

**BDUK  
Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme  
Supplier Bulletin #41  
26th November 2020**

## **Introduction**

With the UK being told to stay at home again, the need for good connectivity in rural areas continues to be more important than ever. Thank you for your consistent hard work in delivering projects in these uncertain times.

To date, the LFFN funded part of the Scheme (GBVS) 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 over £34.3m worth of vouchers, which has already led to around 6,400 new live rural connections.

## **Voucher Scheme post March 2021**

As communicated in Bulletin 26, the Rural (RGC) element of the Scheme will close to new requests on 31/03/2021 (or earlier, should funding be exhausted ahead of this date). Suppliers are reminded that vouchers have a 12 month validity following the date of issue in which time connections must be made and vouchers claimed.

The importance of demand side measures, such as vouchers, in delivering gigabit capable broadband in rural areas is well understood within BDUK and we expect to be able to make a more detailed announcement about future demand side measures before Christmas.

## **“Go list” update**

We have now updated the list of postcodes we make available to you, which advise whether a postcode contains premises that are eligible for Rural Projects. These are postcodes in rural areas; where broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps are available and where there is no contract in place supported by public funds (State aid) to provide a gigabit capable service. Each postcode contains a minimum of one eligible premises.

Speed and State aid data changes all the time, however, this list has been recently updated based on the latest Ofcom Connected Nations data and following a thorough review of State aid contract data across the UK. There will be **premises** which are eligible for the Scheme which are in postcodes not contained within this list. These are generally postcodes where some, but not all, of the premises have or are due to receive a State aid funded connection. Suppliers who wish to check the eligibility of postcodes not contained within this list can do so but putting them in to the postcode checker and, where it indicates that State aid is present in that postcode, can then check published plans on the relevant Local Body’s website or contact them for further information. Notwithstanding the above, the final

determination as to whether projects contain premises which are eligible for the Scheme is made by us.

To request this updated list, suppliers can complete the Rural Eligible Postcode Request within the Self Service area of the site.

To help suppliers understand where we source and how we manage eligibility data, we have produced a short guidance note. A copy has been placed in the library area of the site which you can access when signed in. <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/media/>

### **Connections for LFFN Funded Vouchers**

There are almost 5,000 LFFN funded vouchers which are still to be connected. Suppliers are reminded that these connections need to be made no later than 12 months after voucher issue, as per voucher validity, otherwise they will be cancelled. As communicated in Bulletin 40, Clause 10.2 of the Scheme terms and conditions continues to be suspended for vouchers that were issued on or following 31 March 2019 but we will be reviewing this as well as the remaining Covid amendments in December. Suppliers are encouraged to 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.

### **Support Portal**

Please do not reply to tickets which have been notified to you as 'Solved'. If the ticket is 'Solved' then BDUK is not notified of a response and the reply will not be answered. Please always open a new support ticket via the supplier self service site if you need to follow up on an enquiry after being notified that an existing ticket is solved. You may reference the old ticket in order to avoid repeating the detail contained within it.

### **Notes and Queries**

The Supplier Guidance Notes available on the Self Service library of the portal have now been updated to reflect v6.0 of the Terms and Conditions. They have also been split into categories to allow suppliers to find the answers to a question about a particular topic more easily. As a reminder, these notes are for guidance only and the Terms and Conditions take precedence over these.

### **Dispute Code Update**

An additional dispute code 'D203' has been added to the Dispute & Cancellation Codes Page. Please follow this link to the page for a list of all Dispute and Cancellation Codes: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/supplier-self-service/dispute-cancellation-codes/>

### **Broadband Upgrade Fund (BUF)**

Suppliers who registered interest in the Broadband Upgrade Fund pilot campaign will now have received an email to activate their account. Suppliers can now create 'areas of interest' that they want to propose to build, these should be geography specific and must adhere to the Scheme Terms and Conditions. Residents who have registered on the site and

Community Co-ordinators will then have the chance to review and consider the proposed offers in their communities and in December, choose whether they want to engage further with the supplier to find out more. Supplier registrations remain open, if any additional suppliers wish to register:

<https://broadband-upgrade-fund.campaign.gov.uk/register/supplier>

In total more than 16,000 registrations of interest were received from residents and businesses across the three pilot areas – Cornwall, Borderlands (Cumbria and Northumberland) and West Wales (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire).

### **Supplier Payments and Site Visits during Christmas and New Year**

Please note that there will be no payment run on **Thursday 31st Dec 2020**. After the 24th December, our next planned payment cycle is scheduled to take place on Thursday 7 January 2021.

Furthermore, between 23rd December and 5th January site visits will not take place. This may delay payments on a small number of vouchers. Claimed connections which have been selected for a site visit can be identified on your voucher download as “visit required”.

### **Voucher Scheme Audit**

On Monday 23rd November all Suppliers were contacted with regards to a planned Scheme audit. During the next six weeks we will be contacting suppliers and beneficiaries, on a random sample basis, asking them to provide information and evidence in relation to their connections delivered under the Scheme. Suppliers are advised to begin preparing all relevant documents to facilitate this audit should you receive a specific request from us in the near future. Beneficiaries have been contacted separately regarding this audit.

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.