

**Local Full Fibre Networks Programme
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #40
1 October 2020**

Introduction

Despite the difficult moment the UK finds itself in, BDUK continues to press forward with our plans to help establish the digital infrastructure the country needs. We are pleased that the flow of new rural Project PRPs we are seeing continues to grow with more suppliers bringing forward plans. Thank you.

To date the LFFN funded part of the Scheme has delivered over 26,700 connections. More than 30% of these are in rural locations. The RGC funded part of the Scheme has now issued vouchers with a value of over £28.8M leading to around 4,700 new live rural connections supported by this element of the Scheme.

Top Ups

In 19 of the most rural parts of the UK increased voucher values are available. For full details see the table we have created to help suppliers use these increased funds to support the costs of their customer's gigabit capable connections. The table can be found on this page:

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

Covid Amendments

28 Days to Validate Voucher Requests

As part of the Covid amendments communicated in Bulletins 29 & 30 we increased the time available for beneficiaries to validate a requested voucher from 28 to 60 days. Since March 2020 we have not observed any significant change in the time taken by beneficiaries to validate voucher requests. In Bulletin 32 we said that we would give 14 days notice of our intention to reinstate the 28 day period (as set out in clause 9.3 of the Scheme terms and conditions).

We now provide notice that we will reinstate the original 28 day period set out in clause 9.3 of the Scheme terms and conditions with effect from noon on Monday 19th October 2020. This means that from this date beneficiaries will have 28 days from the date they receive the email from us to validate a voucher request. Any vouchers not validated within the 28 day timeframe will automatically be cancelled.

12 Months to deliver connections

In Bulletins 29 & 30 we advised that we would not cancel vouchers that were not claimed within 12 months of the date of voucher issue and that clause 10.2 of part B of the Scheme terms and conditions is suspended.

In Bulletin 32, we said that we would reinstate this clause by providing 28 days notice and that during this 28 day period suppliers may request extensions to the deadline for delivery of connections subject to the terms of the Scheme.

We now give notice that for vouchers which were issued **before 31 March 2019 ONLY**, clause 10.2 is reinstated.

This means that vouchers which were issued before 31 March 2019 must either be delivered and claimed by 1700 on 29 October 2020, or an extension to the delivery date must have been requested by the same date. Vouchers issued before 31 March 2019 which are not delivered and claimed or for which an extension has not been requested using the Voucher Change request function on this date, will be cancelled.

You can see the date on which a voucher was issued by using the “Download My Vouchers” function when signed in on the website. This date is contained in column AB of the downloaded file.

To request an extension to the delivery date for a voucher:

Sign in

Go to: Supplier Self-Service

Click on: Expiry Date Extension request

Enter the voucher number

Provide the reason for the delay

Enter the date by which you will deliver the connection

Note: Extensions will be subject to the terms of the Scheme. We will not agree to extend the delivery date deadline for affected vouchers beyond 31 December 2020.

Suppliers should make every effort to deliver all connections for which vouchers have been issued within 12 months. Suppliers may cancel vouchers that they are no longer able to deliver at any time.

Clause 10.2 of the Scheme terms and conditions continues to be suspended for vouchers that were issued on or following 31 March 2019.

Remaining Covid Amendments

For clarity, we confirm that the other amendments we made to the Scheme terms and conditions in response to the Covid situation remain in place as follows:

- 28 days for the beneficiary to confirm that a new connection has been delivered (clause 9.5) increased from 28 days to 60 days (after this period unvalidated claims may be cancelled at our discretion). We will reinstate the original terms by providing 14 days notice.
- Audit requests (clause 12.2) the number of working days suppliers have to respond to requests to provide evidence of costs increased from 5 to 10 working days. We will reinstate the original terms by providing 5 working days notice.

- Dispute response time (operational) - the period of time provided for suppliers to respond to disputed voucher requests increased from 5 to 10 days. We will reinstate the original terms by providing 5 working days notice.
- Beneficiary Terms and Conditions - set out in Bulletin 32 - Core terms part B, clause 7.3

Website Links and Email Addresses

Suppliers are reminded that it is possible to amend the URL used in the Scheme website, so that potential customers are directed to a specific landing page relevant to the Scheme. This is especially important now that the only way in which people can benefit from vouchers is when they are part of projects in rural areas.

To change the page link, sign in and use the Manage My Profile function.

To ensure you receive the latest news and updates from the Scheme, it is important that your organisation's contact email addresses are kept up to date. You can use the Manage My Profile function to update the email addresses we hold for you.

Cost Audits

Suppliers are reminded that although no further LFFN-funded vouchers can be requested, we will continue to conduct cost audits on standard vouchers and projects regardless of when the vouchers are claimed. To facilitate the quick and successful conclusion of all cost audits, suppliers are advised to prepare all invoices and contracts relating to voucher funded connections and projects to ensure that this information can be provided easily upon request. Failure to provide this evidence will constitute a breach of the Terms and Conditions and result in the initiation of the Issue Escalation Procedure.

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 is here:

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

Further useful information and updates for suppliers is available 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.