

# [News story: £200 million to kickstart full fibre broadband across UK](#)

The Government has confirmed that £200 million will be allocated to fund full fibre broadband connections in hard to reach areas across the UK, starting with all primary schools who would otherwise never have had access to high-quality broadband.

This will also allow us to test new approaches to fibre rollout in rural areas, benefiting tens of thousands of homes and businesses across the UK with the Borderlands, Cornwall, and Welsh valleys amongst the first areas to be targeted.

Earlier this year the [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) (FTIR) outlined plans to ensure that the country's broadband infrastructure is fit for the future. This was backed up by the Chancellor who set ambitious targets for nationwide full fibre coverage by 2033.

The plans will see mostly competitive commercial investment made across the UK however the FTIR identified that around 10% of the country would need additional funding, from whatever source, of around £3 billion.

To ensure that the hardest to reach areas are not left behind an 'outside-in' approach will be needed to connect these areas at the same pace as the rest of the country.

DCMS Secretary of State Jeremy Wright said:

Through our modern Industrial Strategy it's our ambition to have a full fibre Britain that is fit for the future. By changing our approach and investing in the hardest to reach places first, we will ensure that the whole country can reap the benefits of full fibre broadband.

The Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme is the first step in this process, with funding coming from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF). The £200 million will trial models for local hubs in rural areas, starting with primary schools, alongside a voucher scheme for funding full fibre connectivity to nearby premises, providing full fibre connectivity to homes and businesses.

## **Making full fibre mandatory for new builds**

Government has also kick started the process of making the provision of full fibre broadband compulsory for all new builds. New build developments are a clear case in which opportunities for boosting full fibre broadband coverage are not being seized. Whilst there are examples of the most proactive developers and network providers delivering good connectivity, sites with no,

or slow, connections are inexcusable.

Minister for Digital Margot James said:

Too many new build homes are built with slow, or no, connections. This needs to change. Making full fibre mandatory for new builds will help us meet our ambitious broadband goals, connect people and places and strengthen our digital society.

Poor connections have a disproportionate impact on residents and communities. When people cannot work from home, pay bills online or run small businesses it is not just the individual who suffers; slow, unreliable connections hamper innovation, stop collaboration between groups and make it harder for local economies and communities to thrive.

To address this, Government plans to ensure delivery of gigabit-capable connections to all new build homes, reversing the trend of new build homes being associated with poor connections. The policy will also enable wider deployment of fibre technology across the UK, and a [consultation](#) published yesterday seeks views on:

- How developers and network operators should share the cost of connecting new build sites to gigabit-capable networks
- Introducing a 'duty to connect' provision upon network operators
- Amending building regulations which will mean all new build sites will be built with the necessary infrastructure in place to support gigabit-capable networks

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## **[News story: Jeremy Hunt launches reverse mentoring scheme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) staff](#)**

To mark the end of Black History Month, the Foreign Secretary has launched a new reverse mentoring scheme at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for ethnic minority staff.

The scheme will see senior figures from across the FCO paired with ethnic minority staff in junior grades within the Department, to help challenge ingrained views on what talent looks like, break down stereotypes and biases, get fresh perspectives and help improve diversity in middle and senior grades.

Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

In the twenty-first century it is essential that our diplomats look more like our country as a whole. Especially when 2 of Britain's greatest assets are our diversity and deep inter-country ties.

Despite the improvements we've made on improving overall diversity, there remains a stubborn problem in improving racial diversity at the Foreign Office at senior grades, particularly amongst black staff.

Our reverse mentoring scheme will be a practical way for us to challenge stereotypes and improve diversity. It will help us use the fantastic people the FCO employs to forge stronger connections and boost our prosperity.

### [Black History Month video](#)

The announcement comes following the recent publication of a new Foreign Office report, ['Black skin, Whitehall: Race and the Foreign Office, 1945 to 2018'](#) which provides an insight into the history of ethnic minority staff in the department over the last 70 years.

Although ethnic minority staff currently make up 13.4% of Foreign Office staff, 62.5% of those who have declared their heritage have spent over a decade in the lowest grades without progression, compared to 47% of all staff.

The new programme will help leaders understand how biases around race, gender, class and educational background can sometimes mean that they fail to recognise different types of talent, and how these biases can keep ethnic minority staff stuck in the most junior grades in the Foreign Office. It will also help create a network of champions, mentors and coaches required to help move careers forward.

The scheme is part of a suite of measures to improve diversity in the FCO, including ethnic minority representation on the FCO Board, a continuing schools and university outreach programme, and an exciting new talent programme for ethnic minority staff.

Earlier this year, the Business In The Community (BITC) Diversity Benchmark awarded the FCO a silver banding for gender, and a gold banding for race. The awards recognised the FCO's strong commitment to creating inclusive workplaces.

## **Background**

## **Further information**

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# Press release: Applications open to run country's first Secure School

- £5 million will be invested redeveloping existing Ministry of Justice site in Kent
- This first Secure School is set to open in Autumn 2020

The government has today opened applications for specialist, not-for-profit education providers to apply to run the UK's first Secure School. This provides a custodial setting for young people which is focused on education and health services.

This is the very first example of this establishment in the UK. Based at Medway, it will offer up to 70 places for boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 17 and will predominantly serve the South East, including London – a crucial area of demand. Headteachers will be given complete autonomy to run a tailored curriculum.

Justice Minister Edward Argar said:

Today's publication of the 'How to Apply Guidance' is a crucial step in our ongoing commitment to reform youth custody and equip children with the skills they need to live successful, crime-free lives on release.

Secure Schools will lead the way across the youth estate by focusing on tailored early intervention and putting education, healthcare and physical activity at the heart of rehabilitation.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System Lord Agnew said:

All children deserve the chance to fulfil their potential regardless of their background or circumstances – a high quality education can be the key to helping young offenders get their lives back on track.

That is why we have worked with the Ministry of Justice in the development of Secure Schools so that education, care and health are at the heart of youth justice.

Academies are rich in expertise and innovation that could be extended to helping these young people and I hope to see them putting themselves forward for this.

The Ministry of Justice has engaged with and listened to over 150 stakeholders to ensure the Secure Schools model is built on evidence and

shaped by best practice.

The [application process](#) has been designed to ensure a wide range of organisations is able to make a strong application, including those with less experience of bidding for government contracts – resulting in a provider with genuine expertise and experience in this field. It will run until February 2019 before a provider is announced in the summer – with the aim of the school opening in Autumn 2020.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate a child focussed ethos and show their experience of working with children who have undergone significant trauma.

£5 million will be invested to redevelop Medway Secure Training Centre into a Secure School, including extensive refurbishment of the existing classrooms and residential areas as well as improvement to sports provision on the site. This work will benefit from the findings of the review of sport in youth custody and efforts ongoing as part of the Education and Employment Strategy – both published this year.

Secure Schools are just one part of a package of reforms to the youth estate, including developing Enhanced Support Units to provide specialist support to children with the most complex needs. We are also expanding frontline staff capacity in public-sector YOIs by 20% equating to over 120 new recruits.

## Notes to editors

- The government is developing a specific inspection regime to robustly monitor the performance of Secure Schools.
- Secure Schools will be run by secure school academy trusts and will be governed and run under the same legislation as children's homes and academies.

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## [Press release: Homes England confirms new wave of strategic partners](#)

The partnerships, which were announced as part of the Budget 2018, will secure a total of £653 million in grant funding from the Affordable Homes Programme to deliver affordable homes through housing associations. The deals include homes for social rent in areas of high affordability pressures.

The housing associations for this new wave are:

Platform Housing Group (following the merger of Fortis and Waterloo Housing Associations on the 1st October); Guinness and Stonewater (in partnership); Optivo; Southern Housing Group; Orbit; Thirteen; Vivid.

These are in addition to the eight housing association deals announced in early July – bringing the total number of additional affordable homes that will be delivered to 27,755.

Jackie Jacob, Homes England General Manager for Affordable Housing Programmes said:

“Homes England is working with housing associations across England who are prepared to be more ambitious to significantly increase housing delivery and we welcome these seven new partnerships announced in the Budget 2018.

“We have challenged housing associations to respond to a new way of engaging strategically with Homes England and the response has been excellent – we hope to be announcing more partnerships between Homes England and housing associations in the coming months.”

ENDS

For further media information please contact: Homes England press office on 0207 393 2201 or Patsy Cusworth on 0796772328 or [patsy.cusworth@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:patsy.cusworth@homesengland.gov.uk)

NOTES TO EDITORS

## Strategic Partnerships

Partnership	Grant	No. of additional affordable starts to March 2022
Platform	£71.8m	1,800
Guinness & Stonewater	£224m	4,500
Optivo	£44.9m	1,000
Orbit	£128.8m	2,762
Southern	£55.1m	1,005
Thirteen	£40m	1,000
Vivid	£88.2m	1,408

## About Homes England

Homes England is the Government's housing accelerator. We have the appetite, influence, expertise and resources to drive positive market change.

By releasing more land to developers who want to make a difference, and investing in places of greatest need, to deliver new homes. Homes England welcomes partners who share their ambition to challenge the traditional norms and build better homes faster.

For more information [click here](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).