

Community Fibre Partnerships

FAQs

Why do I need it and what will it do for me?

Why do I need faster Broadband?

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for stable broadband to support the needs of working or studying from home. Additionally, more and more services require wi-fi or internet connections; TV streaming, doorbells, gaming, security cameras, even washing machines and other domestic appliances.

I am told I already have Fibre why is FTTP different?

When communication providers (CPs) speak of Fibre they can mean either Fibre to the Premise (Full Fibre, FTTP, Fibre to the Home) or Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC). Most of the country have FTTC. Full Fibre or FTTP delivers gigabit capable fibre all the way into your home or business. It delivers faster speeds that can be guaranteed, no loss of speed at peak times and no loss of speeds due to distance from the cabinet or exchange. This link helps to explain the differences [Openreach ADSL/FTTC/FTTP explained](#)

What speed can I get from FTTP?

Our technology is capable of 1Gbps, and could potentially support faster speeds. The CPs on our network offer a full range of speeds through difference service packages, from 1 mbps right up to 1gbps

Why do I need to do a Community Fibre Partnership when the Government have promised a full fibre rollout by 2025 (originally 2030)?

You can check the Openreach website www.openreach.com to see if you have a date to get fibre yet. If not, a CFP will deliver in one year (from contract signature). Now there are several voucher schemes available that may fully fund your scheme.

Can I have GFAST through a Community Fibre Partnership Scheme

It is not possible have a CFP using GFAST. GFAST is a technology that enables those near to a cabinet (within 300m) to receive speeds of up to 330mbps.

Is there an alternative solution to taking FTTP? Can I have a new cabinet nearer to me than take FTTP?

In theory yes, but in practice the cost of a new cabinet will be more expensive than FTTP and will be ineligible for Government vouchers. Any scheme will be subject to survey.

I have a green fibre cabinet nearby, why can't you just connect into this?

This is fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) and is not capable of supporting a community's FTTP connections. We have separate fibre connection points called nodes with much bigger capacity that we use to deliver fibre to the premises (FTTP). We only provide a cost for FTTP for Community Fibre.

How long does a typical Community Fibre Partnership take?

A Community Fibre Partnership can take up to 1 year to deliver once the contract is signed.

The time taken to get to contract is dependent on the complexity of the scheme, whether DCMS Gigabit Broadband vouchers are used, and the time it takes for the community lead to rally their community. Voucher funded schemes require residents to pledge and then validate their vouchers.

Estimates and Final offers

I only registered 5 addresses why have you listed 12 addresses in the Initial quote?

Within our network, properties share common Distribution Points (DPs), this could be a pole or a box outside your property. When we design the new fibre network, we will include all properties that share the same distribution point as the addresses you have given us, because they will all naturally benefit from the work. The capital cost doesn't change and adding the properties that share your equipment means that the contribution required by each property becomes smaller. We also ask for a minimum of 10 addresses for each scheme.

My neighbour does not want anything to do with this, will he benefit from the scheme?

It depends on his location. If he shares the same Distribution Point (DP) then he will be included. However, if the DP is not included then he will not benefit.

Could you please confirm that the Final Offer is an absolute figure, and not subject to survey or any price increase when you start the work?

Final offers are a confirmed price, unless they explicitly state that they are subject to a survey. We rarely survey and only if there are flats, self-dig routes or concern regarding the route.

Once the contract is signed, the price is fixed regardless of if it costs Openreach more than expected.

Why is my final offer much higher than my initial estimate?

Initial estimates are a computer-generated estimate to give an indicative cost. To generate a final offer a planner has looked in detail at our records for the area. This can vary in price because:

- The model is not sophisticated enough to identify all the variables
- The node that the model identified as the point of connection no longer has capacity
- The address list is different to the original

I have my estimate/final offer and now wish to add more properties not on the original list, how do I do this?

Absolutely, we want to reach as many people in your community as possible. We will need to produce a new estimate, and this may change the capital cost, but we will adopt the same principle of adding others who share the same network – we want to make schemes as affordable as possible.

Does the estimate include voucher funding?

No, as funding is subject to availability/eligibility we won't make any deductions at this stage, so any potential funding could be used to reduce the amount that the community must pay.

What about the USO, can I use this here?

The Universal Service Obligation (USO) licence is held by BT, not Openreach. It is a separate application process & service that gives individuals the right to demand 10 Mbs service if current speeds received today are below this threshold. BT offer a few options including 4G. Details can be found at www.bt.com/USO

Vouchers and Payment

When do I have to pay and how much?

The amount that you will have to pay will be stated in your final offer letter, please note that this amount is the total amount before and vouchers are applied.

If the scheme does not contain any vouchers, you will be invoiced 50% of the total amount once contract is signed and 50% once the installation is complete.

If the scheme does contain vouchers, then these are first applied to the final 50% payment, any balance is then applied to the initial payment. See example below:

The cost of a scheme is £50k and there are £30k value of vouchers. £25k is due on contract signature and £25k is due on completion. The value of vouchers is worth more than the final payment. So, the balance is taken off the initial payment. This means that the initial payment is £20k.

If a scheme is fully funded by vouchers then no payment is made, assuming all vouchers are validated with the Government. However, if on completion of the work a voucher has become invalid, then a final invoice will be sent to the Legal Entity showing the balance.

Can I spread the payments over several years?

It is not possible to change the payment terms of 50% on contract signature and 50% on completion

Is it possible to check voucher eligibility now? If, say, a person runs a business from home, but the registered address is at their accountants – would this work?

Please see <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/> for further information on eligibility

If after collecting all the vouchers we still have a gap – how exactly do we pay that gap? Bank transfer to some Openreach account?

Yes, we will send an invoice to the Legal Entity.

If a Gigabit business voucher is rejected – would the same property be able to get a residential voucher?

Maybe. It depends on the reason for the rejection. If the reason is that the business cannot prove its status, then maybe. But if the reason is that there is an alternative provider coming to the area, then no.

The process indicates that only after all vouchers are authorised then the contract will be signed. So, what if after the authorisation we are short of the quote for some reason? Could it be possible to add more properties at this point?

Yes, but it would add a delay as the process needs to be started again. This can only happen before a contract is signed.

Can I add any vouchers to the scheme once the contract is signed?

Yes vouchers can be added when the contract is signed and if someone moves to a new house then it is possible to substitute a voucher. We can only do these voucher changed up until the network goes live. If the network has gone live then we are unable to add/ substitute vouchers at that point.

If someone applies for a voucher as a business (SME) – will they be required to connect to an ISP via a business contract?

No. Small businesses can use residential ISP contracts.

How do the vouchers work?

Please go to <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/> for more information, but any approved voucher funding will be paid directly to Openreach and will be deducted from the final offer amount.

What are the terms and conditions associated with the voucher scheme?

In order to qualify for a voucher grant, you must agree to sign up with a communications provider of your choice and start enjoying the benefits of ultrafast fibre broadband once the service becomes available. In addition, it must at least double your current broadband speed. <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>.

Are the vouchers transferable?

No. Vouchers are not transferable. Vouchers are issued to an individual at a specific address. If that individual moves premises the new owner cannot take over that voucher, they would have to apply for one in their own right prior to the network going live.

What is defined as a business for the voucher schemes?

A small or medium business must be turning over less than 50million Euros per annum. It can be a limited company, sole trader, or charity. It must operate from the premise in the scheme, however if a limited company can be registered elsewhere.

I work from home, but my company operates from a business premise elsewhere, can I claim a voucher?

No as the business is operating elsewhere.

My wife does freelance transcription as a Medical Secretary. She is not formally registered as a sole trader because she does not make much (less than the tax-free allowance).

They could request a voucher as a business, and it is up to them to prove their status with DCMS during the pledge validation process.

I have a business at my address as does my wife and it is our home, can we claim 2 business vouchers and 1 residential voucher?

The scheme only allows one voucher per property, per person.

Service Providers

How can we find out the running costs? Is the phone line rental cost the same for FTTP as for voice/ADSL connection?

Openreach is not allowed to advise on ISP issues. You can check which ISPs offer Full Fibre service by looking at <https://www.homeandbusiness.openreach.co.uk/fibre-broadband/ultrafast-broadband/ultrafast-fibre-buy-it-now>

You cannot check Ultrafast prices for your postcode as the Gigabit infrastructure is not in place yet. So, please use postcode **MK182HY** for illustration purposes.

Do I have to use BT?

No, everyone who takes part can choose their own communications/service provider (SP/CP) for service as Openreach builds an open network. Details of participating fibre providers that use the Openreach network here - <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers>

How much more a month is a FTTP service?

Openreach is not a Service Provider, please speak to a Service provider to confirm charges.

Contracts and Legal Entities

What is the best form of legal entity (LE) for a community?

Openreach can contract with various forms of non-profit entities – from unincorporated entity (which does not have to be registered at the Companies House) to various forms of limited companies (these require registration). For example, community interest companies (CIC) or company limited by guarantee (CLG). The choice depends on what suits the community best. The following are some useful links:
Set up a [Community Interest Company](#).

How do we contract with Openreach?

The contract must be between a Legal Entity and Openreach rather than a group of individuals. The LE can be a business in the community, a CIC (Community Interest Company), parish council, it can be an individual. Please note that a sole trader will be contracted with as an individual.

Do I have an ongoing contract with Openreach?

No, the contract is to deliver the project, after this the infrastructure becomes business as usual and maintained the same as the rest of Openreach network. All faults are reported via your Service Provider, the same as you do now.

VAT

When is VAT charged?

VAT is only charged on Commercial groups where the end user must pay a share of the CFP. For example: if the CFP is a business park and the landlord passes on the CFP via

a mandatory user charge. If it is voluntary then no VAT is charged, so if the scheme is fully funded with Government vouchers, then no VAT is charged.

In cases where we do charge VAT and the company is VAT registered, then they should be able to offset their VAT in their usual way. Please note that we are not Tax Accountants nor HMRC, so they do need to seek their own advice on this.

NB If we do charge VAT and the company is not VAT registered then they cannot offset the VAT.

Self Dig

Can I dig some of the route?

It may be possible to reduce our charges by digging some of the route if digging is required. In many places the network is fully ducted or supplied overhead. In these cases, no digging is necessary. Additionally, self-dig can only be on private land (digging on public highways requires licences, even in the verge).

Customers wishing to Self Dig must supply details of the Landowners, probable route and a survey will be necessary.

MDUs

Can you install in MDUs?

Multiple Dwelling Units (flats) are complex for Openreach to deliver to. We will always need to survey and will require Landlords details (or someone to provide access to all areas) prior to a final cost being produced.

Delivery

How long will it take to deliver?

Our contract states we will deliver within 12 months of a signed contract. We will of course work to install the network as quickly as possible.

Why does it take so long for you to deliver?

Once contract is signed, we need to undertake a details plan of your area and plan it into existing work. The work required is a major civil engineering project. We may need to arrange Traffic Management with the local authority to enable us to work in

manholes in the road. We may also need to agree wayleaves. This does take time; hence our contracts do state that the work can take 1 year.

What is a wayleave?

A right of way granted by a landowner, generally in exchange for payment and typically for purposes such as the erection of telegraph wires or laying of pipes. "companies must have way leaves for work they want to carry out on private land"

Do you need to dig up my road?

We will usually deliver the new fibre via existing poles and ducts, very occasionally we may need to install new duct and poles, but we can usually deliver over the existing infrastructure.

How can one know if a fibre cable would come into the house underground or overhead?

It follows the current route.

Would a normal voice line come through the same fibre cable or via a copper cable?

Customers can choose if they wish to have a Voice Over IP service or keep a copper line for their voice calls.

Fibre to the Premise will be included in the contract for those specified on the contract. If someone wants a connection later – will it be a standard connection charge for them for them or incur some cost?

It depends on where they are and whether there is capacity. This is not known in advance of signing the contract.

What equipment will be provided at the end of the fibre cable - just the optical network terminal (ONT) box?

Just a box, a bit larger than your current Master Socket. There is a video which illustrates this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-6LKAPIEyK>

Will I need a new router and if so when do I get it?

When you order a service, this will be sent to you from your Internet Service Provider.

Where the road/pavement/lawns/walls are dug up for the fibre cables – will Openreach make good the surfaces after the work?

Yes, the only exception is if a drive is a specialist surface such as Resin, when the individual customer will need to arrange and pay for the re-instatement

What will be the process of discussing the fibre route when there is a need (previous route is unclear or sub-optimal or crosses someone's private land, etc.)?

Except for the link to someone's home, the route is as per existing and is known - it follows the current cables.

When will you need to enter my home?

Our project will deliver a full fibre solution from the exchange to your property; however, we do not enter your home when we are building the network. The final connection into your property will be done when you place an order with your Service Provider.

Other Questions:

Can you Fibre just to the road and then we dig up our own gardens (lead ins)?

This is possible but makes the scheme very complex. All leads in will need to have been completed and inspected before the network can be set to go live. We do not recommend this approach.

Demand Led FAQs – for fully voucher funded schemes

What is the voucher scheme??

The Government recognise that Gigabit-capable, or ultrafast broadband connections offer the fastest and most reliable speeds available. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme has been designed to support rural communities who are eligible for funding, team up with a network provider, and bring that technology to their doorstep. We are one of the Government's registered network build providers. More information can be found on the Department of Culture, Media and Sport website:

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

What does 'Demand Led' mean?

'Demand Led' is the term we use to differentiate between a traditional CFP scheme where the community contribute to the build costs and a scheme that fully qualifies for Government voucher funding.

What type of technology will you be using?

In a demand led ultrafast community scheme we will be using full fibre, also known as FTTC.

My neighbour does not want anything to do with this, will he benefit from the scheme?

Your neighbour's support for the scheme may be important when it comes to achieving the target needed. However, if they do pledge their voucher they will be agreeing to the terms and conditions of the scheme. If your neighbour has any questions about the scheme, or is unsure of any aspect, then they can get in touch with us at communityfibre@openreach.co.uk and we will happily go through things with them.

What are the terms and conditions associated with the voucher scheme?

In order to qualify for a voucher grant, you must agree to sign up with a communications provider of your choice and start enjoying the benefits of ultrafast fibre broadband once the service becomes available. In addition, it must at least double your current broadband speed. <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>.

Are there any hidden costs?

If your address is eligible for a Gigabit Voucher, then the free voucher you are entitled to, will cover your financial contribution to the scheme. However, you do need to contract with a service provider.

Can I use the voucher to meet my current broadband costs?

No. The voucher can only be towards the cost of the infrastructure build only. You will have to pay for a broadband package.

My community is served by the exchange, but I haven't been asked to pledge my voucher.

If you have become aware of the scheme via your friends and neighbours, you can still visit our website www.openreach.com/connectmycommunity, to check your eligibility, and pledge your voucher.

I have pledged my voucher, what happens next?

Once the community hits their target, we will collate the pledge information and send it to DCMS. DCMS will then verify the pledges and give us the green light to plan the work. You can get further information here:

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/how-do-vouchers-work>

How long with this take?

Delivering this type of infrastructure can take up to 12 months

How do the vouchers work?

We are currently the supplier of the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme.

What happens if our community doesn't hit the pledge target?

Generally, schemes will be open for pledges for 90 days. If there are not enough vouchers pledged to cover the cost of the scheme, you will be released from the obligations associated with that voucher and we will close the scheme. We can help the community investigate alternative funding options such as Community Fibre Partnerships. This would mean that the community collectively pay for the fibre installation.

What is a top up?

Some County Councils will support their communities by matching or topping up the individual value of the voucher, helping those communities hit their target sooner.

Do I have to order my broadband from BT, or can I choose which provider I use?

No, you are not tied to BT when you pledge your voucher. Openreach will build an open network, meaning that you can order from a service provider of your choice, assuming they sell in your area.

Who should I order my broadband from?

Openreach will not advise on ISP issues. You can check which ISPs offer Full Fibre service by looking at

<https://www.homeandbusiness.openreach.co.uk/fibrebroadband/ultrafast-broadband/ultrafast-fibre-buy-it-now>

How much will the fibre service cost?

Costs will vary depending on the package and the service provider. There are many price-comparison sites available to review, Ofcom is a good source of information.

Do I really need Ultrafast broadband?

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for stable broadband to support the needs of working or studying from home. Additionally, more and more services require wi-fi or internet connections; TV streaming, doorbells, gaming, security cameras, even washing machines and other domestic appliances.

I've heard that my broadband can affect my house value, is this true?

Having faster broadband may make your property more desirable, it depends on your market. However, one of the most frequently asked questions when viewing a property to rent or buy is in relation to the broadband speed.

My community is served by the exchange, but I haven't been asked to pledge my voucher.

If you have become aware of the scheme via your friends and neighbours, you can still visit our website www.openreach.com/connectmycommunity, to check your eligibility, and pledge your voucher.

Is it possible to check voucher eligibility now? If, say, a person runs a business from home, but the registered address is at their accountants – would this work?

All vouchers must all be undertaken at the same time (Government rules). If the person can prove that the business is at home address, then there is no issue.

What is defined as a business for the voucher schemes?

It can be a limited company, sole trader, or charity. It must operate from the premise in the scheme, however if a limited company can be registered elsewhere.

I work from home, but my company operates from a business premise elsewhere, can I claim a voucher?

No as the business is operating elsewhere. Also, you can only claim one voucher per person, per premise.

My work is freelance. I am not formally registered as a sole trader because I do not make much (less than the tax-free allowance), can I claim a business voucher?

If you pledge your voucher as a business, you can always provide DCMS with an invoice or similar when they contact you to verify/confirm your pledge.

I have a business at my address as does my wife and it is our home, can we claim 2 business vouchers and 1 residential voucher?

No, the scheme only allows one voucher per property, per person.

If a Gigabit business voucher is rejected – would the same property be able to get a residential voucher?

Maybe. It depends on the reason for the rejection.

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Do I have to use BT?

No, Openreach is an open access network, you have a choice of Service providers.