

# New-build homes to come gigabit-speed ready

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden has today announced (Tuesday 17 March) the government will legislate to make sure new-build homes come with gigabit-speed broadband fit for the future.

This is a significant step in the Prime Minister's plan to level up the UK and accelerate the nationwide rollout of world-class broadband with the fastest speeds.

This will allow people to work from home more easily and will give homes fast and reliable connections for streaming TV and films on multiple devices at the same time.

One in five new-build homes are still being built without gigabit-speed connections, mostly in smaller developments, where the cost can be higher or network operators have not had the time they need to build in connections before completion.

The move will mean developers will be legally required to install high-quality digital infrastructure from the outset, make it a priority as part of the build, and ensure broadband companies are on board before the first brick is laid.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

This legislation means every new home will be built fit for the future and give people access to world-class broadband speeds from the moment they move in.

It's all part of our plan to deliver on our commitment to give everyone in the UK access to gigabit broadband, as we connect and level up the country.

The government will amend building regulations to guarantee that all new homes have the right infrastructure to support gigabit broadband and housing developers must work with network operators to install internet speeds of over 1,000 megabits per second (Mbps) in new-build homes, up to a cost cap of £2,000 per dwelling.

The legislation, to be laid as soon as parliamentary time allows, will remove the need to retrospectively install broadband infrastructure and reduce disruption and high costs.

To make sure developers are incentivised to follow the plans, the government has worked with operators to secure significant new commitments that they will contribute to the costs of installing gigabit broadband in new-build homes.

Virgin Media will contribute at least £500 and in the case of some larger sites £1,000. Openreach has committed to a combined contribution with developers of £3,400, with a maximum developer contribution of £2,000. The government expects to have agreement from other operators in the coming weeks.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

We are building more new homes than at any time in the last 30 years and helping more people to get onto the ladder. We want to ensure those new homes are high quality and fit for the future.

Today's announcement will deliver internet speeds 200 times faster than you would need to watch an HD film on Netflix.

Clive Selley, CEO of Openreach, said:

Providing full fibre to new homes is an important part of Openreach's commitment to invest in faster, more reliable broadband technology – as part of our 'Fibre First' strategy.

We've been leading industry, progressively lowering the plot size threshold at which we offer free full fibre installation for new housing developments. This is now available to smaller developments of just 20 homes. In addition, we've capped the amount house builders contribute if they ask Openreach to build full fibre to smaller-scale developments of just 2 and 3 premises – to help encourage further full fibre take-up.

We welcome the government's announcement that all new build homes will be required to have the infrastructure to support gigabit-capable connections, and we will work closely with government and housebuilders on the best way to deliver this.

Lutz Schüler, CEO of Virgin Media, said:

Many property developers have been building brand new homes with second-rate broadband connections for far too long.

The Government should be applauded for introducing legislation to ensure every new home has access to future proof gigabit broadband as standard – something we've long called for. By busting these broadband barriers, government and industry can work together and ensure new homes are no longer left behind in the gigabit broadband revolution.

The policy, which will be laid as secondary legislation meaning it can be introduced quicker, applies to all new residential dwellings, including conversions and self-built homes, but excluding renovated buildings, schools, hotels and prisons.

Government statistics estimate 215,000 new-build homes are built a year.

The government expects that 98.1 per cent of the time gigabit broadband will be installed at no costs to developers and that developers will have to contribute more than £1,800 for only 0.1 per cent of new builds.

With an assumed operator contribution of between £500-£1,400 this policy will ensure that currently, gigabit-capable connections will be deployed in 99% of total new build premises.

Alongside this, the government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme, which aims to see full fibre broadband delivered to the most remote parts of the UK, continues to work with partners and local bodies to deliver public sector upgrades in rural areas.

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to editors**

- In its response to the consultation *New Build Developments: Delivering gigabit-capable connections* published today the government has said it will use existing powers in the Building Act 1984 to amend the Building Regulations 2010 to mandate that:□
- Developers ensure new homes have gigabit broadband. This includes ensuring that the physical infrastructure necessary for gigabit-capable connections is provided on site for all new build developments and that the home is connected by an operator to a gigabit-capable connection. □
- The requirement on the developer to provide a gigabit-capable connection exists unless the cost to the developer of providing connectivity exceeds £2,000, or the operator declines to provide a connection. □
- If gigabit broadband exceeds the cost cap, the developer must provide at least superfast connection within the same cost cap, unless the operator declines to provide a connection.□
- Building regulations are a devolved matter. Therefore, the legislative amendments to the Building Regulations 2010 will apply to England only. However, the provision of gigabit-capable connections to new homes is a priority for the Government across the whole of the UK. We will therefore work closely with and the Devolved Administrations to help them implement this in a consistent manner across the UK.