

Frequently Asked Questions - Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme

1. What is the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme?

The Scheme has been developed by the UK government to ensure that every household and business in the UK can access an affordable basic broadband service. We define an affordable service as one that costs no more than £400 a year including installation, equipment and monthly fee.

2. Who is eligible?

Any household or business who cannot access an affordable basic broadband service with a download speed of at least 2 Mb per second.

3. How do I check if I'm eligible?

First check that you cannot access superfast broadband (speeds of more than 24Mbps) at www.gov.uk/gosuperfast. If your premise is not listed as benefiting from the roll out of superfast broadband use the BT checker to find out what your current broadband speed is at www.dslchecker.bt.com.

- If the speed checker identifies that your premise already benefits from speeds greater than 2Mbps you **ARE NOT** eligible for a subsidy.
- If the speed checker identifies that your broadband speed is under 2 Mb per second you may be eligible for a subsidy.
- If there are **no** plans to bring superfast broadband to your home or business within the next 6 to 12 months and your current speed is confirmed as less than 2Mb per second you will be eligible.

4. What help can I get if I'm eligible?

You can get help with the cost of installation and any equipment you need to access a basic broadband service at an affordable price.

5. What costs are not covered?

The scheme does not cover the cost of monthly subscriptions. Monthly fees vary depending on the amount of data and speed of broadband connection you choose.

6. What quality of broadband can I expect to receive from the Scheme?

This will depend on a number of factors including the type of broadband package you select and whether you choose a satellite or a wireless broadband service, if available in your area.

Satellite broadband can deliver speeds of 10Mbps (or significantly more) but the speed is not guaranteed throughout the day and packages usually have monthly data caps. You will need to consider how much data you are likely to require and the monthly costs of different packages. Some satellite packages allow you to transfer data overnight without adding to the monthly costs. You will also experience a short time delay with satellite broadband as the broadband signal has to travel to the satellite and back to Earth. This may take a bit of getting used to.

Wireless broadband performs in a similar way to broadband delivered over the telephone network but the quality of the service will vary dependent on the product selected. Wireless broadband is only available in certain parts of the country.

7. How do I apply?

You can apply by entering your post code and completing a simple online application form which can be accessed at <http://basicbroadbandchecker.culture.gov.uk/> If you are eligible for a subsidy code you will need to select a broadband package that best suits your requirements from one of the suppliers registered with the Scheme. We also recommend that you research other options available from other suppliers not registered with the Scheme in case you can access a better offer. You may be offered better terms if you take out a longer contract than you can under this Scheme, for example.

8. Do I have to take out a contract?

Yes. You are required to sign a contract with your chosen supplier for a minimum of 12 months. If you want to terminate within the first year you may have to pay a termination fee and repay the subsidy you have benefitted from.

9. When is the Scheme open until?

If you are eligible you can apply for a subsidy code until the end of December 2017.

10. Are there other options if my broadband speed is less than 2 Mbps?

Yes, you may be able to access:

- A basic broadband service from a 4G mobile broadband supplier. You can check current availability by using the Ofcom mobile coverage checker at www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage
- A superfast broadband service in the future.

11. Can the subsidy be used to support fibre broadband?

One of the suppliers offering services through the scheme is BT, via its Community Fibre Partnerships scheme. The subsidy can be used to support coverage delivered through a Community Fibre Partnerships project, but the project has to be ready to go live at the time when the eligibility code is claimed (otherwise, the subsidy scheme would not be providing access in a timely way to an improved service).

12. I am in a superfast rollout area but will not be upgraded for a long time and my speed is less than 2 Mb per second. Am I eligible?

You may be eligible for a subsidised broadband connection as an interim fix if the planning to bring superfast to your property has not yet started.

13. Superfast broadband is planned to be delivered to my area within 6 to 12 months. Why do I have to wait rather than get a subsidy now?

It would be poor use of public funding to provide a subsidy for one upgrade of broadband service if a further improvement is planned within a short period of time.

14. Who is the Scheme managed and funded by?

The Better Broadband Scheme is managed by Local Broadband Programmes in partnership with The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and jointly funded.