

The State of Broadband

A Comprehensive UK Overview

March 2025

Special Feature

Broadband Trends for 2025

Page 5



Want the latest stats?

A lot of our statistics are live on:

<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local>



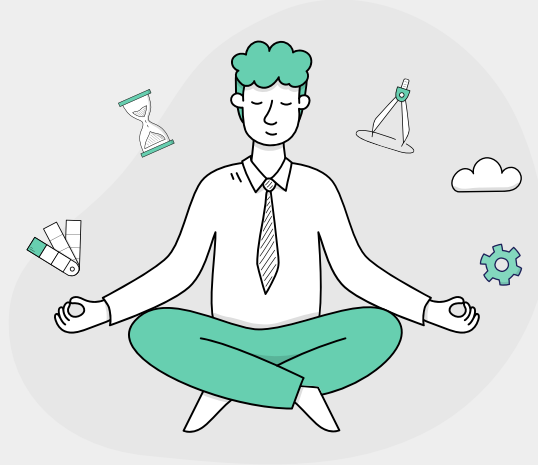
Browse our broadband map:

<https://maps.thinkbroadband.com>

The State of UK Broadband

Welcome to the fifth edition of our State of Broadband Report providing unique insight and the latest statistics on UK broadband rollout.

As usual, we include updates on the State of the Nations of the United Kingdom both looking at Gigabit Broadband and Full Fibre coverage. We will also provide updates on the Altnets, the UK Full Fibre infrastructure builders powering to compete against Openreach.



Key Stats – Full Fibre (FTTP) is now available to over **75% of households** (up from 69% in July 2024) across the UK with **Openreach** leading the way at **52%** (up from 46%) and **Gigabit** being available to **86.6% of households**, up from 83.9%. Altnets are available to 4 in 10 premises (40.3% up from 35.9%).

Although **full fibre coverage has increased by 6.3%** since our last report in July 2024, Gigabit coverage has only increased by 2.7%. This is due to overbuild by fibre providers of Virgin Media's DOCSIS 3.1 network which can today deliver Gigabit services, plus some full fibre networks are overbuilding each other. We have also seen a slow-down in full fibre rollout with limited investment by some alt-nets, resulting in a few months delays in our projections for 85% and 95% full fibre coverage across the UK.

Following the YouFibre/Brsk merger last year, we have now seen approval for the Zzoomm/Full Fibre deal, creating a larger, more efficient altnet for investors.

This report is published slightly later than expected as it's been a busy period for us; however, reflects availability data on **25 February 2025** and comparisons are to the July 2024 report (unless otherwise stated)

Please visit <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local> for the most up-to-date data for your area.

We expect to be releasing our next report in late Summer 2025.

Sebastien Lahtinen

Director, thinkbroadband.com



thinkbroadband.com



@thinkbroadband

About thinkbroadband

thinkbroadband is the UK's leading source of broadband news and analysis and home to the UK's largest community of users looking to get the most out of their home broadband. Run by a small team passionate about all things connectivity, we are independent of broadband providers and offer listings to any provider who meets our listing criteria, not based on whether they pay a commission.

Over the past two decades, we have created a wide range of free tools to help consumers understand how to make the most out of their broadband connection including speed tests, broadband maps, local broadband statistics, and our one-second resolution broadband quality monitor.



We have also developed a range of industry-specific solutions, such as our broadband availability API. This tool is designed to assist websites requiring information on broadband service availability in a particular area, enabling them to power their own services and deliver their users with accurate comparison listings.

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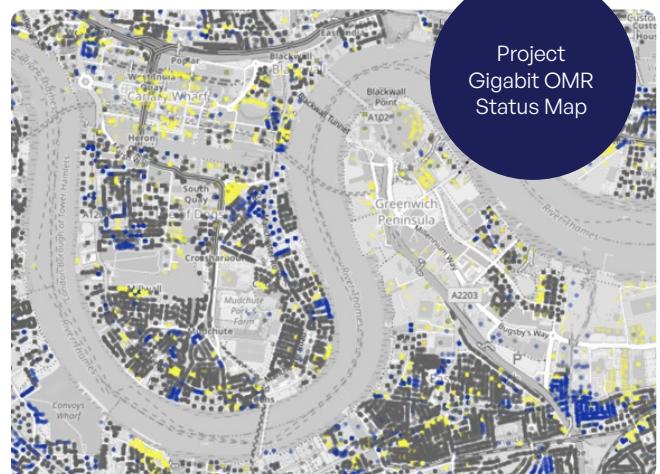
Contact Details

Broadband Maps Update

We have been mapping UK Broadband Availability and speeds for over a decade. Our interactive **UK Broadband Map** (<https://maps.thinkbroadband.com>) allows you to browse provider-level coverage maps as well as information about broadband speeds.

Address-level Broadband Maps Data

We've added several new layers to our maps. These include address-level FTTP broadband availability from our tracking database, the OMR (Open Market Review) status for each address under BDUK's Project Gigabit (viewable at higher zoom levels), and the contract status of Project Gigabit, showing where government assistance is planned to improve broadband in the area.



Any feedback is welcome to team@thinkbroadband.com.

Commercial data services are also available, including our [Broadband Availability API](#) for Price Comparison Websites. Contact us for details.

Broadband Trends for 2025

As the full fibre rollout continues towards 85% coverage by the end of the year, we look at what else we expect to see in the coming months.



Ending in-contract price increases

In the past year, new regulation has come in to ensure that price increases are expressed in ‘pounds and pence’ rather than measures of inflation which consumers can’t plan for; this has arguably meant some of [the most vulnerable consumers might be paying more for broadband](#) due to companies hedging their bets on inflation rates and using fixed increases irrespective of package cost, hurting those on the lowest packages the most, although Social Tariffs are excluded from increases. The ASA has also toughed up its own position on [making the increased cost of services at a future point clearer in advertising](#) and marketing content on websites.

We think Ofcom may be considering consulting on ending price increases during fixed-term broadband contracts, with a view to rolling out a change in 2026. This would bring to an end the annual price increases, requiring providers not to increase costs during any minimum period you commit to and only allow them to do so after this period expires, when you are free to move to another (cheaper) provider.

The previous changes requiring end-of-contract notification also means an offer is always likely to be available from the major operators and it’s therefore likely that consumers will re-contract their

services for successive periods, which could harm the switching market as consumers can only switch at one point in time.

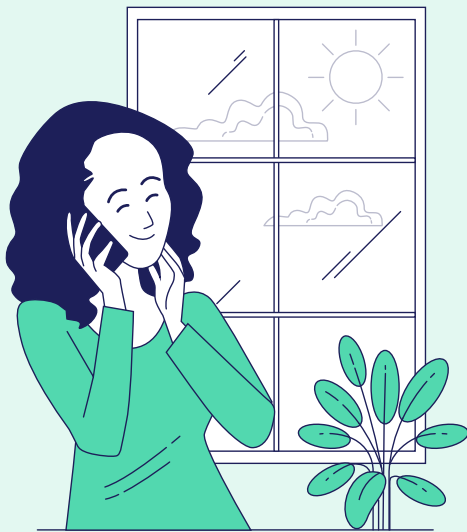
One Touch Switching

The new OTS system has made the process of switching consumer broadband connections simpler and TOTSCo is already in the process of looking at extending the process for business connections. The OTS statistics also provide interesting data on the UK broadband switching market, and how successful advertising campaigns overall are. For example, Black Friday in late 2024 did create a spike in switching orders, but the market collapsed for the rest of December and didn’t pick up again until January 2025, so rather than seeing an increase in switching, it was merely a time shift.

One Touch Switching has reduced the order-to-switch time, but we’re still not seeing signs of thousands of sub-48-hour switches we were told about before the system went live.

The Need for Speed

Most homes can survive with a 300Mbps full fibre service without a Gigabit (let alone faster) services. We will see gamers and potentially some professionals looking to get faster services. However, it’s still the case that just because you have a Gigabit connection, you don’t necessarily get everything downloaded at that speed as limits may apply at where you’re downloading things from. 100Mbps remains the sweet spot to make the experience pleasant, but if you can afford more, then 300Mbps is great for a family. We’re not seeing massive applications which at this point demand bandwidth. Artificial Intelligence (AI) requires processing power, but not bandwidth, at the point between the user and service anyway. We could see increases if AI ‘agents’ start carrying out research online for you, however we think it’s still likely this will be based on servers, rather than on client systems.



The Analogue Switch Off

Everyone has been talking about the switch off of the old PSTN analogue phone lines with the deadline now moved to 2027. More and more business-focused providers are ramping up their marketing efforts. For the average consumer, it's questionable if a 'landline' (if you can still call it that) is even needed. New technology needs to be better used to ensure lifelines are available for everyone, but the old concept of the phone in the hallway at home will simply disappear as the older generations of today are already mobile phone users in the vast majority of cases. This will raise more concerns about how backup power is provided, including for mobile phone networks.

Alt-net Consolidation

There has been talk of Alt-net consolidation for the past couple of years but funders have been hesitant to both exit an investment at a sub-par valuation, nor pay considerable multiples for acquisitions, so we have seen increasing 'mergers' with Brsk/Netomnia (noting these were both funded by Advencap making the deal simpler) and Full Fibre and Zzoomm this year. There have been some straight out acquisitions

such as CityFibre buying Lit Fibre in May 2024 however the large volume of consolidation has not yet materialised. There has been a lot of focus on take-up rather than pure infrastructure build.

Openreach takes the Gigabit lead

Virgin Media is losing its top Gigabit Network title as Openreach has increased its footprint and is expected to overtake Virgin Media later this year, despite the Nexfibre rollout the company is using to increase its own coverage. There has been more talk of other providers re-selling the Nexfibre footprint however as yet we have only seen this available via Virgin Media O2. If the wholesale business doesn't materialise then we expect this to be rolled into Virgin Media O2's brand and they can shed the old complaints about DOCSIS services as they move to XGS-PON once Project Mustang is delivering upgrades for existing customers.

Consuming Media

Traditional satellite and cable services are looking increasingly expensive in the world with Netflix, Amazon and other streaming services, which are shifting many users to withdraw from broadcast content, change services from time to time to access new content, and even cancel subscriptions in months they are less likely to watch TV. Many of the younger working generations have grown up with Netflix subscriptions rather than 200-channel TV packages.



The future switching challenge

As everyone moves to full fibre broadband services, the broadband technology will no longer be the key selling point as there is no natural upgrade to a better service required. This means the switching market will be price driven or based on bundles of services and offers. Of course, if service levels drop, we may see more switches for people who rely on broadband more than ever.



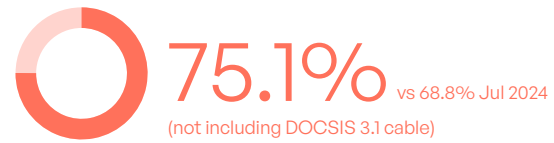
Wi-Fi 7

The cost of sourcing your own Wi-Fi 7 kit is still quite high so Wi-Fi 7-enabled routers may well provide a competitive edge for some providers. There is still a degree of confusion over how to get good Wi-Fi coverage as every home and situation varies, and providers are currently charging a healthy premium to make promises on Wi-Fi.

State of the Nations



Current UK FTTP ("full fibre") Coverage



FTTP 85% Projection

Jan 2026

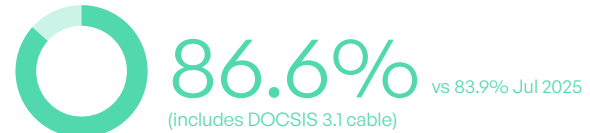
⌚ Delay from Sep 2025

FTTP 95% Projection

Dec 2026

⌚ Delay from May 2026

Current UK Gigabit Coverage



Data: Feb 2025; includes households and business premises. We refer to the 'projection' to meet various targets (e.g. FTTP 85%) rather than 'prediction' as this reflects where the date will be if the trend of the previous nine month period continues. As progress continues towards 100%, it is likely to slow down as we see harder-to-reach areas being added.

UK Nations

Nation	Superfast (30 Mbps+)	Full Fibre ("FTTP")	Gigabit	85% Gigabit Projection	85% FTTP Projection	95% FTTP Projection	Alt-net FTTP	Multiple FTTP
England	98.5%	75.1%	87.3%	Achieved	Dec 2025	Nov 2026	42.5% (+4.7%)	28.0%
Wales	97.5%	75.4%	79.6%	Oct 2025	Dec 2025	Oct 2026	17.0% (+2.5%)	19.1%
Scotland	96.9%	67.1%	80.3%	Apr 2026	Mar 2027	May 2028	32.6% (+2.5%)	24.4%
Northern Ireland	98.7%	96.2%	96.6%	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	39.5% (+4.6%)	46.7%

Notes: For this purpose, altnets means networks other than Openreach, KCom (Hull), Virgin Media RFOG and Nexfibre. Multiple FTTP includes RFOG.

English Region Breakdown

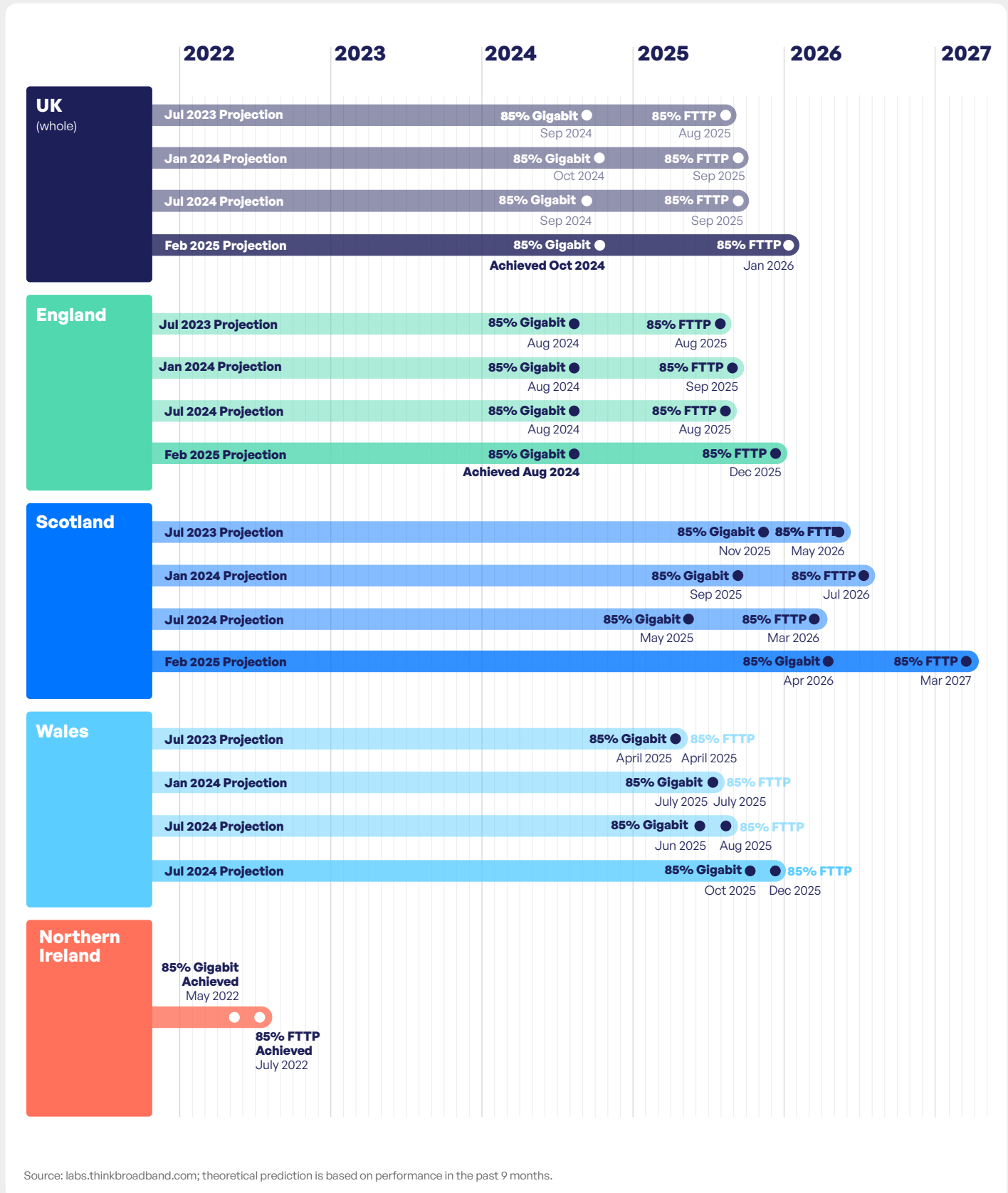
Authority Name	Superfast (30 Mbps+)	Full Fibre ("FTTP")	Gigabit	85% FTTP Projection	95% FTTP Projection	Alt-net FTTP	Multiple FTTP
South East	98.3%	70.7%	84.2%	Jun 2026	May 2027	44.2%	23.9%
London	98.7%	72.5%	91.5%	Mar 2027	Oct 2028	53.6%	31.2%
North West	98.7%	81.5%	90.2%	May 2025	Feb 2026	34.0%	28.9%
East of England	98.5%	71.9%	84.2%	Mar 2026	Dec 2026	39.3%	25.0%
South West	97.6%	69.7%	78.9%	Sep 2026	Sep 2027	36.2%	19.1%
West Midlands	98.8%	76.0%	89.9%	Sep 2025	Apr 2026	41.5%	27.8%
Yorkshire and The Humber	98.5%	85.8%	91.0%	Achieved	Jan 2026	48.7%	41.6%
East Midlands	98.4%	77.9%	87.7%	Aug 2025	Apr 2026	42.3%	27.6%
North East	98.4%	71.1%	88.8%	Feb 2026	Oct 2026	37.1%	27.6%

More broadband data by Local Authority, Constituency, Borough, Council and various other groupings can be viewed on our Broadband Data site

<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/england>

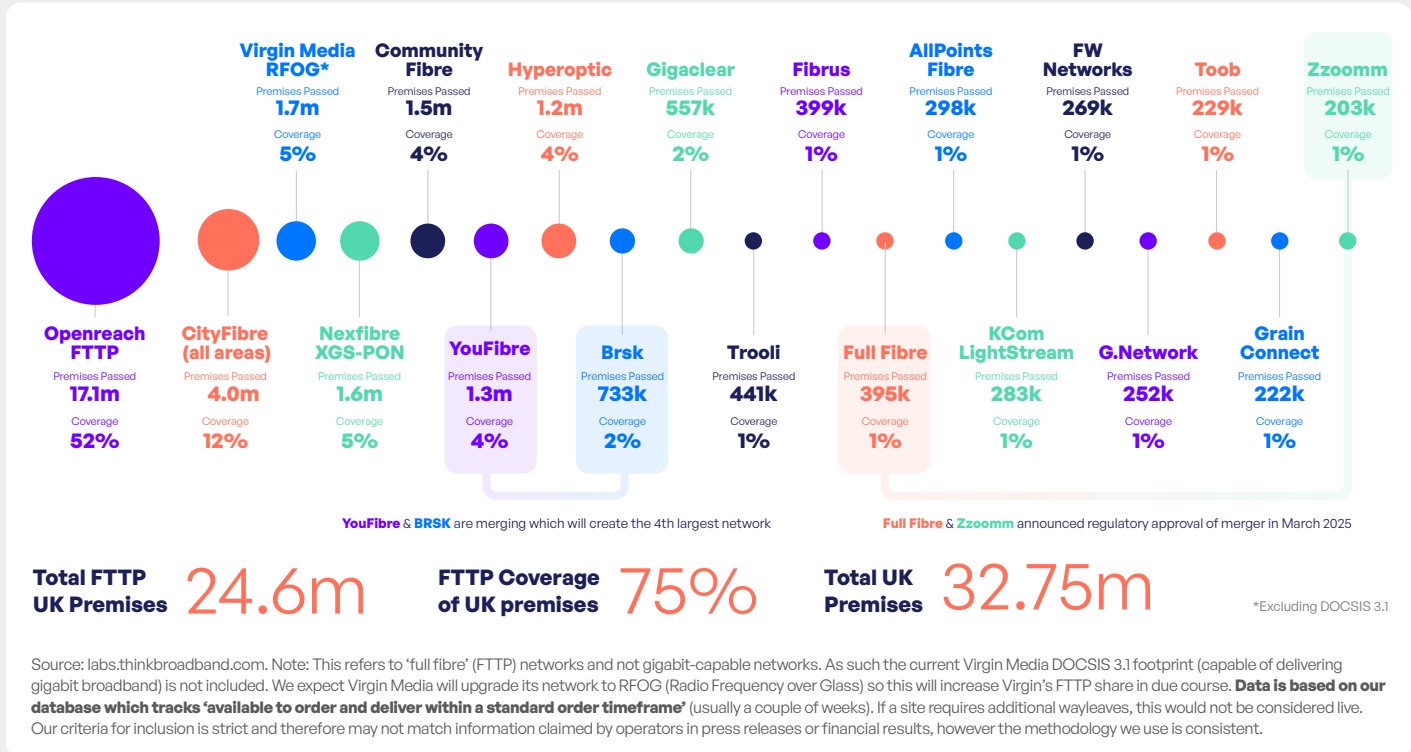
Progress Towards Government Targets

Progress towards 85% Gigabit and 85% FTTP targets

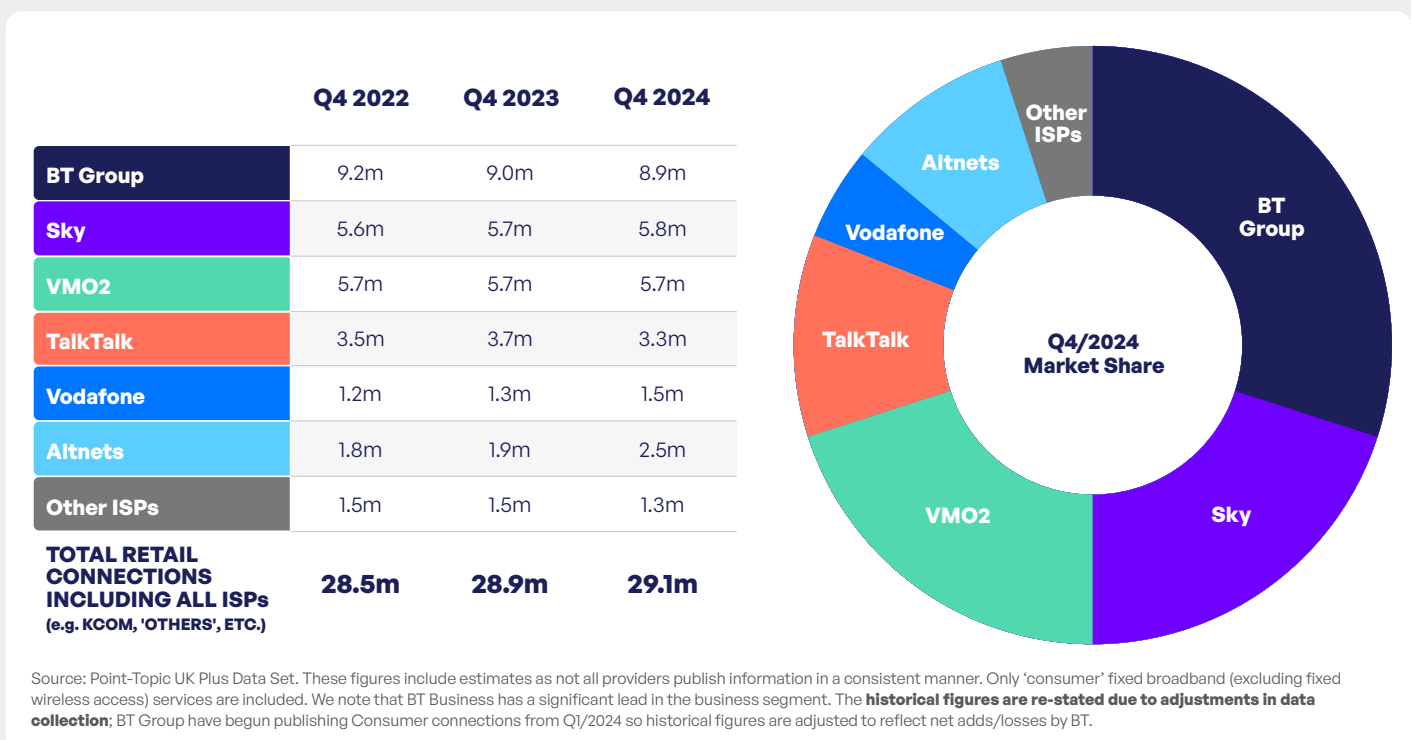


Largest Full-Fibre Networks

The UK has many alternative network operators (altnets), and competitors to the incumbent networks (Openreach and KCom in Hull). Despite being smaller in size, these altnets play a vital role where incumbent FTTP services are not available, providing an alternative commercial proposition, which can often be superior to the consumer. Despite being less known, these smaller networks are an essential part of the UK's broadband infrastructure and provide a critical lifeline for local communities desperate for fast broadband.



Relative Market Share of the Big Retail Providers



Average Consumer Fibre Pricing

We track average broadband prices by speed category for major providers to provide market guidance. There are always offers available as well as a wider selection of broadband providers, so these **prices are only guidelines and not intended to be used for selecting a provider.**



**50-80 Mbps
Downstream**
(5-21 Mbps upstream)



**150 Mbps
Downstream**
(20-30 Mbps upstream)



**500 Mbps
Downstream**
(36-73 Mbps upstream)



**1 Gbps
Downstream**
(52-111 Mbps upstream)



Most fibre-based services require an 12- to 24-month contract. Above prices are based on 18-24 month contracts.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be aware that big providers often have offers on which can include cash-back and special promotions for a short period now included below.

Category	Package	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Contract	Cost/month
50-80 Mbps	Sky Superfast	61 Mbps	20 Mbps	24 months	£25 £27
	Sky Full Fibre 75	75 Mbps	19 Mbps	24 months	£25
	TalkTalk Full Fibre 65	77 Mbps	20 Mbps	24 months	£27 £28
	Virgin Media M50	54 Mbps	5 Mbps	1 month	£48 + £80 setup
	BT Fibre 1	50 Mbps	10 Mbps	12 months	£40
	BT Fibre 2	74 Mbps	20 Mbps	24 months	£27
	BT Full Fibre 1	50 Mbps	10 Mbps	24 months	£30
150 Mbps	Virgin Media M125	132 Mbps	20 Mbps	18 months	£24 £26
	Sky Full Fibre 150	150 Mbps	28 Mbps	24 months	£27
	BT Full Fibre 100	150 Mbps	30 Mbps	24 months	£30
	TalkTalk Full Fibre 150	152 Mbps	30 Mbps	24 months	£28
	Virgin Media M125	132 Mbps	20 Mbps	1 month	£54 + £80 setup
	BT Full Fibre 100	150 Mbps	30 Mbps	12 months	£36 £44 + £42 setup
	BT Full Fibre 100	150 Mbps	30 Mbps	12 months	£36 £44 + £42 setup
500 Mbps	Sky Full Fibre 500	500 Mbps	60 Mbps	24 months	£33
	TalkTalk Full Fibre 500	525 Mbps	72 Mbps	24 months	£35 £34
	Virgin Media M500	516 Mbps	52 Mbps	18 months	£34
	BT Full Fibre 500	500 Mbps	73 Mbps	24 months	£35 £40
	BT Full Fibre 500	500 Mbps	73 Mbps	12 months	£46 £55 + £42 setup
1 Gbps	TalkTalk Full Fibre 900	944 Mbps	110 Mbps	24 months	£42 £40
	Sky Full Fibre Gigafast	930 Mbps	100 Mbps	24 months	£43
	BT Full Fibre 900	900 Mbps	110 Mbps	24 months	£39 £45
	Virgin Media Gig1	1,130 Mbps	104 Mbps	24 months	£37 £41
	BT Full Fibre 900	900 Mbps	110 Mbps	12 months	£54.99 + £42 setup £65 + £42 setup

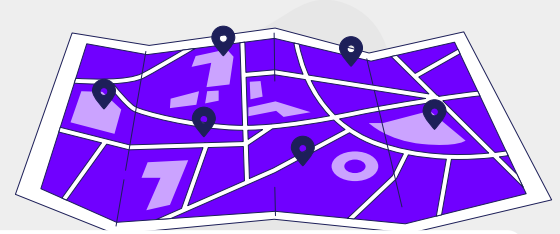
Methodology: Comparisons on 12/03/2025 based on provider websites for comparable products, noting that variations apply. We have not included promotions which include an initial period at a lower price, unless this is substantially less over contract length as purpose of this report is to outline broad prices rather than recommend individual services. No bundling of other services (telephone, TV, mobile) is included. Pricing for services is likely to increase mid-contract in most cases annually, around April. Where speed ranges are quoted, we will use the marketed average figure or a mid-point rounded figure, so caution advised on minor variations (e.g. 74 vs 78 Mbps) as these are likely to be on the same underlying

technology. This simplification has been provided for ease of comparison. Pricing may vary by location however our lookup is based on the same address on what we believe indicates the market for full fibre services. Pricing is rounded up to the nearest pound where it is close. Virgin Media 30-day rolling contract is not available in all areas.

Do not use this table to select a provider for your personal circumstances – This list is provided as a guide to understanding market pricing only. Please visit thinkbroadband.com and compare deals specific to your location and requirements.

Altnet Prices

The UK has many 'altnets', or so called 'alternative network operators' which typically refers to challengers to the incumbent (BT Openreach and Virgin Media nationally). They often offer faster services at lower prices, so we have included a separate table of prices to track.



Category	Package	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Contract	Cost/month
100 - 150 Mbps	Community Fibre 100	100 Mbps	100 Mbps	24 months	£19
	Community Fibre 100	100 Mbps	100 Mbps	12 months	£25
	Hyperoptic Superfast	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	24 months	£29
	Hyperoptic Superfast	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	12 months	£33-£32
	Hyperoptic Superfast	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	1 month	£45-£40-
	YouFibre 150	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	18 months	£24-£23
	YouFibre 150	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	1 month	£34-£30
	Vodafone Full Fibre 150 (CityFibre)	150 Mbps	150 Mbps	24 months	£25
300 - 500 Mbps	Community Fibre 300	350 Mbps	350 Mbps	24 months	£21
	Community Fibre 300	350 Mbps	350 Mbps	12 months	£28
	Hyperoptic Ultrafast	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	24 months	£34-£35
	Hyperoptic Ultrafast	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	12 months	£39-£36
	Hyperoptic Ultrafast	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	1 month	£53
	YouFibre 500	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	18 months	£29-£28
	YouFibre 500	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	1 month	£39-£35
	Gigaclear Ultrafast 300	300 Mbps	300 Mbps	18 months	£19
	Gigaclear Ultrafast 400	400 Mbps	400 Mbps	18 months	£22-£20
	G.Network Ultrafast	300 Mbps	100 Mbps	24 months	£22-£27
	G.Network Ultrafast	300 Mbps	100 Mbps	12 months	£28-£33
	G.Network Ultrafast	300 Mbps	100 Mbps	1 month	£34-£39
	Vodafone Full Fibre 500 (CityFibre)	500 Mbps	500 Mbps	24 months	£31
1 Gbps	Community Fibre 1Gbps	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	24 months	£25-£26
	Community Fibre 1Gbps	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	12 months	£32
	Hyperoptic Hyperfast	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	24 months	£39
	Hyperoptic Hyperfast	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	12 months	£44-£40
	Hyperoptic Hyperfast	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	1 month	£63
	YouFibre 1000	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	18 months	£32-£30
	YouFibre 1000	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	1 month	£42-£40
	Gigaclear Hyperfast 900	900 Mbps	900 Mbps	18 months	£34
	B4RN Residential	1 Gbps	1 Gbps	12 months	£33
	G.Network Gigafast	1 Gbps	300 Mbps	24 months	£28-£30-
	G.Network Gigafast	1 Gbps	300 Mbps	12 months	£34-£36-
	G.Network Gigafast	1 Gbps	300 Mbps	1 month	£40-£42-
	Vodafone Full Fibre 900 (CityFibre)	910 Mbps	910 Mbps	24 months	£29-£31
3 Gbps+	Community Fibre 3Gbps	3 Gbps	3 Gbps	24 months	£56
	YouFibre 8000	7 Gbps	7 Gbps	18 months	£100
	YouFibre 8000	7 Gbps	7 Gbps	1 month	£130
	B4RN 10Gbps	10 Gbps	10 Gbps	12 months	£150 + £360 setup

Date Collected: 13/03/2025. Methodology- see previous section. Do not use this table to select a provider for your personal circumstances - This list is provided as a guide to understanding market pricing only. Please visit thinkbroadband.com and compare deals specific to your location and requirements.

Social Tariffs

Social Tariffs are dedicated plans for those on very low incomes in receipt of certain state benefits. These help to subsidise your broadband service cost.

To qualify you need to be receiving one of the following five benefits: -

Universal
Credit

Pension
Credit

Income
Support

Income-based
Jobseeker's
Allowance

Income-based
Employment
Support
Allowance



Note: Recipients of Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance may also qualify in some cases however this may vary by provider. The contract needs to be in the name of the qualifying person.

Social Tariff Packages (Fixed Line Broadband)

National Networks

Package	Monthly Cost	Download Speed
BT – Home Essentials - No Income (Zero Income only)	£15.00	36 Mbps
BT – Home Essentials - Unlimited 36 Mbps	£20.00	36 Mbps
BT – Home Essentials - Unlimited 67 Mbps	£23.00	67 Mbps
NOW Broadband – Basics	£20.00	36 Mbps
Sky Broadband – Basics (existing customers only)	£20.00	36 Mbps
Virgin Media – Essential Broadband	£12.50	15 Mbps
Virgin Media – Essential Broadband Plus	£20.00	54 Mbps
Vodafone – Fibre 2 Essentials	£20.00	73 Mbps

Other Providers (including alt-nets)

Package	Monthly Cost	Download Speed
4th Utility – Social Tariff	£13.99	30 Mbps
B4RN – Social Tariff	£15.00	1 Gbps
Community Fibre – Essential	£12.50	35 Mbps
Connect Fibre – Essentials	£20.00	150 Mbps
Country Connect – Social Tariff	£15.00	25 Mbps
County Broadband – Essential Broadband Tariff	£15.00	15 Mbps
Fibrus – Full Fibre Essential	£14.99	50 Mbps
G.Network – Essential Fibre Broadband	£15.00	50 Mbps
Grayshott Gigabit – Connect	£19.99	100 Mbps
Hey! Broadband – Everyday Fibre	£16.00	100 Mbps
Highland Broadband – Social Tariff	£19.99	100 Mbps
Hyperoptic – Fair Fibre 50	£15.00	50 Mbps
Hyperoptic – Fair Fibre 150	£20.00	150 Mbps
KCOM – Full Fibre Flex	£14.99	30 Mbps
Lightning Fibre – Social Tariff	£15.00	50 Mbps
Quickline – Social Tariff	£16.50	100 Mbps
RunFibre – Social Tariff	£20.00	100 Mbps
toob essentials	£20.00	50 Mbps
Truespeed – Basic	£20.00	30 Mbps
Wildanet – Helping Hand Social Tariff	£19.00	50 Mbps
WightFibre – Essential Broadband	£19.95	100 Mbps
YouFibre – Social Tariff	£15.00	50 Mbps

Struggling to find the packages?

Unfortunately, we have found that many providers make the Social Tariff pages difficult to find on their websites. They often lack detail or make pricing less visible. We published a [Social Tariffs 2025](#) article with links to the pages, which may be of help.

Source: Information collected by thinkbroadband.com January 2025 and pricing verified on 11 March 2025. Due to some providers not sharing pricing or specifications fully online, we could not always verify all details.

Fibre Overbuild

When a network operator **builds in an area already covered by another network**, this is known as ‘**overbuild**’. An operator may choose to do this if they want to compete, and **competition/diversity can be good for consumers and businesses** alike, however it makes it a **more challenging investment for investors** in altnets who need to see a return on the capital they inject. It can therefore also be inefficient, and frustrating for those without access to even a single full fibre network.

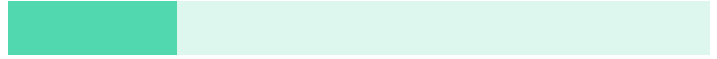


This report we include the overbuild statistics by UK Nations and Regions. These show interestingly that **Northern Ireland is leading the way with 38% of premises covered by two full fibre networks** (via a mixture of Fibrus, Openreach, Virgin Media RFOG, nexfibre and YouFibre) and 8% covered by three. However, we are also seeing quite high rates for Yorkshire and the Humber (which itself has great full fibre coverage).

Premises with 1 FTTP network – 75% (+6%)



Premises with 2 FTTP networks – 24% (+2%)



Premises with 3 FTTP networks – 4% (+1%)



Premises with 4 FTTP networks – 0.3% (+0.1%)



Premises with 5 FTTP networks – 0% (around 14,000 premises)



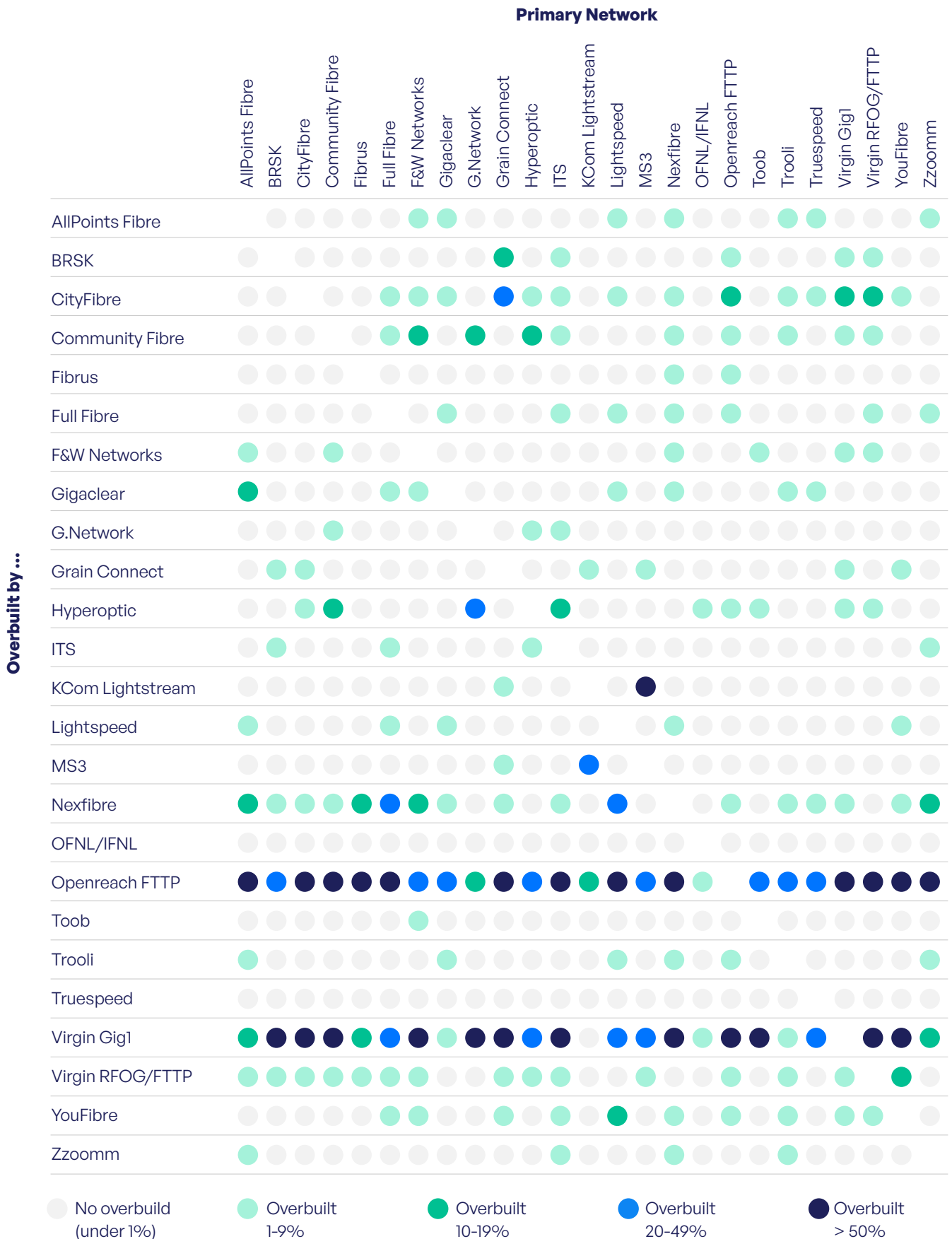
Overbuild by Nation

Nation	1 FTTP Network	2 FTTP Networks	3 FTTP Networks	4 FTTP Networks	5 FTTP Networks
England	75%	24%	4%	0%	0%
Wales	75%	17%	2%	0%	0%
Scotland	67%	21%	3%	0%	0%
Northern Ireland	96%	38%	8%	0%	0%
UK Total	75%	24%	4%	0%	0%

Overbuild by English Region

Region	1 FTTP Network	2 FTTP Networks	3 FTTP Networks	4 FTTP Networks	5 FTTP Networks
South East	71%	20%	3%	1%	0%
London	73%	28%	3%	0%	0%
North West	81%	25%	3%	0%	0%
East of England	72%	20%	5%	1%	0%
South West	70%	16%	3%	0%	0%
West Midlands	76%	24%	4%	0%	0%
Yorkshire and The Humber	86%	34%	7%	0%	0%
East Midlands	78%	24%	3%	0%	0%
North East	71%	23%	5%	0%	0%

Fibre Overbuild



Source: thinkbroadband.com availability database (<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local>) on 12/03/2025

Consumer Feature

Contract Buy-outs

Migrating before your minimum contract is up

As broadband costs continue to rise, many consumers are eager to shop around for better deals. However, long-term contracts of 12, 18, or even 24 months can make early termination costly. Savvy shoppers, though, may find opportunities with certain providers willing to “buy out” their existing contracts, making the switch more affordable.

We contacted various providers in January 2025 to see who would offer to buy out an existing contract and share our findings; however, note that these offers may change regularly so you should talk to the provider

you’re looking to use. Also bear in mind that the payment to your current provider may need to be in one lump sum, whilst some providers may credit the cost against your bill for the first few months, so you may need to pay the exit fees up-front. Even those saying they pay the contract may offer it as credit on your new bill. Also note that any “free” period on a new contract may or may not count towards the initial term.

We would **strongly recommend** you contact the provider before ordering to confirm you qualify due to the costs involved.



Provider		Policy
Vodafone	✓	Provides £25, £50 or £100 credit for new customers switching to their broadband services on a 24-month contract. The exact amount depends on the chosen plan , with higher-tier plans offering more credit. They will contact you within 14 to 30 days of activation to discuss how to claim the credit.
Sky	✓	Sky offers up to £100 credit for switching to Sky Broadband, and an additional £100 for adding Sky TV, totalling up to £200. You have 90 days to send proof of the early termination charges along with proof you paid these.
Virgin Media O2	✗	None
BT	✓	BT offers to reimburse up to £300 towards early termination charges when switching from another broadband provider but its site has some broken pages explaining how you do this.
EE	✓	EE will credit up to £300 towards early termination fees. You need to e-mail them the final bill showing itemisation of these charges.
TalkTalk	✗	None
PlusNet	✗	No, Plusnet generally does not automatically repay early termination fees when you switch to another provider. They refer you to EE instead.
Now! Broadband	✗	None
No One	✗	Can't find detail, they say they'll switch you the moment your contract does end
Community Fibre	FREE	Community Fibre doesn't offer contract buyouts, can offer maximum first four months for free .
Gigaclear	FREE	No buy-out contracts, if you're in contract they can offer free trials until your contract end dates .

Consumer Feature

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Provider		Policy
YouFibre	✓	'Buy-out' the remainder of your contract with your existing residential broadband provider up to £300 paid to your bank account if you sign up to a 18-month contract. Some newer T&Cs don't mention this whilst legacy ones do however their knowledge base still claims they offer this.
KCOM	✓	Offers £50 to £200 credit on your KCOM bill depending on package selected to cover early termination charges.
BRISK	✓	Offers up to £150 credit for early termination charges for customers switching to their broadband services. You need to e-mail your final bill within 30 days of activation of the Brsk service.
G.Network	✓	Offers up to £150 reimbursement paid to your bank account to cover early termination charges when signing up for a 24-month plan and migrating from BT. Current promotion ends 31 March 2025 . You must register within 14 days of your order and send final bill within 45 days of your activation. Service with G.Network must be activated by 30 April 2025.
Fibrus	✓	Provides up to £250 to cover early exit fees when switching to their service.
Lightspeed Broadband	✓	Covers up to £250 in early termination fees for broadband services (excluding landline and add-ons) when you switch to their service
BeFibre	✓	Reimburses up to £150 for customers with at least three months remaining on their current contract when switching to BeFibre.
Hyperoptic	FREE	Offers up to nine months of free service when switching from another provider to a 24-month Hyperoptic contract . Customers need to provide proof of early termination charges within 30 days of activation.
Airband	✓	Airband will pay/credit up to six months' worth of early termination charges when you switch to their service. They say they will 'reimburse' you but later say 'refund or credit' so it's unclear if this refers to a reimbursement or account credit. It appears from the wording that you need to have six months left on your contract so do check. You need to submit paperwork within 3 months of installation showing the costs. We strongly suggest you speak to them about your situation before ordering.
Zen	✗	Confirmed no offers or buyouts.
Cuckoo Broadband	✗	Confirmed no buyout, do gift vouchers of £50 – 100.

Source: Data collected by thinkbroadband from public websites and by phone calls 13-17 January 2025. Figures checked where available on websites on 13 March 2025.

Broadband Speed Requirements

What speed broadband connection do you really need for most applications?

Application		Recommended Bandwidth	
		Up	Down
	Video Streaming (Netflix / YouTube)	Standard Definition / SD	1-2 Mbps
		High Definition / HD	3-5 Mbps
		UHD / 4K	15-20 Mbps
	Zoom Calls	1080p Full HD ¹	3 Mbps
		720p	1.2 Mbps
		Standard Video	0.6 Mbps
	VoIP Calls / Digital Voice	0.5 Mbps	0.5 Mbps
		Actual usage may be less but more likely to be affected by other usage during call	
	Online Gaming (real-time multiplayer)	Fortnite	3 Mbps
			5 Mbps ²
		"Gigabit fibre with [...] symmetrical upload and download speeds absolutely smashes those requirements out of the arena"	
		Roblox	4-8 Mbps
		Call of Duty MW2	4-8 Mbps
	Twitch Streaming / Broadcasting	3-10 Mbps	20 Mbps
		Some recommendations increase upload speed to 25Mbps	
	Web Browsing, E-mail & Social Media	1 Mbps	5 Mbps
		Once connection is above 40Mbps, unlikely to see much improvement as DNS lookups likely to be more of a factor than raw speed	
	Downloading Games and Large Content	-	100 Mbps
		100 Mbps or faster is ideal but balance cost vs patience	
	Larger Households	For real-time simultaneous use, you need to multiply the above.	
		E.g. two people watching Netflix at 4K might need up to 40Mbps; a third is probably not going to be watching at the same time.	

¹ <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-Zoom-system-requirements-Windows-macOS-Linux>

² <https://blog.frontier.com/2022/08/4-ways-fiber-helps-you-win-in-fortnite/>

³ <https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/203312800-Computer-Hardware-Operating-System-Requirements>

Types of Broadband

ADSL (or variations thereof, e.g. ADSL2+)

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines which means broadband through your phone line. The speed is determined by the distance between your property and the telephone exchange (usually up to a few kilometres) and the quality of your line. Asymmetric means the download speed is usually much faster than the upload speed, common in all consumer broadband. There are variants such as 'Annex M' which allow you to sacrifice some download speed for faster uploads. These were typically 'up to 8 meg' or 'up to 24 meg' type services depending on generation but speeds vary wildly based on the quality and length of the line.

"FTTC" or "VDSL2" or commonly called "fibre broadband"

Broadband where the fibre optic cable ends at the street cabinet, which is likely to be some distance from your house. A phone line is then used for the final link to your house, similar to ADSL. VDSL is the underlying technology, "Very High Speed Digital Subscriber Line" which allows faster speeds than ADSL, but it is more limited by distance – a few hundred metres rather than kilometres.

"FTTP", "FTTH", "FTTB" or "full fibre"

Fibre to the premises/home/building. i.e. the entire circuit to the property is fibre. There may in some cases be copper wiring inside the building depending on the setup. The speed is usually not limited by the distance where you can get FTTP as this is delivered over a fibre optic wavelength.

"FTTx"

Combination of the 'fibre to the...' services, i.e. fibre to the home and fibre to the cabinet.

Cable & DOCSIS 3.1

Cable broadband (typically meaning Virgin Media) is broadband delivered through the copper co-axial network (in most cases; RFOG- excepted) used to deliver cable TV services. This has traditionally been capable of delivering faster speeds than phone line based services. The latest generation, DOCSIS 3.1, can deliver gigabit broadband services.

Satellite

Satellite broadband uses geostationary satellites in space to deliver broadband to hard-to-reach areas. Aside from cost the main disadvantage is latency, which makes satellite broadband services slower to use for very 'interactive' applications, such as online gaming. Starlink claims to reduce this significantly. If you're in an area with limited options, this may be worth considering however.

3G / LTE / 4G / 5G (mobile broadband)

These are mobile technologies, evolutions beyond GPRS (2G) and EDGE (2.5G) which were the first types of data used by mobile phones and offered much slower speeds. The later generations like 5G can deliver very fast connections, although the performance varies significantly based on where you are. Using a fixed 4G/5G setup can take advantage of a fixed antenna which will perform better. The difficulty lies when in a congested city environment using a mobile phone, where it's quite possible for a 5G service to perform slower than a 4G one, so newer isn't always better (in the real world).

Wireless

Some broadband providers use wireless technologies such as directional Wi-Fi and microwave links to deliver broadband, often across wide open rural areas, where laying cables could be prohibitively expensive.

Glossary

"meg" or Mbps

The speed of broadband services is these days measured in Megabits per second (or Mbps). It is commonly referred to (albeit technically incorrectly) as "meg". 1 Mbps is broadly speaking 1,000Kbps, and 1Gbps (gigabit per second) is around 1,000 Mbps (technically it's a multiplier of 1024 from binary, rather than 1000). Note in particular that a Megabit (Mb) and Megabyte (MB) are very different, 1MB/s = 8Mbps as there are 8 bits in 1 byte. Sometimes you may see speeds when downloading expressed as MB/s, but broadband speeds are referred to in Mbps.

"Gig" or "Gigabit" broadband

Broadband that is capable of achieving speeds of 1Gbps (gigabits per second) or thereabouts. In practice this usually means FTTP or DOCSIS 3.1 cable services.

"Premises passed"

Term used to describe a premise which is able to order a broadband service with a given provider.

"Decent" broadband

This is a definition used by Ofcom of a broadband connection capable of delivering 10 Mbps downstream, and 1 Mbps upstream.

"Take-up"

The ratio between premises that order a service and the total 'premises passed' (where a service is available). It should be noted that even if full fibre is available, it doesn't mean all services are provided at 1 Gbps speeds.

Recent Developments

10/03/2025

Full Fibre and Zzoomm Merger Approved

27/02/2025

Openreach launching 1000 Mbps symmetric full fibre service

24/02/2025

EXCLUSIVE: UK now has full fibre available to 3 out of 4 properties

21/02/2025

TOTSCo getting closer to running business switching solution

13/02/2025

EXCLUSIVE: Alt Net fibre to the premises now available to 40% of UK properties

30/01/2025

BT Group results as group continues aim to be fully UK focused

16/01/2025

BT Annual Price Increases – Are you paying more under new Ofcom ‘pounds and pence’ rule?

09/01/2025

nexfibre footprint passes 2 million premises



06/01/2025

Openreach declares half of UK passed by its full fibre network

17/12/2024

Broadband switching taking around 2 weeks on average

05/12/2024

Ofcom says UK average download speed now 223 Mbps

12/11/2024

Virgin Media adopts simpler price rise policy

31/10/2024

AllPoints Fibre acquires Brillband

09/10/2024

ASA hits at major providers over mid-contract price increase wording

18/09/2024

New Ofcom guidance on broadband marketing

13/09/2024

One Touch Switching – the launch

06/09/2024

Openreach CEO says Ofcom should force Virgin Media O2 to share its ducts and poles

“When we began our journey to deliver broadband information twenty-three years ago, it was because we were eager to inform the public about the early stages of broadband developments. Since then, the Internet is no longer something we connect to once a day, but part of our everyday lives.

We have always strived to be different. We aren’t another comparison site. Hey, we don’t even consider ourselves a comparison site as most of the time, we aren’t trying to persuade users to switch providers. A lot of the tools we have written are designed to help you troubleshoot your broadband connection. We even work with providers to troubleshoot issues at times.

The thinkbroadband.com site is now 25 years old and we continue to run it with the same passion as when we started. We are the most up-to-date source of broadband availability and speed information in the UK, and we want to provide the best and most unique tools to help you understand the performance of your Internet connection.

I am proud that after all this time, the team that was there in the first year is still the team that runs the website today.”

Sebastien Lahtinen Director



thinkbroadband.com

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