

Parish Council Briefing



Fibre Community Partnerships using UK Gigabit Vouchers

An overview of the UK Gigabit Voucher scheme

The UK Government has launched a campaign through DCMS to support rural communities like yours who don't have access to Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband, and where there are no current plans to build.

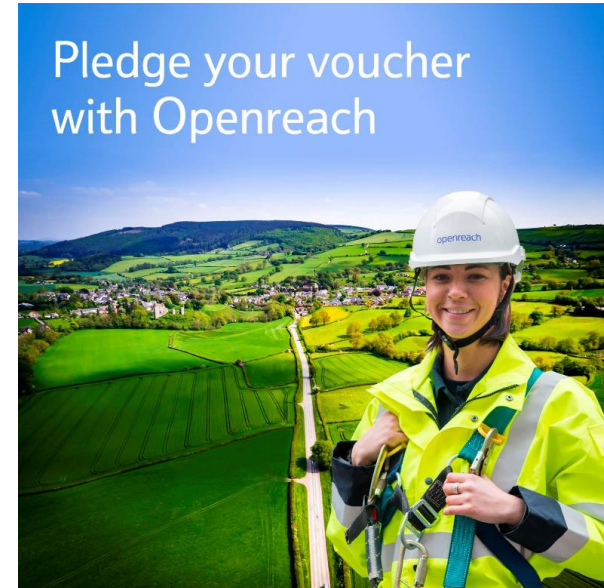
- Vouchers **are worth up to £1,500 and up to £3,500 for small businesses and sole traders**
- Recipients are expected to order an Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband service from a supplier of their choice within **2 weeks** of it being available.
- The new connection must double the existing broadband speed if the speed is less than 50Mbps, or be at least 100Mbps if the current speed is faster than 50Mbps. This is to demonstrate that there has been a step change in the broadband speeds delivered.
- The contract for service with the chosen supplier must be for a minimum of 12 months, with no free periods.
- Openreach will build an open network so consumers can choose any provider who sells in their area.
- Prices will vary between providers but you can check price comparison websites for a list of potential suppliers.

<https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/ftp-providers>

Further information:

Voucher Terms and Conditions: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UKGV-Beneficiary-Terms-and-Conditions-v0.9.pdf>

Openreach Pledge Terms: www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fibre-community-partnership/pledge-terms



Benefits of Ultrafast Full Fibre Broadband

Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband is the next generation of broadband built by Openreach.

- It is 10x* times faster and 5x** times more reliable than the average UK broadband connection.
- At 1Gbps[†] you can play games, stream 4k movies and make video calls, work, or study from home, all at once.

It's ready for anything!



Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband is our most reliable connection that's ready for anything. It is perfect for serious gamers, virtual reality, big families, cloud storage, YouTube uploaders, 360 video, video calls and much, much more. With a max download speed of 1000Gbps it can download a two hour 4K movie in under 2 minutes or your top 100 music tracks on under 7 seconds.

With a max speed of 220Mbps upload speed, you'll be able to send 2GB file in under 73 seconds.

You will get a digital phone line as standard. It is the latest phone line technology that plugs straight into your broadband, or choose no phone line at all.

Ultrafast Full Fibre runs a fibre optic cable straight from our exchange to your door, meaning it won't let you down – so no more buffering or drop outs.

You might also hear Ultrafast Full Fibre Broadband called Fibre to the Premise (FTTP), or Fibre to the Home (FTTH)

Getting Started

- A voucher funded Fibre Community Partnership does not involve a contract with Openreach.
- In order for your scheme to be successful, the community needs to work together and collectively pledge and validate their vouchers to meet the required target.
- The help of you, our key stakeholders, will be crucial in driving the message locally, as it creates strong awareness prior to our direct marketing activities.
- The 'pledging window' once launched, will be available for three months, after which it will be reviewed and potentially closed.
- If the pledge target is not reached, the scheme will be closed and applicants will be released from their voucher pledges.
- **Only one pledge per property is allowed.** Go to www.openreach.co.uk/connectmycommunity and check eligibility, and pledge.



- The Government voucher will only pay for building the fibre infrastructure, the actual connection is part of the arrangement made with the service provider.
- Every beneficiary will get an email from DCMS asking them to read, understand and agree with the terms and conditions. It's important to click **on the link within the email** to accept them on the DCMS portal.
- **Pledging is only the start. Every pledge must be validated with DCMS within 28 days or we will not be able to start building.**

Any member of the community who does not want to take a full fibre broadband package when it is available should NOT pledge their voucher

Business vouchers can get you to target quicker

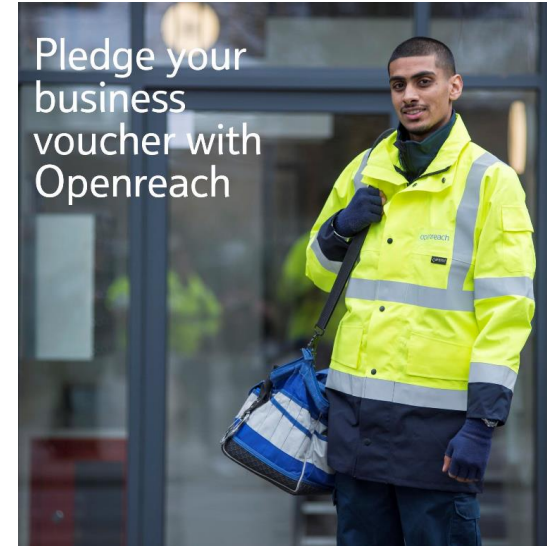
As a business voucher is worth up to £3,500 anyone who qualifies to claim one should be encouraged to pledge.

A business can also include a sole trader or a freelancer, it does not have to be a business premise, as long as they can **submit any evidence of trading**, which can include:

- A letter from HMRC confirming your UTR (Unique Tax Record) number.
- A VAT registration.
- Charity Registration.
- Certification of incorporation (Limited Companies)
- Business bank account statement (From within the last three months)

DCMS often spot check vouchers as part of the initial process, these vouchers will show as “disputed” and more information may be required. If this happens Openreach will contact the people directly with the DCMS dispute code and ask for further proof that they’re either residing or trading at that address, this can include:

- Any of the above evidence for a Business voucher
- An invoice showing the address the voucher is being claimed for
- A copy of a utility bill for a residential voucher.



Working with you

- In order for the scheme to succeed we need the community to work together and collectively pledge their vouchers to meet the required target.
 - With the support of your Rural Engagement Manager and the Demand Stimulation team we can provide you with marketing collateral that will help drive awareness locally.
 - As each community is different, so too is the demand stimulation approach.
 - We will rely on you to advise us how to best deploy marketing materials. Your local knowledge and contacts will help structure an awareness campaign.
 - There are a number of options available so we can adapt to suit your community.
- ✓ Leaflets
 - ✓ Posters
 - ✓ Banners
 - ✓ Social Media posts
 - ✓ PR
 - ✓ Paid for marketing including mailshots and social media



When you hit target

Once your community has pledged their UK Gigabit Vouchers to Openreach and reached the target required for the area, here's what to expect next:-

1. Everyone who has pledged will be advised that the target has been achieved and that they now need to Validate their pledge or the build will be in jeopardy.
2. With all pledges validated we will be able to start the build. We will stay in touch with you so you know how things are progressing.
3. As the build is nearing completion we will get in touch, so you can start 'shopping' for a new Ultrafast Full Fibre Broadband service
4. Once your new broadband service is up and running you will need to update your status on the DCMS portal. This will allow us to claim the value of your voucher against the cost of the build.

PLEDGE – VALIDATE – ORDER



Pledge – Validate – Build – Order - Validate

Here is a summary of the key stages that every member of the community needs to be aware of.

Please take particular note of the **two validation actions**, as these are KEY to the smooth success and running of the scheme

- 1. Pledge** - Only one pledge per property is allowed. Some businesses are 'run from home', therefore the 'pledger' must decide which type of voucher they wish to pledge. They can only choose one.
- 2. Validate** – Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will email everyone who has pledged to confirm some details and ask them to validate that pledge. This ensures that everyone who has pledged understands the terms and conditions of the scheme and that they are happy to proceed. **This needs a response within 28 days or it won't be counted towards the cost of the build.** Please note that the voucher emails can sometimes end up in the spam/junk folders so it's important to review device settings so that doesn't happen. **The sender address will be from: gigabit.vouchers@notifications.service.gov.uk**
- 3. Build** – It will take us approximately 12-18 months to complete the build. During this time each 'Pledger' can review their current contracts and start 'shopping around' for a provider and full fibre broadband package that will suit their needs once available. Please note, not all service providers sell full fibre broadband in all areas.
- 4. Order** – Once we have finished the build, we will let everyone know that the service is now available to order. Orders should be placed within 2 weeks of the build completion.
- 5. Validate** – DCMS will once again contact each pledger and ask them to confirm that an order has been placed for the new service. Once this email has been responded to, DCMS will release the value of the voucher to Openreach and that property's financial contribution to the build is complete.



Additional information

Eligibility

In some cases a property will show as not being eligible, there's a few reasons why this may happen.

- Data anomalies, where our records may not have picked up on a property name, e.g 'The Cottage'.
- A property may have been de-scoped from the scheme because of prohibitive costs.
- Already in a commercial plan, either with Openreach or an alternative network provider
- Can already access Ultrafast speeds
- Have already received State Aid

Contact your community lead or email ibrecommunitypartnership@openreach.co.uk in the first instance and we'll investigate your situation further..

Top up funding

Top ups are where the value of the voucher is increased to help meet the infrastructure build costs.

These are not guaranteed, but are set by the local bodies and are subject to an application process and available funding.

Before you pledge

Before you pledge your voucher here are a few things you need to consider

- When you pledge your voucher to the scheme you are agreeing to the pledge terms, which means you are agreeing to order a full fibre broadband service as soon as it is available. If you do not want or need full fibre broadband please do not pledge.
- You are free to order full fibre broadband from any provider who sells it in your area.
- If you are under contract or likely to be under contract when the build is complete please check with your provider that they can upgrade your service.
- If you are not under contract you are free to use any of the comparison sites in order to switch to a different provider.
- You should look at the comparison sites to get an idea of the potential cost of full fibre broadband. Depending on your current Tariff, there may be a slight increase in your monthly bill.
- The voucher is only valid for a Ultrafast Full Fibre Broadband product that doubles your current speed. It cannot be claimed through any other fibre broadband product e.g. Superfast
- If you are planning on moving home in the next 12-18 months, please do not pledge as you will not be in residence to fulfil the obligations of the voucher. Vouchers are non-transferable
- When you order your new service please be aware that Full Fibre broadband installation requires a visit from an engineer and access to the property. This may be relevant for second homes or renovation projects.

When you order your full fibre broadband

***NB this slide is included for information only, this part of the installation is not part of the voucher scheme – this is part of your arrangement with your internet service provider.**

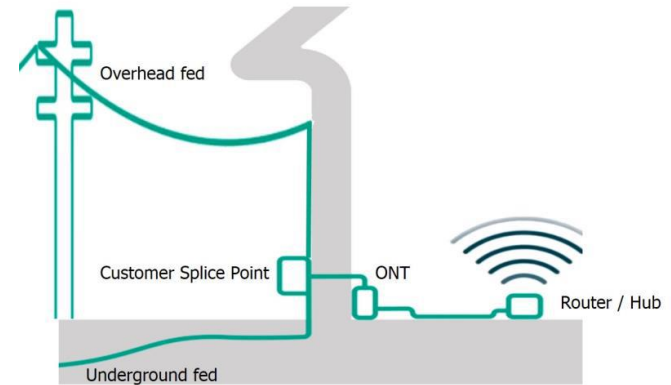
When it comes to getting the new Fibre broadband connected to your home, your ISP will discuss with you, in detail what is involved in the process.

The final installation will be carried out by an Openreach engineer who specialises in home installations.

The Openreach engineer will follow the route of the existing copper feed to the home, so may be overhead or underground. If fed underground a Customer Splice Point (CSP) will be fitted. (Approx. 15cm x 12.5cm)

Inside the home the Openreach engineer will bring the fibre through the wall and surface mount the fibre securely along the wall up to the ONT.

The ONT needs power and will need to be within reach of a power socket. Your router/hub will be connected to the ONT and can then be positioned anywhere within the reach of your supplied cable.



A finished fibre install might look something like this.

You will find more information about fibre install on our website www.openreach.co.uk/fullfibreinstall

Frequently asked questions

What type of technology will you be using?	We will be installing Full Fibre, also known as FTTP, FTTH, Ultrafast and Gigabit.
My neighbour does not want anything to do with this, will he benefit from the scheme?	Your neighbour's support for the scheme may be important when it comes to achieving the target needed. However if they do pledge their voucher they will be agreeing to the terms and conditions of the scheme. If your neighbour has any questions about the scheme, or is unsure of any aspect, then they can get in touch with us at communityfibre@openreach.co.uk and we will happily go through things with them.
Do I have to order my broadband from BT, or can I choose which provider I use?	Openreach will build an open network, meaning that you can order from a service provider of your choice, assuming they sell in your area.
How much will the fibre service cost?	Costs will vary depending on the package and the service provider. There are many price comparison sites available to review.
I don't really need broadband, can I still pledge my voucher to help the community?	The Government are quite specific. The Terms and Conditions stipulate that you must be prepared to enter into a broadband contract with your choice of provider once the service is available.
I've heard that my broadband can affect my house value, is this true?	Having faster broadband may make your property more desirable, it depends on your market. However one of the most frequently asked questions when viewing a property to rent or buy is in relation to the broadband speed.
Can I still keep my telephone number?	Yes. You can keep your existing telephone number as your phone service will continue to be delivered via the traditional copper network for now. You can however speak to your provider about the alternative options and benefits an ultrafast fibre service can give you.
I have pledged my voucher, what happens next?	Openreach will collate the pledge information and send it to DCMS. DCMS will then verify the pledges and give us the green light to plan the work. You can get further information here https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/how-do-vouchers-work

**Once again, thank you for your interest in pledging your UKGV with Openreach.
If you need any further help or assistance please email your Rural Engagement Manager in the first instance.**