

## **Press release: UK condemns illegitimate “elections” held in the Donbas, Ukraine**

FCO condemns illegitimate and unlawful “elections” held in the Donbas and calls on Russia to withdraw its military forces from Ukrainian territory.

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## **Press release: Welsh businesses urged to claim £2500 voucher for broadband boost**

Businesses from Wales are being urged to make use of a £2500 voucher from the UK Government for gigabit broadband speeds before the scheme closes due to high demand.

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## **Press release: Welsh businesses urged to claim £2500 voucher for broadband boost**

The UK Government’s Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme has already helped more than 7000 UK businesses and surrounding homes, who have used the vouchers to contribute to (and in many cases fully fund) the installation cost of a full fibre gigabit capable connection.

The £67 million scheme was initially expected to run until March 2021, but high demand for vouchers means that funds are now expected to be committed a year earlier, and perhaps even sooner if the current success of the scheme continues to grow.

To date, 58 vouchers have been issued to premises in Wales and the UK Government is calling on businesses and residents to apply for the voucher before the scheme comes to an end.

## **UK Government Minister for Wales, Nigel Adams said:**

Improving connectivity for homes and businesses is a central pillar of the UK Government's efforts to strengthen the Welsh economy.

The UK Government's broadband connection voucher scheme is proving to be tremendously popular. Homes want to benefit from superfast broadband speed and businesses need to be properly equipped for all the challenges of the digital world in which we live. I urge all eligible businesses and home owners to apply as soon as possible to make sure they don't miss out on the fantastic offer.

## **Minister for Digital Margot James said:**

Our modern Industrial Strategy is clear on the importance of connectivity, as we build a full fibre Britain that is fit for the future. These vouchers provide practical and immediate help to firms struggling with slow broadband speeds. I encourage small businesses around the UK to apply now.

To ensure as many businesses and homes benefit, the maximum value of the voucher will be reduced from the current £3000 to £2500 in a move that will encourage neighbouring businesses to "pool" their vouchers.

This will enable the scheme to reach more properties without the need for any additional funding. We expect more than 1000 additional businesses and homes to benefit as a result of this change.

DCMS will be carefully monitoring take-up following this change to the scheme rules to determine whether there are locations in which a higher voucher value would be justified.

The scheme is part of a series of Government initiatives to build a Britain with nationwide full fibre broadband coverage by 2033, making sure no communities are left behind. In addition to the voucher scheme, the Chancellor recently announced £200 million for an 'outside-in' approach that will see full fibre broadband rolled out in the hardest to reach rural locations at the same pace as the rest of the country. The Borderlands, Cornwall, and Welsh valleys will be amongst the first areas to be targeted.

## **FSB National Chairman Mike Cherry said:**

Access to good broadband is vital for small businesses across the UK, and with the clock ticking on this scheme, it's important small businesses don't delay if they want to apply for funding.

More information on the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, including details on how

businesses can apply can be found [here](#)

## Notes to Editors

Regional/Nations breakdown of vouchers issued as of 30.10.18

(Additional Local Authority level detail is available upon request)

<b>Region/ Nation</b>	<b>Vouchers Issued</b>
South West	1613
South East	927
Yorkshire and The Humber	871
North West	745
London	661
West Midlands	475
East of England	407
East Midlands	369
North East	68
Northern Ireland	418
Scotland	315
Wales	58

1. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is part of the Local Full Fibre Networks programme, which has the strategic objective of increasing full fibre coverage across the UK.
2. Starting in late 2017, the programme launched the first wave of its programme, designed to test its approach to market stimulation. £10m was allocated to the launch of five pilot projects across the country, including £2m on a market test for the voucher scheme. The national launch of the scheme has been designed to build on the lessons learned from our market test.
3. Gigabit vouchers can be used by small businesses and the local communities surrounding them. Businesses can claim up to £2,500 against the cost of connection either individually or as part of a group project. Residents can benefit from the scheme with a voucher worth £500 as part of a group project.
4. We anticipate that £2,500 will be sufficient to cover the individual connection costs for the majority of UK SMEs. Where this is insufficient, SMEs can pool their vouchers together with other SMEs or with residents to share costs. We have made it easier for more residents to participate in these projects (now up to 10 residents can participate for every one SME).
5. The UK now has 95% coverage for superfast broadband with speeds of 24 megabits per second or higher. However, most superfast connections still depend on copper telephone wires, which are limited in the speeds they can support. For the fastest and most reliable broadband, capable of delivering gigabit speeds, a full fibre connection is required.
6. One gigabit is the same as 1,000 megabits – so it's a big leap forward in connection speeds that could benefit you and your business into the future. Full fibre also supports symmetrical connections – meaning your

upload and download speeds can be the same.

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The £67 million scheme was initially expected to run until March 2021, but high demand for vouchers means that funds are now expected to be committed a year earlier, and perhaps even sooner if the current success of the scheme continues to grow. To date, demand for the scheme has been strongest in the South West, followed by the South East, Yorkshire and the North West.

Minister for Digital Margot James said:

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The scheme is part of a series of Government initiatives to build a Britain with nationwide full fibre broadband coverage by 2033, making sure no communities are left behind. In addition to the voucher scheme, [the Chancellor recently announced £200 million](#) for an ‘outside-in’ approach that will see full fibre broadband rolled out in the hardest to reach rural locations at the same pace as the rest of the country. The Borderlands, Cornwall, and Welsh valleys will be amongst the first areas to be targeted.

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More information on the Gigabit Voucher Scheme, including details on how businesses can apply can be found at <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

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