficiencies and savings each year thanks to a new contract with suppliers, negotiated by The Northern Grid for Learning.

To meet Government education targets, all schools must provide access to a learning platform for teachers and pupils. These online teaching and learning environments can help ensure effective administration and management of schools which allows more time and resources to be made available for learners.

Over the past five years, Northern Grid has supported their Local Authority partners and schools in the use of learning platforms, developing best practice nationally. This has been recognised by national agencies.

Northern Grid, working with teachers and pupils from the region, has undertaken a rigorous Competitive Dialogue Procurement process. This has resulted in a Framework Agreement with four identified learning platform providers who can ensure that next generation learners are prepared for life in the digital 21st century.

The four companies on the framework are:

- Blackboard
- Frog
- Fronter
- Its Learning

This Framework enables local authorities and schools to choose the platform that best meets schools' needs.



northern grid

Northern Grid is keen to promote the benefits which learning platforms bring to teachers and learners. These include:

Anytime Learning

In recent weeks heavy snow prevented teachers and pupils from going to school and for over a year localised outbreaks of swine flu have meant that many youngsters have not been available to receive the education they need. Yet in those schools which have made good use of their learning platforms, pupils can access resources and communicate with teachers and their classmates from home.

Learning platforms can allow communication and collaboration with other learners across the region, the UK and beyond.

Parents

Where parents are closely involved in their children's learning, there is clear evidence that they are more likely to achieve their potential than those whose parents are not involved. Schools which use the Northern Grid's learning platforms will be able to ensure that parents and carers are able to fully participate in their children's learning.

Saving Schools and Local Authorities Money

Paying for a single procurement process instead of each authority managing their own, means significant cost savings and purchasing on behalf of a larger group of schools results in lower prices. As a result, despite upgrading to the latest technology, schools and Local Authorities will save money. In the current financial climate this is welcomed by everyone involved. Buying from the framework means that Local Authorities can be confident that these companies have all met the high standards set down by Northern Grid.

“Working with Northern Grid and other Local Authorities has enabled us to make cost savings through a shared, central procurement process whilst ensuring best value.”

Ian Ithurralde, ELearning Co-ordinator,
Stockton-on-Tees LA



northern grid

“Learning Platform usage by schools in the North East provides excellent support for teaching and learning.”

Mel Philipson,
Manager of Northern Grid for Learning

Northern Grid has been working with its Local Authorities for ten years. Their vision and commitment to work together has resulted in strong partnership, delivering many benefits for the region’s learners. Northern Grid’s national reputation for broadband development enables us to raise the profile of many schools and celebrate their excellent practice.

ENDS

About Northern Grid

Northern Grid for Learning’s vision is to support schools and local authorities to achieve the highest possible standards by embracing the opportunities which technology can provide for 21st century education.

Northern Grid, formed in 2000 as a direct result of the Government’s strategy to introduce broadband connectivity to schools, has been highly successful in establishing a robust, reliable regional network. All schools within Northern Grid’s partner local authorities were connected to broadband technologies two years ahead of schedule and the network is regularly upgraded to ensure schools have the broadband provision they need. The majority of secondary schools receive 100Mgb and most primary schools receive 10Mgb. They are linked into a regional network which is fully resilient and which will provide 1Gb connectivity throughout the region.

The current focus is on supporting the transformation of learning through ICT by providing technologies and resources that will allow greater personalisation of students’ learning experiences, give teachers tools that can enhance their teaching and support leaders in their drive for whole school improvement.

Northern Grid’s activities and services range from dedicated hands-on training, school leader briefing sessions, ICT awards for the region’s most innovative schools, working with teachers to develop freely available content and negotiating with commercial partners to offer schools discounted resources.



northern grid

By collaborating regionally and nationally with schools, agencies, the commercial sector, the other nine Regional Broadband Consortia and the wider education sector, Northern Grid undertakes activities that provide best value, promote best practice and establish the region as a national centre of excellence.

Northern Grid is owned by the seven Local Authorities of:

- Darlington
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough
- North Tyneside
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Stockton
- South Tyneside.

The latest spending review has shown that by working together and aggregating procurements Northern Grid has saved its partner Local Authorities more than £6 million over the last year.

Northern Grid works closely with the 9 other RBCs in England, as well as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Together these 13 organisations form the National Education Network.

www.northerngrid.org

www.nen.gov.uk

For further information contact:

Mel Philipson

Manager

Northern Grid for Learning

0191 4611844

mel.philipson@northerngrid.org.uk