

**Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #36
24 June 2020**

Introduction

The RGC funded part of the Scheme has now supported over 2,000 live connections and has committed almost £20m of funding in total. Today we have some announcements about additional top up funds which we hope will make the Scheme even more successful.

New Top Ups

We are pleased to announce that in 3 parts of the UK additional funding has been made available to help speed up the development and deployment in some of the harder to reach parts of the UK. We set out details below about increased funds in Wales, the English Borderlands and West Sussex.

Wales – Top-up fund

Following the closure of the LFFN part of the Scheme we can announce that, from the date of this Bulletin, the Welsh Government has made additional funding available which means that for new RGC Projects in Wales the maximum value of vouchers for qualifying rural residential beneficiaries in Wales increases by £1,500 to £3,000 and for SMEs from £3,500 to £7,000.

These increased values are available in qualifying rural locations where the currently available broadband speed is less than 30 Mbps.

The Borderlands Partnership – Top-up Fund

From the date of this Bulletin, the English counties of Cumbria and Northumberland - together known as the Borderlands Partnership - with support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Growth Fund - are also able to offer increased maximum voucher values. In this part of the UK the maximum value of vouchers for rural residential beneficiaries increases by £1,500 to £3,000 and for SMEs from £3,500 to £7,000.

These increased values are available in qualifying rural locations where the currently available broadband speed is less than 30 Mbps.

The Connecting Cumbria and iNorthumberland teams will be available to support project development in their respective areas with wayleaves, highways and other barrier busting issues. Suppliers who wish to contact the team should email:

digitalvouchers@borderlandsgrowth.com

West Sussex - Top-up fund

In addition, from the date of this Bulletin, the English county of West Sussex is able to offer increased maximum voucher values. In this part of the UK the maximum value of vouchers for rural residential beneficiaries increases by £2,500 to £4,000 and for SMEs by £500 to £4,000. These increased values are available in qualifying rural locations where the currently available broadband speed is less than 100 Mbps.

The Digital Infrastructure Team (DIT) at West Sussex County Council is taking a lead role on behalf of West Sussex Councils to identify and stimulate demand. The DIT welcome conversations with suppliers to work collaboratively to engage communities and maximise take up. For more information please contact broadband@westsussex.gov.uk

Changes to Supplier Terms and Conditions

In order to make these changes effective, we have updated Schedule 8 – Additional Funding of the Scheme Terms and Conditions. A replacement version of the table in Schedule 8 is now available as a download from the website: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/media/>

We have also added definitions related to these new top up schemes to Schedule 1 – Definitions. These are set out in the same document.

These updates take effect from the date of this Bulletin. The PRP Application form has also been updated to allow you to request the use of these increased maximum voucher values for qualifying projects in these three parts of the UK.

Changes to Beneficiary Terms and Conditions

With effect from the date of this Bulletin we have also updated the Scheme's Beneficiary Terms and Conditions to version 5.3. The changes we have made reflect the availability of these increased voucher values in the named locations. Only the schedules have been amended.

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

Existing Project PRPs in areas with new top up schemes

Suppliers should be aware that we will only agree to increase voucher values for published Project PRPs, 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. Any request to make a change of the maximum voucher values in a project should be made using the formal Change Request form in the supplier self-service area of the website.

Vouchers that have been issued cannot be amended to reflect the Top Up voucher values. Suppliers are also reminded that vouchers are not transferable.

Vouchers cancelled due to non-validation

Suppliers are reminded that requested vouchers are and will continue to be cancelled if they are not validated within the timescale permitted - currently 60 days as set out in Bulletin #30 and #32. It is the responsibility of the suppliers to manage this. We will not reissue a cancelled voucher where the beneficiary has failed to validate at requested stage.

We closed requests for vouchers funded from the LFFN part of the Scheme on 14 May 2020. Because we extended the time that beneficiaries have to validate voucher requests in response to the Covid situation from 28 to 60 days, un-validated LFFN voucher requests will expire 60 days after the date of request and therefore no later than 14th July for these vouchers.

New Pre-Registered Package Project Applications

Following the closure of the LFFN funded part of the Scheme and the introduction of these new top up schemes, we have updated the form used to request a new PRP. We hope this makes the application process more straightforward.

When submitting PRP applications, please could you ensure the postcodes are consistently submitted within an excel spreadsheet with the following format:
4 or 3 characters, SPACE, 3 characters, for example: OX12 7DA or SW1 3PR

If the postcodes provided do not correspond to this format, we may ask you to resubmit.

Site Visits

Please note that from early July our agents Campbell and Kennedy will start to carry out physical site visits of new installations again. This will be a phased resumption of these visits and will be combined with remote inspections as appropriate. We are grateful for your cooperation and support so that we can carry out these validation checks.

NEW DCMS email addresses

As a general principle, we ask you to contact us using the self-service function when signed in as a supplier. However, if you have cause to contact us by email, please note that from **29 June** our email addresses will all change to xxxx.xxxx@dcms.gov.uk. Emails will work to the existing domain for a short while. We ask you to update your records and filters to the new domain from 29 June.

If you have any questions about the Scheme please contact us at using the self-service widget when signed in to the website.

Thank you.