Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
Supplier Bulletin #84
Tuesday 6th September

IMPORTANT NOTICE

New top-up in Cheshire

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Cheshire top-up.

From the date of this Bulletin, Cheshire is able to offer increased maximum voucher values. Eligible residents and businesses can access additional funding to help them access a gigabit-capable connection. The maximum value of vouchers for residential beneficiaries increases from £1,500 to £4,000 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 top up cannot be added to issued vouchers retrospectively. New projects can be submitted with the top-up, if required and qualifying UPRNs in these projects will be able to make use of the additional funding once the projects are approved.

BDUK is preparing to launch a Project Gigabit procurement in Cheshire. Which means voucher eligibility will need to be paused in the county to enable a stable procurement. This means there is an upcoming voucher project submission deadline in Cheshire of 7th October. Further details are listed below.

Voucher deadlines reminder

Voucher eligibility is due to be paused for all premises within all Lots in Phase 3A and Phase 3B. Only premises in voucher priority areas will remain eligible for vouchers during procurement beyond the dates outlined below.

Please inform BDUK of any published projects that you no longer intend to progress in procurement areas with upcoming deadlines and we will remove them from our VPA lists.

Upcoming voucher deadline:

Lots in 3A - Friday 07 October
- Herefordshire (Lot 15)
- Lincolnshire (including NE Lincolnshire and N Lincolnshire) and East Riding (Lot 23)
- Cheshire (Lot 17)
- Gloucestershire (Lot 18)

<u>Future voucher deadlines:</u>

Lots in 3A - Friday 04 November
- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (Lot 32)
- Devon and Somerset (Lot 6)
- Dorset (Lot 14)

Lots in 3B - Friday 04 November
- Essex (Lot 21)
- Northern North Yorkshire (Lot 31)
- Newcastle and North Tyneside (Lot 38)*
- Birmingham and the Black Country (Lot 35)*
- Merseyside and Greater Manchester (Lot 36)*
- Greater London (Lot 37)*

*These Lots were previously referred to as Phase 3C but have now been combined with the existing Phase 3B.

Reminder of project and voucher approach

1. **Until the end of the Public Review**
   Projects: New projects can be submitted as normal but suppliers should allow plenty of time for review ahead of the PR closure.
   Vouchers: Vouchers can be requested for eligible premises as normal. Issued vouchers can be claimed as normal.

2. **After Public Review closure**
   Projects:
   - 'Active' projects will be identified and the premises within them marked as voucher priority areas (VPAs).
   - Projects at an advanced stage of development but 'not active' at the end of Public Review will be assessed as part of the intervention area (IA) design process. In these cases BDUK will determine if vouchers or procurements provide the best solution for gigabit coverage in an area. New projects will need to satisfy strict criteria and prove a clear case that the voucher project will deliver gigabit coverage quicker than the procurement. The IA design process typically takes 3 months to complete.
   - No new voucher projects can be submitted within the Lot boundary.

   Vouchers: Vouchers can continue to be requested for premises within VPAs only. Issued vouchers can be claimed as normal.

3. **During intervention area (IA) design**
   Projects: Any non-active projects already submitted by the end of PR which we are satisfied will offer better pace and value than procurement will be added to the VPA

list. No new voucher projects can be submitted in the Lot boundary while the IA is designed.
Vouchers: Vouchers can be requested for premises within the updated VPA list. Issued vouchers can be claimed as normal.

4. **During procurement**
Projects: The final VPA list will be published alongside the final IA (procurement boundary) after we have completed pre-procurement market engagement. No new voucher projects can be submitted within the IA.
Vouchers: Vouchers can be requested for premises within the VPA list. Issued vouchers can be claimed as normal.

5. **At contract award and during delivery**
Projects: New voucher projects can be submitted for areas which are not part of the contract and which meet the rest of the GBVS eligibility criteria.
Vouchers: Vouchers can be requested for eligible premises.

IMMEDIATE CLOSURE of the Hampshire top-up

We are writing to inform you that the Hampshire top-up element of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme will be closed immediately. This is as a result of voucher requests exceeding available top-up funding.

Whilst you can no longer request a top-up in the Hampshire area, you are still able to request Gigabit Vouchers in the Hampshire area. Existing projects with the Hampshire top-up will not be suspended; however any new requests for vouchers with a Hampshire top-up will no longer be met. Whilst the top-up may be removed from the vouchers at the 'request' stage they can still be issued with Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme funding only. Those vouchers at the 'issued' stage are not impacted and can be progressed as normal. We will also contact any supplier who has a project with a Hampshire top-up, where the project has yet to be approved or published.

If you need to submit a support ticket or email on this matter, please title your message HAMPSHIRE TOP-UP. However, we would ask that you await further information from us in the first instance.

If you have any questions about the procurement process or the interaction between vouchers and procurements, please contact BDUKSuppliers@dcms.gov.uk.

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

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/building-digital-uk

The Digital Connectivity Portal here:

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

Other useful information and updates can be found 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.