



## News

June 2018

### Welcome!

As we all enjoy longer, brighter warmer days we're pleased to bring you good news about more grants that are available to help communities fund fibre. We're delighted to be an approved provider of full fibre through the Government's new Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

The scheme provides vouchers of £3,000 to support getting new gigabit capable connections for businesses, including £500 for residents where there are qualifying businesses. There's an article that gives more information about this, plus a link to apply.

Communities can also apply for a grant of up to £30,000 if the superfast or ultrafast fibre solution we provide includes a local school or registered charity.

Matt Lloyd,  
Head of Community Fibre Partnerships, Openreach

## £30,000 for communities with a charity to get fibre broadband



**BT Group has dedicated £2m to award as grants to communities with a school or charity to enable superfast or ultrafast access in the classroom as well as at home and in the community.**

Communities in the UK with a school or charity receiving speeds of less than 30Mbps can apply for a

grant of up to £30,000 to cover three-quarters of the cost of a new fibre infrastructure delivered by Openreach. So, for example, if the community's cost for a fibre solution that serves a school or charity has been quoted as £40,000, the community would pay £10,000 and £30,000 would be funded from the grant.

### Grant information:

- **Eligibility:** the grant is available to UK communities where their Openreach proposal for a new co-funded fibre infrastructure serves a school or registered charity that has broadband speeds below 30Mbps
- **Level of award:** the grant will cover three quarters of the cost of the new fibre infrastructure, up to £30,000
- **Period of award:** grants are made subject to a contract being signed within three months of the date of the offer letter

# How to get £3000 per premise, for Ultrafast broadband

The Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched a nationwide Gigabit Voucher Scheme whereby firms with 249 employees or less can claim £3,000 each to get a full fibre ultrafast connection.

The scheme provides vouchers to support the capital costs of getting new gigabit capable connections for businesses, or £500 to residents, to help with the costs of connecting to full fibre broadband. You can combine vouchers toward the cost of a full fibre (i.e. an FTTP solution) delivered to communities with multiple businesses, or with a number of small businesses (and residences).

The vouchers can be put towards a full fibre Community Fibre Partnership solution with Openreach meaning firms will be able to order the highest speed connections from the broadest range of suppliers.

Information on how to apply for ultrafast vouchers is via <https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/gigabit>

If you represent a business, or if you're a home owner with a business in your community, then you could be eligible.

 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

## GIGABIT BROADBAND VOUCHER SCHEME

Businesses based at Staffordshire's Brookside Business Park have boosted their broadband speeds with the latest Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) technology.

Roger Harris, owner of Brookside Business Park, said:

"Being a rurally based business park we have the opportunity to offer certain advantages to businesses. I have plenty of office space and lots of parking and reasonably easy accessibility. The one downside was that we didn't have very good broadband connectivity. Due to the Superfast Staffordshire partnership with Openreach we were able to get superfast broadband here reasonably quickly and it's made a fantastic difference to enable us to attract clients and to stabilise businesses that are already on the park."

One of those businesses is Oyster Group Ltd, the digital marketing group, owned by Phil Osman.

He said: "We converted over to superfast broadband as a result of the broadband partnership at Brookside. We're now enjoying speeds of up to 80Mbps. The service has been so much more reliable and it's made a huge difference to our business.

"One of our problems was uploading files to a remote server. Now we can do in seconds what used to take us three hours using satellite broadband or 20 minutes on standard ADSL broadband."

## Improve your wi-fi signal at home: Is your router in the right place?

Are there occasions when you struggle to get a decent wi-fi signal? If your house is large, the wi-fi signal may struggle to reach far corners, for example – but the problem could be that your router is in the wrong position. First of all, start by turning your router off for a few minutes, then on again. If that doesn't work, try following these tips to find the perfect place for your router.

**1. Find a central location:** Solid surfaces slow down wi-fi speeds so placing it in the middle of your home rather than at one end reduces the number of walls it has to go through

**2. Make sure it's away from thick walls:** The thicker the wall, the harder it is for the wi-fi signal to pass through

**3. Don't put it on the floor:** Try and position it on a shelf or table. Wi-fi signals go down as well as up, so if you put it on the floor, a proportion of the signal will go through the floorboards

**4. Ensure it's visible:** The more you can see your router, the better the signal. If you put it in a cupboard it reduces wi-fi speed and the distance the signal can travel will reduce

**5. Avoid windows:** Place the router near a window and some of the signal will be sent outside

**6. Keep it away from your TV:** Metal objects can reflect your signal, dispersing it

**7. Steer clear of fish tanks:** It sounds strange, but water can absorb the wi-fi signal, reducing the distance it can travel



## Openreach community fibre programme brings £340m worth of benefits

**A recent report says Openreach's Community Fibre Partnerships (CFP) programme will lead to substantial business, social and economic benefits.**

The independent report, by Regeneris Consulting, estimates the scheme will generate around £340m in benefits over 15 years – that's an average of £800,000 per community.

The report finds the business impact alone will be £158m, with broadband helping to improve efficiency and raise productivity; open access to new markets; drive new business growth and innovation; and deliver flexible working benefits.

Fibre broadband also promises to increase the value of each house in a CFP by an average of £1,700. This will help create a total of about £100m in economic benefits for residents.

The report measured the impact of CFPs on 60,000 premises in just over 400 communities. Since it was compiled, well over 100 more communities have joined the scheme so these numbers are conservative.

Matt Lloyd, who heads up the programme for Openreach, says: "The tremendous power of fibre broadband is



**REGENERIS**

**Regeneris estimates social, educational and health benefits will total around £80m, as residents gain access to online tools for things such as e-health and learning.**

made very clear in this report. It's heartening to see the many benefits that these partnerships are giving to communities in so many different ways."

"Tens of thousands of people have already benefited from faster broadband as a result of community fibre partnerships, and we're working with hundreds more to get them connected to superfast or ultrafast broadband."

Simon Hooton, Director at Regeneris Consulting, said: "Despite delivery challenges in more rural areas, high speed broadband is vital to the prospects of communities across the UK. This report shows the breadth and scale of benefits generated when you bring high speed connectivity into those communities for the first time."

The evidence from the latest research, and from residents and businesses themselves, is that broadband opens up new opportunities which enhance people's lives and can have a positive impact on their health and the environment around them.

# First community in Northern Ireland signs up for a co-funded fibre scheme

Northern Ireland's first Community Fibre Partnership will provide ultrafast broadband access to a primary school and more than fifty homes on the edge of Clonmore Village in Dungannon.



Clintyclay Primary School and residents living nearby say they're currently living in a broadband black spot with download speeds averaging around 0.5Mbps.

Their CFP will install FTTP technology and make ultrafast speeds of up to 330Mbps available from a number of broadband service providers. That's nearly ten times the UK national average speed. Businesses will potentially have access to speeds of 1,000Mbps.

Gordon Symington became the community lead when he contacted Openreach last July.

He says: "My daughter was studying for her A Level in Computer Science and had to go to the local hotel to log on and do her homework. Our internet access at home couldn't cope with more than one person going online at a time.

**"I contacted the Community Fibre Partnerships team and discovered that our community of 50 or so homes was eligible for a BT grant. We also received government funding and didn't need to look elsewhere for funds."**

**Gordon Symington, community lead**

"I would recommend the scheme to other communities in the same position because it's provided us with the solution we were looking for. It's going to be a game changer."

Fiona Hampsey is Principal of Clintyclay Primary School and hopes to have a new computer suite up and running for the new Autumn term. She says: "Right now, we can't even stream a video without buffering and the children soon lose interest with all the stops and starts.

"We're living in a digital world and our pupils haven't had the same access to digital learning opportunities as children living in urban areas. Faster broadband speeds will offer us so many opportunities and change the way we teach."

"In addition to the computer suite, which is sitting ready to go, we have plans for e-twinning and building links with a school in Europe. Put simply: this Community Fibre Partnership will make a world of difference."

# Self-dig with Openreach to connect your community to ultrafast broadband



Members of the Ditcham fibre community team with pupils at the Ditcham Park School

**If you have a Community Fibre Partnership with Openreach, you don't have to get a spade out to do any part of the digging. However, there may be times when you can reduce the cost of the installation of a new fibre infrastructure by using resources that your community has access to.**

If your community wants to dig and install your own ducting on your land, or on land you have permission to dig, then Openreach are happy for you to do that as part of a community fibre scheme.

There's no minimum or maximum amount of self-dig: it's simply down to what your community wants to do based upon your own fibre solution. You just need Openreach's agreement that it's appropriate to carry out some self-dig and that it's in accordance with their specification.

## **If you're considering working with Openreach on a self-dig option:**

You'd send the list of premises that form your community so Openreach can agree if you have the capability and desire to self-dig early on in the process. You'd also need to outline where you want to dig to so they can incorporate this into the design.

For example, you may want a quote that includes part self-dig.

- If you want to proceed with a self-dig quote, you'll need to:
- Provide addresses for all premises in your community set to benefit from the new fibre infrastructure
- Identify land ownership and any potential premises that are capable and willing to be part of self-dig work
- Identify any natural boundaries that stand between premises and road links (i.e. rivers, streams, woods, hills etc.)

**Tens of thousands of people have already benefited from faster broadband after their communities partnered with Openreach for a community fibre partnership. Could you?**

# Superfast broadband: The effect on house prices



## Research undertaken by leading price comparison sites highlights the importance placed on broadband connectivity when purchasing a new home:

- a GoCompare survey of 2,000 house buyers found that 43% prioritised a good, reliable broadband connection strong enough to stream TV and films
- a survey by Rightmove, of over 3,000 users, found that information on broadband connectivity was ranked as a more important feature when searching for property than transport links and nearby schools. The property search site now includes a tool for users to check connectivity at any address

Housing markets where only basic broadband is available appear to have suffered. Savills conducted a survey which found that nearly 70% of respondents reported that slow broadband was a constraint on letting properties in rural locations.

Analysis of the relationship between broadband and house prices

undertaken by the Spatial Economic Research Centre (SERC) showed that, on average, house prices rose by 2.8% where dial-up internet was replaced by first generation ADSL broadband connections.

The survey undertaken by Rightmove suggested slow broadband could reduce the value of a home by up to 20%\*.

The estimated average house price in communities that have had a fibre partnership with Openreach is £326,000. Regeneris Consulting tested the economic impact where fibre causes house prices to rise by 0.5% and this is conservative when compared to the 2.8% rise in prices following the deployment of first generation broadband estimated by SERC. Applying a 0.5% uplift would see house prices rise by £1,700, on average, where a doubling in speed is achieved.

“Reaching a solution through the Community Fibre Partnership was certainly worth it for our community as it is really helping to protect the housing market from any depreciation associated with poor broadband speeds.”

**John Wohlters,**  
Resident and Community  
Broadband Campaigner  
from Coleorton,  
Leicestershire

\*Rightmove.co.uk, August 2016.

# TV weatherman forecasts a high-speed broadband future for schools, homes and businesses



**TV weatherman, Francis Wilson, has forecast a blizzard of high speed broadband to hit the Essex village of Orsett – thanks to having a Community Fibre Partnership to help connect residents to the superfast technology.**

The partnership between local residents and Openreach, will make high-speed fibre broadband available to a local primary school, nursery school and more than 500 homes and businesses in Orsett, Essex before the end of this year.

As part of this community's fibre solution, a £10,755 grant has been awarded through Openreach to the nursery school in the village hall and the Orsett Church of England Primary School.

Alan Peaford, chairman of the Orsett Forum outlined what superfast

broadband will mean for the community; "The towering buildings of London's ultra-modern Canary Wharf can be seen from Orsett, but it might as well be a million miles away when it comes to connectivity.

"We had been hanging on waiting for something to happen for years, and grumbling to various internet providers and being told to be patient, high speed internet is coming. Because we are so close to London a lot of people in the village need fast internet for work, but some people were getting less than 2Mbps. It is

impossible to download films or even use Skype.

"The issue came up again and again at our forum meetings, and we were all getting very frustrated. We were pointed towards the Community Fibre Partnership.

**"Openreach were wonderfully helpful and as we have a school and a nursery in the village we were able to get a large grant to help us get the work done."**

"Given that we are a rural area and we have outlying farms and houses it would have been impossible to do without that guidance."



[communityfibre.openreach.co.uk](http://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk)

Here at Openreach, we're committed to working with all communities to find a fibre solution, and our Community Fibre Partnership scheme is designed to do just this.