

# Two million rural homes and businesses to benefit in £5 billion broadband upgrade

- Roll out plans revealed for 26 counties including Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Ken
- Follows a raft of announcements this year for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as part of Project Gigabit

Millions of people in rural England will get access to the fastest broadband speeds on the market as part of a £5 billion plan to level up internet access across the UK.

The government's Project Gigabit fund to upgrade digital infrastructure in hard-to-reach areas will accelerate the country's recovery from covid, fire up high-growth sectors such as tech and the creative industries, put an end to families battling for bandwidth and bring the speed and reliability people need to start and run businesses.

New [details published today](#) reveal up to 1,850,000 additional premises across 26 English counties will get access to gigabit speed internet of 1,000 megabits per second – enough to download a HD movie in less than 30 seconds and lay the foundations for next-generation tech such as 8K-quality video streaming.

It brings the current total number of premises in scope for government-funded coverage to 2.2 million, with more still to be announced over the coming months across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This is in addition to the tens of millions of premises that broadband firms are rapidly connecting through their commercial rollout, from one in ten households in 2019 to more than two in five today. The UK is also on track for the fastest rollout in Europe this year and for 60 per cent of all households to have access to gigabit speeds by the end of this year.

The government is also on track to hit its target of achieving at least 85 per cent gigabit-capable UK coverage by 2025, and ministers are ready to go as fast as broadband companies can manage.

## **Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:**

Project Gigabit is our national mission to level up rural areas by giving them the fastest internet speeds on the market.

Millions more rural homes and businesses will now be lifted out of the digital slow lane thanks to our mammoth £5 billion investment

and one the quickest rollouts in Europe.

This broadband revolution will create jobs, power up businesses and allow everyone to access vital services at lightning fast speed, helping us build back better from the pandemic.

Almost half a million (480,000) premises in Shropshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Worcestershire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight will be among the first to benefit followed by counties including Derbyshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Surrey, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

The news follows a raft of Project Gigabit updates benefiting all four UK nations, including £24 million to roll out gigabit broadband in ten local authority areas in Northern Ireland, 234,000 homes and businesses in Wales being confirmed as in scope to receive upgrades through the programme, and £4.5 million to help thousands in central Scotland get next-generation connections.

On top of this, today it is also being confirmed that the Scottish and Welsh governments and 15 English councils have made at least an extra £26 million available in top-ups to the UK [Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme](#). The scheme, which is available nationwide, covers the costs of a gigabit connection in areas that are particularly difficult to reach, and the top-ups boost the financial help available.

There are 47,000 homes and businesses now plugged in to gigabit broadband as a result of the scheme, with a further 38,000 in the pipeline and millions of pounds in vouchers still available for people to claim.

Under the record-breaking fund, a cornerstone of the Prime Minister's plan to build back better, the government is investing in areas left behind by the industry's roll out plans due to the expense and lack of a commercial incentive to connect them to gigabit capable networks.

The [first Project Gigabit contracts announced in March](#) are expected to commence from May next year, with spades hitting the ground soon afterwards. This includes 349,000 premises in Essex, Dorset, Cumbria, Cambridgeshire, Northumberland, Durham, Tyneside, Teesside and Cornwall.

Many more areas are due for upgrades under the scheme and will be announced later this year, with hundreds of thousands more homes and businesses set to benefit.

### **Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:**

The pandemic has seen more services offered online and more businesses and consumers wanting to use online services, in particular from home.

This announcement enabling over 2m homes to have the fastest internet services will make a real difference to those businesses and consumers wanting to maximise the benefits of digital services.

## ENDS

Notes to editors:

Full details on the key dates, number premises and estimated contract value ranges for phases 1a, 1b (areas announced in March) and 2 are published in the table below:

<b>Phase 1a</b>	<b>Procurement start date</b>	<b>Contract commencement date</b>	<b>Modelled number of uncommercial premises in the procurement area</b>	<b>Indicative contract value</b>
Essex	October 2021	May 2022	6,500	TBC (Intervention area being defined)
Dorset (2 lots)	November 2021	June 2022	10,000	TBC (Intervention area being defined)
Cumbria (Lot 28)	September 2021	August 2022	66,300	£60m – £102m
Cambridgeshire and adjacent areas (Lot 5)	October 2021	June 2022	98,500	£95m – £161m
Durham, Tyneside and Teesside areas (Lot 4)	November 2021	October 2022	83,100	£79m – £135m
Northumberland (Lot 34))	November 2021	October 2022	26,600	£24m – £40m
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (Lot 32)	February 2022	January 2023	57,900	£54m – £93m
<b>Phase 1b</b>	<b>Procurement start date</b>	<b>Contract commencement date</b>	<b>Modelled number of uncommercial premises in the procurement area</b>	<b>Indicative contract value</b>
Shropshire (Lot 25)	February 2022	January 2023	66,700	£61m – £104m
Norfolk (Lot 7)	February 2022	January 2023	118,700	£115m – £195m
Suffolk (Lot 2)	February 2022	January 2023	92,000	£89m – £151m

<b>Phase 1b</b>	<b>Procurement start date</b>	<b>Contract commencement date</b>	<b>Modelled number of uncommercial premises in the procurement area</b>	<b>Indicative contract value</b>
Hampshire and Isle of Wight (Lot 27)	February 2022	January 2023	150,900	£148m – £251m
Worcestershire (Lot 24)	May 2022	April 2023	51,400	£50m – £84m
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Procurement start date</b>	<b>Contract commencement date</b>	<b>Modelled number of uncommercial premises in the procurement area</b>	<b>Indicative contract value</b>
Oxfordshire and West Berkshire (Lot 13)	May 2022	April 2023	68,600	£67m – £114m
Kent (Lot 29)	May 2022	April 2023	122,300	£119m – £203m
Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and East of Berkshire (Lot 26)	May 2022	April 2023	142,000	£140m – £237m
Staffordshire (Lot 19)	May 2022	April 2023	76,300	£72m – £123m
West Sussex (Lot 1)	May 2022	April 2023	67,800	£66m – £112m
East Sussex (Lot 16)	August 2022	July 2023	50,300	£49m – £83m
Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes (Lot 12)	August 2022	July 2023	87,500	£85m – £144m
Derbyshire (Lot 3)	August 2022	July 2023	67,300	£64m – £110m
Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Swindon (Lot 30)	August 2022	July 2023	88,000	£85m – £145m
Lancashire (Lot 9)	August 2022	July 2023	92,200	£90m – £153m
Surrey (Lot 22)	August 2022	July 2023	101,900	£101m – £171m
Leicestershire and Warwickshire (Lot 11)	November 2022	October 2023	118,400	£114m – £194m
Nottinghamshire and West of Lincolnshire (Lot 10)	November 2022	October 2023	93,000	£90m – £152m
West Yorkshire and parts of North Yorkshire (Lot 8)	November 2022	October 2023	133,100	£128m – £218m
South Yorkshire (Lot 20)	November 2022	October 2023	62,400	£61m – £103m

Additional info on the table:

- Contract commencement date: The expected start date of the new commercial activity with engineers on site.
- Number of premises: The number of premises in scope of the procurement and expected to be uncommercial and require public funding – either as modelled by DCMS or as superseded following Public Review and Pre-Procurement Market Engagement. This value may change significantly leading up to commencement of the procurement process
- Indicative contract value: Low – An indicative lower bound on the expected contract value – determined by applying a relatively low average subsidy per premises passed to the number of premises expected to be in scope and affordable. High – An indicative upper bound on the expected contract value – determined by applying a relatively high average subsidy per premises passed to the number of premises expected to be in scope and affordable

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme: top-ups:

The areas with top-ups to the voucher scheme are included in the table below.

	<b>Residential Voucher Top-Up Amount</b>	<b>Max. Residential Voucher (inclusive of any VAT)</b>	<b>SME Voucher Top-Up Amount</b>	<b>Max. SME Voucher (exclusive of any VAT which the vouchers cannot fund)</b>	<b>Current available speed must be less than</b>
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme		£1,500		£3,500	100 Mbps
Scotland	£5,000	£6,500	£5,000	£8,500	30 Mbps
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps
English Counties					
Borderlands - Cumbria & Northumberland	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	£1,500	£3,000	£1,500	£5,000	30 Mbps
County Durham	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps
Derbyshire	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	100 Mbps
Dorset	£1,000	£2,500	£2,500	£6,000	100 Mbps
East Riding of Yorkshire	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps
East Sussex	£1,000	£2,500	£1,000	£4,500	30 Mbps
Kent	£1,000	£2,500	–	£3,500	30 Mbps
Nottinghamshire	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps
Oxfordshire	£5,500	£7,000	£3,500	£7,000	100 Mbps
Shropshire	£2,500	£4,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps

	<b>Residential Voucher Top- Up Amount</b>	<b>Max. Residential Voucher (inclusive of any VAT)</b>	<b>SME Voucher Top-Up Amount</b>	<b>Max. SME Voucher (exclusive of any VAT which the vouchers cannot fund)</b>	<b>Current available speed must be less than</b>
Warwickshire	£2,500	£4,000	£500	£4,000	30 Mbps
West Sussex	£2,500	£4,000	£500	£4,000	100 Mbps
Worcestershire	£1,500	£3,000	£3,500	£7,000	30 Mbps