

A guide to getting superfast broadband

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1 What is the Reaching 100% (R100) Programme?

This is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide access to superfast broadband of at least 30 Megabits per second (Mbps) to every home and business in Scotland by the end of 2021.

This commitment will be met by:

1. **Commercial operators** delivering superfast connection upgrades across Scotland.
2. **Three build contracts** worth £600m which are providing a superfast broadband connection to addresses that don't yet have one.
3. The **R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (R100 SBVS)** which offers up to £5000 of funding to provide a superfast broadband connection for addresses not covered by contract build or commercial operator upgrades.

2 Use the online address checker to check your address status

My broadband is slow, what do I do?

If you have slow speeds, you can find out the latest broadband information for your address using the Superfast Scotland [address checker](#).

This will tell you if superfast Broadband (over 30 Mbps) is currently available at your address.

Superfast broadband is available at my address, how do I order a service?

Easy – if you'd like a faster connection, you can choose superfast broadband from an internet service provider (ISP). You might even be able to upgrade with the ISP you've already got. Ofcom can also help you find the best deal. Visit boostyourbroadband.com

Remember, even when a superfast broadband connection is available for your address, the upgrade to superfast speeds doesn't happen automatically, you have to place an order with your provider.

[Here's](#) the list of commercial operators whose networks have been assessed against industry standards and coverage included on the checker.

3 Learn how the R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme can help

What if superfast broadband isn't available at my address yet?

You have options depending on when R100 will reach you. All of them ensure you can have access to superfast speeds by the end of 2021.

3.1 Accessing short term broadband speed upgrades

If the checker shows that you are expected to receive a superfast connection before the end of 2021 please visit regularly for updates. The checker will show you when superfast broadband is available at your address, and you can then order your upgrade package from your preferred provider.

If the checker shows that your address is expected to receive a new superfast connection but not before the end of 2021, then you can apply for a 'one off' voucher worth up to £400. If your address is particularly difficult to reach it may be eligible for an additional subsidy of £250. This will help a provider bring you a short term superfast service until the R100 contract reaches you.

- This is referred to as an '[R100 Interim Voucher](#)'. The solution could be a 4G service, a satellite service or, where available, a fixed wireless access or fibre service. A request for an R100 Interim Voucher must be submitted by a provider for your address by **31st March 2022**.

3.2 Accessing permanent broadband speed upgrades

If the online checker confirms that your address is not in any current broadband rollout plans then you can apply for a 'one off' voucher worth up to £5000 to help a provider bring you a service.

- This is known as an '[R100 Main Voucher](#)'. Again this could include 4G, satellite or a fixed wireless access service but could also include a full fibre service. There may be extra funding available for a full fibre service through the UK Government's Rural Gigabit scheme if your address falls into the required rural classification:
<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

What next? I am eligible for the R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (R100 SBVS) so how do I get it and what can I do with it?

Please continue your enquiry with any registered providers listed here, as the provider has to request the voucher funding on your behalf. Once you have engaged a provider, they will double check your eligibility, request the voucher and start working on delivering your superfast connection.

There is also this useful process map available to help people navigate the R100 journey and how it impacts their address.

4 Find a provider

Providers who are registered to the R100 SBVS can be found [here](#). You may wish to contact a range of providers who can supply fibre, wireless, fixed mobile and satellite technologies to see if they can provide a service to your address. Although providers can give broad guidance on coverage on their website, until they know your exact location it's not possible for them to guarantee that they can provide you with a service.

4.1 I have decided on my superfast solution and I have found a provider, what do I do now?

The good news is that once you have found a provider and agreed on a solution and a cost, where there is one, you can now leave it up to them to progress your application. Your provider will contact us with their proposed solution for consideration and approval, providing details for how they're going to supply superfast broadband to your address along with your contact details.

We then complete this 'tick' list:

- ✓ Email you to check that you are happy for your voucher to go to your chosen provider and that you understand the terms and conditions attached to using the voucher.
- ✓ When you confirm this we then instruct the provider to start installation.
- ✓ Once the connection is complete and you have signed your contract with your provider we then contact you again to check that everything is as expected and that you are now able to receive a superfast broadband service.
- ✓ When you confirm this we can then pay your provider.

From this point on the contract you have is between you and your provider and so any questions about your service or problems with your service must be taken up directly with them.

5 The technologies available

- **Full Fibre (Fibre to the Premises/Home [FTTP/H])**

Full Fibre is when the connection from the exchange all the way to the inside of your address is a fibre optic cable. This enables you to receive any speed of broadband up to 1,000 Mbps (1 Gigabit per second).

- **Fixed Wireless Access (FWA)**

Fixed wireless broadband is an outdoor wireless network, similar to WiFi in your home but over greater distances, from a few hundred metres to many kilometres. Fixed wireless broadband can deliver a one-to-one connection between two buildings or structures (for example from a farm house to a farm office) or a one-to-many network connecting dozens of homes from a single transmitter. Common speeds for fixed wireless networks range between 30 Mbps and 100 Mbps. However, they are capable of much faster speeds over short distances, and Gigabit speeds (1,000 Mbps) at around 300 metres as a one-to-many network.

- The advantage of a **FWA service** is that the network will be designed to deliver to your address with reliable speeds. FWA is not available everywhere and usually where it is available there will usually only be a choice of one ISP.

- **Fixed mobile or cellular broadband (eg 4G)**

Fixed mobile enables internet access using one of the UK's four mobile networks (EE, Vodafone, O2 and Three) or from the many virtual mobile operators that use these networks. Instead of using your mobile phone as a temporary "hot spot" for connecting laptops or TVs; with fixed mobile you install a WiFi router with a mobile SIM card in it, and an external aerial in a suitable location outdoors.

- The advantage of a **4G service** is that you may have the choice of more than one national provider and most addresses in the UK can now receive a 4G signal from at least one of them, particularly when using an outdoor aerial.

- **Satellite**

Satellite broadband uses a dish on your home to connect to a satellite in space. The connection works both up and down from the satellite without any other connections such as a fixed telephone line. Because there is a delay of around half a second as the signal goes into space and back again it's not suitable for 'real time' gaming but it's fine for all other uses. Satellite broadband technology has greatly improved over recent years but it's always worth checking with the provider what speeds they expect you to consistently get.

- In many cases, you may not need a voucher as new commercial services are available for a most of Scotland. However, if your address requires extra equipment over that of a standard commercial service, then your service may be funded by an R100 SBVS voucher.

6 Other considerations

6.1 If you are eligible for an R100 Main Voucher this is a 'one off' voucher so whatever you decide to use it for may need to last you a number of years. A 4G or FWA solution could be the quickest and easiest solution at the moment but a full fibre solution is likely to be the most futureproof. However a fibre connection may cost more than a voucher can cover. In this situation, you can combine the full value of the voucher with your own funds should you want to.

Deciding what is best for you is a balance between what is available, and what is likely to best suit your needs. As always it would be worth speaking to a few providers of different technologies to find out what is available to you. If you have neighbours who are also interested in getting better broadband it would be worth talking to them to see if you can do a group project. This may be more attractive prospect particularly in the case of fibre and FWA, where providers often need to combine a number of premises to make their business case.

6.2 Check for any other funding that may be available from either the UK Government's Rural Gigabit Scheme or from any community funds. Where communities wish to join up and approach R100 SBVS providers for an aggregated solution, we can make introductions to providers so that you can evaluate options and potential solutions. In this circumstance, representatives should email [R100 SBVS@gov.scot](mailto:R100_SBVS@gov.scot)

6.3 Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO)

Since March 2020, every home and business has the legal right to request a decent, affordable broadband connection as a result of the UK Government's Universal Service Obligation.

If you can't get a download speed of 10 Mbps and an upload speed of 1 Mbps, you can request an upgraded connection. While this gives you a legal right to request a service of at least 10 Mbps, the scheme only pays up to £3400* towards that connection, with any additional cost passed to the requestor.

- BT is the USO provider in Scotland, with further details [here](#).
- Ofcom meanwhile has responsibility for scheme itself, details [here](#).

* Note that the Broadband USO is not connected to the R100 Programme and the £3400 cannot be combined with other initiatives.

7 Further information on R100

There are more [FAQs](#) on the R100 Programme here – please refer to these for further background.