

**Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #39
8 September 2020**

Introduction

In this Bulletin we announce significant additional funding available in Scotland, where the maximum value of vouchers in qualifying areas increases significantly. In addition, in what we expect to be the final change to Top Ups in England, we announce 11 new areas which have additional Top Up funding and a further increase to the value of vouchers available in Kent.

Additional funding in Scotland

The Scottish Government is making available up to £5,000 additional funding per voucher for both business and residential beneficiaries in rural areas where speeds of less than 30 Mbps are available and no current intervention is in place.

New Top Ups in England

In addition to the existing Top Up funds available in England (Borderlands - Cumbria and Northumberland, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Warwickshire, and West Sussex), we now announce 11 new areas where increased funding is available plus a significant increase in the maximum value of vouchers in Kent.

The value of these increases varies by area. In order to help you understand these values we have created a reference as a downloadable summary for your teams.

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

In some areas the increased values are only available where broadband speeds of less than 30 Mbps are available: Borderlands, Cambridge & Peterborough, County Durham, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kent, and Staffordshire.

In other areas the Scheme's general eligibility criteria - broadband speeds of less than 100 Mbps available - applies, as set out in the Scheme terms and conditions. These areas are: Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, East Sussex, Hampshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, West Sussex, and Worcestershire.

Revised Terms and Conditions

From noon on 8 September 2020, revised terms and conditions for Suppliers and Beneficiaries have effect. In both cases, these are version 6.0.

Suppliers are reminded that we no longer accept voucher requests associated with the LFFN funded part of the Scheme.

The principal changes are:

- Increased maximum voucher values in those areas of the UK where “Top Up” and additional funding is now available.
- Clarification that membership of an Ofcom approved Alternative Dispute Resolution scheme is a condition of participation in the Scheme.
- Clarification about how we treat beneficiaries who wish to use vouchers in multiple premises.
- Confirmation on the alignment of standard monthly pricing for voucher and non-voucher customers.
- Updates about ineligible costs, for example in relation to IP addresses and use of PIA
- Clarification in relation to suspension of suppliers in the event of the use of the Issue Escalation Process.

Suppliers are also asked to note that the Beneficiary Terms and Conditions have also been updated with effect from 8 September 2020. The changes relate mainly to the treatment of the use of vouchers by the same beneficiary in multiple locations and the inclusion of the new Top Up and additional funding agreements.

Covid-19 Amendments

Through Supplier Bulletins 29 and 31, we introduced a number of relaxations of the Scheme’s terms and conditions to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Following a review we have decided to leave these temporary amendments in place except for one. From 30 September 2020, the time we make available for a Beneficiary to validate that they agree to a voucher requested on their behalf, will revert from 60 days to the previous limit of 28 days. This is because the time taken for customers to validate vouchers requested on their behalf has not been impacted by the Covid situation.

For clarity, the time available for customers to validate installations remains at 60 days, although we will be carrying out further investigations about the reasons for these redeemed vouchers not being validated by the customer.

Vouchers which have been issued but not claimed for more than 12 months do not require formal extensions to be agreed at the present time, nor will they be cancelled without notice. We will provide a further update on the Covid amendments in due course.

PRP Change requests (in response to Top Ups)

Suppliers are reminded that any material changes to PRPs require the written consent of the Authority. Suppliers may request a Change Request (CR) by using the function on the Supplier Self Service area of the website.

BDUK recognises that there are common scenarios which would result in a supplier needing to raise a CR:

- A supplier could raise a CR to increase the voucher values and therefore the PRP maximum value but keep the number of premises the same. In this scenario, the supplier must show the voucher value increase is covering a cost that beneficiaries were going to pay.
- A supplier could raise a CR to increase voucher values and increase the scope of the PRP to include additional premises. In this scenario, the supplier must check the commercial viability of the project and BDUK will complete additional commercial assurance.

Suppliers are reminded that the value of vouchers which have been issued cannot be amended. Any requested increase in voucher value for vouchers that have not been issued will only be granted where this offsets a contribution that the beneficiary or community would otherwise have made.

BDUK will make assessments of the impact of any change requests and inform the supplier of the outcome following the review. The Change Request is not approved until the supplier has written consent of the Authority.

Updated Commercial Assurance Template

The Commercial Assurance Review (CAR) template used for commercial assessments of PRPs has been updated and CAR Template v2.4 will now be issued to Suppliers to complete, where necessary.

Suppliers are reminded that all documents shared between the parties should be password protected.

For a broader overview of BDUK's work, please also see this webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-digital-uk>

The Digital Connectivity Portal here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-connectivity-portal>

takes suppliers through to some useful information and updates here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/resources-for-communications-network-providers>

If you have any questions about the Scheme please contact us using the Support function when signed into the website.