

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme Staffordshire Top-up FAQs

What is a gigabit capable connection?

For the fastest and most reliable broadband, a gigabit-capable connection is required. One gigabit is the same as 1,000 megabits – so it's a big leap forward in connection speeds that could benefit you into the future. Gigabit-capable broadband also supports symmetrical connections – meaning your upload and download speeds can be the same.

What is the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

The objective of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is to increase gigabit-capable coverage across the UK.

In May 2018, the Government launched the first wave of this funding scheme to help small and medium sized businesses and nearby residents access gigabit-capable broadband. The funding available was successfully claimed in two years and this part of the scheme closed to new applications.

In May 2019, the programme launched a second wave of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to support the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to homes and businesses in rural areas of the UK when part of a group scheme. These rural vouchers remain available until March 2021, or when the funding runs out.

Rural premises with speeds below 100 megabits per second (Mbps), and that are not in any existing government-funded plan for a broadband upgrade, will be eligible for up to £3,500 per small and medium sized businesses (SME) and up to £1,500 per resident to support the cost of installing new gigabit capable connections.

Businesses and residents in some of the hardest-to-reach places in the UK may also be eligible for additional funding where it has been 'topped up' by the local authority, as is the case in Staffordshire.

What is the purpose of the top up voucher?

Premises in eligible rural areas with speeds below 30mbps will qualify for a 'top-up' of up to £2,000 per property to support the cost of installing a gigabit capable connection in addition to the amount already available under the scheme. It means the maximum amount available to eligible premises in Staffordshire is £5,500 per SME and £3,500 per resident.



How long does this scheme last for?

You have until March 2021 to ensure a voucher can be issued or until the funding is fully allocated. The supplier can take up to 12-months from the point of the funding being confirmed to install gigabit-capable broadband to your address.

How does the top up voucher work?

Businesses or residents that are eligible for gigabit vouchers can access the scheme through a supplier.

The chart below shows the step-by-step process that each voucher recipient will go through to activate their voucher:



Who is eligible for the top up voucher?

Premises in eligible rural areas of Staffordshire with broadband speeds of less than 30mbps, which are not in any existing government-funded plans for a broadband upgrade, will qualify. Funding is only available when used in group projects and groups can be a mix of residents and businesses, just residents or just businesses. Each resident would be eligible for funding worth up to £3,500 maximum and each business £5,500 maximum with the top up voucher included. The funding goes towards supporting the cost of installing brand new gigabit capable connections. To check if you are eligible, please visit gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/Staffordshire

Will I have to pay towards the installation costs?

The supplier will apply for funding on your behalf and this will go straight to the supplier, not you. The value of the funding will then contribute to the build costs of installing a full fibre connection at your property. In most cases, the funding provided will pay for the cost of installing the new broadband, provided you have enough

properties in your group project. That is why it is important to encourage as many of your neighbours as possible to sign up and increase the size of your fund. Sometimes the community may be asked to make a contribution to the overall cost if the funding does not cover it, but you do not have to proceed further if you think that it is too much money.

How long will the process take?

From the point that a voucher is issued for your premises, a supplier has 12 months in which to install the new gigabit-capable broadband connection.

What are the benefits of a gigabit capable connection to residents?

It makes working from home easier; video calls more reliable; video and music streaming faster; improves online gaming and cloud storage options. The number of internet-connected devices in the home is set to grow and will require faster and more reliable connectivity too.

Good connection speeds also provide people with flexible working and learning opportunities and contribute to an improved work/life balance and can be an important consideration when buying a property.

What are the benefits of a gigabit capable connection to businesses?

It supports online business applications and internet-connected devices; cloud data storage, cyber security systems and back-ups; voice and video conferencing; and flexible working for employees with access to company systems. These all require faster connectivity and the need is only going to increase.

Why am I not eligible for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

In order to be eligible for the standard voucher values (£1,500 per resident and £3,500 per SME), postcodes in Staffordshire must be classified as rural, have broadband speeds of below 100 Mbps, and not be in any existing government-funded plan for a broadband upgrade.

If you are not eligible for this voucher, it means one or more of the following:

- You live in an area that is not classified as rural
- The broadband available in your area is faster than 100 Mbps
- There are already plans to improve the broadband in your area



Why am I not eligible for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme Staffordshire top-up?

In order to be eligible for the Staffordshire Top-Up voucher, premises postcodes in Staffordshire must be classified as rural, have broadband speeds of below 30 Mbps, and not be in any existing government-funded plans for a broadband upgrade.

If you are not eligible for the Top-Up voucher, it means one or more of the following:

- Your premises may not be within Staffordshire
- You live in an area that is not classified as rural
- The broadband available in your area is faster than 30 Mbps
- There are already plans to improve the broadband in your area

You may still be eligible for the standard voucher under the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, even if you don't qualify for the Top-Up.

