



**Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #18
15 August 2019**

Introduction

Demand for vouchers continues to be very strong. To date, the scheme has funded over 11,200 connections with a value of £25.8 million. In addition, we have issued vouchers (not yet connected) to the value of £20.6 million, meaning that around £46.4 million of our £67 million fund has been allocated with further requests in the pipeline. In parallel to Gigabit Vouchers, our team also supports the Better Broadband Voucher Scheme which has so far resulted in over 22,000 connections.

On the original voucher scheme, and following the launch of the Rural scheme, we have seen a ramp up in demand beyond what we forecasted. This means that we have a backlog of Project PRPs under review. We are taking significant action to address these delays, including recruitment to enlarge the team. We are aware that suppliers are keen to get their build activity underway, we apologise for this temporary situation, and thank you for your patience.

Suppliers are reminded that our funding is confirmed only when a voucher is issued, not when a project is agreed.

Rural vouchers are funded from a separate fund of £200 million, alongside public sector hubs sites (the Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme). Suppliers are encouraged to focus their projects on these qualifying rural areas to ensure the best chance of securing vouchers for their customers.

Vouchers that have not resulted in a connection, but are over 12 months since issue, should be cancelled.

Site Visits

Some suppliers may be aware that we have experienced some delays in carrying out site visits as part of the scheme due to issues with our contractor. These issues have led to some minor delays in payments which we are in the process of rectifying. Our contractor, Campbell & Kennedy Maintenance Ltd are in the process of making appointments and site visits. We envisage any delayed checks to be completed by mid-September.

State Aid Intervention - an explanation

In a number of parts of the UK, the government (local or national) has already funded or entered into a contract to fund Gigabit capable connectivity. Premises which are to benefit



from these interventions (mainly as part of the Superfast programme) are not eligible to benefit from the scheme.

Changing Project PRPs to rural values

Suppliers should be aware that increases to voucher values for a published Project PRP, in line with the rural part of the scheme, will only be agreed where there is clear evidence that the increase is justified. This could be where the Project contains eligible costs which would otherwise be funded by the beneficiary, or where it would increase the number of beneficiaries on a Project.

Vouchers that have been issued cannot be amended to reflect the rural voucher values. Instead, vouchers should be cancelled and a new voucher requested to reflect the amended value. Suppliers are also reminded that vouchers are not transferable.

Support Tickets

We have experienced a number of instances where suppliers have opened multiple tickets relating to the same issue. Please use existing support service tickets where these exist, to avoid creating complexity and delays in our responses. Additionally we are seeing a number of queries which are answered in published guidance documents - these are published in the supplier area of the website (<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/media>). The scheme is supported through a comprehensive set of terms and conditions, all available in this location. Please review these before raising questions directly with us.

If you have an open support ticket which you have managed to resolve yourself, please let us know by replying "Closed" to the confirmation email sent to you by our Zen Desk support system.

If you have any questions about the scheme please contact us through the Support Service function.

Thank you