



Building Digital UK

Policy paper

Project Gigabit progress update – April 2024

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-progress-update-april-2024/project-gigabit-progress-update-april-2024>



1. Foreword

We have made strong progress in bringing fast, reliable broadband to rural communities in the first three months of 2024.

In January, we announced that gigabit broadband coverage in the UK had surged to 81%, up from 6% in 2019 and we remain firmly on track to meet the Government's objective of 85% coverage by 2025.

We also marked a second major achievement with more than £1 billion now awarded in Project Gigabit contracts. Fifteen multi-million pound contracts have been signed this year alone, covering more than a 370,000 homes and businesses across the country from Kent, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, to Gloucestershire, Leicestershire and Yorkshire.

These contracts represent a substantial investment in futureproof full fibre networks that will benefit the nation, whether that's through more efficient workplaces, the elimination of buffering at home or high-quality digital healthcare solutions for those who need them. With a total of 31 contracts now signed, valued at over £1.3 billion, we can be proud of the huge strides we are making towards building a more prosperous, more productive, gigabit-powered nation.

In February, we confirmed over one million homes, businesses and public buildings are now able to tap into gigabit-capable networks because of UK Government investment.

Most of these properties are in hard-to-reach rural locations, where residents and businesses previously would have struggled to perform even the most basic online tasks. This work is on top of the premises BDUK has already upgraded to superfast speeds, which are fast enough to meet most people's needs today and now available to 97% of homes and businesses.

The Prime Minister met broadband engineers in Ynys Môn to see the real-world impact of our initiatives on rural communities, while Technology Secretary Michelle Donelan talked to residents and businesses in Northumberland who have been connected to gigabit networks thanks to our investment. There is no better reminder of the reason this government is so committed to improving connectivity than meeting the people whose lives have changed because of our rollout.

Better quality education for all remains one of the greatest prizes in our efforts to upgrade Britain's broadband. Many classrooms have already been transformed by gigabit connections, including through our Gigahubs programme which delivered upgrades to more than 1,200 schools and colleges across the country. To support the remaining schools that have not been reached through suppliers' commercial rollout, we have now awarded further contracts to connect up to 800 primary schools in England through the Schools Gigabit Connectivity Project. This initiative, jointly funded by Project Gigabit and the Department for Education, will provide students and teachers with access to the latest digital technology, enhancing learning opportunities for pupils wherever they live.

The benefits of faster connectivity in schools are made clear in a new report published alongside this update. As a result of our Gigahubs programme, pupils and staff are now using digital technology more frequently – both for learning and extracurricular activities. What's more, the upgrades have helped demonstrate the many benefits of faster broadband to the wider area, helping to accelerate local demand for quicker connections.

The progress made since the beginning of the year is a testament to the dedication and collaboration of all involved, from industry to government. Together, we are forging a brighter, more connected future for the UK.

Julia Lopez MP, Minister for Data and Digital Infrastructure

2. Summary

We now have 31 local and regional Project Gigabit contracts in place, representing over £1.3 billion of investment to bring gigabit-capable broadband to over 780,000 hard-to-reach premises across the UK.

Since our December 2023 update:

- gigabit broadband coverage in the UK has increased to 81%
- we announced that over 1 million premises have now been passed with gigabit-broadband thanks to UK Government programmes, marked by a visit by the Secretary of State to Northumberland in February
- we have signed 15 new contracts covering Kent, Leicestershire and Warwickshire, East and West Sussex, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and East Berkshire, Nottinghamshire and West of Lincolnshire, West Yorkshire and York Area, East Gloucestershire, South Wiltshire, South Yorkshire, the Peak District, West Herefordshire and Forest of Dean, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Dorset and South Somerset, and Mid-West Shropshire
- combined, these contracts represent over £714 million of government investment to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to up to 370,000 premises. In total, we have now signed 31 contracts, for a combined value of £1.3 billion
- The Department for Education has awarded contracts to connect up to 800 primary schools in England, jointly funded through Project Gigabit. The Schools Gigabit Connectivity Project will help students and teachers access the latest digital technology in education
- Alongside this publication, we have published our [Corporate Plan 2024 to 2025](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bduk-corporate-plan-2024-to-2025) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bduk-corporate-plan-2024-to-2025>).

Percentage of
UK gigabit-capable



81%

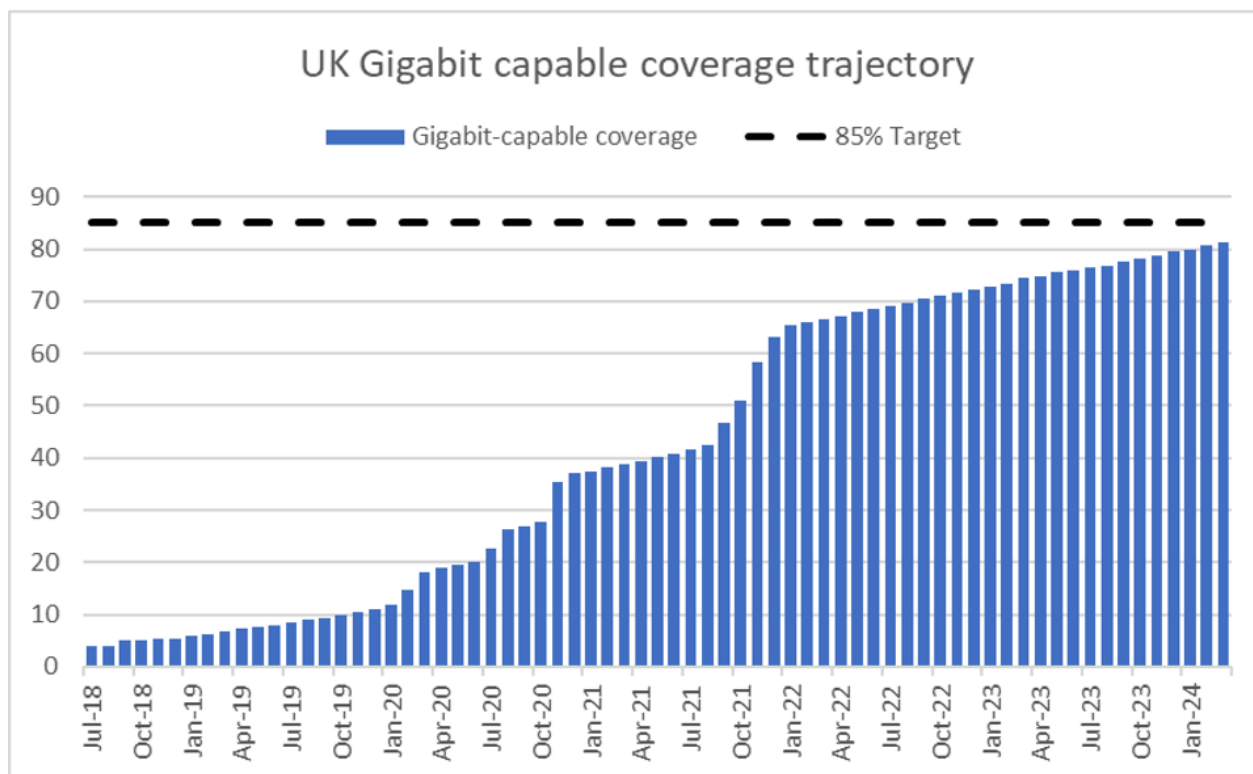
3. Progress towards a gigabit UK

Below is the latest information on gigabit-capable coverage across the devolved administrations and local areas in England. For the most up to date information on urban and rural, residential and business premises coverage, please see the [Project Gigabit progress update - December 2023](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-progress-update-december-2023) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-progress-update-december-2023>), which contains the latest release of Ofcom data.

We draw the below data from ThinkBroadband.com which shows up-to-date information on national and regional coverage. It was sourced in April 2024.

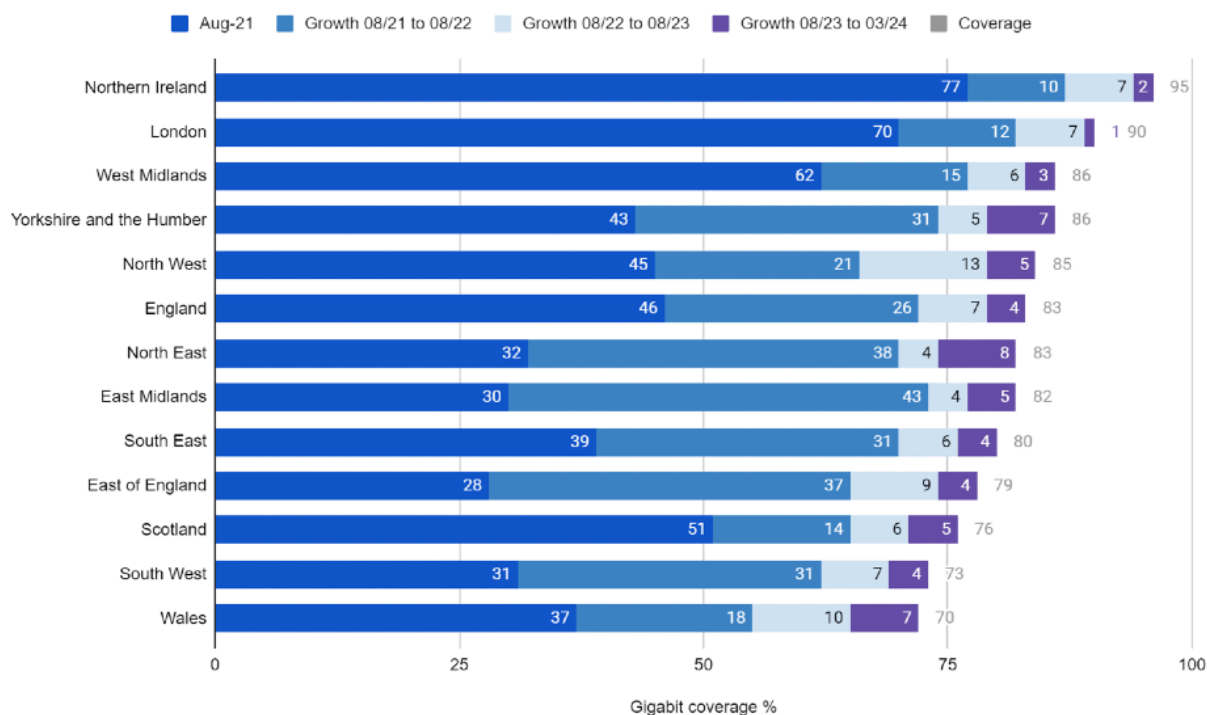
This graph illustrates the growth in gigabit coverage from July 2018, in line with our projected path combining BDUK and commercial efforts towards our coverage goals. Coverage currently sits at 81%, and we remain on track to deliver the initial target of gigabit-capable connectivity to at least 85% of UK premises by the end of 2025.

UK gigabit-capable coverage trajectory (Source: DSIT analysis, ThinkBroadband. Data is accurate as of April 2024.)



Since December 2023, Wales, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the East Midlands have seen a 3 to 4% increase in gigabit-capable connectivity. Notably, the period from August 2023 to May 2024 brought more growth in gigabit connectivity for Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands than the entire year from August 2022 to August 2023.

Gigabit-capable coverage by region and devolved nation, previous 12 months growth (Source: ThinkBroadband, April 2024)



4. Update on Project Gigabit Delivery Plans

4.1 Project Gigabit Procurements

In late 2023 and early 2024, we awarded and signed a significant number of new contracts, in line with our procurement pipeline. These cover Kent, Leicestershire and Warwickshire, East and West Sussex, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and East Berkshire, Nottinghamshire and West of Lincolnshire, West Yorkshire and York Area, East Gloucestershire, South Wiltshire, South Yorkshire, the Peak District, West Herefordshire and Forest of Dean, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Dorset and South Somerset, and Mid-West Shropshire. Collectively, these contracts represent over £714 million funding available to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to up to 370,000 premises. In total, we now have 31 contracts worth over £1.3 billion which will reach up to 780,000 premises across the country.

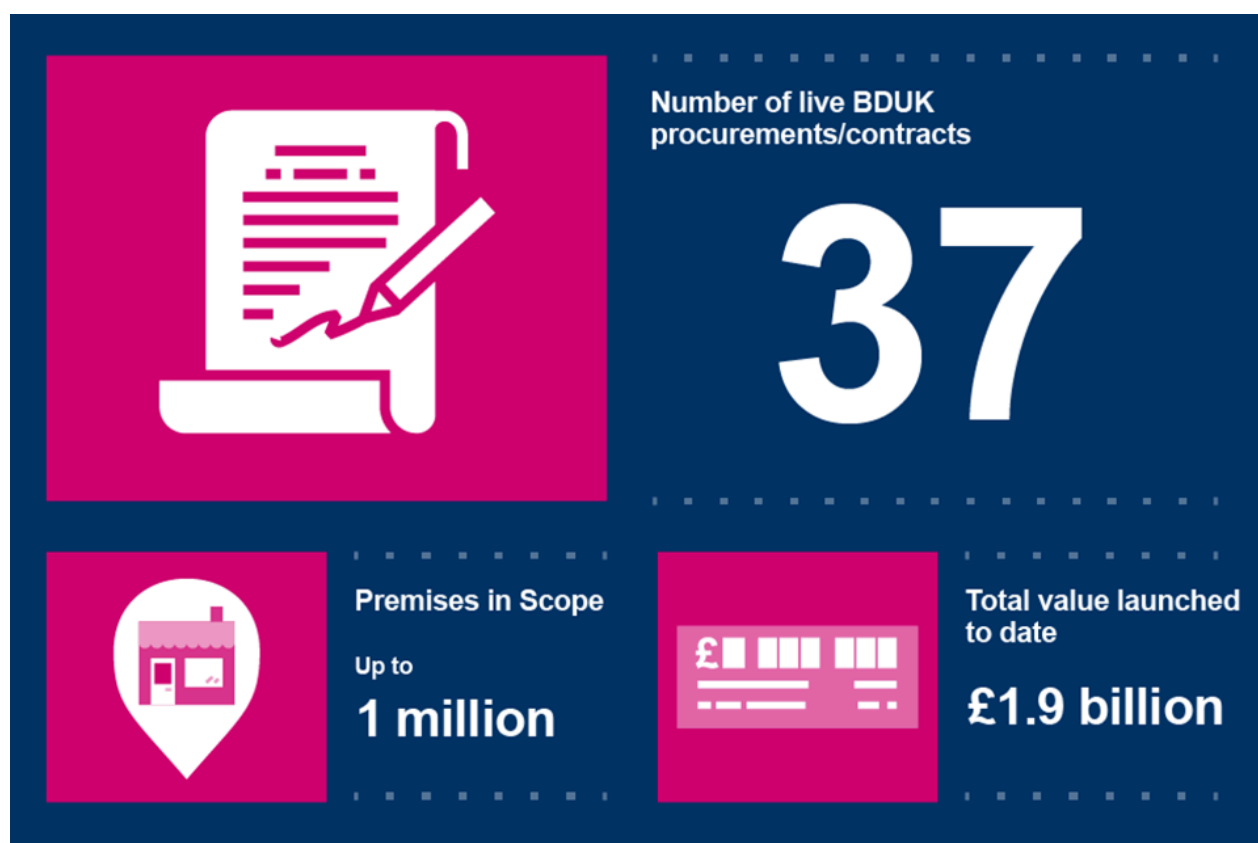
We aim to award the first two call-off contracts under the cross-regional framework in the summer. We use the cross-regional intervention in areas

where there has been minimal or no credible market interest in bidding for regional or local procurements, or where initial supplier appetite has fallen away.

We are engaging with the market for additional call-offs in areas including North Wales, South West Wales, North Somerset, South Devon, South and East Shropshire, North Herefordshire, Essex, and Central and North Scotland. We will also include the North East, as the awarded supplier for the previous procurement was unable to complete signature, as well as Mid Devon and South West Somerset, where supplier interest fell away during the previous procurement process.

The supplier initially awarded the contract for Worcestershire is no longer able to sign. We are currently exploring alternative options for this procurement and will provide more details in the next Progress Update.

Project Gigabit Procurement Progress [Source: BDUK. Data is accurate as of 10 April 2024.]



4.2 Project Gigabit Intervention Areas Map

4.4 Public Sector Hub upgrades

The Department for Education's project to connect up to 800 schools outside of suppliers' commercial build plans is now in delivery and will complete by March 2026. These schools, located in areas not currently served by commercial broadband providers, are set to benefit from future-proofed gigabit-capable broadband, allowing teachers and students to leverage the latest digital technology in education.

In Dorset, gigabit-capable broadband has been installed at 26 public sector sites, with an additional 29 sites in Leicestershire also receiving connections. Both projects were completed by the end of March 2024.

5. Project Gigabit across the Union

5.1 Scotland

The Scottish Government is expected to launch the first Project Gigabit procurement in Scotland, in the Borders and East Lothian areas, in April 2024, and is set to reach over 11,000 premises with gigabit-capable broadband.

Further procurements are expected to launch in phases throughout the rest of 2024 including in Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Perth and Kinross, Aberdeen, Dundee and Moray Coast, and Orkney and Shetland, subject to market interest being confirmed. Central and North Scotland will be included within a future call-off procurement under the cross-regional framework contract that is currently in procurement, which will be delivered by BDUK.

The Scottish Government's £600 million Reaching 100% (R100) programme has now provided gigabit connectivity to over 41,000 premises in Scotland across the three R100 contracts, including overspill. The R100 programme has received £52.2 million of UK government funding, including £2.7m new investment into the R100 Central contract area, which alongside £2.8m of Scottish Government reinvestment, is helping fund more than 1,000 additional hard to reach premises, following greater than expected commercial build in the region.

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme projects continue to be built in Scotland. To date, 5,600 vouchers have been used to deliver a gigabit-capable connection to homes and businesses outside of suppliers' commercial build plans.

5.2 Wales

The Prime Minister visited the Isle of Anglesey in February to mark the announcement that more than one million homes, businesses and public buildings can now access the best internet speeds on the market because of UK Government investment. He met engineers on the Isle of Anglesey to see the work that goes on to enable rollout of faster, more reliable broadband, as well as visiting communities and businesses across the two-day tour of the region.

North West Wales, Mid Wales and South East Wales have been included within a call-off under the current cross-regional framework procurement. North Wales and South West Wales will be included within a further call-off once the framework contract is in place.

As of the end of March 2024, 4,600 homes and businesses in parts of Wales have been connected to gigabit-capable broadband using Gigabit Vouchers. The Welsh Government's Superfast Cymru programme has successfully completed the delivery of gigabit-capable infrastructure throughout Wales, providing nearly 100,000 premises with access to high-speed broadband.

Following the short-term reopening of the Gigabit Voucher scheme in South West Wales (September 2023 to January 2024), and separately in North Wales (December 2023 to January 2024), a total of 39 projects covering over 15,500 premises were submitted to BDUK and have been approved.

5.3 Northern Ireland

Project Stratum continues to build ahead of target, having delivered gigabit-capable broadband to over 75,000 premises to date.

Pre-procurement market engagement for a project in Northern Ireland has been carried out and the procurement process will start shortly. It is anticipated this will extend coverage to up to an additional 60,000 premises.

6. Annex

6.1 Project Gigabit procurement pipeline

Live contracts:

Local or regional supplier procurement	Area and Lot number	Contract signature date	Estimated number of premises in scope of the contract when signed	Contract value (initial and deferred scope)	C s
Local	North Dorset (Lot 14.01)	August 2022	7,000	£6.3 million	V lr
Local	Teesdale (Lot 4.01)	September 2022	4,000	£6.6 million	C
Local	North Northumberland (Lot 34.01)	October 2022	3,700	£7.3 million	C
Regional	Cumbria (Lot 28)	November 2022	59,000	£108.5 million	F
Local	Central Cornwall (Lot 32.02)	January 2023	9,200	£18 million	V
Local	South West Cornwall (Lot 32.03)	January 2023	9,400	£17.6 million	V
Regional	Cambridgeshire and adjacent areas (Lot 5)	March 2023	44,400	£68.6 million	C
Local	New Forest (Lot 27.01)	March 2023	10,400	£13.7 million	V lr
Local	North Shropshire (Lot 25.02)	April 2023	12,000	£24 million	F F
Regional	Norfolk (Lot 7)	June 2023	62,200	£114.2 million	C
Regional	Suffolk (Lot 2)	June 2023	79,500	£100.4 million	C

Local or regional supplier procurement	Area and Lot number	Contract signature date	Estimated number of premises in scope of the contract when signed	Contract value (initial and deferred scope)	C s
Regional	Hampshire (Lot 27)	June 2023	75,500	£104.1 million	C
Local	North East Staffordshire (Lot 19.01)	31st October 2023	5,900	£16.5 million	C F
Local	South Oxfordshire (Lot 13.01)	October 2023	5,500	£17 million	C
Local	North Oxfordshire (Lot 13.02)	October 2023	4,200	£9.4 million	C
Regional	Derbyshire (Lot 3)	November 2023	17,800	£33.4 million	C F
Regional	Kent (Lot 29)	February 2024	50,900	£112.2 million	C
Regional	Leicestershire and Warwickshire (Lot 11)	February 2024	38,600	£71.5 million	C
Regional	East and West Sussex (Lots 16 and 1)	February 2024	52,800	£100.6 million	C
Regional	Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes (Lot 12)	February 2024	25,700	£51.4 million	C
Regional	Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and east Berkshire (Lot 26)	February 2024	34,200	£58.7 million	C

Local or regional supplier procurement	Area and Lot number	Contract signature date	Estimated number of premises in scope of the contract when signed	Contract value (initial and deferred scope)	C s
Regional	Nottinghamshire and West of Lincolnshire (Lot 10)	February 2024	34,300	£58.6 million	C
Regional	West Yorkshire and York Area (Lot 8)	February 2024	28,000	£60.9 million	C
Local	East Gloucestershire (Lot 18)	February 2024	4,400	£16.8 million	C
Regional	South Wiltshire (Lot 30)	March 2024	17,400	£18.8 million	V
Regional	South Yorkshire (Lot 20)	March 2024	32,100	£44.4 million	C
Local	Peak District (Lot 3.01)	March 2024	4,400	£10.7 million	F
Local	West Herefordshire and Forest of Dean (Lot 15)	March 2024	7,900	£23.4 million	F
Regional	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (Lot 32)	March 2024	16,800	£41.2 million	V
Regional	Dorset and South Somerset (Lot 14)	March 2024	21,400	£33.5 million	V
Local	Mid-West Shropshire (Lot 25.01)	April 2024	6,000	£12 million	V

Local or regional supplier procurement	Area and Lot number	Contract signature date	Estimated number of premises in scope of the contract when signed	Contract value (initial and deferred scope)	C s
Total (rounded)			784,600	£1,380 million	

Live procurements (premises numbers and contract values as of 03/04):

The tables below show the live procurements posted on the GOV.UK website.

Local, regional or cross regional procurement	Area and Lot number	Procurement start date	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Number of premises in scope of the procurement (subject to change)
Regional	Worcestershire (Lot 24)	6 October 2022	July 2024	18,400
Regional	Cheshire (Lot 17)	6 July 2023	April 2024	16,400
Regional	Lincolnshire (including NE Lincolnshire and N Lincolnshire) and East Riding (Lot 23)	25 July 2023	April to June 2024	73,800
Regional	North Yorkshire (Lot 31)	3 July 2023	April 2024	39,900

Local, regional or cross regional procurement	Area and Lot number	Procurement start date	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Number of premises in scope of the procurement (subject to change)
Cross Regional	Lancashire North Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire West and Mid-Surrey Staffordshire West Berkshire Hertfordshire (Call-Off 1)	27 July 2023	July 2024 to September 2024	57,100
Cross Regional	West and North Devon, North West, Mid and South East Wales (Call-Off 2)	27 July 2023	July 2024 to September 2024	47,100

Upcoming procurements:

Local or regional or cross regional procurement	Area and Lot Number	Procurement start date (subject to change)	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Estimated number of premises outside supplier plans (subject to change)
Local	South Scotland - Borders, Midlothian, East Lothian	April 2024	October 2024	11,300

Local or regional or cross regional procurement	Area and Lot Number	Procurement start date (subject to change)	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Estimated number of premises outside supplier plans (subject to change)
Local	Dumfries & Galloway-East	August 2024	March 2025	8,500
Local	Dumfries & Galloway - West	November 2024	June 2025	8,100
Local	Fife, Perth & Kinross	July 2024	February 2025	14,200
Local	Orkney & Shetland	May 2024	November 2024	11,200
Regional	Dundee, Aberdeenshire & Moray Coast	May 2024	March 2025	68,800
Regional	Northern Ireland	May to July 2024	January 2025	60,000
Cross Regional	East and South Shropshire, North Herefordshire, North Wales, and South West Wales (Call-Off 3)	July to September 2024	November 2024	49,600
Cross Regional	Mid Devon, North Somerset, and South Devon (Call-Off 4)	July to September 2024	November 2024	23,300

Local or regional or cross regional procurement	Area and Lot Number	Procurement start date (subject to change)	Estimated contract award date (subject to change)	Estimated number of premises outside supplier plans (subject to change)
Cross Regional	Essex and North East England (Call-Off 5)	July to September 2024	November 2024	22,100
Cross Regional	Central and North Scotland (Call-Off 6)	July to September 2024	November 2024	96,900
Total				374,000

7. Gigabit vouchers issued/claimed

	Total Vouchers issued	of which yet to be connected	of which used to fund a connection
2017 to 2018	40	0	40
2018 to 2019	6,900	0	6,900
2019 to 2020	15,800	0	15,800
2020 to 2021	18,400	0	18,400

	Total Vouchers issued	of which yet to be connected	of which used to fund a connection
2021 to 2022 (r)	23,000	100	22,900
2022 to 2023 (r)	28,600	3,100	25,500
2023 to 2024 (p)	44,000	15,300	28,700
TOTAL	136,700	18,500	118,200

Source: BDUK as of April 2024

(p) - Provisional

(r) - Revised due to new data

Notes:

1. Figures rounded to the nearest 100, except for 2017 to 2018
2. Total Vouchers Issued only includes vouchers connected or still live; vouchers cancelled after issue are removed from the figures, this can cause a decrease for earlier years.

7.1 Public Sector Hubs

Fiscal year	Rural Gigabit Connectivity	LFFN	GigaHubs	Total
2017 to 2018	0	0	0	0
2018 to 2019	0	10	0	10
2019 to 2020	20	300	0	330
2020 to 2021	220	1,360	0	1,580
2021 to 2022 (r)	760	2,540	10	3,310

Fiscal year	Rural Gigabit Connectivity	LFFN	GigaHubs	Total
2022 to 2023	<5	10	40	50
2023 to 2024 (p)	0	0	40	40
Total (r)	1,000	4,220	90	5,310

Source: BDUK as of April 2024

(p) - Provisional

(r) - Revised

<5 - denotes delivery of fewer than 5 hubs, but more than 0

Notes:

1. Figures rounded to the nearest 10
2. LFFN includes only hubs whereas we previously also reported assets
3. Gigahubs delivered are counted when status moves to “build - not live” and a connection date is present