



Bringing faster broadband to our rural areas
Project Update December 2017
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we need to spread the word!

If you would like a Word version of this newsletter please email: broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk

[Sign up to receive this e-newsletter](#) direct to your inbox and for information about progress on your cabinet or exchange-only line.

Over 60,000 properties able to connect to the fibre network

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Over 60,000 premises now able to connect to the fibre network

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Over 60,000 premises now able to connect to the fibre network

Over 60,000 households and businesses are now able to get high-speed broadband, thanks to the CSW Broadband Project.

The pace of the roll-out and the mixture of technology being used by engineers from Openreach means dozens more properties are going 'live' on an almost daily basis. Many of these will be "Exchange Only" lines, or at some distance from existing fibre infrastructure, so property owners may not realise that they can now connect to the new network.

Residents and businesses are therefore urged to keep checking whether they can access the technology by checking the [BT DSL checker](#) to establish which infrastructure your property is connected to. For the best results you will need to be able to enter a BT landline number for your property. If you do not have this then you can use your address, but it may be less accurate. Do not

use the BT postcode checker as that covers too wide an area to be of any use. The [How to use the BT DSL Line checker](#) page on our website contains a handy guide to interpreting the results of the BT checker.

It is amazing to realise that, just three and a half years since the first CSW Broadband cabinet went live, over 60,000 premises can now connect to the fibre network. This is a real step-change and shows that this public investment is making massive improvements to our local infrastructure.

There is still a lot more coverage to come between now and the end of 2019, and the team are actively seeking additional funding to take the fibre network still further.

Superfast connection vouchers for businesses

Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce has launched its new ICT Business Support service, funded through European Regional Development Fund. The aim is to assist businesses to make the most of the technology that is available today, and to plan for the future.

To help with this, a Connection Voucher is available that will offer match-funded grants to help the SME to actually implement the change and to take advantage of the new technologies. The voucher is to be used towards the cost of a complete end-to-end solution, including a Superfast connection to the Internet and networking within the business, either wireless or cabled, as appropriate; Equipment to implement transformational business changes may also be eligible.

To find out more please call Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber on 02476 654 321 to speak with an advisor today. Please do not contact the CSW Broadband project about this scheme as we are not involved in the administration.

Gigabit connection grants for businesses

If you are a small or medium-sized business, you may be able to get a grant of up to £3,000 to upgrade your business broadband to a Gigabit capable connection.

The Government is testing a new Gigabit Voucher Scheme, which will provide vouchers worth up to £3,000 to support the capital costs of getting new gigabit capable connections for businesses. Coventry and Warwickshire are one of the four pilot areas.

Suppliers will be offering vouchers worth between £500 and £3000 each to local businesses, which can then be used to pay for the installation of gigabit speed connections. The aim of the pilots is to encourage the market to extend full fibre infrastructure in the UK by increasing demand and reducing the cost to customers.

The pilot is supplier-led, meaning that customers will need to go to an approved supplier who will then deal with the administration of the scheme. Details of approved suppliers can be found at: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>

Please note that the CSW Broadband project is not involved in the administration of this scheme, and all enquiries should be made through the above website.

Better broadband connection vouchers

Finally, if neither of the above schemes are right for you (or if you are not a business), the Government has recently announced an extension to the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme.

If you currently experience poor broadband speeds, or are unable to obtain an affordable broadband service at all, the scheme will provide you with access to a basic broadband service that will offer speeds of at least 2 Mb per second, and usually much higher.

The scheme will ensure that no household or business will need to pay more than £400 to access a basic broadband service over a 12-month period.

If you take advantage of this scheme, your household or business will still be eligible for a superfast broadband service in the future.

Households and businesses that are eligible to take advantage of the scheme will be provided with a unique code that will cover most of the cost of the installation and commissioning of a basic broadband service including any necessary equipment.

You will be required to enter into a contract for a minimum of 12 months with one of the suppliers registered under the scheme and pay any remaining cost of installation, the monthly charge for the service they select, and any VAT payable.

The code does not have a specific fixed value but when used to obtain a basic broadband service from a registered supplier it will reduce the total cost by up to £350. The code has no other value and cannot be redeemed in any other way than through the scheme.

Households and businesses can take advantage of the scheme, if they meet the following three criteria.

- Your home or business is not currently able to access a broadband download speed of at least 2Mb per second.
- There are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide a download speed of at least 2Mb per second.
- There are no plans to provide superfast broadband to your location within 12 months of your application.

Households and businesses that apply for a subsidy will be asked to confirm there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to them that offer a broadband speed of at least 2 Mb per second.

To apply, visit the [Guide to the Better Broadband Subsidy Scheme](#) page on our website.

Parish-level mapping for parish council websites - update

Thanks to those parishes who responded to our last newsletter stating that they would be interested in parish-level mapping to go onto local websites. Our data team will be working on this over the next few months and we'll advise in a future edition how you can access this facility.

What would help you, as a parish council, to keep your residents informed about the broadband rollout?

Please drop us an email to broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk, and we'll develop a plan that incorporates as many of the suggestions as possible.

Copy for your own website or newsletter

We have [short articles of around 300 words that can be downloaded](#) to use in your own newsletters or on websites. These are updated monthly.

Questions and Answers

Here are some of the Q&A's raised recently. Our website has a full set of Q&As, which are regularly updated.

What is FTTP on demand?

We have recently had a number of enquiries where the [BT DSL checker](#) suggests that a product called Fibre on Demand (FoD or FTTPoD) is available, offering speeds of up to 330Mbps.

This is NOT the same as native Fibre to the Premise (FTTP), which is being installed to many areas through this project.

It is easy to get native **Fibre-to-the-Premise** (FTTP) services confused with **FTTPoD** because the two solutions function in identical ways, although their cost, contract and deployment methods have tended to be significantly different. In a native FTTP setup, the fibre optic cable will have been installed outside your property (e.g. down your street), which makes it fairly quick and inexpensive to get connected.

By comparison FTTPoD is designed to be requested ('*on demand*') in Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) capable areas where the fibre optic cables have yet to reach specific properties. In some cases, this will attract significant distance-based construction charges (civil works) worth thousands of pounds.

Because of the high costs involved (and often the requirement for a much longer than standard contract), very few providers actually offer FTTPoD. Some that we are aware of include [Cerberus Networks](#) and [FluidOne](#). It's worth doing your homework as there may be others.

This is likely to remain a niche product for those who are prepared to pay the additional installation charges and a higher ongoing monthly cost.

How do I switch to a different broadband provider?

You may wish to transfer suppliers for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Poor quality of service
- You need additional features that your current internet service provider (ISP) does not offer
- You think the deal you are subscribed to is not providing good value for money
- You are moving house/business premises

First of all, check if the contract period you signed for with your existing supplier has expired. Contracts are generally for either 12 or 18 months. Most contracts require you to give a month's notice, even after the initial 12 or 18 months. If it hasn't expired, you may be liable for a cancellation fee or even the balance of the fee until the contract runs out. It's your choice if you decide you want to buy yourself out of a contract that hasn't yet expired.

It is important that you check that the new service you wish to sign up to is available in your area.

There are impartial sources of advice, such as:

- The [Which? broadband speed checker](#) is easy to use and has some good, impartial advice as well.
- [Moneysaving Expert](#) has lots of advice about switching provider.

You can also use various comparison websites to check this – we've listed a few below. Please remember that comparison sites work by receiving a commission from the ISPs and may not list all of the available options. Therefore you may want to try several such sites before making a decision.

- www.moneysupermarket.com/broadband
- www.broadbandgenie.co.uk
- www.broadband-finder.co.uk
- www.broadbandchoices.co.uk
- www.cable.co.uk

You can find more [frequently asked broadband questions](#) on our website.

Help us to spread the word!

We need to reach as many people as we possibly can. You can help us by emailing this to all your local contacts and encouraging them to email it to all their contacts.

Why not join the CSW Broadband conversation on social media!

To keep up to date on what we're doing and to have your say on how the project develops:

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Join us on [LinkedIn](#)

Email us!

For **newsletter** enquiries, please use: broadbandnews@cswbroadband.org.uk

For **all other enquiries**, please use: broadband@cswbroadband.org.uk

So that you don't miss out on any important news updates from the CSW Broadband team, please ensure that these are enabled in your firewall.

To find out more about the project, please visit the [CSW Broadband website](#).



CSW Broadband is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Coventry City Council, BT and Department for Culture Media & Sport.