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## Over 77,000 properties now able to connect to the fibre network

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### Newsletter – October 2022

By CSWSTAFF | Published: 7TH OCTOBER 2022

Over 77000 properties now able to connect to the fibre network

#### Topics in this edition:

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#### CSW Project updates – Contract 3

Another 20 Contract 3 structures have now gone live since our last newsletter was published in June. The communities benefiting from these most recent upgrades include parts of:

Admington, Alveston, Bishopton, Black Hill, Budbrooke, Clifford Chambers, Frankton, Great Wolford, Grendon, Hartshill, Heathcote, Kingsbury, Middleton, Napton on the Hill, Princethorpe, Stockton, Upper Brailes and Welford-on-Avon.

As a result of this, **over 77,000** properties across the region are now able to connect to the fibre network thanks to the work of the CSW Broadband Project.

As always, once we have received confirmation that a particular upgrade has been completed, we will try and inform as many of the affected residents as possible.

**Remember, once your property has been upgraded, you won't get a faster service automatically. You need to order the improved service with your chosen ISP in order to benefit from the upgrade.**

To check on your property's superfast status, enter your landline number or address into the [BT Broadband Availability Checker](#). Our [How to use the BT Broadband Availability Checker](#) webpage will help you make sense of the Broadband Checker results.

You might like to use a broadband comparison site such as [MoneySavingExpert.com](#), [Broadband Choices](#), [Compare the Market](#), [BroadbandProviders](#) or [uSwitch](#) to find a fibre broadband package to suit you and your family's needs.

#### How CSW is helping to deliver Project Gigabit's objectives

Back in July 2018, the government published the [Future Telecoms](#)

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**Infrastructure Review**, which outlined their ambitious plans to provide world-class digital connectivity that is ‘gigabit-capable’, reliable, long-lasting and widely available across the UK.

The intention was to make the UK a world leader in digital connectivity – increasing our competitiveness, boosting productivity and meeting the future demands of both consumers and businesses.

In March 2021, the UK government unveiled Project Gigabit – the £5bn rollout programme that would help them to achieve these objectives. The aim is to provide gigabit-capable broadband speeds of up to 1000Mbps to at least 85% of UK premises by the end of 2025 and at least 99% by 2030.

About 80% of the nation’s gigabit-capable coverage is expected to be achieved by commercial providers through their own deployment build plans.

The focus of Project Gigabit, therefore is on improving the connectivity of those final 20% of homes and businesses, where the private sector network builders have no plans to do so. These areas typically being located in the more rural and semi-rural areas of the country.

In England, the Project Gigabit programme is being centrally managed by BDUK (Building Digital UK) who have put Warwickshire and Leicestershire together in a contractable region known as Lot 11. It will be the job of the CSW team to oversee the upgrade of properties not covered by commercial plans in this area.

The first step – before procurements can begin and contracts can be awarded – is to identify precisely which areas of Warwickshire and Leicestershire are not expected to benefit from the build plans of commercial network builders over the next three years.

Only once we have the answer to that can we identify where public funding will need to be allocated.

We are currently in the process of helping BDUK to ascertain this information with a view to Lot 11 then going out to tender early next year with the build programme likely to start at the end of 2023.

Of course, the CSW Broadband Project is already delivering on these Project Gigabit objectives and has been for some time. Around 20% of our Contract 2 build and 99% of our Contract 3 build has been delivering gigabit-capable, full fibre solutions to homes and businesses across Solihull and Warwickshire.

Our Local Full Fibre Networks Project (LFFN) has also upgraded 220 public sector buildings across Warwickshire. 159 of these were schools – including 138 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 5 nursery schools and 4 community special schools.

Other sites that benefited from this upgrade included 19 libraries, 12 fire stations, 5 hospitals, 5 social services buildings, 4 county council or district council offices and 3 community centres amongst others.

In addition, nearly 1000 residential and business properties that were in close proximity to the above sites were also able to take advantage of having a full fibre connection.

We will of course provide you with regular updates on how the Lot 11 procurement and contracting process progresses over the coming months via this newsletter.

## **CityFibre to start £17m rollout of FTTP broadband in Rugby**

Network builder CityFibre has begun the £17 million rollout of a new gigabit-

capable Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband network across Rugby – with the aim of reaching nearly every home and business in the town.

The project, which started in September, is being backed by Callan Connect – one of CityFibre’s existing civil engineering partners, who also worked with CityFibre on their Coventry and Solihull network builds.

The infrastructure build has already started in the Rokeby, Overslade and New Bilton areas of the town, with the full deployment expected to be completed in early 2024.

With Rugby already well served by Virgin Media’s broadband network and Openreach also in the midst of a large FTTP deployment across the same area, CityFibre will no doubt face some competition for customers from their gigabit-capable rivals in the town.

However, for local residents and businesses, this can only be a good thing as such competition is likely to see some attractively-priced deals being offered by different network providers all vying for their custom.

Back in August, CityFibre also started work to bring full fibre connectivity within reach of almost every home and business in Binley Woods in Warwickshire.

The new infrastructure rollout that will future-proof the town’s digital needs for generations to come is expected to be completed by late 2022.

Local residents and businesses can find out more about these builds and register their interest at [www.cityfibre.com/homes](http://www.cityfibre.com/homes).

## Ofcom asks broadband ISPs to halt price hikes & offer social tariffs

Ofcom has recently revealed that 29% of UK households (8 million) – double last year’s 15% – are still having problems paying their phone, broadband and TV bills. In response, they’ve called on major ISPs to reconsider annual price rises and have ordered some ISPs to introduce social tariffs as soon as possible – [as reported by ISPReview recently](#).

The article notes that consumer broadband, phone and mobile services are often considered to be quite reasonably priced in the UK, but there are always those – often in the most disadvantaged groups – who may struggle with paying their bills. This has become a much bigger problem thanks to the pandemic, a surge in inflation and the cost of living crisis.

The UK Government and Ofcom has so far largely responded to this crisis by encouraging more ISPs to proactively introduce and promote low-cost social tariffs and Ofcom has also previously warned of further action if providers fail to put more effort into tackling this issue, which they said could include the potential introduction of an industry-wide regulated social tariff.

A number of providers have launched social tariffs or upgraded ones they already had and take-up of social tariffs has more than doubled in the last 6-months from 55,000 to 136,000 homes but that is still on 3% of those eligible.

Ofcom have also expressed concern that many of those same ISPs have separately continued to hit their regular customers with inflation busting annual price hikes of around 10% with even higher prices expected for 2023.

In Ofcom’s view, such providers should now “consider whether large price rises can be justified at times of exceptional financial hardship,” but they’ve so far stopped short of making a more significant market intervention.

The regulator’s recently published ‘[Treating vulnerable customers fairly](#)’ paper provides revised guidance on how firms should support customers in debt or who

are struggling to pay and states that providers should rotate between a range of communications channels – such as letters, email, phone and text – to increase the chances of reaching customers in debt to offer support.

As ever, the biggest barrier to the adoption of a social tariff remains the issue of awareness, with 70% of eligible customers not even realising that such packages exist – despite all the publicity that has been given to them over the last 12 months. The onus is clearly on ISPs to do a better job promoting them.

For more information about the social tariffs that are currently available through a variety of ISPs and whether you and your family qualify for one of these packages, MoneySavingExpert.com's [Broadband for low income families](#) webpage is a good source of information and advice that is updated on a regular basis.

## Copy for your own website or newsletter

As always, we have a range of [short articles of around 300 words that can be downloaded](#) for use in your own newsletters / websites should you wish to use them.

## Your questions answered

Here are some of the Questions and Answers (Q&A's) that residents have raised recently. Our website has a full set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#), which are regularly updated.

### Can CSW Broadband influence how much suppliers charge for their services?

With the cost of living crisis starting to bite, this is something that we are often asked. However, we have no influence over the prices charged by commercial providers. Our role is to extend the wholesale fibre network as far as possible, and we are doing this through the contracts that we hold with Openreach.

As access to the network is available to all suppliers on an equal basis it is a purely commercial decision on the part of an ISP as to which packages they offer and at which price range.

The best thing is to shop around for a deal that is right for you. Please remember that some price comparison sites work by receiving a commission from the ISPs and may not list all of the available options. Therefore, you may want to try several such sites before making a decision.

A number of websites, including [MoneySavingExpert.com](#), [Usave](#) and [Which?](#) provide useful advice on how to haggle for the best broadband deals which will hopefully save you money at a time when broadband prices are set to rise.

As mentioned earlier in this update, with many households currently struggling to pay their broadband bill, MoneySavingExpert.com's [Broadband for low income families](#) webpage provides regularly updated information on the social tariffs that are currently available and information to help you find out if you qualify for these.

### What is the process for ordering and installing an FTTP service?

The ordering and final installation process for the Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) solutions that are now being rolled out in Contract 3 of the CSW Broadband Project is a little bit different to the FTTC (Fibre to the Cabinet) solutions that were predominantly rolled out during Contracts 1 and 2.

'WBC FTTP' will be listed under 'Featured Products' on the [BT Broadband Availability Checker](#) results page, if FTTP is available at your property. For

more information on making sense of the results returned from your enquiry, visit our [‘How to use the BT Broadband Availability Checker’](#) webpage.

As the level of full fibre coverage has steadily increased across the UK, so have the number of ISPs offering FTTP packages. For a full list of all the ISPs who have stated that they offer residential and business packages across the CSW region, please visit our [Fibre to the Premise \(FTTP\)](#) webpage.

There are a number of comparison sites that you can use to find the best FTTP broadband package for your needs and your wallet, including:

[MoneySuperMarket.com](#), [Broadband Finder](#), [Broadband Choices](#), [Broadband Genie](#), [Broadband Providers](#), [Choose](#), [Comparethemarket](#) and [u-Switch](#).

Whichever ISP you chose to provide your service, the installation process will be similar to that shown in this short [installing full fibre to your property](#) film from Openreach.

Once you have ordered a service with your chosen ISP, they will contact Openreach. They will then arrange an appointment to come and fit the service. The engineer will run fibre from the nearest distribution point (either over a pole or via underground ducting) to your property. The fibre will then be connected to a small box on the outside wall of your property at ground level.

The fibre will then be run through your wall to the inside of your property, where the engineer will install a small powered wall-mounted unit that they will then plug your router into.

They will then typically test your full fibre connection on one of your preferred devices to make sure that the service is working properly and that you can start making the most of your faster and more dependable connection.

Finally, it is worth noting that the ‘WBC FTTP’ product should not be confused with the far more expensive FTTP on Demand – a separate commercial product offered by BT which is NOT being installed through the CSW Broadband Project.

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