

Great news for all our **Cumbrian** and **Northumbrian** B4RN projects only.

There is more funding available to help homes and businesses in rural areas of Cumbria and Northumberland, who currently do not have access to broadband services of at least 30Mbps download.

The funding will pay towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to premises when part of a group project.

The funding provides a rural top-up scheme that effectively doubles the voucher value for eligible properties that receive service of less than 30Mbps.

As a part of the Digital Borderlands Programme, B4RN can use rural top-up vouchers to support communities in not-spot locations in Cumbria and Northumberland to install full fibre infrastructure in the period up to March 2022.

Rural top-up vouchers enable B4RN to apply for enhanced vouchers for all new voucher requests in the Cumbrian and Northumbrian projects.

There is still a maximum funding limit applied to the projects. Using the rural top-up vouchers, we should be able effectively drawdown the project maximum voucher funds with a lower level of sign up, potentially enabling your projects to move into a build phase sooner.

Unfortunately, Lancashire, Cheshire, Norfolk and North Yorkshire haven't developed a rural top-up scheme.

Key Points Recapped:

- The vouchers can be topped-up up to double their value. For example, a rural residential voucher worth £1500 is now worth up to £3000, while a business voucher worth £3500 is now worth up to £7000.
- Please note that voucher funding for your project has a maximum cap, once this is reached with the voucher funding there will be no further funding from the DCMS so any shortfall in your project would still need to be raised by local investment.
- In effect, the top-ups will allow your project to draw down the voucher funding earlier before all the properties are connected.
- This is only available on vouchers that have not yet been applied for. Existing issued vouchers remain at their current value.

FAQS

Q. What determines eligibility for a Rural Top-Up?

A. Top-ups are only available for properties that have less than 30 Mbps connection speed. They must be in a project that has been made eligible for the rural top-up scheme. Currently, these are Cumbrian and Northumbrian projects.

Q. If a property gets a speed of over 30Mbps are they eligible for a voucher?

A. Yes, but they will be restricted to a standard rural voucher. Rural residential voucher = £1500. A business voucher = £3500. The speed must be less than 100Mbps.

Q. Where do I go to get a speed test?

A. All requests for service must come through the 'Get B4RN' page of the website. At the bottom of the 'Get B4RN' form there is a hyperlink that will take you to a speed test:

<https://b4rn.speedtestcustom.com/>

If their speed test result is less than 30Mbps then using this evidence, we may be able to apply for a top-up. If less than 100Mbps, then they would still receive a rural voucher.

Q. How do customers apply?

A. All customers need to apply using 'Get B4RN' on the website to register their interest in taking service and the voucher team will process the applications.

Q. What if I have already got a voucher – can it be topped-up?

A. No vouchers that have been issued cannot be topped-up. The top-up is only available on new applications for vouchers.