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25th January 2006

Sanjin Kaharevic
E-Government and Take-up Team
Scottish Executive, Area 3-G80
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Dear Mr Kahaveric

Digital Inclusion

Thank you for seeking the views of the Lochaber Disability Access Panel in regard to the Digital Inclusion paper. Your paper was discussed at a recent meeting of the Panel and, after discussion, it was agreed that we should respond by not completing the questionnaire but by simply letting you have our views which are: -

Two "digitally inclusive" projects – both aimed at supporting disadvantaged groups – were running successfully in Lochaber but required to cease because the Scottish Executive decided to stop supporting them. These were (1) LEAD and (2) Lochaber Communications Network. This was a retrograde decision on the part of the Executive and had considerable and adverse impact on already disadvantaged persons.

- These projects were designed and functioning precisely in the way that you are now seeking to reinstate via your Digital Inclusion paper. There is a clear need to support already disadvantaged groups, whether disadvantaged by income, unemployment, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age, regardless of their geographical location or point of public internet access, supporting and ICT training.
- The Panel has no objections to our response being made available to the general public.

I hope these comments are useful

Yours sincerely

P.P. Barbara Budge

Ken Johnston
Chairman of Lochaber Disability Access Panel