Faster broadband for Barnsley

Superfast Broadband is coming to Barnsley thanks to a multi-million pound deal with BT. It means that fibre broadband will be available to around 98 per cent of homes and businesses across South Yorkshire, over a three year period.

Fibre broadband means everyone in the family can do their own thing online, all at the same time, whether it’s downloading music in minutes or watching catch-up TV, streaming HD or 3D movies in a few minutes, or posting photos and videos to social networking sites in seconds. It will also improve access to new job opportunities, and make it easier to shop around for cheaper services.

The benefits are also considerable for businesses, whose employees will be able to do much more in far less time. Firms can speed up file and data transfers, collaborate with colleagues and customers on conference or video calls or swap their hardware and expensive software licenses for files, processing power and software from cloud computing. Staff can work as effectively from home as they would in the office.

To sign up for a newsletter to keep you informed about the scheme, please visit the dedicated website www.superfastsouthyorkshire.co.uk

£21.94 million investment in the project

£270 million economic return

99.1% Barnsley coverage for homes and businesses

80% current high speed broadband access

98% high speed broadband access by 2017

---

Join Barnsley’s Shared Lives family

We’re looking for people who can open up their homes, lives and hearts to support people with dementia, mental health issues, or learning or physical disabilities.

By becoming a Shared Lives carer you can support people who’ve previously lived in a care home or struggled living home alone to do things they may have never done before or lost the confidence to do.

We understand the decision to open up your home and become a Shared Lives carer isn’t one you will take lightly. We will be there with you every step of the way from your initial enquiry and throughout your time as a carer.

To find out more visit www.barnsley.gov.uk/sharedlives where you can hear personal stories of some of the people and carers who are already part of our Shared Lives family.

You can also speak to us by calling 01226 775023 or 01226 776981.
Say yes to apprenticeships

Are you aged 16 to 24? Do you want to get onto the career ladder and have the chance to earn money while learning practical skills at work? Or are you already an apprentice who may have friends interested in following in your footsteps?

Perhaps you are a parent who wants to support your son or daughter to get a job and get on track to a new career.

Apprenticeships offer a fantastic opportunity for young people aged 16 to 24 to become independent and gain a qualification while developing work-related skills, with the chance to secure permanent employment afterwards.

Today’s apprenticeships are available across a range of professional sectors including business administration, customer service, electrical engineering, floristry, information technology and web design, and much more.

Apprenticeships are flexible programmes that mix training in the workplace with teaching in the classroom or workshop, followed by exams and practical assessments.

Barnsley Apprenticeship Hub is part of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Apprenticeship Hub Programme, which runs across 10 local authority areas. The scheme is delivered by Barnsley College from its Skills Hub on behalf of Barnsley Council.

The programme offers free advice to small and medium size businesses that want to find out about the benefits and practical steps involved in recruiting an apprentice.

To view current vacancies go to http://apprenticeshiphubs.co.uk/barnsley/vacancies

Barnsley Apprenticeship Hub is based at First For Apprenticeships Barnsley, Queens Court Business Centre, Regent Street, S70 2EG.

To find out more, visit www.firstforapprenticeships.barnsley.co.uk, email info@firstforapprenticeships.barnsley.co.uk or call 01226 216839.

The National Apprenticeship Service also provides advice and information on vacancies. Go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

Overindulged over Christmas?

Give your body a break from the booze – take a month off drinking and join Dry January.

Dry January has proven that taking a month off booze can have a positive impact on your long term drinking levels. It will also help your New Year waistline by reducing the number of calories you consume.

To take part visit www.dryjanuary.org.uk

We’ve been working with Church Action on Poverty in Barnsley, Fareshare and the Trussell Trust to feed people in crisis.

4,019 people living in Barnsley were helped by Barnsley Food Bank Partnership from October 2013 to October 2014.

44% (1,496) were children.

56% (2,523) were adults.

28 tonnes of food has been donated.

Helping to create over 2,600 food parcels – each parcel provides a person with three meals for three days.

Top three reasons people living in the borough need a food parcel:

1. Low income
2. Issues with benefits
3. Debt

Nationally, it’s estimated a quarter of all people who use food banks are in low paid jobs.

You can find out more about the Barnsley Food Bank Partnership, including how to get involved and make donations by visiting http://barnsleyfoodbank.org.uk/
Fall in love with the Cooper Gallery

Forget the dark, damp days of January and join the Cooper Gallery as they begin the new year with an air of romance and affection.

From Saturday, 17 January until Saturday, 25 April, the gallery will host Love and Devotion, a free exhibition dedicated to a selection of the smaller, more intimate paintings and drawings from its fine art collection. Two 17th century paintings from the gallery’s collection will also be part of the exhibition.

Visitors will be able to enjoy beautiful depictions of fluttering hearts, blushing cheeks and scenes of absolute devotion, along with examples of maternal love and faith. The perfect way to take the chill out of the cold winter months and look forward to the season of love.

In conjunction with the exhibition the Friends of the Cooper Gallery will host “If music be the food of love…” on Valentines Day. A wonderful musical event based around the theme of love in a truly unique venue - a perfect way to celebrate the occasion. Tickets are available on the door at £3 (friends) and £5 (nonmembers).

Those who fall in love with the Cooper Gallery may want to adopt a picture as part of the Cooper 100 appeal. Ask gallery staff for more information.

More Tesco jobs for local people in Hoyland

Tesco was due to open a superstore in Hoyland in the Autumn of 2014. The South area team knew it was coming, and eagerly anticipated its opening, looking forward to the job opportunities the new store would bring for local people.

A few months ahead of its opening, the area team discovered that the only way to apply for a job was online. With a good knowledge of the local area, they knew that there were lots of local people without computers and without the skills to fill in an online application. This wasn’t looking good for local job seekers.

So, way ahead of the store stocking its shelves, for its launch, the area manager was in discussion with the new store manager to find a way to make sure locals could apply for jobs there. Together with Tesco’s store manager and Forge Community Partnership, a Hoyland based charity, the area team set up recruitment drop in sessions for local residents interested in applying for jobs there.

Kate Faulkes, South Area Council manager, initiated this project and drove it forwards. Kate said, “This is great for local people. It means more money is being spent locally, it’s great for the environment as people can get to work by foot or bike, and people will keep more of their earnings as they’re not spending on travel costs to get to work. It’s great for Tesco because their staff can get to work quickly, even when it snows.”

Matt Pickthall, Tesco’s local community representative, explained what happened next: “I liked the sound of recruitment pop up shops. I could see that Tesco tends to recruit quite low numbers of local residents, and I was more than happy to work with local people to find a solution.

“This is a great result, achieved through area teams being proactive in local areas, and using our local knowledge and contacts to spot and take advantage of local opportunities.”

Getting to grips with the Care Act

Have you heard about the Care Act? Next April will see the biggest change to social care law for more than 60 years.

Bringing together over 30 Acts, it aims to make the law around social care less confusing. Making it simpler for people to know what care and support is available and a choices they have and where they can go to get it.

Care and support means different things to different people. It depends on what each person needs to continue to live independently without needing social care services. This could include things like caring for others, help to see friends or help to get in and out of bed, get washed and dressed.

Making it simpler for people to know what care and support is available and the choices they have and where they can go to get it.

If you want to know how the new law will affect you visit our website www.barnsley.gov.uk/careact or email us at adultsocialservices@barnsley.gov.uk

Fall in love with the Cooper Gallery

Forget the dark, damp days of January and join the Cooper Gallery as they begin the new year with an air of romance and affection.

From Saturday, 17 January until Saturday, 25 April, the gallery will host Love and Devotion, a free exhibition dedicated to a selection of the smaller, more intimate paintings and drawings from its fine art collection. Two 17th century paintings from Cannon Hall’s collection will also be part of the exhibition.

Visitors will be able to enjoy beautiful depictions of fluttering hearts, blushing cheeks and scenes of absolute devotion, along with examples of maternal love and faith. The perfect way to take the chill out of the cold winter months and look forward to the season of love.

In conjunction with the exhibition the Friends of the Cooper Gallery will host “If music be the food of love…” on Valentines Day. A wonderful musical event based around the theme of love in a truly unique venue - a perfect way to celebrate the occasion. Tickets are available on the door at £3 (friends) and £5 (nonmembers).

Those who fall in love with the Cooper Gallery may want to adopt a picture as part of the Cooper 100 appeal. Ask gallery staff for more information.

Barnsley tops South Yorkshire recycling league table

Barnsley has the best recycling figures in South Yorkshire according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs figures – pulled together by national recycling firm SITA UK.

Some 51.6 percent of the borough’s household waste was recycled during 2013-14, far above the national average of 43 percent.

Elsewhere, Rotherham Council recycled 40.9 percent of household waste, Doncaster 40.2 percent and Sheffield just over 30 percent. Thanks to everyone for their continued recycling efforts – let’s see if we can make our figure even better over the coming months.

Early learning forms the building blocks to success

Working with children as an early years practitioner in a school or nursery is a stimulating and rewarding profession and one which many people access through our accredited training.

Students who have successfully completed early years qualifications have come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including people returning to work after raising children, unemployment and those who want a new career direction.

Deborah Connolly, from Ardsley, achieved a Level 3 Diploma through our Adult and Family Learning (AFL) service after taking a work break to raise her two children. She works as an early years practitioner at Little Acrorns Nursery in Wordsworth.

“As soon as I walk into the room, the children run up to me shouting my name,” Deborah says. “It truly is a wonderful feeling and this is just the beginning. I cannot wait to see what the rest of my career change has in store for me.”

She adds: “Attending AFL and achieving this qualification was the best decision I made and I am so glad I saw it through. I am now qualified, making a difference and helping children.”

Nationally, the government has introduced the requirement for students entering early years courses to have both GCSE English and mathematics at grade C or above.

Tutor Shirley Bower explains: “AFL is offering the chance to study at Level 3 to attain the new Early Years Educator qualification, starting in February. The service is looking forward to contributing to the long overdue recognition of the importance of early learning in nursery as a building block to successful progression in school.”

AFL offers a progression route through Levels 1 and 2 introduction courses. While developing their skills, learners are given the opportunity to attain the GCSE qualifications required for Level 3.

To find out more visit www.barnsley.gov.uk, email adultlearning@barnsley.gov.uk, or call 01226 775270.
Keep well this winter

Make sure you and your friends, family and neighbours are well this winter.

Follow these handy tips:

**Be prepared:**
hot meals and plenty of hot drinks will keep you warm. Try to keep a stock of food in the house such as tinned, dried and frozen foods.

**Medication:**
if the weather turns bad you may not be able to collect or have your medicines delivered. Check the forecasts and make sure you have enough in stock.

**Flu jabs:**
flu is much more serious than a cold. Keep yourself safe and make sure you have your flu jab. Find out more at www.barnsley.gov.uk/flu.

**Room temperature:**
check the temperature in your living room and bedroom. Ask someone for help if you can’t work your heating controls properly.

**Clothing:**
wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer. This will trap the heat. Socks and hats are great too and are a good idea to keep you warm in bed.

**Become a good rapper:**
cover yourself with a blanket or shawl if you’re sitting for long periods. Put your feet up if you can as the air is colder near the floor.

**Trap your curtains behind radiators to keep the heat in the room.**

**Keep active:**
moving about will keep you warm. Get up and walk around, make a hot drink and spread housework throughout the day. If walking is a problem try moving your arms and legs whilst sitting or wiggling your fingers and toes.

---

More online services coming soon

We’re making it easier for you to access the council online. This means major improvements to our website to help you apply, book, pay and track your requests on your computer, tablet or phone. We’re improving our website. This will put you in control and help you to get the information when you need it.

From April we’ll be improving the ways you can access information about your council tax, housing benefit, council tax support and business rates.

There will be lots of new and improved features, such as:

- **E-billing** - Receive your council tax and business rates bills by email and make payments using a direct link from your e-mail.
- **E-forms** - Apply for benefit or report changes in circumstances online using an e-form, and track progress online.
- **Single contact number** - If you need to phone us, you can do it more easily using one number for council tax, business rates and benefits enquiries.
- **Direct debit options** - Choose to pay by direct debit weekly, fortnightly or monthly.
- **Entitlement checks** - Check your entitlement to benefits, find out about council tax discounts and exemptions, and what help is available if you’re experiencing hardship.

This is part of our commitment to improve your online experience. You’ve told us that you want to find information, pay your bills, and talk to us online quickly and easily. We’ve listened to your feedback, and we’re changing the way we work to start making this possible.

More than 80% of adults have access to the internet, and almost 50% of people asked have said they would prefer more council services to be available online. Currently less than one in every 10 customers contact us online. This year we think we can increase this to 4 in 10.

So you might need less direct support from us in the future, which will help us to save costs. This is all part of our move towards a leaner, more sustainable future council, helping us to save £28 million over the next two years.

If you don’t have internet access, or need some help to get started, we can help you. We’ll still have a telephone and face to face service, but this will be needed for less as the way you contact us changes.

We’ll keep you updated about this in coming months.

---

Be an energy shopper

If you’re worried about high gas or electric bills this winter have you thought about switching your supplier?

Find out more at www.barnsley.gov.uk/winterwell

---

Pledge to build on improvements in child safeguarding

Councillors and managers in the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) directorate have pledged to build upon significant improvements in Barnsley’s child protection social work practice.

The move follows the government’s lifting of an Improvement Notice, placed two years earlier, on the council’s services for social care and looked-after children services.

Congratulations the council and its partners on ‘good progress’, the Department for Education (DfE) acknowledged a strong sense of partnership in Barnsley - shared by the council and organisations including health, police, schools and voluntary sector.

The DfE announcement was welcomed at the final meeting of the multi-agency Improvement Board (pictured) which had met regularly since November 2012 to oversee improvement actions first identified by Ofsted inspectors.

Acknowledging the hard work and professionalism of staff from the council and its partners, Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director for CYPF, said: “We need to acknowledge how far we’ve come, celebrate our success, and then move on to the final leg of the journey – delivering excellent services to children, young people and families across the borough.”

Barnsley was keen to share lessons learned, and good practice that had been developed, with other authorities, especially those which faced similar challenges, Ms Dickinson added.

---

Could you foster a Barnsley child?

We’re always on the lookout for those special people who can give a safe and loving home to a Barnsley child at a time when they need it most.

Foster carers provide a lifeline to children who can no longer live with their own families. Sometimes, this is just for a few weeks, until the child can return home or until the child can be placed with another member of their family. In other cases, children may need to stay in foster care longer while they wait to be adopted.

We always do what we can to keep families together, but sometimes it becomes impossible for some children to stay at home.

Our social workers always work with families to try to change circumstances, so that we can bring families back together, but, sometimes we can’t and that’s where you come in. We need people like you to give some of our children a safe and loving home.

To discover more about becoming a foster carer or to find out when our next information evening is, visit www.barnsley.gov.uk/fostering, email fostering@barnsley.gov.uk or call 01226 775676.

---

Follow Barnsley Council on Facebook and Twitter

---

---

---