



23 May 2023

Ms Sarah Cremin  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts

By email

**Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (Vote 29)**

**Ref: S1291 PAC33**

Dear Ms Cremin,

I refer to your letter of 9 May 2023 seeking details from the Department on public buildings (libraries, schools, hubs, etc.) connected to the NBP network.

'Public buildings' is a broad term and could include a number of different types of buildings. This makes it difficult to provide a comprehensive picture of the number of public buildings passed; however, detailed figures are available for the number of schools and BCPs within the Intervention Area.

## **1. NUMBERS PASSED AND NUMBERS CONNECTED**

As of 12 May 2023, NBI reports that:

- Design work is completed in townlands across every county in Ireland with over 384,100 premises surveyed. This survey work is feeding into detailed designs for each deployment area.
- Over 40,300 Fibre-To-The-Premises connections are now completed across all counties.
- Over 151,200 premises across all counties can place orders and pre-orders through local broadband service providers.

The current rate of connections under the National Broadband Plan is ahead of forecast, and demand is very strong. Currently there are over 3,500 connections per month, and this is expected to increase to 4,000 connections per month by the end of 2023.

## **2. TARGETS AND TIMELINES**

In 2019, a mapping consultation was undertaken to determine the Intervention Area for the National Broadband Plan. This set out all premises where commercial operators were not providing, or were not intending to provide, high-speed broadband services. The ultimate goal of the National Broadband Plan is to ensure access to high-speed broadband to all premises in the intervention area - circa 600,000 premises at present, including new builds. This includes over 65,000 farms, 44,000 non-farm businesses and any schools, libraries, hubs, local authority buildings and local health centres, etc. which are not being served by commercial operators.

The Government is ensuring early connection to high-speed broadband in key locations in rural communities under the Strategic Connection Point (SCP) initiative. The SCP programme is a collaborative effort involving the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of

**29-31 Bóthar Adelaide, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 X285**

29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin, D02 X285

T +353 1 6782000 | 1890 44 99 00

[www.gov.ie/decc](http://www.gov.ie/decc)

Rural and Community Development, the Department of Education, Local Authorities and the owners and managers of the SCP sites.

There are two types of SCPs viz community facilities for public access (otherwise known as Broadband Connection Points or BCPs) and primary schools for educational access (school SCPs).

While the Department does not collate information on public buildings in the Intervention Area generally, BCPs are located in areas of community importance. These locations were selected by Broadband Officers in each Local Authority who were tasked with consulting with local communities and business to find the appropriate locations for the BCPs. BCPs are located in a variety of buildings, such as community centres, libraries, sports centres, etc.

The Government agreed to accelerate the rollout of high-speed broadband to some 679 schools across the State in the Intervention Area by end of H1 2023, ensuring that by that time all schools will have the necessary infrastructure to carry out their critical day to day educational activities unimpeded by poor broadband.

A SCP at a primary school location provides Wi-Fi exclusively for students and teachers and underpins the Department of Education's (DE) Digital Learning Framework for Schools.

As of 5 May 2023, NBI reports that there were 909 SCPs installed - 283 BCPs and 626 school SCPs.

The success of the SCP programme is underlined by the eduroam Everywhere initiative that has been established at a number of BCP sites. eduroam Everywhere (<https://www.eduroam.ie/>) is a new initiative aiming to enable eduroam, a WiFi service for education institutions, at additional locations off-campus.

Between 2021 and 2022, almost 500 new eduroam hotspots were delivered across Ireland. 268 of these hotspots are located in BCPs, increasing their appeal for students, researchers and university staff. Between 1 January 2022 and 4 January 2023, there were 95,121 successful access requests across Ireland, with 26,367 unique devices successfully accessing the eduroam network at BCPs.

### 3. CLARIFICATION REGARDING TARGETS

The build portion of the National Broadband Plan will be complete by 2027. The SCP programme will be complete during 2023, with all school SCPs and BCPs installed.

A Final Remedial Plan under the contract, was concluded in December 2022. Under this Plan, NBI is committed to delivering a cumulative target of 185,000 premises passed by the end of January 2024.

A copy of the latest NBP quarterly update for Q1 2023 is attached for the information of the Committee.

Should you require any clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Karen McCaffrey in my Department, by email at [karen.mccaffrey@DECC.gov.ie](mailto:karen.mccaffrey@DECC.gov.ie) or by phone at 087 738 1463.

Yours sincerely



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**Mark Griffin**  
**Secretary General**



An Roinn Comhshaoil,  
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide  
Department of the Environment,  
Climate and Communications

R1908 (iii) PAC33

A photograph of two workers in high-visibility vests and hard hats working on a utility pole in a rural landscape. A white van with 'NBI' branding is parked nearby. The scene is set against a blue sky with scattered clouds and a green field in the foreground.

# National Broadband Plan

PAC Quarterly Update – Q1 2023

# NBP Update Q1 2023

Over 36,127 premises across the country were connected to high-speed broadband under the National Broadband Plan (NBP) by the end of Q1 2023, with monthly Take Up reaching an average of 2,700 connections.

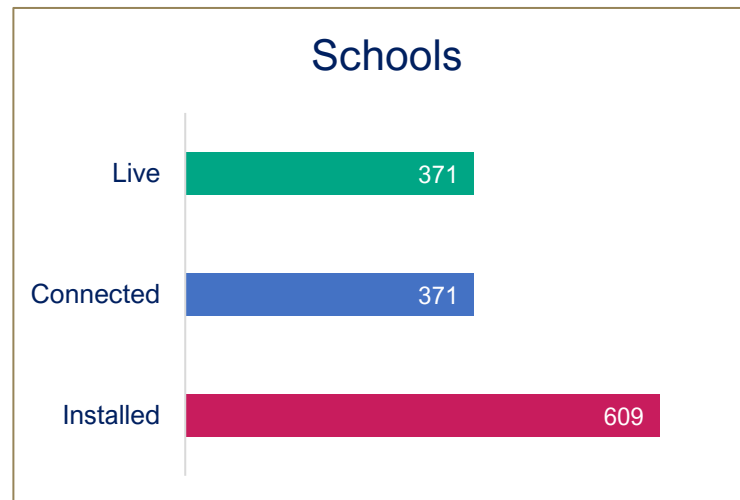
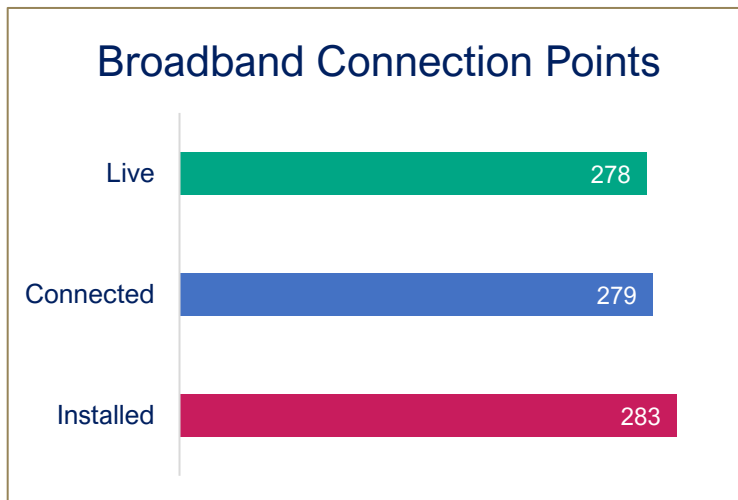
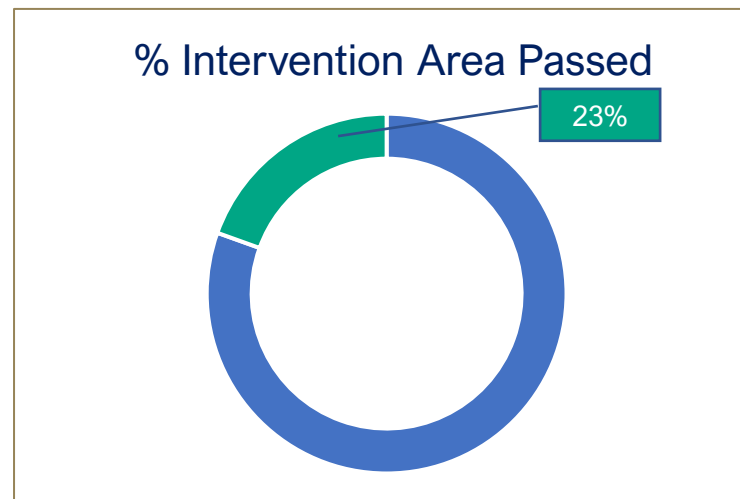
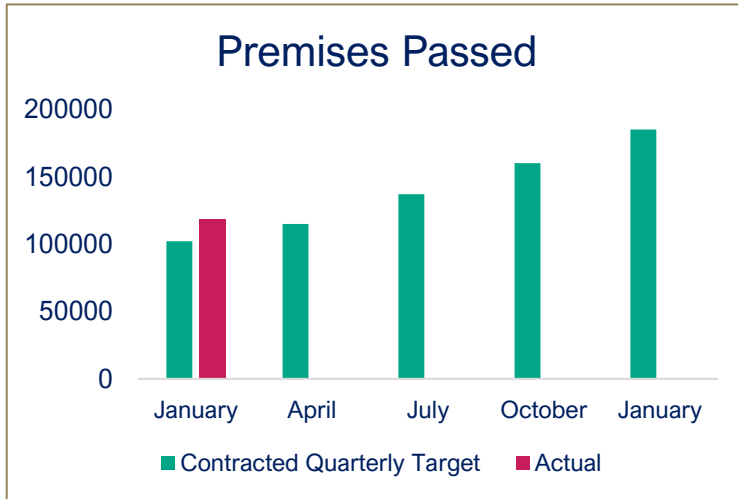
National Broadband Ireland (NBI) remains on track to meet its target to have passed more than 185,000 premises cumulative by the end of its fourth contract year (end of January 2024), having passed more than 131,000 premises by end March and with main fibre cabling build commenced in a further 161,000 premises.

There are over 280 community broadband connection points (BCPs), as well as more than 600 National Primary Schools, installed by NBI across the country and ready to provide interim high-speed services to thousands of local businesses, students and citizens.





# NBP Roll Out – Q1 2023



### Key Updates

**NBI's current targets**

- 185,000 Premises Passed by end January 2024.
- 284 Community Connection Points installed by H1 2023\*.
- 679 School Connection Points installed by H1 2023\*.

**Milestones achieved**

- 131,000 Premises Passed by end March 2023.
- 36,127 Premises connected to the NBP Network by end March 2023.
- 23% of Premises Passed have been connected – rate exceeding expectations.

For updates on individual Counties / DAs please visit: <https://nbi.ie/reps/>

Data as of 31 March 2023.

\*Targets shown are NBI targets for installation under the NBP Project Agreement. Connection of BCPs and Schools is dependent on agreements with the Dept of Rural and Community Development and Dept of Education respectively.

# NBP Roll Out – Q1 2023

## Key Updates

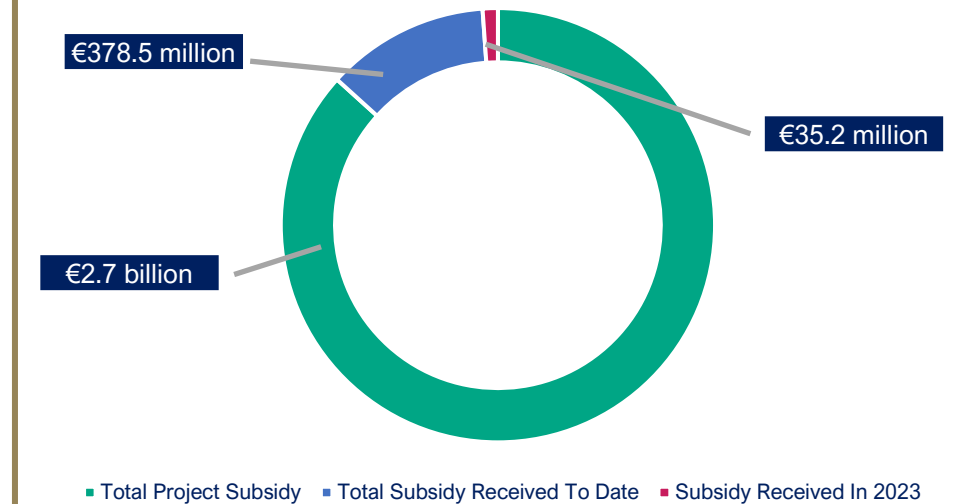
### Subsidy Drawdown

- €35.2m subsidy paid to NBI from January to March 2023.

### State Clawback

- €43 million of returns to the State under clawback provisions.

## Subsidy Drawdown



## Milestones Managed

- The contract with NBI contains a comprehensive set of protections and legally binding obligations. Under the contract NBI have significant reporting obligations regarding costs and revenue to be submitted to the Department. Subsidy is released upon achievement of contract milestones which are verified via an independent certification process.
- To March 2023, delay sanctions totalling €738,800 have been imposed in relation to build-related milestones for delays in passing deployment areas. This may be refundable if (or when) NBP achieves other build milestones ahead of its target. In addition, a performance credit sanction of €22,500 has been applied under the KPI regime.



## CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT

- By email - [broadband@decc.gov.ie](mailto:broadband@decc.gov.ie)

## CONTACT NATIONAL BROADBAND IRELAND

- General email contact – [contactus@nbi.ie](mailto:contactus@nbi.ie)
- Elected representatives email contact - [reps@nbi.ie](mailto:reps@nbi.ie)
- By phone - 0818 624 624

