



Broadband: The small business view

FSB one page briefing

A fast, reliable and guaranteed broadband service is crucial for small businesses as we look towards, growth and prosperity in the private sector.

Despite the potential that online access promises, the reality is very different for small businesses as they struggle to access the broadband speeds they require, reducing their productivity.

Small businesses have said that their priorities are access to broadband and a higher broadband speed. Broadband is not an added luxury to small business operations but rather a vital utility - similar to gas and electricity.

The Government target of a minimum of 2 Mbps by 2015 is inadequate. The urgent need for significantly better broadband provision for small businesses is here and now. The FSB urges Government to elevate the status of broadband and make it a universal service obligation.

Where fibre optic solutions are not available, the FSB is urging the government to look at mobile solutions as a compliment to fibre.

Government must reinvest public money, saved on digitalising government services, into fibre optic broadband provision throughout the UK, particularly in rural areas where service levels in some locations are still poor.

FSB recommendations:

- Deploy a future proof broadband strategy where fibre to the premises is the most sustainable solution. However, where fibre optic broadband is not available mobile broadband can work as a complimentary service.
- Make broadband provision a universal service obligation to ensure faster and more consistent deployment across the whole of the UK.
- Reinvest public money saved on digitalising government services into fibre optic broadband provision throughout the UK including rural areas.

The FSB calls on the Government to accept our recommendations to help small businesses thrive in the digital age and seek a strategic, future-proof solution.

Key Statistics

- 90 per cent of FSB members use the internet in running their business
- A lack of broadband speed and acceptable IP throughput reduces productivity for 33 per cent of small businesses
- 63 per cent of FSB members are unhappy with the speed and reliability of their internet connection
- 13 per cent of FSB members would consider moving business premises to an area with faster broadband
- 94 per cent of FSB members feel their service providers' offerings are failing to match their advertising claims
- Government will save several billion pounds by bringing public services online

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