

# 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

	Residential Voucher Top-Up Amount	Max. Residential Voucher (inclusive of any VAT)	SME Voucher Top-Up Amount	Max. SME Voucher (exclusive of any VAT which the vouchers cannot fund)	Current available speed must be less than
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

---

## [UK condemns deliberate attack on oil tanker by Iran](#)

Press release

UK assessments have concluded that it is highly likely that Iran attacked the MV MERCER STREET in international waters off Oman using one or more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.



**Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:**

The UK condemns the unlawful and callous attack committed on a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman, which killed a British and a Romanian National. Our thoughts are with the friends and family of those killed in the incident.

We believe this attack was deliberate, targeted, and a clear violation of international law by Iran. UK assessments have concluded that it is highly likely that Iran attacked the MV MERCER STREET in international waters off Oman on 29 July using one or more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

Iran must end such attacks, and vessels must be allowed to navigate freely in accordance with international law.

The UK is working with our international partners on a concerted response to this unacceptable attack.

Published 1 August 2021

---

## [More than 85 million COVID-19 vaccines administered in UK](#)

- Two doses provide over 90% protection against hospitalisation from the Delta variant, which is the dominant strain in the UK
- All adults are eligible to get their second dose after eight weeks

More than 85 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have been administered across the UK, the latest figures show, as the government continues to urge everyone eligible to get their vaccines as soon as possible to protect themselves and their loved ones.

A total of 85,196,986 doses have been administered in the UK, with 46,851,145 people receiving a first dose (88.6%) and 38,345,841 people receiving both doses (72.5%).

The latest data from Public Health England (PHE) and Cambridge University shows that around 60,000 deaths, 22 million infections and 52,600 hospitalisations have been prevented by vaccines up to 23 July.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

In under eight months, health services across the UK have delivered more than 85 million doses – this is a phenomenal achievement. It has shown Britain at its best.

From our NHS administering the jabs, to the armed forces, thousands of volunteers and civil servants, you have all played an important role in getting us to this life-saving milestone – and I want to thank you all for your tireless efforts.

Please get both of your jabs if you haven't already to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Data from PHE shows COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant. The analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

The UK met the Prime Minister's target ahead of schedule to vaccinate two thirds of adults in the UK with both doses and to offer a first dose to all adults by 19 July.

All adults in the UK are able to get their second doses after eight weeks. This will mean every adult has the chance to have two doses by mid-September.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Our COVID-19 vaccination programme has been an enormous success and has allowed us to cautiously ease restrictions.

Getting both doses of the vaccine is one of the most important things people can do to help build a wall of defence around yourself, your loved ones and our country.

I urge everybody to get their jabs so we can carry on doing the things we've missed.

From the end of September, people will be required to prove they've had both jabs to enter nightclubs and music events.

The government announced that people who have been vaccinated with both doses will not have to quarantine on their return to England from an amber list country, providing they received their second jab at least 14 days prior.

From 16 August, double vaccinated people will also no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, and will be advised to take a PCR test.

The government announced that double vaccinated frontline NHS and social care staff in England who have been told to self-isolate will be permitted to attend work in exceptional circumstances and replaced by testing mitigations.

A limited number of critical workers may also in exceptional circumstances be able to leave self-isolation to attend work if deemed a close contact and informed to do so by their employer.

The UK government secured access to more than 500 million doses of the most promising COVID-19 vaccines early on behalf of the entire UK, crown dependencies and overseas territories. The UK's medicine's regulator, the MHRA, was the first in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, allowing the rapid deployment of vaccines across the country and ensuring the UK has one of the fastest vaccination programmes in the world.



YouGov polling shows the UK continues to be one of the top nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated and ONS data published on 2 July shows that more than 9 in 10 (96%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine.

Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

Notes to editors:

- The latest UK-wide vaccination statistics are published [here](#) and NHS England publishes vaccine statistics for England [here](#)
- The latest PHE analysis on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines is available [here](#). Their latest study on the number of cases prevented and lives saved by vaccines is [here](#)
- The ONS survey on 'Barriers to COVID-19 vaccination' can be found [here](#)
- The YouGov data comparing uptake rates in countries around the world is available [here](#)
- To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.
- The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is one of the largest donors to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.
- Backed by the UK government, the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is available to developing countries at cost and in June, we announced the UK will donate at least 100 million surplus coronavirus vaccine doses within the next year, including 5 million beginning in the coming weeks. More details [here](#) Visit the NHS website for advice on how to book or manage a COVID-19 vaccination appointments

---

**[Uber, Bolt and Deliveroo help drive](#)**

# vaccine uptake

- Leading businesses to join national effort to further drive uptake in young people
- Uber, Bolt and Deliveroo among those to offer incentives for people to get the jab, with more set to join soon
- Young people urged to get jab to protect themselves and loved ones and support cautious return to normal life

Some of the country's top food and travel businesses have joined the national effort to get as many people as possible vaccinated against COVID-19.

Uber, Bolt, Deliveroo and Pizza Pilgrims are among the household names who will be offering discounts and incentives to customers who get a COVID-19 vaccine and help protect the country from the virus, as we continue the cautious return to normality.

Uber, for example, will be sending reminders to all users in August, encouraging them to get the vaccine, and will be offering discounted Uber rides and meals on Uber Eats for young adults who get the jab. This follows earlier Uber campaigns offering free trips to vaccination centres earlier this year and for NHS staff during the height of the pandemic.

Bolt will be offering free ride credit to vaccination centres. A similar scheme by Bolt included offering £250,000 in free ride credit to London vaccination facilities earlier this year.

Other incentives being discussed could include vouchers or discount codes for people attending pop up vaccine sites and booking through the NHS, social media competitions and promotional offers for restaurants.

The government is set to release further details on these partnerships in due course.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I'm delighted that more than two thirds of young people in England have already had a first dose of a vaccine, helping to build a wall of defence around our country.

Thank you to all the businesses who are stepping up to support this important vaccine drive. Once available, please go out and take advantage of the discounts.

The lifesaving vaccines not only protect you, your loved ones and your community, but they are helping to bring us back together by allowing you to get back to doing the things you've missed.

Companies will not ask for, or hold any health data for the incentive scheme.

Jamie Heywood, Uber's Regional General Manager for Northern and Eastern Europe, said:

As cities open up, we all need to proceed with caution and ensure that all adults are vaccinated against COVID-19.

We're proud to be working with the government on this important campaign to encourage everyone to get their jab.

Sam Raciti, Bolt's Regional Manager for Western Europe, said:

Bolt is delighted to support this campaign. Get a Bolt, grab a jab, get living.

A Deliveroo spokesperson said:

At Deliveroo we want to do our small part to support the NHS during the pandemic, including delivering 1 million free meals to frontline NHS staff and vaccine centres. This is the next step in helping get people vaccinated and safely back to normal.

Thom Elliot, Pizza Pilgrims Founder, said:

We are excited to do our bit in the push to get every adult in the UK vaccinated against COVID-19.

By making getting your jab as easy as grabbing a pizza, hopefully we can help our teams and our customers get both their first and second doses as easily and quickly as possible. Watch this space for more details.

The government is working closely with the NHS to make it as easy as possible to get a vaccine, including through 'grab a jab' pop-up vaccine sites across the country.

Over 600,000 people were vaccinated last weekend at these walk-in clinics, from London's Tate Modern Gallery to a Primark in Bristol. Further sites have been made available this week – including at Thorpe Park in Surrey and Circus Extreme in Yorkshire.

The government and NHS are also working together to provide information and advice at every opportunity on how to get a vaccine and its benefits, including through a range of partnerships with industries catering for predominantly younger audiences.

This work includes partnerships with high-profile entertainment and sports

personalities on short films encouraging people to get the jab, such as film stars Jim Broadbent and Thandiwe Newton, and football legends Harry Redknapp and Chris Kamara. The government has also partnered with dating apps and social media platforms on adverts and incentives to get the vaccine.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

It is great to see the strong enthusiasm among young people so far to get their vaccines.

Getting both doses of the jab is the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and avoid unknowingly passing the virus on to someone who may be more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Thank you to the businesses who have backed this mission – please get your jabs as soon as you can and grab a bargain.

A total of 84.7m doses have been administered in the UK, with 46.7m people receiving a first dose (88.4%) and 37.9m people receiving both doses (71.8%). Around 67% of people aged 18-29 in England have already received a first dose of a vaccine.

The latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University shows that around 60,000 deaths, 22 million infections and 52,600 hospitalisations have been prevented by vaccines up to 23 July.

Data from PHE shows COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant. The analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

YouGov polling shows the UK continues to be one of the top nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated and ONS data published on 2 July shows that more than 9 in 10 (96%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine. The latest ONS data shows 90% of adults under 30 have said they have received or would get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

Notes to editors:

- More on Bolt's scheme can be found [here](#)
-

# European Convention on Human Rights protocol comes into force

News story

Protocol no. 15 to the European Convention on Human Rights will come into force today (1 August 2021), following its ratification by all 47 State Parties.



Protocol no. 15 is an international legal agreement which makes a series of changes to the Convention, and whose development was led by the UK.

Its coming into force will conclude the last major reform from the Brighton Declaration, adopted under the UK's chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. The Brighton Declaration was an agreement made at the Council of Europe High-Level Conference of April 2012, where the UK Government announced plans to reform the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

The changes introduced by Protocol No. 15 aim to address inefficiencies in the ECtHR. Under certain conditions, the ECtHR reviews applications from people claiming their rights under the Convention have been violated by a State Party. In particular, the Protocol will contribute to helping the Court manage the high number of applications it receives.

Protocol No. 15 recognises that the primary responsibility for protecting human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights falls to each individual State Party. It will also improve the efficiency of the ECtHR by shortening the time limit for applications and ensuring that all applications have been properly considered by domestic courts. Additionally, it will modify rules regarding the appointment and retirement of judges of the Court, to enable them to serve for a full nine-year term and provide continuity.

It also demonstrates the extent to which the UK's pragmatic leadership on the reform of the ECtHR has delivered results, and will enable, along with other measures agreed by Convention State Parties over the last decade, this unique

international system of human rights protection to remain effective and continue to respond to new challenges.

Noting this progress and the important achievement that the entry into force of Protocol No. 15 represents, the UK Government will keep supporting the continued improvement of the ECtHR and the system of the European Convention on Human Rights.

## **Notes:**

The changes introduced by Protocol No. 15 are as follows:

- Inclusion of a reference to the principle of subsidiarity (according to which the primary responsibility for protecting human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights falls to each individual State Party) and the doctrine of the margin of appreciation (the “space for manoeuvre” that State Parties are given in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention) to the Preamble to the Convention
- Shortening from six to four months of the time limit within which an application must be made to the ECtHR (this is from the date on which the final decision was taken at the national level, when all domestic remedies have been exhausted)
- Removal of the rule preventing rejection of an application that has not been duly considered by a domestic tribunal where the applicant has not suffered a “significant disadvantage”
- Removal of the right of the parties to a case before the ECtHR to object to the decision by a Chamber of the Court to relinquish its jurisdiction over the case in favour of the Grand Chamber
- Replacement of the upper age limit for ECtHR judges (currently the age of 70) with a requirement that candidates for the post of judge be less than 65 years of age at the date by which the list of candidates has been requested by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. This intended to enable all judges to sit for a full nine-year term.

Published 1 August 2021