

Getting a Basic Broadband service

A guide for those who may wish to apply to benefit from the scheme

If you currently experience poor broadband speeds of less than 2Mbps, or you are unable to obtain an affordable basic broadband service, this scheme can help provide you with access to an alternative broadband service, by supporting you with either access to a subsidised satellite broadband connection or to a reasonable approved alternative where available.

This helps fulfil a Government commitment first made in December 2010, when the Government announced public funding to extend Superfast Broadband beyond the reach of commercial deployment to 90% of UK premises. The 2Mbps Universal Service Commitment (USC) was to offer a service providing broadband speeds of at least 2Mbps for anyone yet to benefit from Superfast Broadband by the end of 2015. The Government subsequently made further public funding available to raise the target for Superfast Broadband coverage to 95% of UK premises by the end of 2017.

Note that the National Broadband Scheme defines affordable basic broadband as costing an end user no more than £400 in the first 12 months of use.

What are my other options for Better Broadband?

You may already be able to access Superfast Broadband services. You can check current and planned availability of Superfast Broadband services in Cumbria elsewhere on this website:
www.connectingcumbria.org.uk

Alternatively, you can check Superfast Broadband availability on the Government's website:

<http://gosuperfastchecker.culture.gov.uk/basicbroadbandchecker/>

You may be able to get a 4G mobile broadband connection. You can check current availability of 4G mobile broadband services at the Ofcom Mobile Coverage Checker:

www.ofcom.org.uk/mobilecoveragechecker

Some parts of Cumbria are commercially covered by local wireless broadband service providers. You can check whether they cover your area by entering 'wireless broadband Services in Cumbria' into an Internet Search engine (i.e. Google or Yahoo) or refer to the basic broadband coverage map published on the Connecting Cumbria website (<http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/>) which indicates areas it is likely that basic broadband services are available.

If none of the above options are available to you this scheme can support you to access broadband services via satellite or via approved independent network providers where they are available who deliver services via a range of technologies such as fixed wireless. A list of approved suppliers on this scheme can be viewed on the Basic Broadband page of the Connecting Cumbria website (<http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/getting-a-basic-broadband-service.asp>) with contact details to allow you to consider which of them offers the combination of technology and service package best for you.

How will we help?

We will provide an eligibility code that you will be able to present to one of the approved suppliers for this scheme; a list of the currently approved suppliers can be seen on the Basic Broadband page of the Connecting Cumbria website (<http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/getting-a-basic-broadband-service.asp>).

You will need to place an order with one of the approved providers, and enter into a contract for broadband services provision for a minimum period of 12 months.

The eligibility code will cover most of the cost of installation and commissioning of your broadband service. You will be responsible for paying any remaining cost of installation and commissioning (if any), for choosing the features of the broadband service you require, and for paying the monthly subscription for the service you have selected, and for paying any VAT on the amounts payable. Please note that the code is only valid for use within 30 calendar days of issue.

The eligibility code does not have a specific fixed value, but when used to obtain a broadband service from one of the approved service providers, the use of the code will reduce the total cost (i.e. installation and commissioning costs plus 12 monthly subscriptions) by around £350. The eligibility code has no other value, and cannot be redeemed in any other way than through the scheme with an approved supplier.

Where can I find more information about the scheme?

More information on the national scheme can be found on the DCMS website at: www.gov.uk/dcms.

More information on the operation of the scheme in Cumbria can be found on the Broadband Programme website at: www.connectingcumbria.org.uk

How do I decide whether to apply?

You can obtain information on the scheme by reading this guide, and from the DCMS and Connecting Cumbria websites (links above), which should help you to decide whether to apply to benefit from the scheme.

Can I apply?

You can apply to benefit from the scheme if you currently experience poor broadband speeds (i.e. download broadband speeds of less than 2Mbps), or you are unable to obtain an affordable broadband service at all.

When can I apply?

The national scheme was launched at the end of 2015, and will be available for applications from launch until the end of 2017.

Satellite broadband services provided under the scheme will be available to use until (at least) 2022 however other types of approved suppliers may opt to suspend their services in-line with the terms of any service contract agreed between themselves and their customers.

How do I apply?

You can apply to benefit from the scheme by completing a simple online application form at: www.connectingcumbria.org.uk

You will need to provide us with:

- Your postal address, including your post code
- The main line telephone number at that address, if you have one
- Your name and other contact details such as mobile phone number, email address, etc.

- You will need to confirm that you are the owner or occupier at that address (we cannot accept applications from anyone that is not the owner/occupier).
- You will need to answer ALL questions on the application form.

Will I be eligible to benefit from the scheme?

You will be eligible to benefit from the scheme, and will be issued with a code, if you currently experience poor broadband speeds (i.e. broadband download speeds of less than 2Mbps), or you are unable to obtain an affordable broadband service at all, providing that:

- (a) We determine that your home or business is not currently able to access a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps;
- (b) there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps;
- (c) *You confirm on your application that:*
 - I. *to the best of your knowledge, there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide you with a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps;*
 - II. *you do not already have a satellite broadband service or a connection to an independent network at your address;*
- (d) *Our records of existing and planned coverage of broadband services to confirm that there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide you with a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps;*

If we believe there may be an alternative affordable broadband service available to you, which may be able to provide you with a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps, we will refer you to the relevant provider for you to obtain that service (and not issue you with a code under the scheme). However, if an alternative affordable broadband service is not actually available to you, we will consider issuing you with a code under the scheme (subject to the other eligibility tests described here), and add your post code to our list of those where we are proposing make codes available, which we will make publicly available to service providers for consultation.

(Note: adding post codes to our list of those where we are proposing to make codes available, and making that list publicly available to service providers for consultation, is a condition of the European Union's State Aid Decision, which provides clearance for the scheme, and is designed to prevent publicly-subsidised broadband schemes 'crowding out' private investment in making broadband services available).

- (e) *There are no plans to provide Superfast Broadband to you within 12 months of your application. As part of this we will check our roll-out plans for Superfast Broadband to see whether you are likely to benefit within 12 months of your application. If you are likely to benefit from Superfast Broadband within our programme, you may not wish to enter into a minimum 12 month contract with an alternative broadband retail service provider under the scheme, and may prefer to wait until Superfast Broadband becomes available to you. Please note that if our plans indicate that Superfast Broadband is likely to be available within 12 months of your application, then we will not issue you with a code under the scheme.*

If I apply to the scheme and take a basic broadband service, will I still be considered for Superfast Broadband deployment?

Yes. Taking a basic broadband service under the scheme has no effect on our plans for further deployment of Superfast Broadband, and your premises will be included within those plans, whether you take a subsidised broadband service under the scheme, or you choose not to do so.

How will I know the outcome of my application?

We will aim to make a decision on your application as quickly as possible (within one month of receiving your completed application), and we will advise you of the outcome of your application by email.

If we decide to issue you with a code under the scheme, we will send you a unique code via email, together with a link to the list of approved broadband retail service providers currently operating under the scheme, and their contacts details. Please note that the code is only valid for use within 30 calendar days of issue and your chosen service provider needs to be able to install services within 30 days of order.

If we decide not to issue you with a code under the scheme, we will send you an email with the reasons for our decision.

Can I appeal against a decision not to issue me with a code?

If you are not satisfied with our decision not to issue you with a code under the scheme, and the reasons we have given for that decision, you may submit one appeal by email setting-out the grounds for your appeal, and why you believe we should have issued you with a code. We will review our decision in the light of your appeal, and will make a final decision on whether or not to issue you with a code under the scheme. We will not be able to consider more than one appeal in relation to any one applicant.

How do I use the code?

Once you have received a unique code, you should review the products and prices available from each provider, to select the product that best meets your requirements and the amount of monthly subscriptions you are willing to pay.

You should then approach your chosen broadband retail service provider to order the service you require, and provide them with your unique code. The broadband retail service provider will confirm the features of the product you have chosen, and the costs involved in a minimum 12 months service contract, after the code has been taken into account.

The code will cover most of the cost of installation and commissioning of your broadband service. You will be responsible for paying any remaining cost of installation and commissioning (if any), and paying the monthly subscription for the service you have selected, and for paying any VAT on the amounts payable.

Can I use the code with retail service providers that are not part of the scheme?

No, the code can only be used with approved broadband retail service providers operating under the scheme. Other broadband retail service providers may join the scheme after launch, and you will be

able to view the list of currently approved suppliers on the scheme on the Connecting Cumbria website. Please note that the Broadband Delivery UK Supplemental Scheme which operates alongside this scheme has a separate list of approved suppliers from the main scheme, if you are issued with a code under the supplemental scheme you will be advised of the contact details for approved suppliers under that scheme.

Other broadband retail service providers not operating under the scheme may also offer services in your area, and you may choose to use such an alternative broadband retail service provider, but you will not be able to use a code issued under the scheme with that alternative provider, and you will have to meet the full cost of installation and commissioning and using the service yourself.

Who operates the scheme?

The scheme to deliver the 2Mbps Universal Service Commitment (USC) is operated by a partnership between DCMS, Cumbria County Council, BT, a number of satellite broadband retail service providers, a number of satellite broadband platform providers and a number of independent network broadband providers.

The national satellite scheme is operated under a Framework Contract awarded to BT by DCMS.

DCMS have overall responsibility for implementing the Government's policy on the 2Mbps Universal Service Commitment (USC), working with BT to operate the national scheme, and with local bodies to ensure that the scheme is implemented consistently across the UK.

DCMS and local bodies provide matched public funding for the operation of the scheme through the Local Call-off Contracts.

BT under its current Local Body agreements will provide wholesale satellite broadband services on an open access basis, working with the satellite broadband platform providers, and satellite broadband retail services providers who have contracted for the subsidised wholesale satellite broadband services. Alongside this Cumbria County Council will work with independent network broadband providers who have pre-registered appropriate service packages on the scheme to allow subsidy recipients to choose from a range of services.

Applications under the scheme and decisions to award codes in Cumbria are made by the project team, using a nationally agreed process and eligibility criteria.