



Better Broadband Scheme FAQs

1. *Why is the scheme being launched?*
2. *Who operates the scheme?*
3. *Who is this scheme for and how will it help?*
4. *How long will this scheme last for?*
5. *Who can apply for a Subsidy Code?*
6. *How do I know whether or not I can access speeds of more than 2Mbps?*
7. *If I apply to the scheme and take a satellite or wireless broadband service using a Subsidy Code, will my premises still be considered for superfast fibre broadband deployment in future?*
8. *How do I apply for a Subsidy Code?*
9. *What happens after I have applied?*
10. *What eligibility checks will Superfast Essex make before issuing a Subsidy Code?*
11. *How do I use the Subsidy Code?*
12. *Can I use the Subsidy Code with retail service providers that are not part of the scheme?*
13. *If you decide not to issue me with a code, can I appeal against the decision?*
14. *Why satellite?*
15. *Why wireless?*
16. *So which company do I use?*
17. *Where can I find more information about the scheme?*
18. *Appendix A – Applications operating via satellite*



1. Why is the scheme being launched?

This scheme helps fulfil the UK Government's commitment first made in December 2010, when they announced the availability of public funding to extend superfast broadband beyond the reach of commercial deployment to 90% of UK premises. The commitment also included a plan to ensure that there would be a basic service providing broadband speeds of at least 2Mbps for anyone yet to benefit from a superfast broadband rollout. The Government subsequently made further public funding available to raise the target for superfast broadband coverage to 95% of UK premises by the end of 2017; our target at Superfast Essex is to reach 95% of Essex with superfast speeds by 2019.

This Better Broadband Scheme is designed to ensure the 2Mbps minimum commitment is met, whilst the overarching work continues.

2. Who operates the scheme?

The scheme to deliver the 2Mbps commitment is operated by a partnership between the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), Essex County Council, a number of retail service providers and satellite and wireless operators.

DCMS has overall responsibility for implementing the Government's policy on the 2Mbps commitment, working with Essex County Council to ensure that the scheme is implemented in line with the national programme.

Applications under the scheme and decisions to award codes within Essex are made by the Superfast Essex programme team, using a nationally agreed process and eligibility criteria.

3. Who is this scheme for and how will it help?

This scheme aims to help anyone (residents or businesses) currently experiencing slow broadband speeds of less than 2Mbps by providing access to a satellite or wireless broadband service as an interim solution, until such time as fibre broadband becomes available to them. Whilst the Government's commitment is to ensure that everyone has access to speeds of at least 2Mbps, these satellite and wireless broadband services have the capability to significantly improve on this speed.

The packages offered under this scheme will cover most of the cost of installation of a 12 month satellite or wireless broadband service. This will reduce the total cost (i.e. installation costs plus 12 monthly subscriptions) to ensure it does not exceed £400 within the first year, for a basic service.

4. How long will this scheme last for?

The national scheme will be available for applications until the end of 2017. After this time, no more applications can be received but the satellite or wireless broadband services provided to existing users of the scheme are contractually obliged to be available for use until at least 2022.

5. Who can apply for a Subsidy Code?

You can apply for a subsidy code under this scheme if you:

- a. Currently receive broadband download speeds of less than 2Mbps and;
- b. There are no plans to upgrade your area under the Superfast Essex rollout within 6 months of submitting an application and;
- c. There is no other broadband supplier in your area able to offer you a service where you would receive broadband download speeds of 2Mbps or above. Therefore if you already have an existing connection with a satellite or wireless provider, you will not be able to apply.

6. How do I know whether or not I can access speeds of more than 2Mbps?

To find out if you can already access superfast fibre broadband services, or if your area is planned for an upgrade under the Superfast Essex programme over the next few years, please check our interactive map at www.superfastessex.org/maps. If you are on a BT connection you can also check the [Broadband Availability Checker](#) to see what speeds you can access at your premises (please note that the speeds shown are those available to you, and you may need to upgrade to a fibre service in order to actually receive the increased speeds).

7. If I apply to the scheme and take a satellite or wireless broadband service using a Subsidy Code, will my premises still be considered for superfast fibre broadband deployment in future?

Yes. Taking a service under this scheme has no effect on our plans for further deployment of superfast broadband, and your premises will be included within those plans whether you take a broadband service under the scheme, or not.

8. How do I apply for a Subsidy Code?

You can apply by completing a simple online application form at:

<http://goo.gl/forms/HiqKLD6B4w>

You will need to provide us with:

- a. Your postal address, including your postcode.
- b. The main line telephone number at that address, if you have one
- c. Your full name and other contact details such as mobile phone number, email address, etc.
- d. You will need to confirm that you are the owner or occupier at that address (we cannot accept applications from anyone who is not the owner or occupier).
- e. Businesses will need to declare whether they have received over €200,000 of public subsidy within the last 3 years.

9. What happens after I have applied?

Once your application is received, Superfast Essex will undertake some eligibility checks (see question 10 below) before issuing a Subsidy Code to you.



We will aim to make a decision on your application as quickly as possible, within 30 days (maximum) of receiving your application. You will receive an email from make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk to let you know the outcome of your application. If your application is successful and we issue you with a Subsidy Code you will receive an email from make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk to confirm your eligibility and next steps.

You will then receive a separate email with your unique Subsidy Code from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) betterbroadband.noreply@culture.gov.uk together with the list of the satellite and wireless broadband retail service providers currently operating under the scheme, and their contact details. ***(You may wish to add both email addresses outlined above to your list of safe senders so that they do not end up in your junk box).***

If your application is unsuccessful we will send you an email from make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk explaining the reasons for the decision.

10. What eligibility checks will Superfast Essex make before issuing a Subsidy Code?

- (a) We will check that your home or business is not currently able to access a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps.
- (b) We will check our rollout plans for fibre broadband to see whether you are likely to benefit within 6 months of your application. If superfast broadband is likely to be available within 6 months of your application, then we cannot issue you with a code under the scheme.
- (c) On your application, we will ask you to confirm that to the best of your knowledge, there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide you with a broadband download speed of at least 2Mbps. We will also ask you to confirm that you do not already have a satellite or wireless broadband service at your address.

We will check our records of existing and planned coverage of broadband services to confirm that there are no alternative affordable broadband services available to you, which would provide you with a download speed of at least 2Mbps.

11. How do I use the Subsidy Code?

Once you have received your unique Subsidy Code, and the list of satellite and wireless broadband retail service providers currently operating under the scheme (also available on the dedicated website page), you should review the products and prices available from each provider to select the product that best meets your requirements and the amount of monthly subscriptions you are willing to pay. For details of the participating providers please see www.superfastessex.org/betterbroadband.



You should then contact your chosen satellite or wireless broadband retail service provider (with your Subsidy Code) to order the service you require. This will mean entering into at least a 12 month contract with your chosen provider.

The retail service provider will confirm the features of the product you have chosen, and the costs involved in a minimum 12 months service contract, after the code has been taken into account.

The code will cover most of the cost of installation of your broadband service. You will be responsible for paying any remaining cost of installation for the monthly subscription for the service you have selected, and any VAT, on the amounts payable.

The code does not have a specific fixed value, but when used to obtain a broadband service from one of our participating retail service providers it will reduce the total cost (i.e. installation costs plus 12 monthly subscriptions) to ensure it does not exceed £400 within the first year, for a basic service (eg. minimum of 10Mbps peak speed and 10GB monthly data allowance). The code has no other value, and cannot be redeemed in any other way than through the scheme.

12. Can I use the code with retail service providers that are not part of the scheme?

No, the Subsidy Code you receive can only be used with satellite or wireless broadband retail service providers operating under the scheme. Other providers may join the scheme, and you will be advised of the full list operating under the scheme at the time that you are issued with your unique code.

Other retail service providers not operating under the scheme may also offer services in your area, and you may choose to use one of the services they offer, but you will not be able to use a code issued under the scheme with that alternative provider, and you will have to meet the full cost of installation and monthly subscriptions for using the service yourself. If you would like that provider to become part of the scheme please ask them to get in touch with us and we will endeavour to have them added.

13. If you decide not to issue me with a code, can I appeal against the decision?

Yes. If you are not satisfied with our decision not to issue you with a code under the scheme, and the reasons we have given for that decision, you may submit one appeal by emailing make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk setting out the grounds for your appeal, and why you believe we should have issued you with a code. We will review our decision in light of your appeal, and will make a final decision on whether or not to issue you with a code under the scheme. We will not be able to consider more than one appeal in relation to any one applicant.

14.

a. *Why Satellite?*

Satellite broadband is one of a number of technologies considered by BDUK and BT when looking at alternative technologies to connect anyone currently unable to get a broadband service of 2Mbps and above.

Satellite broadband was chosen as one of the preferred interim solutions to be delivered via this scheme because it is both a) capable of significantly improving the connectivity of those experiencing very poor speeds and b) affordable.

b. *How does satellite broadband technology work and what are its capabilities?*

Modern satellite technology is now affordable, flexible and fast. The next generation satellite broadband (Ka band) technology being used by the participating retail service providers of this scheme is significantly less expensive than its predecessor (Ku band) technology. However, it does have some limitations.

Monthly satellite broadband packages do not give the same data allowances as superfast fibre broadband.

Satellite services also have higher latency than most other broadband services so there are some uses and applications where satellite is not recommended. For example, online video gaming, as any activity or game that involves the need for an immediate reaction will not work that well due to a slight 0.7 second delay.

However there are still many applications which work very well using satellite, such as email and web browsing, file sharing, rich media (eg. video/audio), external and business-critical applications as well as real-time applications such as video-conferencing.

Knowing which applications work well and those that may not, should help you determine whether a satellite solution will suit your requirements or not. Some of the satellite retail providers participating in this scheme offer pre-installation consultations to discuss your specific application requirements.

Some common applications and their suitability over satellite connectivity are summarised in Appendix A as a guide.

15.

a. *Why Wireless?*

The majority of people have their Broadband service delivered through a phone line. Even people who've benefited from upgraded Fibre Optic cabinets still have the last part of their connection carried through old fashioned copper.

This is the primary reason why people suffer from poor speeds, even with upgraded cabinets, because the final part of their connection was originally designed to provide just voice calls. In many areas the copper lines date back several decades and the greater the distance you are from the local cabinet, the slower your speeds.



Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) uses Fibre Optics to feed local towers and then uses radio rather than copper phone lines to connect subscribers to the Internet. By cutting out the copper phone lines FWA is able to deliver fast connections in rural areas.

b. What are the benefits of FWA (Fixed Wireless Access)?

FWA allows fast connections to the Internet in rural areas where copper phone lines are unable to deliver similar speeds. No phone line is required to connect to the Internet - so no line rental is payable, a potential saving of more than £150 per year.

There is low latency - this is the time it takes to receive a response whilst online; the response time is similar to telephone line broadband and better than satellite broadband which has to send requests to space and back. It's also based on a technology that's been around more than 100 years - radio - which is a technology used on a daily basis by most of the world. It survives the most extreme environments so is not affected by weather.

You are likely to receive a small dedicated radio on the outside of your property which provides an encrypted private connection to the Internet.

16. So which company do I use?

Please see each of our participating retail service provider's websites to find out more about their individual products, data usage allowances and to view their FAQs.

These are listed on our website www.superfastessex.org/betterbroadband. More companies are still being added to the scheme so keep an eye on our website for the most up to date list.

17. Where can I find more information about the scheme?

More information on the Bette Broadband Scheme can be found on the DCMS website at: www.gov.uk/dcms. More information on the operation of the scheme in Essex can be found on the Superfast Essex website at www.superfastessex.org/betterbroadband.

Appendix A – Applications operating via satellite

✓ ✓ Works Well

✓ Works with limitations

✗ Not Recommended

Application	Operation via Satellite	High Data Usage?
Web browsing	✓ ✓	
TV On Demand (e.g. BBC iPlayer)	✓ ✓	Yes
Video On Demand (e.g. LoveFilm & Netflix)	✓ ✓	Yes
Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media sites	✓ ✓	
Interactive online gaming	✗	
Watching videos on YouTube and sharing	✓ ✓	Yes
VoIP	✓	
Skype	✓	
Internet Radio	✓ ✓	Yes
FTP and TFTP applications	✓ ✓	
Citrix	Contact a provider for guidance	
VPN	Contact a provider for guidance	
IMAPI e-mail (Microsoft Exchange server etc.)	✓	
Web mail access to email IMAPI servers	✓ ✓	
POP3/SMTP email	Check with your existing broadband service provider that you will be able to access your current email inbox if you switch to a different network (e.g. satellite).	
Wireless Access Points	✓ ✓	