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Summer 2019 News

Welcome to the Summer edition of our Superfast Worcestershire newsletter

In this edition of our newsletter, find out about:

The Launch of new Rural Broadband funding scheme, Superfast Worcestershire's progress, How to make sure you're getting the best from your home broadband...**and much more!**

Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme

Following success of the Gigabit Voucher scheme, the UK Government announced a new scheme in April called the Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme.

As part of the Government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme, businesses and residents in some of the hardest-to-reach places in the UK are eligible for additional funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to their premises.

The £200 million scheme is set to run for 2 years and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) will also be trialing a model connecting local hubs in rural areas, starting with primary schools. Working with the Department for Education, DCMS has identified the first 31 schools eligible for a connection under the scheme. These new speeds will enable whole classes to simultaneously surf the internet as part of structured lessons, and gives schools easier access to online training and educational learning.

The following summarises the key characteristics of Rural Gigabit voucher eligibility:

- Available in defined "rural" areas (by postcode in all parts of the UK)
- Available to those with existing broadband speeds of less than 30 Mbps
- Up to £3,500 for eligible SMEs (including self-employed) and up to £1,500 for residents
- Applications must include a minimum of 2 residential or SME premises (single connections are not eligible)

Whether you live or work in an area with little broadband service or are looking to upgrade to ultrafast speeds to future proof your home or business, more information can be found here:

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/rural>.





Here's how the process works:

1. Contact our team on: superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk to check if there is already a scheme underway in your area.
2. If not, use the Gigabit postcode checker to find a supplier in your area: gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/for-residents/suppliers
3. Contact your chosen supplier to confirm your eligibility
4. Identify premises to be included in the project – you may wish to check your premises' status on our website: www.superfastworcestershire.com/#where-when. There's a helpful guide to forming community projects here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-led-broadband-schemes/guidance#before-you-start-forming-a-community-group-and-deciding-on-the-best-solution

5. Register with your chosen supplier
6. Supplier provides a quote, group accepts and is given a build timescale.

The Superfast Worcestershire team would be really happy to support you and we'd love to keep in touch with you about your Community-led broadband scheme. We've been heavily involved with Worcestershire businesses and residents utilising the Gigabit Voucher scheme and since its launch in May 2018 we have supported many communities in securing over £500,000 worth of vouchers, with many more nearing contract signatures.

Email: superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk

Tel: **01905 846432**

Find us on Facebook ([@broadbandworcs](https://www.facebook.com/broadbandworcs))

GIGABIT BROADBAND VOUCHER SCHEME

ARE YOU READY?

PART OF THE LOCAL FULL FIBRE NETWORKS PROGRAMME



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The Gigabit Voucher scheme is still running for those who aren't classified as rural

Gigabit vouchers can be used by businesses and the local communities surrounding them to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit capable (ultrafast) connection. If you are a small or medium business and meet the eligibility criteria, each business in your group can claim up to £2,500 each against the cost of broadband connection. Additionally any residents included in the group project can also benefit from up to £500 per premises (groups must have a minimum ratio of 1 business to 10 residents.)

To help with the process, here are some simple step by step instructions:

- 1** Visit <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/> to review voucher eligibility criteria
- 2** Identify premises to be included in the project – you may wish to check your premises' status on our website: www.superfastworcestershire.com/#where-when
- 3** Register your project with the chosen provider.
- 4** Please keep our team informed (superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk) – we will help you along the way!

Update on coverage

To see if you can upgrade your home or business to superfast broadband, enter your landline or postcode in the checker at <https://www.superfastworcestershire.com/#where-when>





Take Up Success.

What is Take Up?

Take-up is simply when homes and businesses around Worcestershire sign up for a new service, utilising infrastructure built as part of the Superfast Worcestershire programme. Remember, unless you sign up to a new package with your Internet service provider of your choice, your speeds will not improve.

How is Worcestershire doing?

The broadband take-up figures for Worcestershire continue to steadily increase, with the report for April 2019 showing a take up figure of 64.6% in Contract 1 and 57.5% in Contract 2. This is well above the national average.

Why is this important?

High take-up is great news for Worcestershire because our contract with suppliers includes a clawback mechanism. Once take-up hits a certain target, the programme receives funds back from the supplier – Superfast Worcestershire is then able to re-invest these funds to reach more premises across Worcestershire with superfast broadband. As a result of high take up in Contract 1, we were able to reach a further 3500 premises in Contract 2!

How is Superfast Worcestershire trying to encourage take up?

You may have spotted our bright pink A frames around the county letting you know when a broadband structure goes live which our Superfast team are busy deploying to keep you up to date. You can also follow us on Facebook ([@broadbandworcs](#)), Twitter ([@SuperfastWorcs](#)) or register for email updates here: www.superfastworcestershire.com/#register





Get the most out of your Broadband Connection

Did you know, Wi-Fi is easily disrupted by environmental factors, such as home wiring, walls and other electrical devices in the home such as TV Boxes and Consoles? The good news is that you may be able to boost your household speeds by making a few simple changes such as moving your router or by speaking to your Internet Service Provider.

Which? has published an article detailing 11 simple steps to follow to maximise your connection speeds, from the most effective positioning of your router to making sure you have the best hardware for the job. You can find the full article here: www.which.co.uk/reviews/broadband-deals/article/speed-up-slow-broadband



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Broadband Case Study: Manor Hill House

Michael & Emma Moffett open the doors of their beautiful home, Manor Hill House in Upton Warren, to host events from weddings to wakes and christenings to conferences in their exclusive venue.

In July 2018, the local area benefitted from an upgrade to fibre to the premises or ultrafast broadband and Emma talks to us about the positive impact this has had on her business:

“Communication is key to delivering perfect events for our guests – we have to liaise on so many details between suppliers and guests from menu choices to decoration to music. Prior to the summer, we were working with poor speeds of less than 2Mbps, which was incredibly frustrating and sapped time from our busy days.”

After the network upgrade, Manor Hill House can now access download speeds of up to 330Mbps and upload speeds of up to 50Mbps.

“The improved ultrafast speeds have been fantastic. It has allowed us to be more efficient – no more waiting around for pages to load and we can quickly share photos and videos to update our website. We can now allow our guests, particularly for conferences, access to high speed broadband, which makes our site more accessible. We’ve also been able to confidently schedule video calls with suppliers and clients without the fear of the connection dropping out which saves us time and travel expenses.”

Looking to the future, Emma hopes that Manor Hill House will be able to trial new technologies for the business like live streaming so they can share events across the globe, be it distant family from weddings or colleagues operating in a different country.

Visit Manor Hill House website here:

www.manorhillhouse.co.uk

www.facebook.com/manorhillhouse

www.instagram.com/manorhillhouseweddings



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Broadband Universal Service Obligation

The Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) is being delivered by Ofcom, and we expect customers will be able to request a USO connection from the end of March 2020. The scheme is for those currently getting less than 10Mbps connection (10Mbps download, 1Mbps upload) and not due to receive a service from a publicly-funded roll out programme in the year following their request.

The new USO will give people in the UK the right to request a decent broadband connection (10Mbps download, 1Mbps upload) at no cost, if the cost does not exceed £3,400.

Where the costs of installation are over to £3400, consumers will be required to contribute the excess costs or do some of the work themselves.

It is currently estimated that only 2% of UK premises are likely to be affected. For more information [Click Here](#).



Thank you for registering your interest in the Superfast Worcestershire Broadband Programme. If you want to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please [click here](#).

Do you have a story about how superfast broadband has helped transform your lifestyle or business for the better? Share it with the Superfast Worcestershire team at:

www.superfastworcestershire.com

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