

About Broadband Upgrade Fund

What is the purpose of the Broadband Upgrade Fund?

To ensure the hardest-to-reach areas are not left behind and can access improved broadband services, the government has introduced a pilot campaign for homes and businesses in three rural areas of the UK, called the Broadband Upgrade Fund, as part of the national Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme. The aim is to help capture public interest in faster, more reliable broadband in each of the pilot areas. This will encourage suppliers to extend their broadband networks to meet demand and the government will help to fund the cost of the work.

How does the Broadband Upgrade Fund work?

The Broadband Upgrade Fund website captures registrations of interest from residents and business owners for government funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to their property. The demand in an area will be shown with pins on a map. At the same time the website map will show suppliers which communities are keen on this faster, more reliable service, making it more attractive for them to build to your area, years ahead of the market.

Step 1

Register your demand for faster broadband (with the option to become the Community Co-ordinator for your community)

Step 2

Tell your neighbours and friends about the fund and watch the registrations of interest for faster, more reliable broadband in your area grow

Step 3

Broadband suppliers will tell us if they're interested in building in your area based on the level of interest and we will put them in touch

Step 4

Your community can compare options and costs and you can ask your local council for help but your community makes the final decision

Step 5

Your chosen supplier will manage the application for voucher funding and you will receive an email from us to check that you agree

Step 6

Your supplier gets to work to deliver your new connection

Step 7

Connected! Your supplier lets us know the work is done

Step 8

We check with you by email that the service is live and working

Step 9

We sometimes make some further checks before we pay

Who is eligible for the Broadband Upgrade Fund?

Rural premises in Cornwall, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Cumbria and Northumberland, with broadband speeds of less than 100 megabits per second (Mbps), are eligible. Funding is only available when used in group projects and groups can be a mix of residents and businesses; just

residents or just businesses. Each resident can have funding worth up to £1,500 and each small and medium-sized business (SME) can have funding worth up to £3,500. The funding goes towards supporting the cost of installing brand new gigabit-capable connections.

Test your current speed here: www.checker.ofcom.org.uk/broadband-test
(<https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/broadband-test>)

To check if you are eligible for the Broadband Upgrade Fund, simply enter your postcode on the [home page](https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/) (<https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/>).

Will I have to pay towards the installation costs?

The supplier will apply for funding on your behalf and this will go straight to the supplier, not you. The value of the funding will then contribute to the build costs of installing a full fibre connection at your property. In most cases, the funding provided will pay for the cost of installing the new broadband provided you have enough properties in your group project. That is why it is important to encourage as many of your neighbours as possible to sign up and increase the size of your fund. Sometimes the community may be asked to make a contribution to the overall cost if the funding does not cover it but you do not have to proceed further if you think that it is too much money.

What can I expect to pay per month for upgraded broadband?

It depends on the broadband package that you have currently, the supplier that you use and whether your contract is part of a 'bundle' deal. Some people find they are paying a bit more each month for much faster broadband

and some people find they are paying less. Better WiFi can also mean that you save money on other bills such as your mobile phone because you can use WiFi calling at home or at work. You can look at prices on comparison websites and for further advice go to: www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/price-comparison (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/price-comparison>)

How long will the process take?

We are asking people to register their interest by 30 September 2020. After that, if a supplier is interested in building better broadband to your area, the whole process from contract to connection could take up to a year but it could be less. This depends on a whole range of reasons from how near you are to the nearest town; your current broadband infrastructure; the supplier you use and even the weather.

Will there be much disruption?

There could be some disruption along roads but in rural areas, telephone cables tend to be overhead. When you are connected to gigabit-capable broadband an engineer will need access to your property to install a new junction box and to bring the new cable to you. They will contact you to arrange a day and time that is convenient for you.

What is the role of a Community Co-ordinator?

This is to act as a voluntary intermediary between any suppliers who might wish to build better broadband to your area and your community. It might involve attending some meetings or getting a small group together in your community to support the project. You could also ask for support from someone from your local council.

Community co-ordinator case study

Gavin Keeble from Grisedale in Cumbria helped as a local co-ordinator when his community got together to improve their broadband across their remote dale to over 300 properties. He was part of a larger organising group who helped to co-ordinate communication with neighbours and different landowners to make a really positive impact in his community. You can read about the big difference it has made in his home and working life [here \(/case-studies\)](#).

What are the benefits of a gigabit-capable connection to residents?

It makes working from home easier; video calls more reliable; video and music streaming faster; improves online gaming and cloud storage options and makes digitally-controlled home security, heating and lighting options more viable. The number of internet connected devices in the home is set to grow and will require faster and more reliable connectivity too.

Good connection speeds also provide people with flexible working and learning opportunities and contribute to an improved work/life balance and can be an important consideration when buying a property.

Register your interest as a resident

It's quick and easy to register your interest. Just sign up by entering your details on the [home page \(https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/\)](https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/). Once you have done so you will be able to see if others in your area have also registered interest to upgrade their home or business broadband on a pin map. As a resident you are entitled to £1,500 towards the upgrade. Once enough people in your area sign up, you will be asked to choose a broadband supplier and then it is over to them.



“The difference that this has made to our lives has been incredible. Of the 5,000 people who work for Cornwall Council, around 4,000 have been working from home during the pandemic so it has really brought it home to us how important it is to have reliable connectivity these days. I will certainly be recommending this scheme to other communities in my parishes.”

- Dominic Fairman

[Read the full Case Study \(/case-studies\)](/case-studies)

What are the benefits of a gigabit-capable connection to businesses?

It supports online business applications and internet-connected devices; cloud data storage, cyber security systems and back-ups; video and music streaming; voice and video conferencing; and flexible working for employees with access to company systems. These all require faster connectivity and the need is only going to increase.

Register your interest as a business

It's quick and easy to register your interest. Just sign up by entering your details on the [home page \(https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/\)](https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/). Once you have done so you will be able to see if other businesses in your area (see map) have also registered interest to upgrade their business/home broadband. As an SME you are entitled to £3,500 towards the upgrade. Once enough people in your area sign up (SMEs and/or residents), you will be asked to choose a broadband supplier and then it is over to them.



“The difference that the new service has made is completely cosmic. It has given us total peace of mind connecting to the outside world and running an international business from a beautiful and remote part of the UK, dramatically improving our businesses professionalism and capability as well as transforming our family life.”

- Gavin Keeble

[Read the full Case Study \(/case-studies\)](/case-studies)

Who manages the application for the funding?

The application for the Broadband Upgrade Fund is managed by the broadband supplier that your community chooses. This means, once you have registered your interest, and a supplier has agreed to build a new service to your area, they will request the funding on your behalf. The voucher funding will go straight to the supplier, not to you. The value of the funding will then contribute to the build costs of installing a full fibre connection at your property.

Why am I not eligible for the Broadband Upgrade Fund?

This pilot campaign is running in designated areas: Cornwall, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Cumbria and Northumberland. In order to be eligible, postcodes in these areas must also be considered rural and with broadband speeds of below 100 Mbps.

If you are not eligible for this fund, it means one or more of the following:

- You do not live in either Cornwall, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Cumbria or Northumberland
- You live in an area that is not classified as rural
- The broadband available in your area is faster than 100 Mbps or there are already plans to improve the broadband in your area

However, just because you are ineligible for this particular fund, does not necessarily mean that you cannot upgrade your broadband with the help of the government. Visit <http://buildingdigital.campaign.gov.uk> (<https://buildingdigital.campaign.gov.uk>) to find out what support is available and if you are eligible.

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