



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

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# **A DSIT update: delivering comprehensive rural connectivity**

*Matilda Rogers*

*Head of Rural Connectivity*

# Context



- The department is now over 2 years old!
- Digital inclusion is a priority for DSIT ministers
- Spending Review 2025 is ongoing and due to conclude in June
- According to Ofcom's December 2024 reporting, among UK residential rural premises:
  - 54% have access to a gigabit capable broadband connection
  - 89% have access to a superfast broadband connection



# Project Gigabit Aims

## PROJECT GIGABIT

UK government's programme to deliver **fast, reliable broadband** to hard-to-reach places across the UK



- Delivered by BDUK, Project Gigabit aims to deliver nationwide gigabit capable broadband connectivity by 2030
- Connecting hard to reach premises, outside of commercial plans





# Shared Rural Network (SRN)

- 4G now covered 95.3% of the UK landmass, meaning that the overarching 95% target for 4G geographic coverage has been met a year ahead of schedule
- Full coverage areas have increased from 66% of the UK landmass at the start of 2020 to over 80% of the UK landmass today
- Government funding underway includes:

EAS – extended  
area service

TNS – total  
not-spot

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# 5G Standalone



- Ambition for all populated areas of the UK to have higher quality standalone 5G by 2030
- Vodafone, Virgin Media O2 and EE have all launched standalone 5G networks in a number of large towns and major cities
- According to Ofcom, 5G (combined standalone and non-standalone 5G) is available outside 95% of UK premises from at least one mobile operator

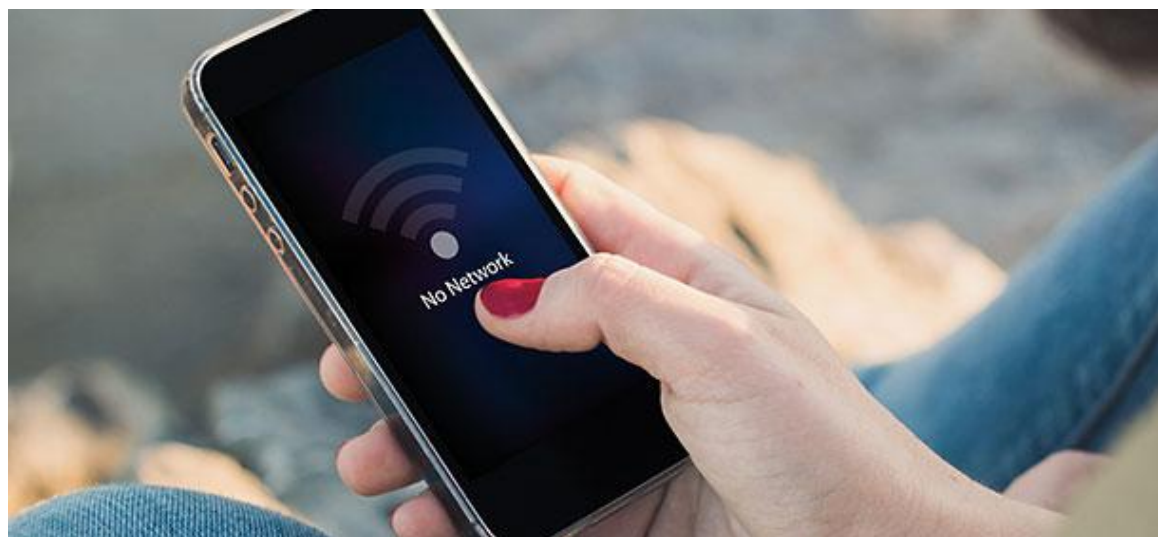
## 5G coverage outside of premises across the nations

England	96%
Northern Ireland	92%
Scotland	91%
Wales	86%



# Mobile Coverage Reporting

- Strong ministerial interest in Ofcom's coverage reporting
- Key priority for Minister Bryant is for Ofcom to improve their measuring and reporting of mobile coverage
- We are continuing to work with Ofcom to ensure that they deliver meaningful improvements to their coverage reporting





# Connecting VHTR Premises

- The vast majority of premises will receive improved connectivity via commercial activity or through Project Gigabit
- Where this is not possible, we continue work to identify where support might be required to accelerate the deployment of appropriate technologies

Alpha Trials

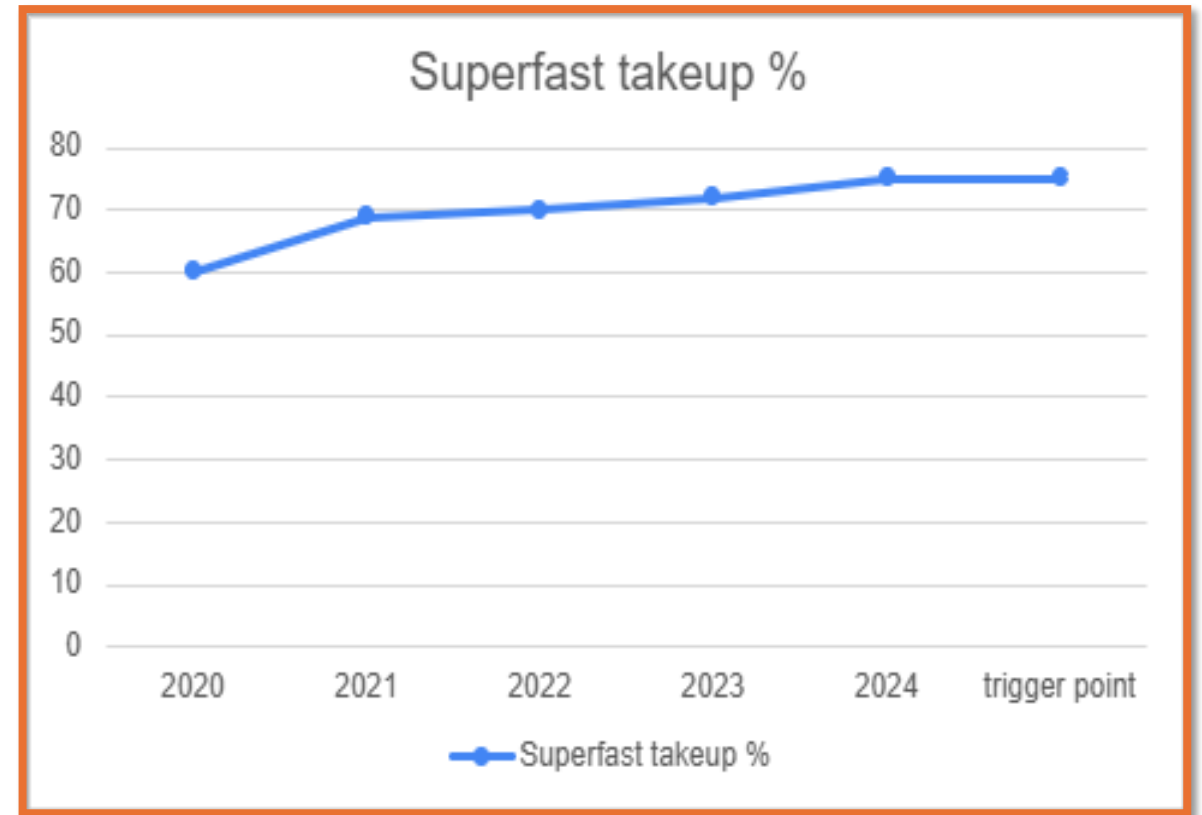
Rural  
Connectivity  
Accelerator

UK Space/ESA



# Broadband Universal Service Obligation

- Provides the right to request decent broadband connectivity
- Approximately 58k premises are unable to access a decent broadband service, with 48k premises estimated as eligible
- The legislated trigger point to review the broadband USO was reached in December



# Barrier Busting



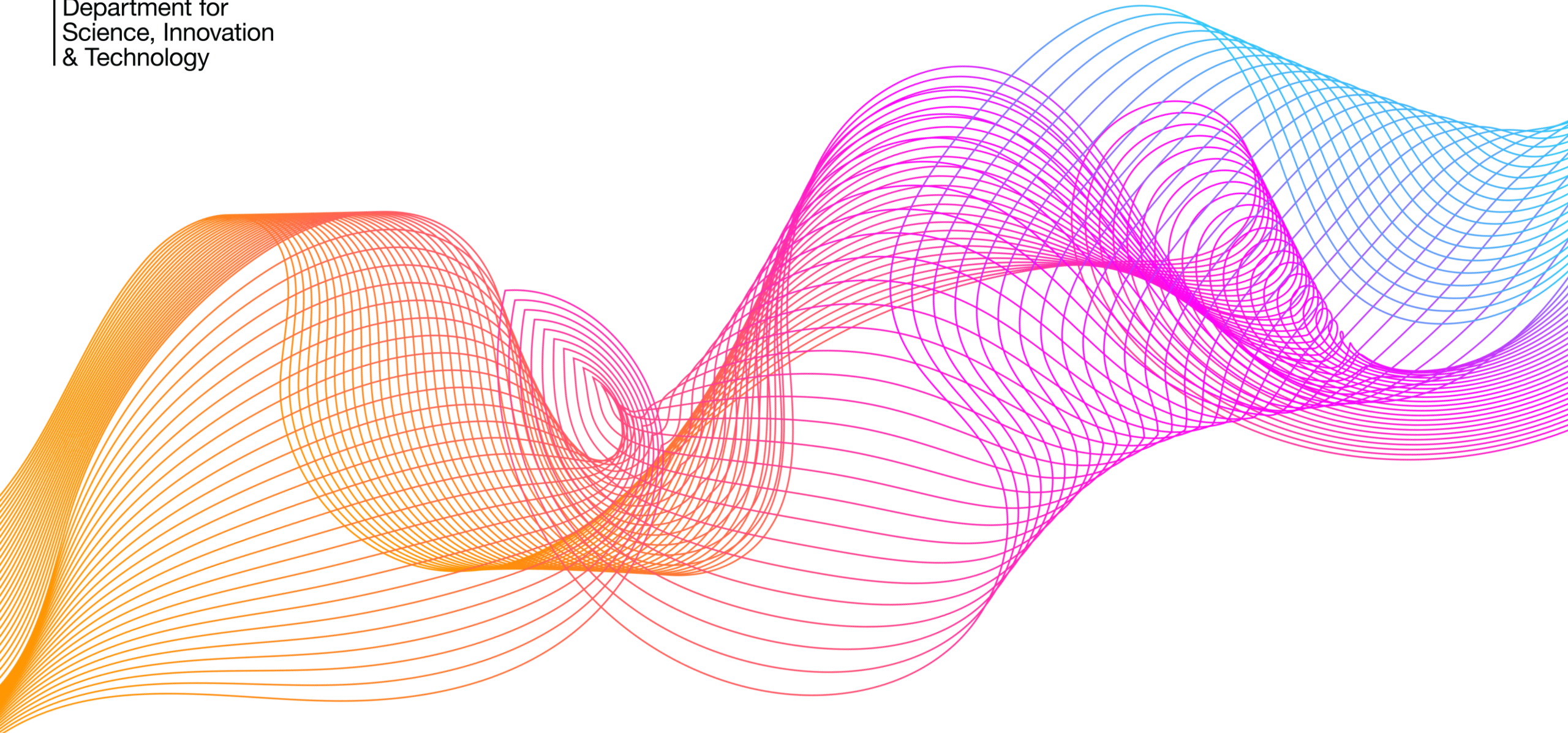
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- Committed to implementing all remaining provisions of the Product Security and Telecommunications Act 2022 as soon as possible
- Most provisions have already been implemented, with those remaining being complex and technical
- Flexi permit trials are due to conclude in July, with a view to being implemented in the second half of 2026



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