

## FAQs – Gigabit Voucher scheme

### **THE HAMPSHIRE TOP-UP TO THE GIGABIT BROADBAND VOUCHER SCHEME**

#### 1. What is the Hampshire Top-up to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

The Scheme is a 'top-up' of the Government's existing Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, to help people in hard-to-reach locations get a fast, reliable broadband service. Eligible residents can get vouchers worth up to £3,000 per property - double the value of the government's standard Gigabit Broadband Voucher.

#### 2. How much funding can I get?

Up to £3,000 is available per residential premises, but you must apply as a group, with at least one other person living in a separate property.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### 3. What is the eligibility criteria for getting funding through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

1. Applicants must be in a rural area (as classified by DeFRA) Check whether your postcode is eligible on our website at <https://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/alternative-solutions/hampshire-top-up-to-the-gigabit-broadband-voucher-scheme/>
2. Only group projects are allowed (a group being 2 or more residents in 2 or more properties).
3. Applicants must have current internet speeds below 100Mbps and not currently be gigabit-capable
4. The Hampshire Top-Up to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme will be allocated on a 'first-come, first served' basis

### **APPLYING FOR THE SCHEME**

#### 4. How do I apply for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

The scheme is run by suppliers so you have to find a supplier registered with the scheme and approach them. To find a supplier in your area go to <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/#suppliers> and type in your postcode. Then contact one or more of those suppliers listed and discuss the Top-Up to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme with them.

Your supplier will double check eligibility for you, give you a quote for installation of broadband (and advise whether vouchers will cover this or how much extra cost there may be), get the vouchers for you and work with you on the scheme.

It is not necessary to apply for the Hampshire Top-Up fund separately – it is all administered by BDUK (part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). BDUK issue the vouchers to the suppliers when the building of infrastructure has been agreed with the residents. The Hampshire Top-Up fund is allocated automatically as part of this process.

Please see our step-by-step guide at

<https://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/alternative-solutions/hampshire-top-up-to-the-gigabit-broadband-voucher-scheme/>

#### 5. What do I have to commit to if we agree to go ahead with the build?

You must commit to a 12-month contract with your supplier for download speeds of 30Mbps or double your existing speed (whichever is higher) through a gigabit-capable connection.

#### 6. What speeds will I get if I go ahead with the build?

The upgraded broadband service must deliver a "step change" in service which is at least a doubling of speeds compared to the service currently being consumed (either upload or download) but must be at least 30Mbps.

### **REGISTERING INTEREST**

#### 7. When I add people onto register for Gigabit Vouchers am I personally responsible for them committing to the scheme?

No. The registration stage is so that the supplier can assess how many premises are applying, potentially see if there are other nearby schemes or houses that would be suitable to join the project in order to make it more viable, and provide you with a quote for the work. It is then up to you and your group to decide whether you want to progress with the installation of gigabit-capable broadband.

### **ONCE YOU'VE APPLIED**

#### 8. Who is the voucher paid to?

The voucher is paid from BDUK directly to the supplier on your behalf. The voucher pays for the building of the new fibre network to your community. If the network costs more than the value of the voucher you will have to pay the balance (if you accept the quote).

### 9. How long will it take to get gigabit-capable broadband?

The supplier must build your new network within 12 months of the voucher being issued. Once the new network has been built you have to order a new full fibre broadband connection with a speed of at least 30Mbps or double your existing speed (whichever is higher).

BDUK will email you to ask for confirmation that the network has been built and that you have taken up a new service. BDUK also checks with the supplier to see if a service has been taken up at your address.

### 10. Will I need to cancel my current broadband contract?

You must commit to a 12-month contract with a supplier for download speeds of 30 Mbps or double your existing speed (whichever is higher) through a gigabit-capable connection.

Your current broadband contract may allow you to upgrade to a gigabit-capable connection. Not all suppliers offer this however. If yours doesn't then you would have to find an alternative supplier to meet the terms and conditions of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme.

### 11. Will I lose my phoneline?

You can keep your copper phone line if you wish to or you can transfer over to a fully fibre based telephone service called VOIP. In either case you will be able to keep your existing telephone number.

### 12. Will I need to pay for my connection?

The answer to this is in two sections. Firstly, the Voucher covers the cost of building the new network. In many cases, the Top-Up to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme will cover the entire cost of building the new network. However, there are some areas that are more difficult and therefore more expensive to reach. In these cases, the costs for building the network might be higher than the value of the voucher and the community will have to decide if they want to progress. If they do want to proceed, they'd have to decide how to raise the additional funding.

Secondly, once the new network has been built there isn't normally a charge for ordering a Full Fibre (FTTP) connection (gigabit-capable broadband) - you will simply switch contracts and pay a monthly amount for your broadband bill.

### 13. Why have additional addresses been listed in my quote that didn't register for the scheme?

Properties share common Distribution Points (DPs), this could be a pole or a box outside your property. When a new fibre network is designed, frequently all properties that share the same distribution point as the addresses you have registered will be included because they will all naturally benefit from the work. The capital cost doesn't change.

In other examples the supplier may also review the area at large and decide that adding in some additional premises nearby will help to reduce the cost of the network for each property. By adding the properties it means that the contribution required by each property becomes smaller.

## **DEADLINES FOR APPLYING**

### **14. When does the scheme end?**

Your supplier will need to have registered your scheme with BDUK by the 19th February. BDUK will issue Voucher notices by email to residents and these must be taken up (i.e. click the link in the email to complete the registration) by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### **15. What is the last date for submitting an application for gigabit vouchers?**

A supplier needs to submit a proposed project to BDUK by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

### **16. What happens if I'm still waiting for a quote from my supplier?**

Quotes can take up to 28 working days to be processed. Once you have your quote you should decide with your fellow applicants whether to proceed or not.

If you get a quote after the last submission date then it is possible that your project could be transferred to a new scheme, subject to any new eligibility criteria. The same terms and conditions as well as funding are not guaranteed. Please see below.

### **17. What happens if I don't have a quote yet or my application hasn't been processed yet – will I miss the deadline to apply?**

If your application has not been submitted to BDUK by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021, you are no longer eligible for this scheme. However, suppliers may be able to transfer your application to a new scheme. All vouchers issued under the UK Gigabit Programme will be subject to the agreement and operation of new terms and conditions (including detailed eligibility criteria) which are currently being developed.

### **18. What happens if we've accepted a quote and our supplier has applied for the vouchers, but the build hasn't started yet?**

All vouchers issued in connection with requests made prior to the closure of the Scheme have a 12-month validity, during which time the new network should be built and vouchers claimed.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SCHEME CLOSES**

### **19. Will there be another scheme after this one?**

A new scheme is planned but we do not have full details of this yet. The amount of funding that individual premises can apply for, or the eligibility criteria has not yet been announced.

### **20. Is the government rolling out gigabit broadband anyway?**

There are government plans to reach as many people as possible with gigabit-capable broadband by 2025. As part of this, the government says there will be a focus on areas without superfast speeds (classified as 24Mbps) wherever possible.

Hampshire County Council is in talks with BDUK (part of DCMS) about its involvement in this plan.