



**Local Full Fibre Networks Programme  
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme  
Supplier Bulletin #7  
4 October 2018**

**Introduction**

We advised you that during September we would carry out a review of the Scheme to make sure it is operating in the best way possible to meet our policy objectives. We wrote to all registered suppliers a few weeks ago to seek views on a number of important issues about the Scheme. Thank you to all those who responded.

We are now reviewing the comments received as well as carrying out a review of the impact of the Scheme on businesses and full fibre deployment. Once that evaluation is complete, we will write to you to let you know the outcome and whether any of the Scheme's parameters are changing.

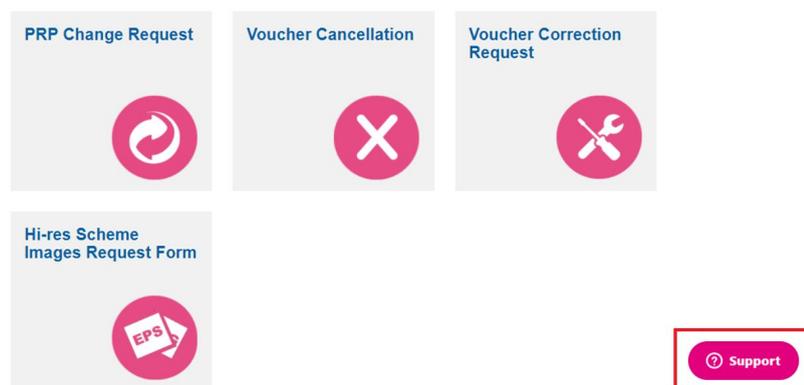
We also received a number of comments about the operation of the Scheme. As a result of your feedback, we have made some improvements to the portal in response. These are detailed below.

**Portal Changes**

In response to your feedback, we have added the following support functions to the portal:



**Supplier Self Service**





- **Voucher Cancellation** - you now have the ability to cancel voucher requests you have made using the portal. If you do need to cancel a voucher, you must provide a reason for the cancellation. You should also be aware that we will monitor cancellations - excessive numbers of cancellations may lead to compliance investigations by our team.
- **Voucher Correction Request** - from time-to-time customers' details needs to be corrected or updated. In order to manage requests for changes to customer details, we have made a voucher correction request form available. NB: Vouchers are not transferable. These requests will be managed using our new Zendesk support ticketing system monitored by the team.
- **PRP Change Request** - you have a responsibility to alert us to any changes affecting agreed (published) PRPs. In order for you to request changes for Standard or Project PRPs, we have made available an online form to allow you to send us your detailed requests. These requests will also be handled using the Zendesk ticketing system. Any unauthorised changes which are discovered as a result of a cost audit or site visit will be considered non-compliant and may result in your suspension or removal from the Scheme.
- **Hi-Res Scheme Image Request** - we have available a set of hi-res images to support your promotion of the scheme. Unfortunately, these images are too large to place in the portal. Please use this facility to request images should you need them.
- **Support** - for any other queries you may have about the Scheme previously sent to [LFFNSuppliers@culture.gov.uk](mailto:LFFNSuppliers@culture.gov.uk), please now use the Zendesk support facility (bottom right on this page). This will enable you to ask questions about the Scheme of a more general nature. You will receive a ticket number, by return from our Zendesk help system. Please respond to this email if you wish to add more information.

The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Team manages a huge number of supplier emails. The new self-service options and support request capability we have added, backed up by Zendesk should speed response, minimise lost communications, and improve communications. [LFFNSuppliers@culture.gov.uk](mailto:LFFNSuppliers@culture.gov.uk) should no longer be used for scheme operation.

### Notes and Queries

Since the Scheme launched in March 2018 we have responded to a number of requests for guidance and clarification about the Scheme and the application of the terms and conditions from registered suppliers. In the interests of clarity and consistency, we have now published a summary of questions and our responses (copy attached). Please find some time to review these. A copy has also been placed in the supplier area of the website: [HERE](#)

### Claims - Voucher Redemption

Suppliers are reminded that when redeeming a voucher following the delivery of a new connection, only the **actual incurred eligible costs** should be claimed. BDUK will be carrying out full cost audits to ensure that all suppliers adhere to this condition. Overclaiming is a breach of the terms and conditions and may lead to your removal from the Scheme. If you believe you may have inadvertently misclaimed for a voucher you have already delivered, you must let us know urgently. Redeeming a voucher when the service is not live is a breach of scheme rules and can result in the supplier's removal from the scheme.



## Site Visits

Suppliers are advised that we have now appointed a [third party contractor](#) to carry out site visits as part of the Scheme's compliance checks. Routinely we will contact beneficiaries directly to arrange to visit and check that the connections you have reported as delivered meet the description of the PRP connectivity. You must only claim a voucher when the circuit is live and delivered at the speeds set out in your PRP application.

For Project PRPs, we will carry out a site visit prior to the release of the first payment. We aim to carry out this initial project site visit as quickly as possible after you report the first connections have been delivered. We will make sure that our audit partner is aware that the visit is part of a project and has sufficient information to carry out an appropriate visit.

Our project weekly site visit request cycle is:

1. New projects "live" and customer validated identified.
2. Pass information and request to visit from auditors.
3. Auditors make arrangements with beneficiary **and supplier**.
4. Site visit carried out and reported online to DCMS.
5. Information reviewed and payment released as appropriate.

All claimed vouchers where we intend to carry out a site visit prior to payment will be marked "**Visit Required**". Where these relate to Project PRPs our agent will contact you.

## Validation of Vouchers

Voucher requests may **ONLY** be validated by the beneficiary and should **NEVER** be validated by the supplier. Supplier validation of beneficiary email requests for voucher issue or connection will lead to the use of the Issue Escalation Process and may result in the supplier being removed from the Scheme.

You are also reminded that where your customers are Sole Traders / Partnerships that they must upload evidence of their status as a trading entity when they validate the voucher request. This evidence:

- must match the installation address and
- must be some form of official document, preferably the VAT/UTR confirmation letter from HMRC but failing that a recent utility bill, bank statement, or lease agreement.



## **PRP Application Status**

We have been asked to explain what the status of a PRP means and how the review process works:

- Supplier requests a PRP, the application is created with a **'Pending'** status.
- Where necessary, our first step is to complete a state aid check - this applies only to Project PRPs. If these are not required, or are passed satisfactorily, the PRP is then passed to the commercial team for review. As part of this stage, the commercial team will sometimes refer questions back to suppliers. When they do so the status will change to **"with Supplier"**. This means that we are waiting for some input from you.
- If you have already sent the information we have requested, it means that we haven't seen/got to it yet. Previously we were only using email only to manage PRP applications but due to the increasing volumes, we've recently switched to using Zendesk tickets (#NNN) to avoid missed comms. Please respond to the Ticket Request only as this will help us respond more efficiently.
- When the PRP has been checked and is considered OK to approve, its marked as **'Final Review'**, this means a recommendation has been made to either decline or approve the PRP.
- If it's approved it is **'Published'**.
- Project PRPs have a maximum number or value of vouchers that may be requested. When the package reaches its max value then it is **'Suspended'**.
- If DCMS determines that a Supplier, PRP or voucher warrants investigation for breaches of the scheme Ts & Cs, packages may be **'Blocked'**. This status prevents any new requests or attempts to redeem vouchers for that PRP or for the supplier.

**If you have ANY questions about the Scheme please SIGN IN and contact us using the support function on your 'logged-on' home page.**