

Frequently Asked Questions - National Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme

1. What is the Better Broadband 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 that 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 benefitting 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 might be eligible for a subsidy.
- If there are plans in place to bring superfast broadband to your household or business within 12 months you will not be eligible for a subsidy.
- If there are no plans to bring superfast broadband to your home 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 choose to buy and whether you decide to take up a satellite or a wireless broadband service, if this is 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 completing a simple online application form which can be accessed at <http://betterbroadbandchecker.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 (including those not registered under the Scheme) in case you can access a better offer e.g. you may be offered better terms if you take out a longer contract than you can under this Scheme.

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.

Update November 2017. The Government has announced that its Better Broadband Scheme will continue through 2018

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

Yes. You may be able to get:

- 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 wireless broadband service in some areas. Information on available operators and network providers can be found by searching online.

- a superfast 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. Why do I have to wait rather than get a subsidy now?

There are strict rules around spending public funding to support the delivery of broadband services. The government cannot publicly fund two solutions to the same property within the same 12 months.

14. Who is the scheme managed and funded by?

The National Better Broadband Scheme. is delivered by a partnership between The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Local Broadband Programmes and the registered retail service providers. It is managed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and administered on their behalf by Local Broadband programmes.