

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should I sign up with HBC?

We expect that all Heriot residents will gain from our new service even although some may consider their current service via the Heriot Exchange adequate. Those further away from the exchange¹ will certainly find the service to be a major improvement to existing. We hope residents will support the scheme to ensure its viability for the community as a whole.

¹ The BT exchange *may* be upgraded under the “Next Steps” programme in 2017.

2. What speeds can I realistically expect from the HBC system and how much can I download?

Our target is to provide a symmetric service of at least 10 Mbps upload and download for at least 95% of the time. Actual speeds will often be greater than that but at times of heavy usage speeds may fall below the target due to network congestion. The fastest speed currently available in Heriot is about 6.6Mbps download speed only, and that is only available to those who live near the telephone exchange. New subscribers will not need to pay initially whilst the system is being set up and tested.

The download limit of 100 GB per month should be sufficient for a family of 3-5 people who do not rely upon Internet TV all of the time but who do watch occasional films or catch-up TV programs (BBC iPlayer, etc.). For example, listening to Internet radio or music services for an average of 4 hours a day will use 3 to 8 GB per month, depending upon the music quality (degree of compression). Standard definition videos, films and TV programs absorb 0.5 to 1 GB per hour, while high definition content absorbs up to 2 GB per hour. Most computer games are at least 10-15 GB to download, but online gaming should not use more than 2-3 GB per month unless someone is playing for more than 12 hours per day.

3. Who funds the infrastructure

Wind Farm Grants and local businesses currently fund the infrastructure and installation of HCB. Once the system is operational subscribers will be charged a competitive rate for the service.

4. Can I keep my existing email address?

Yes. Your current provider will advise but may charge a small fee for the service. BT, for example, charges about £1.90 per month.

5. How will I be billed?

Billing will be by Direct Debit via a company called Go-Cardless. This company has been researched, is reviewed at 4/5* by its users, and will allow individuals to set up easily an amount to be taken from your bank account monthly. The system is secure and Heriot Broadband Company will not have access to your account details. Heriot Broadband Company can increase amounts but you will be notified in advance of this.

6. Who profits from my payments?

Payments by individuals will start at around £12.50. Following a period of assessment of the service. You will be notified when charges are required. Higher speeds may be provided at a later date at increased costs, where possible, should individuals choose to upgrade but this will be after we install the basic service to most users. At present HBC needs sufficient members before profits are made. We need to provide a service to about 70 members before costs and outlays are met. Any further income received by additional subscribers will be used for maintenance of the hardware, repairs and replacements. As a Community Initiative Company we are not allowed to hold "profits". Accounts will be submitted to Companies House on an annual basis to ensure that members are fully aware of the status of the company.

7. What happens if damage occurs during the installation?

A brief survey will be undertaken prior to installation to ensure roofs/chimneys or buildings are satisfactory to take the receiver and cabling, which needs to be run inside to a router. HBC would not be liable for any damage to the property if fixings were found to be inadequate either due to age or lack of maintenance to the property. It will be the interest of the householder to make good any areas for potential fixings prior to work being carried out.

8. How long will installation take?

We are currently constructing the backbone of the system, the relay masts, and identifying suitable locations. Once they are installed we expect to be able to make connections within two to three weeks of your request subject to adequate stock being held.

9. Who do I speak to if something goes wrong?

There will be a back up service provided by HBC, and details will be provided in your contract although you will be expected to do simple checks before approaching HBC e.g. checking for power, re-starting your router etc.

10. If there is maintenance needed to the system how long might I be offline?

This will depend on whether the repair can be fixed remotely, or whether access is required to the property. Repairs to physical damage will depend to some degree on the cause. HBC undertake to replace faulty equipment we supply in the event it fails during a warranty period.

11. I would like to use HBC as a broadband provider. What's the next step?

Simply visit our website at www.heriotbroadband.co.uk and fill out the registration form or contact one of the directors.

This document may be subject to change.