

# News story: £67 million boost for a Full Fibre future

Tens of thousands of businesses and homes across the UK are set to benefit from a £67 million investment in faster internet connections, the Chancellor Philip Hammond announced today.

The Nationwide Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) will provide vouchers worth up to £3000 for a small or medium sized business or £500 to residents to help with the costs of connecting to full fibre broadband.

The scheme is part of a wider government plan to get more homes and businesses connected to full fibre broadband. It builds on the £200 million Local Full Fibre Networks programme which gives funding to local areas to boost full fibre delivery. £95 million of this funding was allocated at Spring Statement to 13 successful bidders across the UK.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We're backing Britain's small businesses by investing £67 million to bring full-fibre broadband to more businesses up and down the country.

This means faster, more reliable broadband access as we build the digital infrastructure we need to make our economy fit for the future.

DCMS Secretary of State, Matt Hancock said:

Small businesses are the backbone of the British economy and now they can turbo-charge their connectivity with gigabit speeds.

By building a full fibre future for Britain we are laying the foundations for a digital infrastructure capable of delivering today what the next generation will need tomorrow.

Full fibre connections are faster, more reliable and cheaper to operate than traditional copper lines, and are capable of supporting not only gigabit, but terabit and even petabit speeds, which will serve the UK far into the future. Currently only around 3% of UK premises have access to a full fibre connection.

The scheme forms part of the Government's commitment to make full fibre

broadband available to at least 10 million homes and businesses by 2022. Over the past 18 months, the government has taken significant steps to support the commercial roll out of full-fibre broadband, including:

This next generation of connectivity will help the country to remain productive and competitive over the long-term, creating a Britain fit for the future, and enabling businesses to create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK. Through its Industrial Strategy, the Government is continually driving the UK's connectivity, telecommunications and digital sectors, and investing in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future. Registration for new suppliers will open before the launch of the scheme at the end of March 2018. The scheme will be open until March 2021 or until all available funding has been allocated. There is more information [on our website](#).

### **Notes to editors:**

- The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is intended to further the strategic objective of the Local Full Fibre Networks programme to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre coverage across the UK in both rural and urban locations across the UK.
- A market trial of the voucher scheme for business premises was launched in late 2017 in four areas across the country, with one area also running a trial of residential vouchers. Around 1000 vouchers were issued to small businesses through this pilot. These areas were:
  - Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire
  - Bristol, with Bath and North East Somerset (also had residential vouchers)
  - Coventry and Warwickshire (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick)
  - West Yorkshire and York (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield and York)
- Businesses and residents can get vouchers from suppliers who are registered with the scheme. Vouchers may only be used to support the cost of eligible connections. Suppliers can offer vouchers to both new and existing customers.
- Where suppliers are able to provide qualifying connections to single SMEs, vouchers will be made available to cover up to £3,000 of eligible costs.
- The only way residents can benefit from the voucher scheme is as part of a local community group scheme, which must also include small businesses. Residents and businesses taking part in a group scheme are able to join together to pool the value of their vouchers. Within this group the total value of vouchers used by businesses must always be greater than the value of vouchers taken by residents.
- In some areas the value of a single voucher will not fully meet the installation costs of a gigabit capable full fibre connection. Anyone in this position can also benefit from the group approach outlined above. Businesses and local community groups interested in requesting a voucher will be able to find full details of our scheme [on our website](#). The website also includes instructions on how to register for new suppliers,

and the full details and terms and conditions of the scheme.