

Reference: 01543368

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9 January 2023

### Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to Project Gigabit and the Universal Service Obligation for Broadband. We received this request on 8 December 2022. We have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”).

### Your request and our response

*Please could you provide information in relation to the following questions regarding both Project Gigabit and the Universal Service Obligation for Broadband.*

*For each question (1 – 6 & 11) please provide the answers for the following time periods*

- Between April 2022 and September 2022*
- Between September 2021 and September 2022*
- From April 2020 to September 2022 (since the USO scheme started)*

*Plus, for each question (1 – 10) please separately provide breakdowns of the data into the 12 NUTS 1 regions of the UK*

*1) How many individuals have submitted claims against the USO?*

BT publishes six-monthly reports on its progress against the broadband USO, and these reports include data on the number of orders it has received. The [reports](#) are available on BT’s website.

For ease, the reports indicate the following number of requests were made to BT’s USO helpdesk:

- Between April 2022 and September 2022: 3155
- Between September 2021 and September 2022: 6052
- From April 2020 to September 2022: 25,351

Only those requests which were eligible for the USO were converted into confirmed orders. BT's reports show that over the total period to September 2022, it received 1653 confirmed broadband USO Orders.

As part of our recently published [Connected Nations report](#), we also reported on the total number of USO orders and provided a breakdown by Nation. See table 2.7 (on pages 14-15) in that report. We do not hold this data broken down into the 12 NUTS 1 regions of the UK.

*2) Out of those who made requests, how many were quoted over £3,400*

Ofcom does not hold this data.

BT's published reports indicate that the number of confirmed USO orders which were above £3,400 (the reasonable cost threshold') were:

- Between April 2022 and September 2022: 160
- Between September 2021 and September 2022: 40
- From April 2020 to September 2022: 169

*3) What was the average (mean) quote above £3,400*

*4) What was the highest quote above £3,400*

*5) What was the average (mean) amount paid by individuals for services above £3,400*

*6) What was the highest amount paid by individuals for services above £3,400*

Ofcom does not hold data broken down in this way, or for the whole period requested. We have some data provided by BT for the period up to May 2021 on the total estimated costs of connecting remaining premises eligible for the USO. However, this data was provided to Ofcom by BT and we consider that it is exempt from disclosure under section 44 of the FOI Act. This exemption provides that information is to be withheld if its disclosure is prohibited under other legislation – in this case section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 (the "Communications Act").

Section 393(1) of the Communications Act prohibits the disclosure of information about a particular business, which we have obtained in the course of exercising a power conferred by, among other legislation, the Communications Act, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption under the Communications Act and does not require a public interest test.

*7) How many of the 498,000 premises that now have gigabit capable broadband due to Project Gigabit were experiencing broadband speeds of below 10 Mbps (the national minimum standard)?*

*8) How many of the 498,000 premises to be passed with gigabit-capable broadband with gigabit capable broadband due to Project Gigabit were experiencing broadband speeds of below 30 Mbps?*

Project Gigabit and the voucher scheme is run by the UK Government and delivered by Building Digital UK (BDUK), it is not an Ofcom scheme and we do not therefore hold the requested data. [Further information on Project Gigabit](#) is available on the government's website.

*9) Of the 106,000 gigabit broadband vouchers issued: how many of these premises were experiencing broadband speeds of below 10 Mbps (the national minimum standard)?*

*10) Of the 106,000 gigabit broadband vouchers issued: how many of these premises were experiencing broadband speeds below 30 Mbps?*

We do not hold this data. While Ofcom collects data from BDUK on the number of gigabit vouchers it has issued for the purposes of our estimates on the numbers of remaining properties that may be eligible for the USO (which we report on in our Connected Nations reports), we have not analysed the data to identify the figures you have requested.

*11) Please could you provide a breakdown of the total value of procurements launched to date by Project Gigabit into the 12 NUTS 1 regions of the UK?*

See response to questions 7-8 above.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any queries, then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Temiloluwa Dawodu

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

#### Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review, **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF