# [Millions set to benefit from faster broadband with new plans to tackle rogue landlords](#)

A new law will ensure the nine million people in the UK living in blocks of flats aren't left behind in the Government's nationwide upgrade to gigabit speed broadband, Digital Secretary Nicky Morgan announces today.

The measures will make it easier to install faster internet connections in blocks of flats where landlords repeatedly ignore requests for access from broadband firms. It is estimated that an extra 3,000 residential buildings a year will be connected as a result.

Gigabit speed broadband is classed as a thousand megabits per second and is around 30 times the speed of superfast broadband. It will be the equivalent of downloading an HD film in less than 45 seconds.

This follows the government announcing £5 billion of new funding to bring gigabit-capable broadband to the hardest-to-reach parts of the UK earlier this month. It is the latest Government action to bust the barriers to faster broadband rollout and enable the private sector to get the job done.

The legislation is part of the Prime Minister's plan to level up the country through new infrastructure, and deliver nationwide coverage of gigabit speed broadband as soon as possible.

Digital Secretary Nicky Morgan, who will today visit a block of flats in Coventry being connected to gigabit-capable broadband, said:

> We're pushing ahead with delivering the digital infrastructure that will underpin the UK's future growth and boost our productivity.
>
> We've just announced £5 billion so that people in rural communities will get gigabit speed internet at the same time as everyone else.
>
> And we're now making sure people living in blocks of flats and apartments are not left behind either, and can reap the huge benefits of the fastest and most resilient internet connections.

To install gigabit-capable broadband in the UK's estimated 480,000 blocks of flats or apartments, broadband companies must get permission from the building's owner to enter the property and undertake the necessary works. One of the biggest obstacles preventing operators deploying new networks to residential blocks is the landlord's failure to respond in any way to requests for access.

Operators say that 40 per cent of their requests for access receive no

response. While they already have an option available to push for access via the courts, there is considerable cost, time and uncertainty involved.

This means a significant amount of tenants are missing out on the chance to benefit from gigabit-capable broadband. The same problem does not exist for individual houses, where it is much easier to get permission to access the property.

To solve this, the Government is going to create a cheaper and faster process for telecoms companies to get access rights. It will apply when a landlord has repeatedly failed to respond to requests for access to install a connection that a tenant within the building has asked for. It will give operators a cheaper and more streamlined route via the existing Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) to connect the property, lowering the timescale to enter a property from six months to a matter of weeks, and at a drastically reduced cost.

Simon Clarke, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said:

> Faster broadband boosts productivity and makes people's lives easier at home and at work.
>
> That is why we are connecting more residential buildings to the fastest internet, while also ensuring the most rural areas benefit from this technology through our £5.5bn high-speed broadband funding.

Lutz Schüler, CEO of Virgin Media, said:

> This new law is something Virgin Media has long called for – it breaks through a major broadband barrier as we invest to bring gigabit speeds to our entire, ever-growing network. Giving broadband builders clear and efficient access rights will mean the many forgotten flats across the country can get the next-generation connectivity they deserve.

Greg Mesch, Chief Executive Officer of CityFibre, said:

> We are pleased to see the Government supporting competitive builders of digital infrastructure as they build momentum to deliver the target of national full fibre coverage by 2025. As a company committed to rolling out more than 20% of the target, CityFibre welcomes all barrier busting initiatives that help to accelerate the rate of build.

David Smith, Policy Director for the Residential Landlords Association said:

We recognise how important it is that tenants should have access to high speed broadband. It is in a landlord's interests to be able to offer it as it makes their properties more attractive to prospective tenants.

The RLA will work constructively with the Government to ensure that any difficulties in implementing enhanced access rights are addressed such as broadband companies ensuring they have the right contact details for a landlord.

**ENDS**

## Notes to Editors

- The Government has today published its response to the consultation: [Ensuring tenants' access to gigabit-capable connections](#). It has decided it will introduce new legislation to amend the Electronic Communications Code to provide operators with a faster, cheaper route to gain interim rights under the existing Electronic Communications Code via the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) and its equivalent in devolved administrations. This route will apply only in circumstances where a tenant has requested a service, the landlord's permission is required for that service to be delivered, and the landlord fails to respond to repeated requests from an operator for access.
- Part 4 of the existing Code allows operators to apply to a tribunal for provisional rights to enter a property and install infrastructure. But operators have not done so — citing the cost, time and uncertainty of eventual result. The Government will instead legislate so that: (i) where a landlord fails to respond to repeated requests for rights to install infrastructure, including access; (ii) a tenant within the building has requested a service; and (iii) an operator has complied with other statutory duties (for example they have made a specified number of requests which haven't been responded to). This will allow an operator to apply for an order which will give them interim code rights to deploy in the building.
- Currently an operator may use the pre-existing process under the Electronic Communications Code to make an application to the tribunal after 28 days. That application is then put to the court and they have to wait an estimated 2-3 months for a decision. The Government is proposing under the new system that operators will only have to wait 42 days before making an application (to ensure they have sent a sufficient number of notices and made serious attempts to gain access) but then will then be able to use the faster process to gain the right to access which will speed up the time it takes to access a building from an estimated six months to what we envisage will be between 6-7 weeks and lower the cost to the operator (from an estimated £14,000 to around £300). The Government will set out a clear process operators will need to follow to demonstrate their repeated attempts at engagement with a landlord; before being able to apply for those rights. We also intend to legislate so that — once such rights are ordered by the Upper Tribunal or equivalent in devolved administrations — landlords will also be able

to challenge the making of such an order.

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# [Ministers highlight vital projects around the country as government drives infrastructure revolution](#)

- road, rail, port and digital investments highlighted today are helping to improve crucial links and spread growth opportunities
- biggest road upgrade in the UK confirmed as £1.5 billion A14 improvement scheme to open a year early following recent unveiling of 18 new road projects given go ahead
- day of activity follows on from Chancellor's commitment to an infrastructure revolution which will help create better opportunities and level up the country
- new law will mean an extra 3,000 residential buildings a year will be connected to gigabit-capable internet, part of the Prime Minister's plan to deliver nationwide coverage of fast broadband

The government will today (10 October 2019) reaffirm its pledge to drive forward an infrastructure revolution with major investment in transport and the [roll out of super-fast broadband to rural areas](#) as ministers showcase the benefits of investment already taking place across the country.

Today's series of visits are highlighting crucial work to increase access to opportunities across the UK and improve journeys for commuters, help the UK's ports prepare for Brexit and roll out full fibre broadband to every corner of the country.

The Transport Secretary will be visiting Portsmouth International Port to see the crucial infrastructure that has been put in place, and learn how it is preparing for Brexit.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere will be announcing that the biggest road upgrade in the UK — the brand new dual carriageway on the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon — will open a year ahead of schedule.

The 12 mile bypass for the town of Huntingdon is part of a [£1.5 billion project to upgrade 21 miles of the A14](#) in Cambridgeshire and will save drivers up to 20 minutes on journeys.

It follows news last week that [18 new road schemes across England have been given the go ahead](#) by the Department for Transport, in addition to the £25.3 billion that has already been committed for investment in the strategic road network between 2020 and 2025.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury Jesse Norman will visit the National Infrastructure Lab in Southampton, a state of the art research and testing facility, helping to deliver infrastructure that cost less, lasts longer, is environmentally sound, and is suitable for the modern world.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

> This government is determined to deliver an infrastructure revolution. Today is all about highlighting the benefits of work taking place around the country which is improving journeys for passengers, connecting communities and increasing productivity.
>
> This is just the start of our vision to modernise our infrastructure, invest in our transport and technology for the future and level up and unite the whole of the UK.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard will also today visit Leeds station to see upgrade works, part of the record £13 billion being invested by 2020 to improve transport networks in the north.

The government has been clear that it wants to drive growth across the north, including through [Northern Powerhouse Rail](#), giving local leaders greater powers and investing £3.6 billion in towns across England.

And Environment Minister Rebecca Pow will visit one of Europe's biggest infrastructure projects — the £3.8 billion [Thames Tideway Tunnel](#) — to learn how it will help to clean up the Thames.

Recognising that connectivity refers to digital as well as physical infrastructure, the government has also committed £5 billion to support full fibre broadband roll-out to the hardest to reach 20% of the country.

To underline the importance of digital infrastructure, Digital Secretary Nicky Morgan has today announced a new law to make it easier to install gigabit-capable internet connections for the 9 million people living in blocks of flats, where landlords repeatedly ignore requests for access from broadband firms. She will today see how industry are progressing with plans to deliver nationwide gigabit broadband at CityFibre install in Coventry, while Digital Minister Matt Warman will visit a Virgin Media broadband dig in Southampton.

Meanwhile, Exchequer Secretary Simon Clarke will visit Openreach to meet trainee engineers and learn more about the importance of fibre broadband in connecting businesses and homes.

Digital Secretary Nicky Morgan, said:

> We're pushing ahead with delivering the digital infrastructure that will underpin the UK's future growth and boost our productivity.

We've just announced £5 billion so people in rural communities are not left behind and have access to the fastest internet speeds at the same time as everyone else. Today, we've also announced plans to ensure those living in blocks of flats and apartments are not left behind either.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

The government is determined to build the infrastructure this country needs. This includes high-quality, well designed, environmentally friendly homes, good transport links and access to fibre broadband, allowing local communities to prosper.

Every region across the UK has a key role to play in enhancing productivity and prosperity. This government is committed to boosting economic growth, to level up and develop towns and communities across the country.

Ministers from the Department for Education will be making visits to see the pipeline of skills the country will need to support the development of infrastructure in the future.

Schools Minister Lord Agnew will visit Sunderland College to speak to manufacturing, engineering and construction apprentices and Children's Minister Michelle Donelan will visit New College in Durham, which has close links to the car manufacturer, Nissan.

Today the government also announced £88 million new investment to help close the productivity gap between the UK and major world economies and turbocharge British businesses. The investment will help develop software to harness the power of supercomputers and help kickstart the UK's largest and most ambitious productivity institute, which will examine how to boost productivity levels across the country.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Oliver Dowden, said:

We're committed to delivering greener, technologically advanced infrastructure that both connects people across the country and helps in the fight against climate change – making sure the UK continues to be one of the best places to live and do business in the world.

# [The IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate the UK Home Office Country Information Products](#)

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) is part of the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. Its purpose is to review the content of all Country of Origin Information (COI) produced by the UK Home Office. Country of Origin Information is used in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. It is also used in policy formulation.

The IAGCI reviews products to provide assurance to the Independent Chief Inspector that the content is accurate, balanced, impartial and as up to date as possible. COI is contained in:

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis for the top 20 asylum intake countries, and commonly address a specific type of common asylum claim(s) or provide general information for several claim types. They are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (news sources, academic literature, independent research reports, fact finding reports from UK government or from other governments). These documents also contain Home Office policy on the recommended position to be taken with respect to various types of claims, based on the available and accepted country information.

Information Request (IR) responses are made directly by case workers or others to the Home Office. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs. The IAGCI includes in its reviews a consideration of the COI included in a sample of (not more than ten) IR responses. Each IR response is typically a maximum of 2 pages in length.

## Tender Details

IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate and report on the country of origin information contained in UK Home Office information products. At its next meeting, the IAGCI requires a country expert to review the use of country information used in the following CPINs (4 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

**Tender 1: Albania**

[Country policy and information note: people trafficking, Albania, March 2019](#) (44 Pages)

[Country policy and information note: blood feuds, Albania, October 2018](#) (61 Pages)

**Tender 2: Iran**

[Country policy and information note: Christians and Christian converts, Iran, May 2019](#) (36 pages)

**Tender 3: Vietnam**

[Country policy and information note: trafficking, Vietnam, September 2018](#) (37 Pages)

For each tender, the expert is also asked to consider a selection of approximately 10 Information Request Responses, which will be provided by the Chair of IAGCI, and are an average of 2 pages long.

## Description of work

Country Policy and Information Notes aim to provide an accurate, balanced and up to date summary of the key available source documents regarding the human rights situation, with respect to the issues selected for coverage, in the country covered. The purpose and scope of the reports are clearly set out in an introductory section of the document. Reviewers should evaluate the reports in this context and seek to identify any areas where they can be improved. Specifically the review should entail:

- assessing the extent to which information from source documents has been appropriately and accurately reflected in the CPIN Reports
- identifying additional sources detailing the current human rights situation in the country with respect to main grounds for asylum claims (which are noted in each CPIN Report)
- noting and correcting any specific errors or omissions of fact
- making recommendations for general improvements regarding, for example, the structure of the report, its coverage or its overall approach

## Reviewers should follow these specific guidelines:

- the review should focus exclusively on the country of origin information contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- the CPIN should be reviewed in the context of its purpose as set out above. It should consider the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information
- when suggesting amendments, rather than 'tracking changes' on the original CPIN, a list of suggested changes should be provided as part of a stand-alone review paper, and each report should be reviewed separately. A reporting template will be provided to reviewers (for reference please refer to most recent reviews on the [IAGCI webpage](#) for examples of the template)
- any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document for the Home Office to be able to use it (preferably Open Source). The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available in English

language source

Previous reviews of COI products can be viewed via the [IAGCI Webpage](#)

The selected reviewers will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in London, when their review will be considered. This meeting is due to take place in late December 2019. Alternative arrangements may be made, if attendance is not possible. Representatives from the UK Home Office will also attend the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by IAGCI may be used as source documents for future CPIN reports or other Home Office information products.

**How to Apply**

Researchers interested in conducting any of the reviews should submit:

- a one page letter demonstrating their expertise in human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the particular country or countries
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to [IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk](mailto:IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk) by close of Friday 25 October 2019.

Unfortunately, we are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

Successful bids will be notified by Monday 28 October 2019. Final reviews are due by the close of Monday 25 November 2019 and will be discussed at the IAGCI meeting in late December 2019 (precise date to be confirmed).

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# [£88 million to help unleash the productive power of the UK economy](#)

- £88 million new government investment to help close the productivity gap between UK and major world economies and turbocharge British businesses
- investment will help power the next generation supercomputers which could improve business efficiencies, including providing up-to-the-minute weather forecasts
- funding will help kickstart the UK's largest and most ambitious productivity institute, helping examine how to boost productivity levels across the country

Levels of productivity across certain sectors in UK manufacturing, like

aerospace, are among the highest in Europe, but overall UK productivity still lags behind major global economies and certain sectors, including chemicals and textiles, find it harder to grow.

By adopting new technologies and more efficient business practices, the productivity of businesses, particularly small ones, could be increased. This will help them to scale up and expand into new markets – boosting competition and ultimately benefiting consumers with lower prices or better quality products and services.

£43 million in government investment will support top researchers and analysts to explore how to turbocharge UK productivity levels through a new ambitious productivity institute; tackling barriers such as productivity imbalances between sectors and regions, poor management practices and skills investment.

Experts will work closely with businesses to power the UK towards a more competitive and resilient economy, as well as the public sector and policymakers, aiming to deliver benefits for both businesses and consumers. Increased productivity can drive up wages, lower prices of products and improve working conditions.

The announcement comes as ministers visit new infrastructure projects across the country to highlight government investment in connectivity. Infrastructure is one of the 5 foundations of productivity highlighted in the Industrial Strategy and the Prime Minister has been clear that this government will level up infrastructure across the country with new road and rail investment and full fibre broadband.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

> Productivity matters – if we produce more, we can earn more, as individuals and as a society.
>
> Today's investment will allow us to develop pioneering software to harness the power of supercomputers and create a state-of-the-art Productivity Institute.

A further £45 million will be specifically invested by the government into the development of cutting-edge supercomputer software, set to transform whole sectors from agriculture and advanced aerospace to Formula One and pharmaceuticals with hyper-accurate weather predictions – helping them plan come rain or shine and in turn boost their productivity.

Involving the Met Office, this radical development could mean businesses will receive up-to-the-minute weather forecasts, so they are not 'caught in the rain' and can focus on delivering their products and services effectively and efficiently. This knowledge could help farmers protect crops for consistent food supplies, help airports keep flights running – and businesses can foresee the impact on infrastructure that cause downtime like flooding, for example.

With the potential to provide more accurate predictions, supercomputers are helping businesses plan methodically. Research software engineers and scientists will work together to futureproof the UK against the fast-moving changes in supercomputer designs, pushing the boundaries of science and preventing compatibility issues or lags — which could pose a threat to disciplines such as weather and climate prediction, to complex aircraft design and drug development.

Named 'ExCALIBUR', the project will ensure the UK can meet the scientific and engineering challenges of the future with maximum efficiency and safeguard future industry productivity.

Met Office Director of Meteorological Science, Simon Vosper, said:

> The ExCALIBUR project will establish a national capability in scientific computer software that mirror the real world, accelerating advances in a wide range of important areas that rely on cutting edge computer technology: from climate prediction to drug research and nuclear fusion.

Professor Jennifer Rubin, Executive Chair of Economic and Social Research Council, said:

> Raising productivity is arguably the greatest economic challenge of our time, and is needed to increase wages and living standards, and to ensure benefits can be spread across sectors and regions.
>
> This significant investment in understanding what will drive improvements in productivity is an important opportunity for research to make a contribution to improving quality of life and economic performance.

The £88 million funding forms part of the government's [Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)](), and follows the government reaffirming its commitment to invest at least 2.4% of GDP in R&D by 2027. The government has made making boosting productivity and increasing earning power a priority — making the most of untapped potential right across the UK.

1. About the Strategic Priorities Fund:

   - the Strategic Priorities Fund supports high quality multidisciplinary research and development priorities
   - this is the second wave of funding
   - the SPF Wave 2 total programme funding allocation is £496.8 million

2. About the programmes:

   - Transforming Productivity: National Institute of Excellence (ESRC)  ESRC with Innovate UK HMT, BEIS, DWP and MHCLG

Funding requested: £42.2 million over 6 years.

Location(s): This funding is to create an institute that creates a national capability for productivity. HEIs, Institutes, PSREs will be able to bid for funding. The location of the Institute and any partners will be announced following a competitive process.

This SPF will invest in an ambitious, strategically driven, world class institute to provide a systematic understanding of what is required to solve the UK's productivity challenges. The institute will provide a convening hub for wider research as well as undertaking its own research, bespoke analysis and evaluations. The Institute will also design and test interventions: translating findings and scaling-up solutions in collaboration with business and policy-makers. The institute will be driven by high profile leaders; combining permanent academic researchers and analysts with seconded world-leading experts, drawing in outstanding fellows from relevant research, public and private sector organisations with an interest in understanding and improving productivity.

The project will be delivered with £30 million funding for the Productivity Institute and £11 million for open research calls.

- Harnessing Exascale Computing: Exascale Computing Algorithms and Infrastructure Benefiting UK Research: 'ExCALIBUR' (Met Office and EPSRC)

Met Office and EPSRC with STFC, UKAEA, NERC and MRC

Funding requested: £45.71 million over 5 years    Location(s): The intention is to build a national capability through calls which are open to HEIs, Institutes, PSREs and/or businesses across the UK.

Fast-moving advances in supercomputer architectures will render current scientific simulation codes redundant. This poses a significant threat across a range of disciplines from weather and climate prediction, through complex aircraft design and drug development, to frontier science fields including cosmology. The UK must harness the power of those advances in architecture to meet the scientific and engineering challenges facing society and mitigate the risk of this threat. Present approaches to scientific computing are not adequate to that task.

ExCALIBUR will design cutting-edge algorithms and software for the efficient solution of scientific problems on future generation supercomputers.  A multidisciplinary cohort of research software engineers and scientists will work together to future-proof the UK against the fast-moving changes in supercomputer designs.

This will be delivered through knowledge integration activity between software engineers (£0.75 million), a scoping workshop to establish high priority use cases which will be developed through a mixture of open calls, commissioned research and single tenders (£5-7 million each), a second wave of use cases (~£2 million each), funding for disciplines with emerging

requirements for high-performance algorithms (£3 million), cross-cutting research activities to drive impact (£10 million) and capital funds to develop proof-of-concept systems with new computer architectures in partnership with industry (£4.5 million).

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# [Government loans to build new schools alongside new homes](#)

Housing developers will be given loans so they can deliver thousands of school places up front, so they are ready for communities before new properties are finished.

To meet the rising demand for more places at good schools, and help families get on the property ladder, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has today (Thursday 10 October) said up to £20 million per school would be made available to builders.

It means new school places are financed and delivered up-front – rather than builders having to wait for new homes to be built and sold before having the money to build the development. The loan will be charged at interest, and repayable once new homes are sold.

The scheme will incentivise developers to build more properties in the areas most in need – including on sites that have stood empty for a long period of time.

The new schools will build on the 921,000 new school places created nationwide since 2010, leaving the Government on track to deliver a million new places by the end of the decade, and rising standards in schools – with 85% of schools now judged good or outstanding, up from 68% in 2010.

It also helps boost the viability of new housing estates, particularly those led by small and medium sized developers where cashflow is a significant issue.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, said:

> We want to offer parents across the country a good choice of local schools for their children that suits their talents and needs, and we're already on track to create one million new school places nationwide this decade.
>
> But we know that in some cases, building schools and properties at the same time so they are ready for new communities can be challenging for housing developers. That's why we are launching

these loans today, to help parents secure a good school place for
their child at the same time as moving into a new family home.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Esther McVey MP said:

It's only right that infrastructure is delivered up front —
including thousands of new school places — which supports existing
communities and the new homes which we need building.

I welcome this support being made available today — helping medium
and large sized house builders deliver new schools as they deliver
the homes we urgently need.

The Developer Loans for Schools programme, launched in partnership with the
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, will give parents even
more choice of a good school place through a pilot, running from 2019 to
2021, in areas that meet specific criteria, including:

- Demand for more good school places;
- An approved application to open a new free school before the loan
  changes hands;
- Planning permission to build extra homes;
- Demonstrable value-for-money of the project;
- Early funding required for the school as part of housing developments;
  and
- The borrower must be a UK-registered company and must own the site.

Housing developers are already expected to contribute to the costs of new
schools to help meet the need arising from new housing, but can struggle to
raise the funds to get schools ready in time for families moving to new
developments. The new loans will help plan mixed-used developments — which
offer new homeowners an entire community as well as a new home — more
effectively.

Developers interested in taking part in the pilot programme, which will
initially offer around 10 loans to successful bidders can express their
interest and submit their project proposals to the Department for Education
from October 2019 — all projects will need to demonstrate value for money,
affordability, and must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the
prospectus also published today.

The new loans build on the Department's guidance published earlier this year
which aims to support local authorities to secure contributions from
developers to fund school places that their new housing developments create,
outlining how local authorities can negotiate the funding and land required
from developers for new schools and school expansions.

It also follows updated Planning Practice Guidance which ensures that funding
for schools is properly considered when housing developments are planned.

The Government also recently announced £14bn for primary and secondary schools in England between now and 2022/23 — delivering on the Prime Minister's pledge to increase school funding to give all young people the same opportunities to succeed regardless of where they live or go to school.