

# Millions pledged for schools and hospitals in rural Scotland to 'go gigabit'

- £2 million boost will connect 91 NHS surgeries and hospitals in the most isolated parts of Scotland to gigabit broadband
- Another £1 million to build a 'high-speed Highlands' with full fibre broadband for nearly 200 schools, hospitals and GP practices
- £2 million project has finished connecting 21 Shetland schools and council buildings to gigabit speeds
- Adds to £4.5 million to put thousands in Scotland first in line to get next-generation broadband through Project Gigabit

It comes as the government announces Project Gigabit, an ambitious [£5 billion project](#) to roll out top-of-the-range gigabit connections to every corner of the country, the first pound of [which will be spent in Scotland](#).

Ninety-one GP surgeries and community hospitals in rural parts of Scotland – including remote island services on Arran, Jura, Lewis, Mull, Shetland and Orkney – will join the digital fast lane with gigabit broadband upgrades.

The UK government pledged a further £2 million to extend investment to an additional 41 NHS Scotland sites, under plans to create an infrastructure revolution for isolated areas of the country.

A further £1 million has also been pledged to extend full fibre to even more schools, hospitals and doctors' surgeries across the Highlands, meaning 199 public buildings will now enjoy faster internet speeds thanks to a £7.3 million total investment through our Local Full Fibre Networks scheme. Up to 37 sites are expected to receive connections this month and all are due to be completed by March 2022.

And in the northern isles of Yell and Unst in Shetland, work as part of a £2 million project to connect 21 schools, council buildings and other public sites to fibre broadband has now been completed marking a big tick in the UK government's checklist to level up isolated Scottish communities.

Matt Warman, Digital Infrastructure Minister, said:

We know that improving connectivity is a top priority for people in Scotland, and this broadband boost will enable dozens more doctors' surgeries, schools and other valued public buildings to raise productivity and deliver better quality services.

This is on top of the £5 billion Project Gigabit we're launching today, the first pound from which will be spent in Scotland, that is setting out to deliver next generation speeds to every corner of the UK.

The UK government has already invested over £15 million to provide gigabit-capable connections with local authorities and other public bodies in Scotland, but today's launch of Project Gigabit marks the beginning of even more investment.

Last month we announced the first tranche of funding from Project Gigabit will be spent in central Scotland: £4.5 million to upgrade 5,300 homes and businesses that were due to get superfast through the Scottish Government's 'Reaching 100%' (R100) programme but will now get even faster gigabit connections.

Both governments are working closely together to scope how Project Gigabit will work in the rest of Scotland, including an assessment of its distinct characteristics and the challenges this could pose to delivery, and consideration for how it will align with the R100 programme.

Projects will be developed jointly by the UK Government and Scottish Government through a collaborative approach, in which the Scottish Government is expected to be the lead partner on implementation management on behalf of DCMS.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

"The UK Government is investing millions of pounds to ensure people in remote areas of Scotland benefit from fast, reliable internet connections. Upgrading broadband in NHS surgeries, hospitals, schools and councils across rural Scotland will transform public services at the very heart of our communities, helping us to build back better from coronavirus."

ENDS

## **Notes to editors**

### **New sites to benefit**

#### **Highlands**

- Bualnaluib Primary School, Aultbea
- Bower Primary School, Lyth Wick
- Gergask Primary School, Laggan Bridge
- Great Glen Way Office, Strathoich, Auchterawe Road, Fort Augustus
- Harbour Building, Harbourmasters Office, Kinlochbervie, Larg
- \*Maintenance Depot, Sir Archibald Road, Thurso
- Staffin Primary School, Staffin, Portree
- Strathconon Primary School, Srathconon, Muir or Ord
- Aviemore Depot, Achantoul, Aviemore
- Forvie Centre, Colliston, Ellon

#### **NHS Scotland sites**

- Carloway Medical Practice
- Carnwath Health Centre

- Creich Surgery
- Dalry Health Centre
- Dunvegan Health Centre
- Fyvie Health Centre
- Glencairn Gp Surgery
- Tobermory Medical Practice
- Southernness Surgery
- Langabhat Medical Practice (Leurbost)
- Lorn Medical Centre
- Migdale Hospital
- Patna Resource Centre
- South Ronaldsay Practice
- Springfield Health Centre
- St Brendans Hospital
- The Glebe Medical Centre
- The Shiskine Surgery
- Barr Surgery
- Kyles Medical Centre
- Armadale Medical Practice
- Dalbeattie Clinic \*Dounby Surgery
- Isle Of Arran War Memorial Hospital
- South Uist Medical Practice
- Carradale Surgery
- Dunbeath Health Centre
- Lochgoilhead Practice
- Habost Clinic (The Group Practice)
- Killearn Health Centre
- Lady Home Hospita
- Loudoun Medical Centre
- Inveraray Surgery
- Staffin Nurse Base
- Stromness Surgery
- Arran Medical Group
- Kingshill Medical Practice
- Furnace Surgery
- Victoria Hospital Annexe
- Westray Surgery
- Whiting Bay Surgery