

Broadband Connection Vouchers

Frequently asked questions

#superfastbritain

www.superconnectedleedsbradford.co.uk

Better business is better connected

Here you will find some of the most frequently asked questions about the Superconnected Cities Connection Voucher Scheme.

What is the Superconnected Cities Connection Voucher Scheme?

The scheme is designed to accelerate the accessibility of fast, reliable internet connectivity for businesses. The scheme provides grants of up to £3000 to businesses to cover the cost of connecting to a superfast internet connection. It's a national government scheme, which is available throughout the Leeds and Bradford districts.

Why does my business need Superfast Broadband?

The average UK business will need 10 times their current bandwidth within the next five years. This means that high speed broadband is becoming an absolute necessity for businesses. Superfast broadband opens up a whole raft of leading-edge software and applications that could benefit your business, allowing you to work more efficiently, work when and where you want, expand your offering and improve interaction with customers, colleagues and suppliers. It offers businesses access to increasingly important technologies such as cloud computing and video conferencing.

What will the Connection Voucher pay for?

Your Voucher can be used towards the cost of making the physical broadband connection to your business premises, including works such as cabling, surveys, power supply installation and costs related to wayleaves or easements. The voucher will cover the whole cost of the connection, if that cost is between £100 and £3000. It can't pay for monthly rental or for any IT equipment you use in your business.

Who is able to apply?

You must be a Small or Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) as defined by European Commission. Registered charities, social enterprises and sole traders that meet SME criteria are also welcome to apply. You must be located within the Leeds and Bradford districts.

Am I an SME?

There is an official definition of a Small or Medium Enterprise that you need to meet to be eligible, please see below:

- ▶ you are a sole trader or employ between 1 and 249 persons AND
- ▶ you have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million Euros AND/OR
- ▶ you have an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million Euros

If you are not sure, please take advice before you apply. You can also try the eligibility checker at www.superconnectedleedsbradford.co.uk

How long will the scheme operate?

From its launch in Leeds and Bradford on the 17th February 2014, the scheme will run until the end of March 2015.

I already have a Broadband connection, can I still get a voucher?

Yes, provided that the new connection provides a 'step change' in the speed of connection. This usually means that your new connection will need to be 30 Megabits per second. 30Mbps is classed as a 'superfast' connection.

If you already have fast connection, you are still eligible for a connection as long as your existing speed is at least doubled when you move to the new supplier.

What type of service and technology is available? Does the scheme fund all types of technology?

There are a number of different types of technology which can provide your business with superfast broadband. As well as the well-known fibre optic technology, you can also receive broadband through wireless radio connections or through coaxial cable. The connection vouchers scheme is technology neutral – meaning any type of technology can be funded through the scheme.

Services available are either classed as 'contended', which is a shared service or 'uncontended', which is a dedicated Service; please see the **Broadband jargon buster** for more detail on the services and technology types.

Am I in a "Superconnected Cities" local authority area?

If you are located in the Leeds or Bradford districts, and pay business rates or council tax to Leeds or Bradford Councils, then you are.

Other cities participating in the scheme include Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Coventry, Derby, Derry/Londonderry, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Newport, Oxford, Perth, Portsmouth, Salford, York.

I want to apply – what should I do?

If you are ready to apply, you should visit **www.superconnectedleedsbradford.co.uk** and follow the directions on how to submit your application form.

Do I have to pay the VAT?

Yes. Connection Vouchers cannot pay the VAT on your supplier invoice. If you are VAT registered, you can claim it back in the normal way. If you are not VAT registered you need to budget to pay the 20% VAT from your own fund.

Can I apply as part of a group of businesses?

Yes, applying as a group of businesses who occupy a building or a business park, may be beneficial. It means you can apply together and receive a larger grant, which may result in a faster or more reliable broadband solution. Each business within the group is still entitled to a maximum individual grant of £3000, so you can group together and receive a much larger grant. Grants of over £20,000 will need to be referred to Central Government.

I haven't paid a connection charge before, why would I need a voucher to cover such costs?

Although you may not have paid a connection charge before, it is possible that your supplier would have added any connection costs to your ongoing monthly charge. Over 100 Internet Service Providers have now developed new products specifically for this scheme, which extract the value of the connection from your ongoing monthly charge. This could mean that you end up paying a lower monthly subscription cost than you would have done under the previous pricing model.

How do I choose my supplier?

Visit **www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/category/Leeds-Bradford** for a list of suppliers who are registered to take part in this scheme. We can't advise you on which supplier to use. You need to get one quote as part of the application process. Choose the product that best meets your business need, you don't have to choose the cheapest quote you find. To help you decide there are several independent sources of advice available on the internet such as:

Sam Knows **www.samknows.com/broadband/broadband_availability**

If you have any questions about how to choose a supplier in Leeds and Bradford, please get in touch on **0113 3950357** or **info@superconnectedleedsbradford.co.uk**

How do I know what my current speed is?

There are many broadband speed checkers available online. These will measure both the upload and download speed of your current connection at a particular moment in time. The benefits of connecting to a superfast, business grade service is that many products will include a guaranteed level of connection speed, which will be fast and reliable. We've put a speedchecker on our website:

www.superconnectedleedsbradford.co.uk

What if my business has already received a grant for something else?

The Connection Vouchers scheme runs under State Aid regulations that monitor how much grant is given to a business or organisation over the last three financial years. Many grant schemes that you may have had help from use different State Aid rules. You will know if you have had de minimis grants because you will have been given a letter at the end of the programme telling you how much assistance has been provided under de minimis. You may want to take professional advice before you apply if you are unsure.

I'm confused about the jargon. Can you help?

You may find that if you contact a supplier they will talk you through the options. Or try our **Broadband jargon buster** to find an explanation of some of the technical terms you will come across while you are choosing your connection.

How can I work out my business needs?

What are you going to use your connection for? Have a look through our **Business Needs Guide** and think about the kind of work that your broadband connection will need to support.

What if my business has multiple premises?

The connection vouchers can only be used by an SME for one of its premises. If your business has a premise in another part of the country, you cannot apply for a connection voucher in any other Superconnected city.



Department
for Culture
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**SUPERCONNECTED
CITIES**
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City of Bradford MDC
www.bradford.gov.uk

For more information:

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Administered on behalf of Government by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), this programme is transforming Britain by promoting growth, enabling skills and learning, and improving quality of life.

For more information about vouchers, go to
www.connectionvouchers.co.uk

For more information about BDUK, go to
www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk