



The Universal Service Commitment (USC) and the Universal Service Obligation (USO)

Universal Service Commitment (USC)

The Government set out to deliver superfast fibre across 95% of the UK but also pledged access to at least 2mbps for everyone. The access to at least 2mbps promise is called the Universal Service Commitment (USC). Government has chosen to deliver this via a voucher scheme which provides a subsidy for individual householders or businesses towards the installation of satellite, wireless broadband or 4g. Vouchers can also be collected by a number of people in an area and used to buy fibre services. The scheme is run and managed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport but is administered locally by the e-Sussex team, who publish DCMS information and undertake eligibility checks. Information can be found at <http://www.esussex.org/national-better-broadband-scheme/>

Universal Service Obligation (USO)

In order to ensure that Britain's telecoms infrastructure is fit for the future and will continue to deliver the connectivity that consumers need in the digital age, universal high speed broadband is to be delivered by a regulatory Universal Service Obligation (USO), the government confirmed in December 2017. The decision means that everyone in Britain will have the legal right to request minimum speeds of 10Mbps by 2020 regardless of where they live or work

According to the government, this is the speed that will meet the typical needs of a family that wants to browse the web, stream films and carry out video conferencing at the same time.

BT had volunteered to deliver universal high-speed broadband to all areas of the UK, as an alternative to regulation. However, the government has decided that this plan was not viable. It believes the regulatory approach offers a number of benefits to consumers, such as the fact the minimum speed of connection can increase over time as people's connectivity requirements evolve.

Furthermore, the Government has said the USO provides for greater enforcement to help make sure homes and businesses get connected, as well as maximise the provision of fixed line connections in the hardest to reach areas.

More detailed information has yet to be published by the Government about how the USO will work and how it will be funded. Local Authority projects will **not** be responsible for delivering the USO.

Adapted from information provided by U Switch: www.uswitch.com/broadband