

Improve your broadband connection with new voucher scheme

Homes in the Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol City Council area could improve their broadband speeds as part of a new Government trial.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is for a limited time offering vouchers worth £500 towards the cost of getting gigabit-ready broadband installed in local homes as part of the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme.

This scheme runs alongside an initiative aimed at businesses, registered charities and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Bath & North East Somerset (BNES) and Bristol City Council are the only two Local Authorities that will in addition be trialling the scheme with residents in their area.

The full fibre connection could radically change speeds for homes, making their broadband faster and more reliable. Smart phones, tablets and laptops could all be connected to the network at the same time without any glitches and customers could even download a TV series in a few seconds. The streaming of 4K or full-High Definition films would also be hassle free and gamers could play online without experiencing delays, thereby benefitting the whole household.

Councillor Paul Myers, Cabinet Member for Community & Economic Regeneration at Bath & North East Somerset Council, said: “There is a very real opportunity right now, whereby residents of Bath and North East Somerset could be eligible for up to £500 to get gigabit-capable broadband installed as part of a £2 million trial taking place in four areas around the UK.”

Councillor Craig Cheney, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance said: “There are many homes throughout the Bristol area that are lagging behind when it comes to broadband connection speeds. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme could have a really positive change for many residents. One of our key areas of focus as an administration is to reduce isolation and improve connectivity both physically and digitally. This scheme will help us in delivering these goals as well as making it easier for residents to enjoy home entertainment, complete homework or even apply for jobs. We’re proud to be part of rolling this out and helping more Bristol residents to become more digitally literate whilst improving their quality of life.”

The scheme is open to groups of residents to apply for the scheme together, thereby enabling streets or communities to all benefit and share the faster broadband speeds. Interested groups of residents will need to contact the suppliers directly who will look into what is possible to install.

The £500 voucher from the scheme will subsidise the costs of setting up the broadband connection. All customers will be expected to commit to a 12 month contract with their chosen supplier.

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock said: “A world-class digital communications network is essential to ensure the UK’s future competitiveness in the global market and its ability to attract investment. Faster and more reliable connections are transforming the way we live and work, and better broadband supports businesses to grow and become more productive.

“These voucher trials, alongside a range of other actions, are testament to Government’s ambition for full fibre infrastructure across the UK to underpin our digital economy.”

Further information on the scheme including how to contact the suppliers is available by visiting <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk>.