Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #14
13 May 2018

Introduction

It is now just over 12 months since the scheme launched. It has been a great success so far and at 31 March, the scheme has committed funds totalling over £38m and over 8,000 new connections have been delivered supported by almost £19m investment from DCMS.

https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/

Voucher Expiry
The scheme launched in March 2018, which means that some vouchers are coming to their 12-month anniversary. When a voucher is issued, suppliers have up to 12 months to deliver the associated connection. As set out in the terms and conditions, if delivery before this deadline is at risk as a result of the actions or inactions of a third party - that is, neither the supplier nor the beneficiary - we will consider an extension to the deadline.

Extensions may only be agreed if the delay is caused by a third party and a realistic revised deadline for delivery is provided. Failure to meet either of these conditions will place the voucher at risk of cancellation. We are now sending automated emails to alert you, but you are advised to actively manage voucher deadlines. If you do need to request an extension, you can now do so using the voucher change request form (when signed into the website).

If you do have connections you know you cannot deliver, you should use the self-service cancellation facility to tell us the voucher is no longer required. This will also allow us to make the best use of the available funds. Finally, you are reminded that requesting vouchers for customers where there is no realistic prospect of delivery may be regarded as a breach of the scheme's terms and conditions and may be treated as non-compliance.

State Aid Checks
Suppliers should be aware that when Project PRPs are submitted for review one of the checks we carry out aims to establish whether a postcode address included in it has already received or is in a plan to receive a gigabit capable connection using other sources of public funding. Whilst we do our very best to make sure these checks are carried out properly, build plans do change from time to time. As a result, it is possible for us to agree to a project PRP but then decline a voucher requested as part of that project on the basis that public funding is planned. This will be rare, however to help suppliers manage this we have now provided a "look-up" function for any postcode which will provide information about the current state of our knowledge relating to a postcode.

Postcode lookup results:

Checks show a possible match for existing state aid intervention in this postcode. Further investigation is required by BDUK before a voucher can be issued.

In Wales increased funding may be available; **click here for more information**

Close

The postcode look up will show if there is a possibility that premises in that postcode have or will receive state aid. Before a PRP is issued, further investigation by DCMS may be necessary

The look up will also indicate if premises in this postcode might be eligible for a particular voucher type

Ofcom data sharing

Your attention is drawn to an update in the scheme's Privacy Notice which now makes explicit the fact that we share data about the use of vouchers with Ofcom. This does not include personal data about beneficiaries, but will include information we hold about the speed and technologies deployed at an address level including UPRN data where we hold it. You should review the privacy notice you have in place with your customers to make sure you continue to comply with relevant data protection laws.

Beneficiary Information

We recently carried out a survey of beneficiaries who did not validate voucher requests made by suppliers. A significant proportion of respondents said that they either did not trust the link or were not expecting an email from DCMS. You are reminded that when you request vouchers for your customers you must tell them to expect the validation email from gigabit.vouchers@notifications.service.gov.uk.

There is a leaflet you should pass to your customers which explains the process. This is available from the scheme library when you are signed in on the website.

https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/media/

If you have any questions about the scheme, please contact us using the Support Function when signed in as a user.