

There was a major change from Building Digital UK (BDUK) earlier this year which was the termination of the Project Gigabit contract with Freedom Fibre. Therefore, BDUK are currently exploring other delivery solutions which potentially include working with Openreach, this is still to be confirmed. Due to this change in procurement approach, it has put a lot of activity on hold at the moment, whilst they come to an arrangement on the large-scale delivery approach for Cheshire.

The Government deadline was originally 2030 to deliver fibre broadband to 99% of homes across the UK. However, since the latest spending review we have seen this date change to 2032. When Government reaches an agreement on the new contract for Project Gigabit, there will be a better understanding of where is to be connected and hopefully by what date. For areas which fall outside of this delivery, alternative solutions can be explored.

The Digital Cheshire team have developed the "Alt-Tech" Grant Scheme. This will allow residents and businesses who still struggle with bad connectivity to receive advice and equipment to enable use of an alternative solutions utilising 4G mobile broadband. The grant scheme itself will cover the equipment and installation of this solution, which also uses an external (mounted on the premises) antenna to obtain the strongest mobile signal possible with the homeowner only being responsible for the monthly service cost which is below £40 per month for a year (further discounted for longer contract durations if required). If people would like to find out more about accessing 4G broadband and benefitting from the Alternative Technology Grant Scheme, please **contact the Digital Cheshire team**. <https://digital-cheshire.co.uk/4g-broadband-grant-scheme/>