

I live in an area which is not served by ADSL broadband. We are reliant on satellite broadband which is unreliable and extremely expensive to install and run. A fibre optic duct has been laid through our village (Elphin, IV27 4HH) but we have been told we won't be connected as we are too far from the exchange (8 miles).

It is extremely important for the health of our community that we're connected. The internet has become essential not just for home-workers but day-to-day living. For example, RBS bank closed our local branch in Lochinver so access to digital banking is vital. DEFRA is trying to phase out paper application for Common Agricultural Policy payments - so online access is similarly important in our crofting community.

At the moment we pay £40/month for 20MG of data to Europasat satellite broadband provider. I feel very discriminated against that we are tied to one provider who is so much more expensive than BT/Talk Talk/Sky etc.

I think it is very important that the USO builds capacity for the broadband of the future. Satellite broadband was originally installed in our village through the Scottish Government's Broadband Reach project in 2007. However, the time lag between consulting and installation meant that by the time the equipment was installed it was outdated. When the government consulted in 2005 people on dial-up connections really only used the internet for email so they couldn't imagine that in 2007 they would expect to do digital banking, video streaming, iplayer etc.