

Connecting society – 2016/17 summary



We believe that a connected society is a better society. By helping more people get online, we're opening the door to life-changing opportunities. And we're investing in young people's ability to make the most of that connectivity, by building a culture of tech literacy for the next generation.

Access to the internet is a powerful tool for social change. Information and communication technology is supporting the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by providing better access to education, healthcare and employment. But millions of people in the UK and many more around the world are not online. We're working to change that.

We can make the biggest difference through our core products and services that contribute to wellbeing, education, and to improving people's financial prospects. We measure our impact by looking at the number of people helped and the social value this has created.

We aspire to become the UK's digital champion, and are investing in our network to connect people, businesses and communities to superfast broadband. We want to help everyone get connected, and to keep them connected. By supporting the most vulnerable in society, we're helping them overcome barriers to access like age and impairment.

We're using our technology to deliver education, healthcare and financial empowerment to those who need it most, as it's what you can do with that connectivity that really matters. That's also why we're committed to building a culture of tech literacy for the next generation, and ensuring young people have the tech know-how to be able to thrive in our digital society.

Our 2020 ambitions

More than 9/10 people in the UK will have access to fibre-based products and services

9/10

Premises reached by March 2017:

8.8/10

Help 10 million people overcome social disadvantage through the benefits our products and services can bring

10m

Helped since 2014/15:

3.9m

Help 5 million children receive better teaching in computing and tech skills

5m

Helped since 2014/15 school year:

1.1m

2016/17 highlights

Extending connectivity

We've reached 88% of UK premises by providing access to our fibre-based products and services. And we're on track to help the Government achieve 95% fibre coverage by the end of 2017. We've also launched our community fibre partnerships initiative, to work with local groups to bring fibre to their area.

Keeping people connected, whatever the weather

We're helping people stay connected, even in adverse circumstances such as flooding. We've made major upgrades to our flood defence capabilities, and increased the size of our emergency response team.

Supporting online access for all

Together with Wales and West Housing, we've created one of the largest free (at point of use) wi-fi networks in social housing. And we're helping local residents build the skills they need to get online.

Connecting refugees

We've provided free wi-fi hotspots and IT equipment to eight refugee centres in Serbia and Macedonia, to help over 315,000 refugees stay in touch with their families and access information to help them on their arduous journeys.

Promoting tech literacy



Peter Weir, MLA, Minister for the Department of Education, at Fane Lane Primary School, Belfast for the launch of the Barefoot Computing Project in Northern Ireland.

The Barefoot Computing Project has now reached more than 39,000 teachers and helped 1.1m children get better teaching in computing and tech skills. And we're helping young people step up to the jobs of the future, through Work Ready and our partnership with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation – reaching over 2,050 young people this year.

Connecting society – 2016/17 summary continued

Bristol community marks our fibre milestone



The Yard area of Bristol was the 200th community in the UK to sign a jointly funded deal with BT to get fibre-based broadband for their area. The project is part of our Community Fibre Partnerships programme which exists to get faster internet to the last 5% of the UK not currently covered by the fibre broadband roll-out scheme.

Numerous local businesses and 39 households will benefit from the faster internet connection. The Garden Bristol, an outdoor childcare project based in The Yard, was part of the group that applied for a BT grant. With our £6,426 contribution and additional funding from the local community it will soon enjoy download speeds of up to 80Mbps.

Enabling healthcare in rural Ghana



We're enabling community healthcare workers in rural Ghana to get expert advice from doctors to help their patients. The new telehealth centre we created with the Novartis Foundation is helping to expand access to quality healthcare in remote areas by cutting down transport times and costs for patients, and avoiding unnecessary referrals. During the pilot phase, hospital referrals have fallen by 37% – which could save the Ghana Health Service over £2bn per year.

Superfast broadband helps carve out a new career



Michael Barnfather dreamt of leaving his office job of 30 years to launch his own business as a cabinet maker. With the arrival of superfast broadband in his seaside town of Withernsea, he's been able to make this dream a reality.

Before, the limited bandwidth meant Michael often struggled to send large files like the bespoke cabinet designs he needed to show clients. All that changed when BT partnered with East Riding of Yorkshire Council to deliver superfast broadband to Withernsea.

Michael now stores all his designs on a remote cloud. He can upload and share large design files in seconds. He's even created an online showcase of his designs to show customers and help him build his business.

Keeping mountain rescuers connected in the Lake District



The Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team in the Lake District is one of the busiest search and rescue teams in England. It's made up entirely of volunteers who are on call 24/7. They carry out around 60 mountain rescues a year and respond to local community needs when extreme weather hits.

[Patterdale Mountain Rescue](#) depend on reliable communications to quickly co-ordinate and respond to call-outs. We've installed a broadband satellite system at their base to provide emergency communications for the team and the local community if regular networks go down. The system's emergency back-up generator means the team is totally self-sufficient in a power cut too. Keeping Patterdale Mountain Rescue connected enables them to help people in need and save lives, whatever the weather.

Bringing wi-fi to refugees in Eastern Europe



Persecution, conflict and poverty have forced more than 1 million people to flee to Western Europe in the last two years. Thousands of refugees have passed through Serbia and Macedonia, putting huge strain on resources.

We've provided free wi-fi hotspots and IT equipment to eight refugee centres in Serbia and Macedonia, supported by SOS Children's Villages. For many refugees, free ICT services are the only way to stay connected with their families and friends on their arduous journeys. They can also find out about travel connections and immigration policies of countries along their way.

Over 315,000 refugees used these services in the first eight months. Aid organisations and government agencies also use them for urgent communications in emergency situations.