

## Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) - Data Management Guidance

### Overview

This note aims to provide a high level overview of how postcode and premises eligibility data is managed by BDUK as part of the Scheme. These guidance notes apply only to eligibility information for the Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) funded part of the Scheme and do not affect or update the Scheme terms and conditions.

Premises are eligible for a voucher where the following applies:

<b>Rurality</b>	The location is classified as rural
<b>State aid</b>	No contract exists for a publicly funded gigabit capable connection to be provided
<b>Speed</b>	More than 100Mbps is not available

The source data for each of these are drawn from a number of places:

- **Rurality** (in England & Wales) is based on the Office for National Statistics [rural urban classifications \(RUC\)](#). Similar statistical bases apply in Wales and Northern Ireland. These classifications are based on population densities.
- **State aid** data is drawn mainly from local bodies' Superfast contracts for future and historic delivery. Only notified and approved changes are applied. We also take account of other public sector interventions, for example Westminster's voucher scheme
- **Speed** - in addition to the information we have from public contracts and our own interventions, we use Ofcom's Connected Nations data to form a view about the speed available in a postcode. This data is updated three times a year. Ofcom's online broadband availability checker: <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/broadband-coverage> provides access to this data at a premises level.

Open Market Review and other locally held speed data *including any commercial plans* is **not** taken into account in determining eligibility. Neither do we remove postcodes where there are no eligible premises for other reasons - for example, council offices, universities or large industrial sites. The inclusion of these postcodes does not change the terms of the scheme.

Ultimately, BDUK determines whether a property is eligible for the Scheme.

### How we check

Our portal contains two datasets that we use for automatic checking:

- A list of postcodes which are rural and contain at least one premises where the data we hold indicates that speeds of less than 100Mbps are available. Vouchers cannot be requested in postcodes that are not on this list.

- B. A dataset containing every postcode which contains at least one premises for which a **state aid** intervention is planned. If vouchers are requested for premises in these postcodes we carry out a premises level check (actual address/UPRN) before the voucher is issued.
- C. Postcodes must be included in the Project PRP to be eligible.

The publicly available postcode checker on our site provides a response to any postcode entered: is the postcode on list A and/or on list B. We carry out premises level checks in relation to speed.

If a location is clearly rural but classified as urban, we reserve the right to consider other sources, for example RDPE eligibility as determined by Defra in England. Our decision is final.

### **What happens if a supplier wants to create a project in a location where a state aid intervention is planned?**

In simple terms, we will not provide voucher funding for any premises in a state aid contract. Only if the local body agrees to descope the affected premises and this is formally confirmed through BDUK's Change Request process for the National Broadband Scheme will vouchers be issued.

### **How often is the data updated?**

Ofcom updates the Connected Nations data three times a year - we use this to update our speed data.

The statistical basis for RUC is only updated in response to population data, but does update to reflect changes in postcode allocations. For some postcodes no RUC data is available. Contracts for broadband managed by the public sector are changing all the time. We update our state aid checklist frequently as change requests are processed..

### **Does Universal Service Obligation (USO) eligibility affect the voucher Scheme?**

A premises could pass the eligibility checks for both schemes, but can currently only be built under one of the schemes, The funding cannot be combined. For example, a premise could meet the both sets of eligibility conditions. That household could apply for a voucher based build OR they could apply for the USO. We share information directly with Ofcom to manage this.

### **A final word**

We are aware that it is impossible for the data we use to be perfectly correct all of the time. Great efforts are made to manage and maintain the data we use for all of our schemes and programmes and we have well-developed plans intended to improve our data management in the coming weeks and months; we know that data is critical to our mission. Where we encounter significant data issues, we will look to resolve these with the help of our local body partners and we plan to be as transparent as possible with our partners about the data we use.