

Consultation response form

Please complete this form in full and return to Broadband.USO@ofcom.org.uk.

Consultation title	Approach to high excess costs under the broadband universal service
Full name	Dr. John Lindsay Wild
Contact phone number	[X]
Representing (delete as appropriate)	Self
Organisation name	
Email address	[X]

Confidentiality

We ask for your contact details along with your response so that we can engage with you on this consultation. For further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights, see [Ofcom's General Privacy Statement](#).

Your details: We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Is there anything else you want to keep confidential? Delete as appropriate.	Nothing
Your response: Please indicate how much of your response you want to keep confidential. Delete as appropriate.	None
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	Yes

Your response

Question	Your Response:
Question 1: Do you agree with our proposal to amend the treatment of excess costs in determining eligibility for a USO connection, where excess costs are above £5,000? Please set out your reasons and supporting evidence for your response.	<p>Yes, but more is needed</p> <p>Confidential? – No</p> <p>I live in Aberdeenshire (AB51 5HU), 5 km from the town of Inverurie, so rural but far from remote, with 4 Mb/s speed. My quote from BT was £132,000 to meet USO specifications, which would pay for 6 km of fibre from</p>

Pitcaple. No details of the quote were forthcoming except that about 50% was for trenching. The existing copper network is not buried, just laid on the surface in the verge or ditches.

The problem we have is that the existing copper network supports speeds by copper of over 10 Mb/s for a 'halo' of about 3 km. Along the cable route the approx. 25 houses in Pitcaple, 9 rural houses and 32 houses in Chapel of Garioch currently have speeds over 10 Mb/s, so are not eligible for USO grants. For the second 3 km the 15 rural houses average about 300 m apart, making the full incremental cost of connecting each property (beyond the 3 km limit) about £7,000. However, they must all bear the cost of the 3 km of fibre to reach past the limit of acceptable speed by copper cable, so the total individual cost would be around £12,000. This is beyond the means of most rural dwellers.

It is grossly unfair that, should we choose to pay a substantial sum to have full fibre, BT would then be able to link up the 66 houses on the upgraded route to fibre and profit from higher tariffs on an infrastructure we have paid for.

This 'halo' effect at the limits of fibre coverage means that most rural properties distributed around the UK will not benefit from USO. Either you need to change the name Universal to Selective or have a serious re-think about how to truly deliver a Universal Service, which you are under Obligation to provide, under my interpretation of the words and legislation.

I will be pleased to provide more details of the calculations and figures above at your request.