

● LIVE UK COMPARISON · MAY 2026

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Friday, 1 May 2026

# Best Broadband Deals UK

## May 2026.

A fresh-start-of-the-month guide to switching, saving and squeezing every drop of value from full-fibre Britain. Live across 35+ providers.

**~84%**

**UK PREMISES  
FULL-FIBRE READY**

*Best estimate, May 2026*

**285**

**MBIT/S AVERAGE  
UK DOWNLOAD SPEED**

*Up 28% on 2024*

**1.6M**

**SWITCHED VIA OTS  
IN ITS FIRST YEAR**

*Sept 2024 to Sept 2025*

Edited by **Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith**

Reviewed by **Adrian James**

Next review within 30 days

**INDEPENDENT · FREE · NO SIGNUP**

**broadbandswitch.uk**

EDITOR'S LETTER · 1 MAY 2026

## A genuinely good month to switch.

May has arrived, the April price rises have just landed in everyone's bills, and the UK broadband market is in the friendliest state for switchers we have seen in years. Full-fibre now reaches more than four in five homes, average speeds are up almost a third on last year, and One Touch Switch has turned changing provider into what feels like a 10-second job. This update captures everything that matters for the month ahead, with live deals at your address available through our postcode comparison tool.

— Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith, Lead Editor

## May 2026 at a glance

Five numbers that frame the month, and three reasons it is a particularly good time to look again at your bill.

### £3 to £4

#### APRIL 2026 MONTHLY RISE

Across BT, EE, Plusnet, TalkTalk, Vodafone, Virgin Media and Sky, all in pounds and pence (NOW Broadband held prices steady this April; its most recent £3 rise was in July 2025).

### ~25.6M

#### PREMISES FULL-FIBRE READY

Best estimate, May 2026 (around 84%, range 83 to 85%). Ofcom's last official figure was 78% / 23.7m homes (Nov 2025); thinkbroadband's live tracker recorded 84.12% on 24 April 2026.

### £12.50+

#### SOCIAL TARIFFS FROM

Now offered by 30+ providers for households on Universal Credit and other qualifying benefits.

### ~6%

#### REAL-TERMS PRICE DROP IN 2025

Ofcom Pricing & Consumer Engagement Report, 26 February 2026. Faster packages saw the biggest drops.

### 8.6%

#### ELIGIBLE TAKE-UP OF SOCIAL TARIFFS

Just 532,000 of about 6 million eligible UK households were on a social tariff in June 2025.

### 18%

#### OUT-OF-CONTRACT PREMIUM

The average extra paid by dual-play customers who let their contract lapse without switching.

### MAY 2026 TAKEAWAY

For most UK households this month, the best broadband deal is a **full-fibre (FTTP) plan in the 150 to 500 Mbit/s range** from a provider with clear pounds-and-pence rises. Headline prices for that tier typically sit in the **low-to-mid £20s a month**, subject to availability at your postcode. Sort by total contract cost, not introductory price, and check the rise schedule before you sign.

## Three reasons this is a friendly month for switchers

- ✓ **Pounds-and-pence pricing is now the norm.** Ofcom's January 2025 rules mean every in-contract rise on a new deal is stated in £ at sign-up. No more inflation surprises.
- ✓ **Full-fibre coverage has passed 80% of premises.** More homes have a faster, more reliable option than ever, and average UK download speeds reached 285 Mbit/s in 2025, up 28% in a year.
- ✓ **Switching is genuinely easy.** One Touch Switch is live across the UK and 1.6 million people used it in the first 12 months. You contact only the new provider; everything else is handled for you.

● MAY 2026 · LIVE UK COMPARISON

## Find your live deal in 10 seconds

Postcode in. Real prices out. Average switcher saves £180 to £292.

[broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare) →

FREE · NO SIGNUP · 35+ PROVIDERS · 429 ISPS TRACKED

## INSIDE THIS UPDATE

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A 21-section monthly market update for UK households thinking about their broadband in May 2026.

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**How to use this update.** Each section opens with a 40 to 60 word "Quick answer" so you can scan to the bit you need. Specific monthly prices and headline deals change daily; this report focuses on what is true across the market this month, with the live results for your address available through the comparison tool at [broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare). Every claim is sourced; see Section 19 for the full APA 7 reference list and Section 20 for further reading.

SECTION 02 · STATE OF THE MARKET

## The UK broadband market in numbers

The UK now has one of the most competitive home broadband markets in Europe. Coverage, speed and choice all moved meaningfully forward in 2025, and the gains have continued into the first months of 2026.

<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #e91e63;">~84%</p> <p><b>FULL-FIBRE AVAILABILITY</b></p> <p>Best estimate, May 2026 (range 83 to 85%). Ofcom's last official figure was 78% / 23.7m homes (Nov 2025).</p>	<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #2e7d32;">~89%</p> <p><b>GIGABIT-CAPABLE</b></p> <p>Best estimate, May 2026. Ofcom's last official figure was 87% / 26.4m premises (Nov 2025).</p>	<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #ffc107;">285</p> <p><b>MBIT/S AVERAGE MAX</b></p> <p>UK average maximum download speed in 2025; up almost 30% on 2024 (Ofcom, 2025).</p>	<p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #004a7c;">~44%</p> <p><b>TAKE-UP WHERE AVAILABLE</b></p> <p>Best estimate, May 2026 (Nov 2025: 42%, 10.6m active full-fibre connections).</p>
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Coverage and gigabit estimates above are forward-looks built on Openreach's published December 2025 build trajectory, INCA's *State of the Altnets 2026*, and thinkbroadband's live coverage tracker, which recorded UK full-fibre availability of **84.12% on 24 April 2026** (Ferguson, 2026). Ofcom's next Connected Nations update is expected to confirm the precise May 2026 figures shortly; we will refresh this page the moment the data lands.

### Coverage and speed: the great British shift

Britain has spent the last five years quietly transforming its broadband infrastructure. The slow, distance-sensitive copper network that defined the early 2010s is now in retreat, accelerated by Openreach's commercial **"Stop Sell"** programme, enabled in turn by Ofcom's Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review (Ofcom, 2021). As of mid-February 2026, **1,281 Openreach exchanges, covering 12.5 million premises (around 51% of the full-fibre footprint)**, were under active Stop Sell, with a further 132 exchanges added in Tranche 23 to go live in February 2027 (Openreach, 2026a). The mechanism is straightforward: once full-fibre coverage in an exchange area passes 75% of premises, ADSL and FTTC are progressively withdrawn for new orders, switches and upgrades, gently nudging the country onto the faster, more reliable network. The trial blueprint was set in **Salisbury (December 2020) and Mildenhall (May 2021)**, and has scaled steadily ever since.

Around five in six UK premises can now order a fibre connection that runs all the way into the home. Openreach alone passed **21.4 million premises with FTTP by 31 December 2025**, on track for 25 million by the end of 2026 (BT Group plc, 2026). By 12 April 2026 the Openreach figure had risen to 22.36 million, with a record monthly build of 608,354 in March to April 2026 (Ferguson, 2026). CityFibre, Virgin Media O2's nexfibre, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre and a long tail of regional altnets add millions more on top, with INCA recording altnet coverage (excluding Openreach and Virgin Media O2) of **19.7 million premises by end-2025**, up 3.3 million year-on-year (INCA, 2026).

The consumer effect of all this is straightforward and welcome: faster, more reliable, more competitive. Average UK download speeds reached **285 Mbit/s in 2025**, an almost-30% jump on 2024, and Ofcom recorded **real-terms price drops of around 6% across most broadband tiers** in the year to September 2025 (Ofcom, 2026c).

## Pricing: the new pounds-and-pence regime

The other quiet revolution is regulatory. Since **17 January 2025** Ofcom has banned percentage-based, inflation-linked mid-contract price rises in any new contract. Every rise must now be set out in **pounds and pence at sign-up**, so customers know exactly what their bill will look like for the duration of their term. The rule has fundamentally reshaped how providers price their packages, and it is one of the main reasons the headline cost of a typical full-fibre plan has stayed remarkably steady through 2026's spring rise season.

## Switching: the One Touch Switch effect

One Touch Switch (OTS) launched on **12 September 2024** and was the biggest change to UK switching in a decade. Under the new system, customers contact only the *new* provider, who handles the rest. More than **1.6 million UK customers used OTS in its first 12 months**, with over 300 providers signed up. The friction that used to keep loyal customers paying out-of-contract premiums has, for most households, simply disappeared.

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*"Choice has expanded sharply. More than 30 broadband social tariffs are now available, up from just three in 2020."*

— OFCOM, FEBRUARY 2026

## The competitive lay of the land

Three groups of providers shape the UK retail market in 2026:

- **National retailers on Openreach:** BT, EE, Sky, TalkTalk, Vodafone, Plusnet, NOW Broadband, Zen Internet, John Lewis Broadband and others, all selling broadband over the same wholesale network.
- **Cable and full-fibre on nexfibre:** Virgin Media O2, increasingly co-located with full-fibre upgrades through the nexfibre joint venture.
- **Altnets:** Hyperoptic, Community Fibre, CityFibre-based brands, YouFibre, Brsk, Trooli, Gigaclear, Quickline, Wessex Internet, Fibrus, Ogi and dozens of others, building independent full-fibre networks.

Our directory tracks 429 UK ISPs and surfaces 35 or more in the live comparison at any one time. Which retail brand is best for any given household depends entirely on the wholesale network they sit on, the deal cohort the customer signs up to, and what the household actually wants from its connection.

SECTION 03 · APRIL RECAP

## What changed in April 2026

### QUICK ANSWER

April 2026 was the first full price-rise season under Ofcom's new **pounds-and-pence regime**. Most major providers raised prices in late March or early April by a fixed amount in £, ranging from **£3 to £4 a month**, depending on provider and contract cohort. Every rise on a new contract is now disclosed up front rather than tied to inflation indices.

For most customers the rise was anticipated, modest and far easier to budget for than the CPI- or RPI-linked surprises of recent years. But it has shifted the comparison maths in a few important ways.

- ✓ The all-inclusive **total contract cost** has overtaken headline £/month as the right way to compare deals. Two plans at the same starting price now end up at very different totals once their fixed rises are baked in.
- ✓ **Fixed-price providers** like Zen Internet, Cuckoo and several altnets have a clearer story than ever: many publish a "no mid-contract rise" promise during the minimum term.
- ✓ **Sky customers** retain a 30-day right to leave penalty-free when notified of a rise, because the increase sits outside contract terms. NOW Broadband works the same way and held prices steady this April; that makes them unusually flexible options if you value the right to walk away.
- ✓ **Out-of-contract customers** are now paying the largest premiums on record relative to in-contract prices. Ofcom's most recent data put the average gap for dual-play at around 18%.

### How the major providers compared

PROVIDER	APRIL 2026 MONTHLY RISE (BROADBAND)	HOW IT IS APPLIED
BT	+ up to £4 / month	Stated in contract; rises annually each 31 March.
EE	+ up to £4 / month	Stated in contract; +£2 TV, +£2.50 mobile.
Plusnet	+ £4 / month	Stated in contract; +5% on call plans.
TalkTalk	+ £4 / month	Contracts taken from 16 November 2025.
Vodafone	+ £3.50 / month	Contracts taken from 12 November 2025.

PROVIDER	APRIL 2026 MONTHLY RISE (BROADBAND)	HOW IT IS APPLIED
<b>Virgin Media</b>	+ £4 / month + £3.50 / month	£4 for contracts taken from 2 October 2025; £3.50 for the 9 January 2025 to 1 October 2025 cohort. Both are stated in contract terms.
<b>Sky</b>	+ £3 / month	Not in contract terms. Existing customers in minimum term notified of the rise have a 30-day right to leave penalty-free for broadband, Sky Talk and Sky Q.
<b>NOW Broadband</b>	No April rise	Most recent rise was £3 / month in July 2025. No fixed annual rise in NOW's contract terms; future rises are communicated by direct notification with a 30-day right to leave penalty-free.

Figures sourced from each provider's official price-change announcements published in early 2026. Older contract cohorts may face different rises. Check your provider's contract summary or our **2026 mid-contract price-rise guide** at broadbandswitch.uk for a full cohort-by-cohort breakdown.

#### WHAT IT MEANS IN MAY

If you signed up before mid-2024 you may be paying meaningfully more than a new switcher would for the same package. The friendliest move this month is a quick post-code check: even allowing for the new fixed rises, switching from an out-of-contract deal typically saves a household **£100 to £300 a year**, depending on speed tier and length of term.

SECTION 04 · TOP PICKS

## Best broadband deals 2026: top picks at a glance

**QUICK ANSWER**

Our 2026 picks are organised **by household need**, not by provider name. This shortlist is the starting point; the live deal at your address is surfaced through the comparison tool at **[broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare)**. Availability and offers vary street by street, especially across altnet networks.

BEST FOR	PROVIDER TYPE TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO COMPARE ON
<b>Best overall full-fibre value</b>	National FTTP retailers (BT, Sky, Vodafone, Plusnet, NOW Broadband, EE, TalkTalk) and city altnets (Community Fibre, Hyperoptic, YouFibre).	Total contract cost over 24 months.
<b>Best for low monthly bill</b>	Altnets and big-brand entry tiers.	Headline £ a month plus April rise in £.
<b>Best for speed</b>	Gigabit and multi-gig plans on Openreach FTTP, Virgin Media / nexfibre, and altnets.	Average evening speed and upload speed.
<b>Best for TV lovers</b>	Sky, Virgin Media, BT, NOW.	Combined channel value, sports / cinema add-ons.
<b>Best for flexibility</b>	Rolling 30-day plans from 5G home broadband and selected altnets.	Setup fee, exit notice, no minimum term.
<b>Best for budget households</b>	Social tariff providers (BT, Sky, Virgin Media, Vodafone, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre, EE, KCOM and others).	Eligible benefits, monthly £, speed.
<b>Best for rural homes</b>	Gigaclear, Quickline, Wessex Internet, Trooli, Fibrus (NI), Ogi (Wales), plus 4G / 5G home broadband.	Coverage at postcode, FWA fallback.
<b>Best for fixed-price promise</b>	Zen Internet, Cuckoo and selected altnets that publish "no mid-contract rise" terms.	Length of price hold, renewal price.

Prices and offers are subject to availability and change frequently. Live deals at your address are surfaced via the postcode comparison tool at [broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare).

## SECTION 05 · CHEAPEST

## Cheapest broadband deals UK May 2026

### QUICK ANSWER

The cheapest broadband in the UK in May 2026 starts in the **high-teens £ per month** for entry full-fibre (around 35 to 50 Mbit/s) on city altnets, and from the **low £20s** for nationally-available 100 to 150 Mbit/s plans, subject to availability. If you receive Universal Credit, Pension Credit, ESA, JSA or Income Support you can usually go lower still through a social tariff.

### Three traps to dodge when chasing the lowest price

- **Headline-rate seduction.** Some "introductory" offers jump sharply after the first year. Always read the rise schedule and the renewal price.
- **Setup-fee sting.** A tiny monthly bill paired with a £30+ setup fee can wipe out the savings on a 12-month contract. Always add the setup fee to your total.
- **Out-of-contract drift.** If you have not switched in 18 months you are very likely paying around 18% more than a new switcher on the same product.

The clean way to compare is to look at the **total contract cost over 24 months** rather than the first-month price. Our cheapest broadband page ranks live results that way, with deals also broken out at **under £25 a month** and **under £30 a month** for households on stricter budgets.

### MAY TIP

Combine an entry full-fibre plan (low £20s) with the streaming services you already use, and you will almost always come out cheaper than an old-style triple-play bundle. Run a quick postcode check before you decide; altnet pricing in particular varies dramatically by street.

SECTION 06 · FASTEST

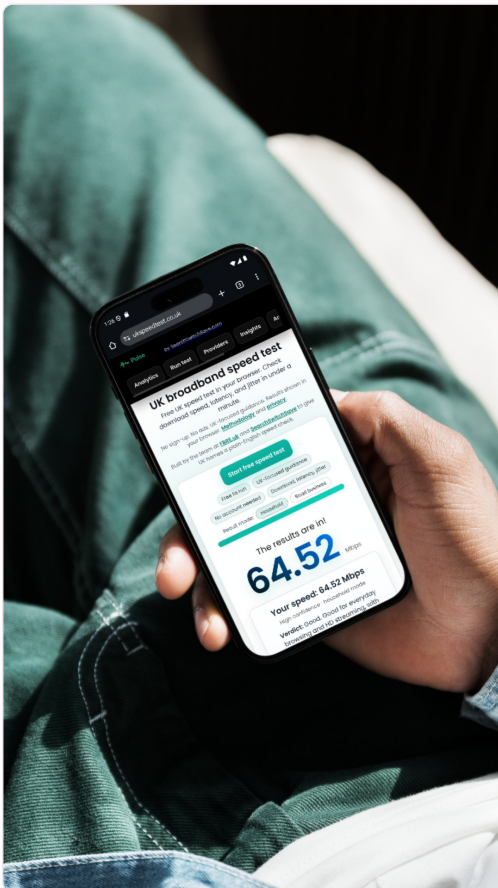
## Fastest broadband UK 2026: gigabit and multi-gig

### QUICK ANSWER

The fastest broadband widely available in the UK in 2026 is full-fibre **gigabit (around 900 to 1,000 Mbit/s)** and **multi-gig (2 Gbit/s and above)** on Openreach FTTP, Virgin Media's nexfibre platform, and several altnets. Some altnets, including Community Fibre, Hyperoptic and YouFibre, offer **symmetric multi-gig plans** where the upload matches the download.

Reality check before you go shopping for headline numbers: very few households actually need a full gigabit. A 4K Netflix stream needs around 25 Mbit/s, a Zoom call around 4 Mbit/s, and most online games run comfortably on 50 Mbit/s. Where gigabit and multi-gig genuinely shine:

- ✓ Households with multiple heavy users on simultaneous video calls.
- ✓ Creators uploading large files, livestreams or 4K footage.
- ✓ Smart homes with 30 or more connected devices.
- ✓ Anyone who wants real headroom for the next decade rather than just today.



### SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

#### First, see what you actually get today

Before paying for more speed, check what you currently receive. Our sister-site **UKSpeedTest.co.uk**, branded *Pulse*, is a free, no-signup, ad-free UK speed test that measures download, upload and jitter in under a minute and gives a plain-English verdict.

Built by the same SearchSwitchSave editorial team that publishes BroadbandSwitch.uk. Visit [uk-speed-test.co.uk](https://uk-speed-test.co.uk).

## Speed tiers explained

TIER	TYPICAL SPEED	GOOD FOR
<b>Standard</b>	Up to 35 Mbit/s	Light use, single occupant, basic streaming.
<b>Superfast</b>	35 to 100 Mbit/s	Couples and small households, 4K streaming, video calls.
<b>Ultrafast</b>	100 to 300 Mbit/s	Family households, multiple simultaneous streams, hybrid working.
<b>Full-fibre</b>	500 Mbit/s to 1 Gbit/s	Large households, content creators, smart homes.
<b>Multi-gig</b>	2 to 8 Gbit/s	Power users, prosumers, anyone future-proofing.

## SECTION 07 · FULL-FIBRE

## Best full-fibre (FTTP) deals 2026

### QUICK ANSWER

Full-fibre, also called FTTP (fibre to the premises), runs a single optical strand all the way into your home. It is now available to **roughly 25 million UK homes** as of May 2026 (Ofcom's last official figure was 23.7 million in November 2025), with around **43% of those homes already connected**. Plans typically start at 100 to 150 Mbit/s in the low £20s a month and scale to 2 Gbit/s and beyond, subject to availability at your address.

### Why full-fibre is the right default in 2026

- ✓ **More reliable.** No copper from the cabinet means weather, line length and ageing wires no longer cap your speed.
- ✓ **Symmetric or near-symmetric uploads on most altnets.** This transforms cloud backups, video calls and uploads to social platforms.
- ✓ **Future-proof.** Most FTTP networks can scale to 10 Gbit/s without changing the cable in the ground.
- ✓ **Often cheaper than older copper-based fibre (FTTC).** Wholesale price competition has compressed retail prices, especially in altnet footprints.

If full-fibre is not yet at your address, our full-fibre vs FTTC vs cable vs 4G / 5G explainer walks through the alternatives. For households in London especially, our Hyperoptic vs Community Fibre comparison is a useful starting point.

**Behind the brand: who uses which network?** Most national retailers (BT, Sky, TalkTalk, Vodafone, Plusnet, NOW Broadband, EE, Zen Internet) sell full-fibre over **Openreach**. Virgin Media uses its cable network and **nexfibre**. Altnets like Community Fibre, Hyperoptic, YouFibre, Gigaclear, Brsk, Trooli, CityFibre-based brands, Fibrus, Ogi and Wessex Internet build their own full-fibre networks. Which retail brand is right for you depends substantially on which networks reach your street.

## SECTION 08 · BROADBAND + TV

## Best broadband and TV deals 2026

### QUICK ANSWER

The best broadband and TV bundles in 2026 come from **Sky, Virgin Media, BT and NOW Broadband**, each combining a full-fibre or cable broadband line with a TV platform. Choose by which channels you actually watch, not by which package looks biggest on paper.

### How the four major TV bundles compare

- **Sky Stream and Sky Glass** deliver Sky's TV apps over your broadband (no dish), and bundle naturally with Sky Broadband.
- **Virgin Media** combines its cable and full-fibre broadband with a TV 360 / Stream platform and Sky Sports / TNT add-ons.
- **BT TV** runs over BT broadband and offers flexible Sky Sports, TNT and NOW passes.
- **NOW Broadband** pairs neatly with NOW's contract-free TV memberships if you prefer monthly flexibility.

If you mainly stream on Netflix, Disney+, Prime, ITVX and BBC iPlayer, you may save by going broadband-only and adding the streaming services you actually use. Our broadband-only vs bundles insight breaks the maths down by household type.

## SECTION 09 · BROADBAND ONLY

## Best broadband-only deals (no phone line)

### QUICK ANSWER

You no longer need a landline to get broadband. More than 1 million UK households dropped landline-only service in the year to July 2025, and most full-fibre and cable plans are now broadband-only by default.

This matters because:

- ✓ The UK's old copper phone network (PSTN) is being switched off, and Digital Voice runs over your broadband instead.
- ✓ Removing line rental almost always lowers the monthly bill.
- ✓ Many altnets never offered a phone line in the first place.

Our broadband-only vs bundles insight breaks down when keeping a landline is still worthwhile, typically for care alarms, monitored alarms, or households who genuinely use the home phone every week. If you rely on a wired phone for accessibility or healthcare devices, read our Digital Voice and broadband switching guide before you switch.

## SECTION 10 · NO CONTRACT

## No-contract and 30-day rolling broadband

### QUICK ANSWER

Rolling, no-contract broadband is widely available in 2026, particularly on **5G home broadband** plans (Three, EE, Vodafone) and from a handful of altnet retailers. Expect a small monthly premium over a 24-month deal in exchange for the freedom to leave any month with short notice.

This is the right pick if you are:

- ✓ Renting short-term or expecting to move within the year.
- ✓ Living in a new-build that may get full-fibre soon.
- ✓ Using broadband as a stop-gap before a permanent solution lands.
- ✓ Trying out a new altnet and want to keep your options open.

## SECTION 11 · SOCIAL TARIFFS

## Social tariffs: cheapest broadband on benefits

### QUICK ANSWER

Social tariffs are discounted broadband packages for households on means-tested benefits. Prices typically range from **£12.50 to £20 a month** for 30 to 150 Mbit/s, with no setup fees and no exit penalties on most. Eligibility usually covers Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support.

Despite more than 30 social tariffs now being available (up from 3 in 2020), only **532,000 households** were taking one as of June 2025, around 8.6% of those eligible. Ofcom found that 70% of eligible households simply did not know social tariffs existed. Major providers offering verified social tariffs in 2026 include **BT, EE, Sky, NOW Broadband, Virgin Media, Vodafone, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre and KCOM** (Hull area).

### Quick benefits to applying

- ✓ Most social tariffs are exempt from mid-contract price rises.
- ✓ Most are 30-day rolling, so you can leave easily if your circumstances change.
- ✓ Switching to a social tariff is straightforward via One Touch Switch, even from a non-social tariff.

### SPREAD THE WORD

If you know someone on Universal Credit, Pension Credit or another qualifying benefit who has not switched broadband in the last two years, a 5-minute conversation about social tariffs can comfortably save them **£200 to £400 a year**. Awareness, not eligibility, is the bottleneck.

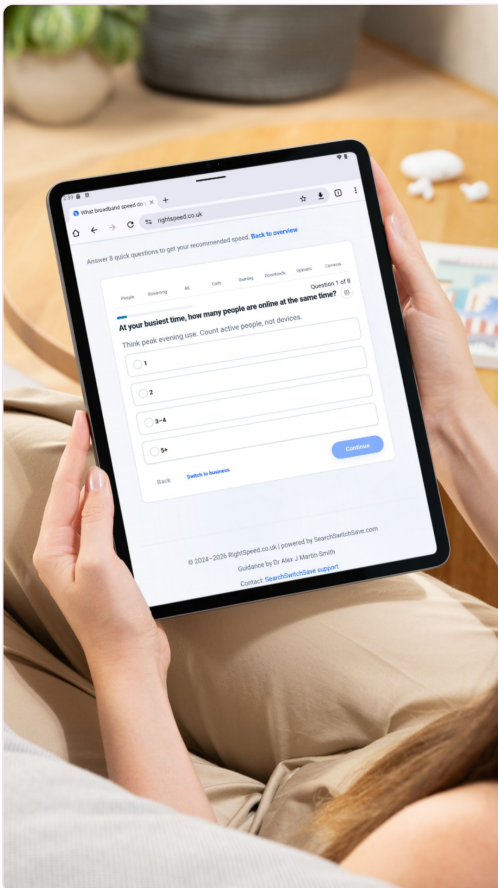
SECTION 12 · BY NEED

## Best broadband by need

*The right "best" depends entirely on what you actually do online. Five common household profiles, with a quick speed-tier and what to look for in May 2026.*

### How busy is the average UK home?

The average UK household contains **2.35 residents** (ONS, 2025), but the typical home now juggles many more simultaneous connections than people. **95% of UK adults use the internet at home** (Ofcom, 2025d), **average fixed-line data use has reached 583 GB per connection per month** in July 2025, up 10% year-on-year (and 738 GB on full-fibre lines specifically), and **41% of British homes own a smart speaker** (Ofcom, 2025b, 2025e). Add the **28% of working adults in Great Britain who work in a hybrid pattern** (ONS, 2025) and a typical evening peak now layers a 4K stream on the TV, a video call from the home office, a mobile game on the sofa, a smart-home hub humming away in the background, and a doorbell camera quietly watching the front door. The headline number is no longer "people"; it's "concurrent connections", and that is climbing year on year.



#### SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

### Right-size your speed before you overspend

Many UK households pay for far more speed than they actually need. Our companion tool **Right-Speed.co.uk** walks you through eight short questions about people, streaming, gaming, calls, uploads and cameras, then recommends the speed tier that genuinely fits your home, in plain English.

Authored by Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith. Free, no signup, no ads. Visit [rightspeak.co.uk](https://rightspeak.co.uk).

**Working from home** 100 to 300 Mbit/s

For most home workers in 2026, a full-fibre plan of **100 to 300 Mbit/s download with at least 50 Mbit/s upload** is the sweet spot. Upload speed and latency matter more than peak download for video calls and cloud collaboration. If multiple people work from home, look for symmetric uploads (most common on altnet FTTP) and a router with WiFi 6 or WiFi 7 for whole-home coverage.

**Online gaming** 100 Mbit/s + low ping

Online gaming is more sensitive to **latency and stability** than raw speed. A reliable 100 Mbit/s full-fibre line with low ping (typically under 20 ms) will outperform a faster cable or copper line with higher jitter. Check average evening latency, packet-loss reports on the chosen network, and a wired Ethernet path from router to console or PC.

**Streaming and 4K** 80 to 150 Mbit/s

A single 4K Netflix or Disney+ stream needs about 25 Mbit/s. A household with two simultaneous 4K streams plus background devices runs comfortably on **80 to 100 Mbit/s**. Anything 150 Mbit/s and above is plenty for typical streaming households, even with smart-TV sets, doorbells and a few phones in the mix.

**Large households and student houses** 300 Mbit/s +

Households with four or more heavy users should aim for **300 Mbit/s or more** on a full-fibre line, ideally with strong WiFi mesh coverage. Students should look at 9-month academic-year contracts and check whether the property already has a usable line in place.

**Renters and movers** Rolling / short-term

Renters and frequent movers should favour **rolling or short-term contracts**, plans with low or no setup fees, and providers that allow you to take the deal with you when you move. 5G home broadband is often the easiest plug-and-play option for short tenancies.

## SECTION 13 · PRICING

## April 2026 broadband price rises in detail

### QUICK ANSWER

In 2026, in-contract price rises on UK broadband are stated in **pounds and pence at sign-up**, not as an inflation-linked percentage. Most major providers raised prices in late March or early April 2026 by amounts ranging from **£3 to £4 a month** depending on the provider and your contract cohort. Sky's rise sits outside contract terms and so triggers a 30-day right to leave for in-contract customers; NOW Broadband did not raise prices in April 2026, with its most recent rise of £3 a month applied in July 2025 (Sky Group, 2026; Uswitch, 2026).

This is thanks to Ofcom's January 2025 rules, which banned CPI- and RPI-linked clauses in new contracts. The published April 2026 rises across major providers are summarised in Section 03; this section covers the regulatory detail and the questions readers ask most.

### Which providers do not put price rises in your contract?

A small but growing group either guarantee no mid-contract rise during the minimum term or do not include a rise clause at all, giving stronger consumer protection. Examples include **Zen Internet**, **Cuckoo** and several altnets that publish a fixed-price promise. Always read the term length and the renewal price; "no rise during your term" still leaves the door open to a higher renewal price at month 25.

### Can I leave penalty-free if my price goes up?

Only if the rise was not clearly stated in pounds and pence at sign-up. **Sky** is the notable exception in April 2026: because Sky's £3 rise is not in its contract terms, customers retain a 30-day right to leave when notified. **NOW Broadband** works the same way structurally but held prices steady this April; its last rise of £3 was in July 2025. For everyone else, the £ rise is part of the agreed contract, so the right answer is usually to ride out the term and switch promptly the moment you reach your end-of-contract date, when the savings on offer are largest.

### Out-of-contract premiums

Ofcom data shows out-of-contract dual-play customers pay around **18% more** on average than in-contract customers. If you have not switched or re-contracted in the last 18 months, this is the single fastest saving available to most UK households.

*"Pounds and pence pricing has done what years of warnings could not: it has made comparing broadband easy again."*

— BROADBANDSWITCH.UK EDITORIAL TEAM, MAY 2026

## SECTION 14 · HOW TO SWITCH

## Switching broadband with One Touch Switch

### QUICK ANSWER

One Touch Switch (OTS) launched on 12 September 2024 and is the standard UK switching process for broadband and home phone. You contact only your **new** provider; they handle the rest. Over **1.6 million UK customers** used OTS in its first 12 months, with more than 300 providers signed up. Most switches complete within a few working days with little or no downtime.

### The five steps

- 1 Compare deals at your postcode.**  
Use the comparison tool at broadbandswitch.uk to see live deals from 35+ providers at your address.
- 2 Choose by total contract cost.**  
Not the introductory price alone. Add the headline £, setup fee, voucher and the published April rise to compare like for like.
- 3 Sign up with the new provider only.**  
Under OTS, they contact your current provider for you. No awkward call to cancel.
- 4 Receive both confirmations.**  
Both providers send confirmation within one working day. These set out any early-exit fees, your switch date and your activation date.
- 5 Service goes live.**  
Downtime is typically measured in minutes to a few hours. If a switch is delayed past one working day, you are entitled to compensation under Ofcom's automatic compensation scheme.

**Already in contract?** Check your end-of-contract date in your provider's app or last bill. If you are within the last 30 days of term, you can usually switch without paying any early-exit fee. If you are mid-contract, weigh the early-exit charge against the saving on the new deal over its full term.

## SECTION 15 · METHODOLOGY

## How we rank deals

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**QUICK ANSWER**

Every deal in our comparison tool is ranked by **total contract cost**: the all-inclusive amount you will actually pay over the contract term, including the headline monthly price, the setup fee, the value of any voucher or reward, and the published April price rises in pounds and pence.

In short, our standards are:

- ✓ **Live deal data refreshed at least daily** from our partners and verified against each provider's Key Facts Document.
- ✓ **429+ UK ISPs tracked** in our broader provider directory; 35 or more surfaced in the live comparison at any time.
- ✓ **No paid placement.** Affiliate commission does not change the rank order or which deals appear.
- ✓ **Editorial review.** Every category page is reviewed by a named editor and dated.
- ✓ **Public corrections log.** Any factual error is logged, dated and credited to the reporter.

Our full methodology, including the Total Contract Value formula, is published at **[broadbandswitch.uk/how-we-rank-broadband-deals.html](https://broadbandswitch.uk/how-we-rank-broadband-deals.html)**.

## SECTION 16 · FAQ

## Frequently asked questions

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### What is the best broadband deal in the UK in May 2026?

For most UK households this month, the best broadband deal is a full-fibre (FTTP) plan in the 150 to 500 Mbit/s range from a provider with clear pounds-and-pence rises. Headline prices for that tier typically sit in the low-to-mid £20s a month, subject to availability at your postcode. Sort by total contract cost, not introductory price.

### Who has the cheapest broadband in the UK in 2026?

Cheapest depends entirely on what is available at your address. Entry full-fibre tiers from city altnets such as Community Fibre and Hyperoptic, plus broadband-only plans from Plusnet, NOW Broadband, Sky and Vodafone, regularly compete at the lowest end. Social tariff customers can go lower still. Always confirm by running a postcode check.

### How much should I pay for broadband per month in 2026?

Ofcom reported that average UK broadband prices fell about 6% in real terms in 2025, with the fastest packages seeing the biggest drops. As a rough benchmark, expect to pay in the high teens to low £20s for entry full-fibre, low-to-mid £20s for 150 Mbit/s, and high £20s to mid-£30s for 500 Mbit/s and gigabit. Specific prices vary by provider, postcode and term.

### How much will broadband bills go up in April 2026?

Most major UK providers raised prices in late March or early April 2026 by a fixed amount: BT and EE up to £4 a month for the latest cohort, Plusnet £4, TalkTalk £4 (for contracts from 16 November 2025), Vodafone £3.50 (for contracts from 12 November 2025), Virgin Media £4 (for contracts from 2 October 2025) or £3.50 (for the 9 January to 1 October 2025 cohort), and Sky £3. NOW Broadband did not apply an April 2026 rise; its most recent increase of £3 a month was in July 2025. Older cohorts may face different amounts.

### Can I leave my broadband contract early because of a price rise?

Only if the rise was not stated in pounds and pence at sign-up. Under Ofcom's January 2025 rules, a clearly disclosed rise becomes part of your contract, so you cannot exit penalty-free. Sky's rise sits outside its contract terms, so existing in-contract customers were given a 30-day right to leave penalty-free for broadband, Sky Talk and Sky Q when notified. NOW Broadband works the same way; its most recent rise was in July 2025, and any future rise will be communicated by direct notification with a 30-day exit window.

### Which UK broadband providers do not have mid-contract price rises?

Several smaller and altnet providers, including Zen Internet, Cuckoo and a number of regional altnets, publish a fixed-price promise during the minimum term or do not include a rise clause. Always check the term length and the renewal price, and look for the specific words "no mid-contract price rise" in the contract summary.

### **What is One Touch Switch and how does it work?**

One Touch Switch is the UK's standard broadband and landline switching process, live since 12 September 2024. You contact your new provider only; they coordinate with your old provider, give you confirmation of any early-exit fees, and run the switch with minimal downtime. Over 1.6 million UK customers switched via OTS in its first year.

### **Do I still need a phone line for broadband in 2026?**

No. Most full-fibre and cable broadband plans no longer include a phone line. The UK's old copper phone network is being switched off and replaced by Digital Voice, which runs over your broadband. Care alarm and monitored alarm users should check compatibility before switching.

### **What broadband speed do I actually need?**

A single 4K stream needs about 25 Mbit/s, a video call about 4 Mbit/s, and most online games run on 50 Mbit/s. Households of one to two people are usually fine on 60 to 100 Mbit/s; three to four people on 150 to 300 Mbit/s; five or more heavy users on 500 Mbit/s or above.

### **What is the difference between FTTP, FTTC and cable broadband?**

FTTP, which expands to "fibre to the premises", is the formal name for full-fibre broadband. It runs an optical fibre directly into your home and is the fastest, most reliable mainstream technology. FTTC (fibre to the cabinet) uses fibre to a street cabinet and copper for the final stretch, so speeds drop with distance. Cable, used by Virgin Media, runs coaxial into the home and is now being upgraded to FTTP across the nexfibre footprint.

### **Is full-fibre available at my address?**

It is for around 82% of UK homes by our best estimate for May 2026, with Ofcom's last official figure (published 19 November 2025) at 78% / 23.7 million homes. Openreach reached 21.4 million premises with FTTP by 31 December 2025 and is on track for 25 million by the end of 2026; Ofcom's next Connected Nations update is expected to confirm the precise May 2026 figure shortly. Coverage varies street by street, especially across altnet builds, so a postcode check is essential.

### **Am I eligible for a broadband social tariff?**

You are usually eligible if you receive Universal Credit, Pension Credit (guarantee credit), Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support; some providers also accept Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance. More than 30 social tariffs are now available, priced from around £12.50 a month, but Ofcom found 70% of eligible households did not realise they existed.

### **Can I get broadband without a credit check?**

Yes. Most pay-as-you-go and 4G or 5G mobile broadband options are available without a credit check, and several rolling 30-day plans require only a debit card.

### **How long does it take to switch broadband?**

Most One Touch Switch transfers complete within a few working days, often with downtime of minutes to a few hours. Engineer visits (for example, when moving from one network to another) can extend that to one or two weeks, but the new provider gives you a confirmed switch date up front.

### Which is the most reliable broadband provider in the UK?

Ofcom's Q3 2025 complaints data, published 19 February 2026, showed Plusnet was the least-complained-about UK broadband provider, with 4 complaints per 100,000 customers against an industry average of 8. Customer satisfaction varies year to year; check current Ofcom complaints data and Which? survey results before signing.

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[broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare) →

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## SECTION 17 · EDITORIAL

## Editorial team and standards

### Authors of this issue

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### How we work

- ✓ We name the editor and reviewer on every dated page.
- ✓ We refresh live deal data daily and headline market context monthly.
- ✓ We publish a public corrections log; any factual error is logged, dated and credited to the reporter.
- ✓ We earn a commission when readers switch via our comparison journey. This never affects which deals we show or the order they appear in.
- ✓ We see the best in every provider in the British market, frame changes as positive consumer outcomes wherever possible, and never bad-mouth a brand.

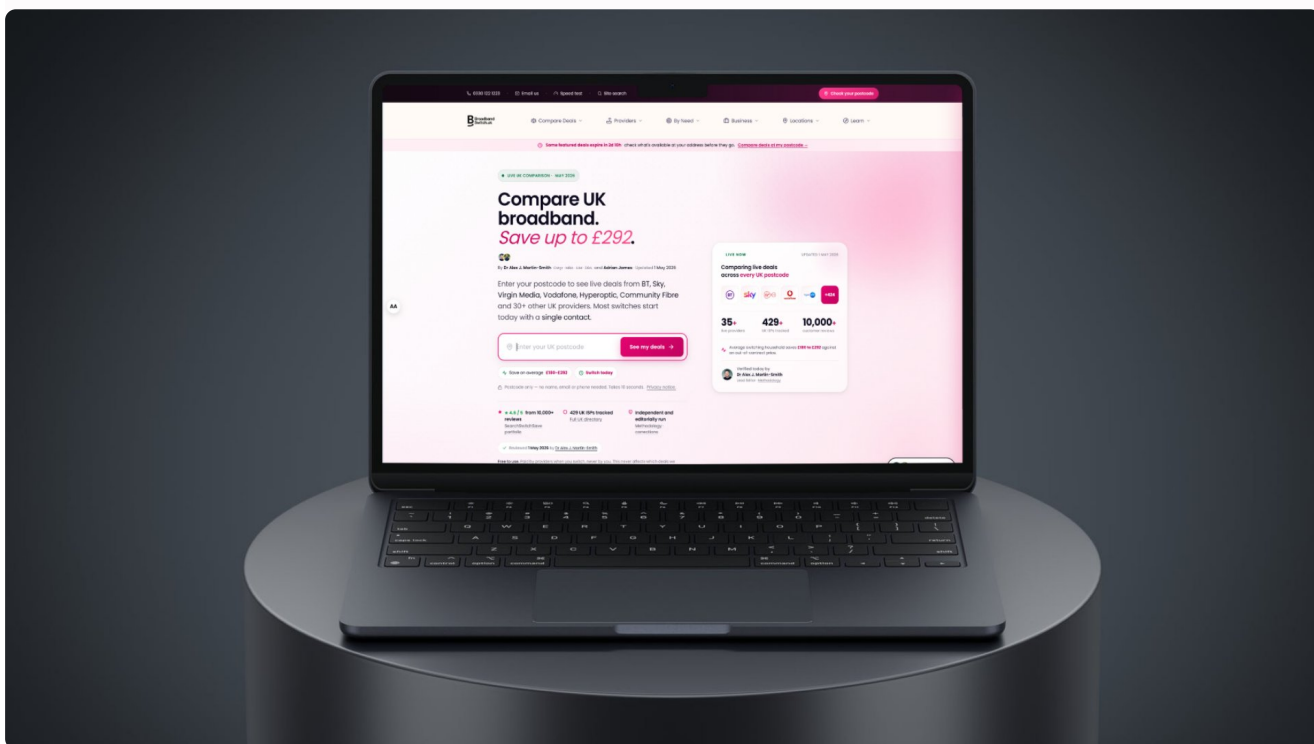
### Disclosures

Read our editorial policy, affiliate disclosure and AI disclosure on [broadbandswitch.uk](https://broadbandswitch.uk) for full detail on how we make money, how we use AI tools responsibly and how we keep recommendations independent. No provider has paid for inclusion or position in this update.

SECTION 18 · OWNERSHIP

## Ownership and sister sites

BroadbandSwitch.uk is part of the **SearchSwitchSave Group's FBRE.uk network** of UK broadband sites, alongside three companion brands: RightSpeed.co.uk, UK-SpeedTest.co.uk and BroadbandMap.org.uk. One editorial team, one set of standards, one straightforward goal: helping Great Britain switch with confidence.



*BroadbandSwitch.uk – the consumer-facing comparison site, free to use, paid by providers when you switch.*

### Our sister sites

- **RightSpeed.co.uk** – an 8-question UK broadband-speed-needs calculator that helps households right-size their plan before they overspend. Plain-English guidance, no signup, no ads.
- **UKSpeedTest.co.uk** (branded *Pulse*) – a free, no-signup, ad-free UK broadband speed test that measures download, upload and jitter in under a minute and gives a plain-English verdict on what your line is good for.
- **BroadbandMap.org.uk** – a postcode-level UK coverage map showing which technologies (FTTP, FTTC, cable, 4G, 5G) reach which streets, refreshed against the latest Openreach, Virgin Media O2 and altnet data.

## Corporate disclosure

**BroadbandSwitch.uk** is a trading name of **SearchSwitchSave®**.

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**UK Intellectual Property registration:** UK00004211113

**ICO Isle of Man registration:** R697728

**Registered office:** Sycamore House, Glen Duff, Lezayre, IM7 2AT, Isle of Man

FBRE.uk is the SearchSwitchSave Group's owned network of UK broadband sites and build studio, and is not an external membership body. All sites in the network share the same editorial standards, the same author bylines and the same corrections log.

## SECTION 19 · REFERENCES

## References (APA 7)

Every quantitative claim in this issue is backed by a publicly verifiable source. References are listed alphabetically below in APA 7th edition format. Where a claim relies on a forward-look estimate (for example, May 2026 full-fibre coverage), the supporting trajectory data and the latest Ofcom official baseline are both cited.

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## SECTION 20 · FURTHER READING

## Sources and further reading

*A short, plain-English summary of the most useful primary sources behind this issue. Use these if you want to read the originals; full APA citations are in Section 19.*

- › **Ofcom, Connected Nations 2025**, published 19 November 2025. Coverage, speed and adoption data for the UK fixed-line and mobile networks.
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- › **Citizens Advice consumer rights guidance**. Switching, mid-contract price rises and complaints.

## SECTION 21 · COLOPHON

## Colophon and disclosures

*The technical and editorial details behind this issue. Bookmark this update; the next one drops on the first working day of June.*

**BroadbandSwitch.uk · UK Broadband Market Update · Issue 05 · May 2026.**

Published Friday, 1 May 2026. Compiled and reviewed in Great Britain and the Isle of Man. All figures sourced from the references in Section 19; consumer-friendly summaries in Section 20. Live deals at your postcode are surfaced via the comparison tool at [broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare). Specific monthly prices and headline offers change daily and are not reproduced here; they are subject to availability at your address and personalised price will vary by location.

**Caveats.** All prices and offers referenced in narrative form are subject to availability at your postcode. Provider price-rise figures are taken from each provider's official January to March 2026 communications and apply to the latest contract cohort; older cohorts may differ. Eligibility for social tariffs is set by each provider and Ofcom guidance and may change. This update is general consumer information, not financial or legal advice.

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## ● ONE LAST THING

## Ready to switch? Compare your live deals.

Thanks for reading the May 2026 Update. See you on the first working day of June.

[broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/compare) →

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