

SuperConnected Broadband Team

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See what faster internet connectivity could do for your business

We have a commitment to support businesses in Manchester, helping you to grow, and as such we are helping to fund the physical cost of getting superfast internet connectivity.

A faster internet connection can make your organisation more efficient, cheaper to run and easier to develop.

Some of the ways you could benefit:

- More people can share your connection at one time and still enjoy high speeds
- Services such as videoconferencing, which require faster speeds, work better
- Services such as 'voice over IP' become possible for more users, replacing conventional telephones
- 'Cloud'-based services, where you can store information 'virtually', work faster and with shorter delays.

We have vouchers giving up to £3,000 of help with connection costs.

It's a grant, not a loan, so you don't need to pay us back.

In most cases, the voucher we are offering (which will be accepted by most internet service providers, including the best-known household names) will cover the cost of getting connected, leaving you to just pay the VAT and monthly subscription cost.

If you're a sole trader or a self-employed home worker, or if you employ fewer than 250 people, as long as your turnover is less than approximately £43million each year and you don't already have a superfast connection, you could be eligible for this grant*.

Even if you are in a building with several tenants, or your landlord provides a managed service, you can apply for a grant to improve your connectivity.

It's easy to apply – just visit manchester.gov.uk/superconnected and complete the application form.

If you would like advice or support on using superfast connectivity to grow your business, then register for the launch event at businessgrowthhub.com/events/broadband-connection-vouchers-launch-event

Yours sincerely,



Dawn Royle
Strategic Lead, SuperConnected Cities,
Manchester City Council

* Eligibility will be decided on a number of criteria, including size and type of business.

A superfast connection helped Blue Orchid to adopt new ways of working

Formed in 2001, Blue Orchid provides services for people who want to set up their own business, secure a job, or gain training and qualifications. These services include workshops, training programmes and one-to-one business support.

The company has always been keen to invest in its IT systems and take full advantage of the latest technology. In the past three years, Blue Orchid has opened new offices, first across the north west and then further afield in the UK, to get closer to its clients.

“With sites across the UK and a lot of data to move around, we had a particular need to upgrade our broadband,” explains Blue Orchid director Jim Crook.

Now employing almost 100 people, the company needs the most efficient IT resources possible, as it plans to expand further by offering a range of new services that will help new and growing businesses to access premises, grants and loans.

“We try to interact with clients a lot through the web, and their expectation these days is for that interaction to be Amazon-standard – to be ‘one click’ wherever possible,” says Jim.

“It’s exciting to re-engineer the business by taking advantage of new technology, and it’s all driven by client demand. Clients want to interact with businesses as they wish, whether through traditional methods or online; and in all cases, it has to be as convenient as possible.”

To help further its expansion, Blue Orchid applied to Manchester City Council for a grant to help fund the installation of superfast broadband in its Manchester city centre hub. Jim was delighted with the hassle-free process, which took around two weeks from the first online enquiry to receiving the benefit of greatly improved broadband speeds for his growing company.

“The timing of this grant scheme was perfect for us,” says Jim.

“The response from the Council to our application was immediate. It was a straightforward process done online. There wasn’t any burdensome bureaucracy to get in the way.”

“We got the nod in a couple of days. It took a week for the engineering work to be done and we went live within two weeks of making initial contact.

“With our superfast broadband now up and running, we have been able to migrate a lot of our business to a new ‘cloud’ customer relationship management system. We have to have reliable and speedy broadband for this to work.”

Jim urges any business which is considering making the jump to superfast or ultrafast broadband to visit www.manchester.gov.uk/superconnected now.

“Moving a lot of our functions, such as our accounts, onto the cloud has reduced our IT spend significantly. We now have double the capacity, for a quarter of the cost of our previous system.

“Getting a grant to install superfast broadband takes very little of your time. You’ll receive good advice and support throughout the process and it can help take your business to the next level.”