

● UK SPEED GUIDE · JUNE 2026

THE SPEED GAP, SOLVED

Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Why Are My Speeds Lower Than *advertised?*

Paying for 150 and getting 60? There are three usual suspects: what the advert really promised, the line itself, and your own four walls. Here is how to find yours, fix it, or walk away free.

50%

**WHO MUST REACH THE
"AVERAGE"**

At peak, by the ad rules

30

DAYS TO FIX IT

Then you can exit free

8-10pm

WHEN AVERAGES ARE SET

Peak time, by the rules

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Next review within 90 days

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SECTION 01 · AT A GLANCE

The speed gap at a glance

QUICK ANSWER

Three suspects explain almost every speed gap: **the advert** (the "average" only has to reach half of customers at peak), **the line** (part-fibre fades with every metre of copper), and **your home** (Wi-Fi quietly loses what the line delivers). One wired test tells you which one is yours, and if the line is below your **guaranteed minimum**, you can demand a fix or leave free.

KEY FACTS · VERIFIED JUNE 2026

The advertised "average" is a median: since May 2018, UK ads must quote the speed available to at least 50% of customers at peak time, 8pm to 10pm. By definition, half of customers get less at peak.

You have a personal number that matters more: providers must give you a speed estimate and a minimum guaranteed speed when you order.

Below the guaranteed minimum? 30 days. Report it, and signed-up providers must fix it within 30 days or release you penalty-free, including linked landline and TV. Vodafone is notably not a signatory to the code.

An "80 Mbps" part-fibre line tops out around 76 in real throughput even beside the cabinet, and fades with distance.

Wi-Fi is the biggest in-home thief: a cheap single-radio extender can lose around half your speed; a well-set-up mesh keeps roughly 90%.

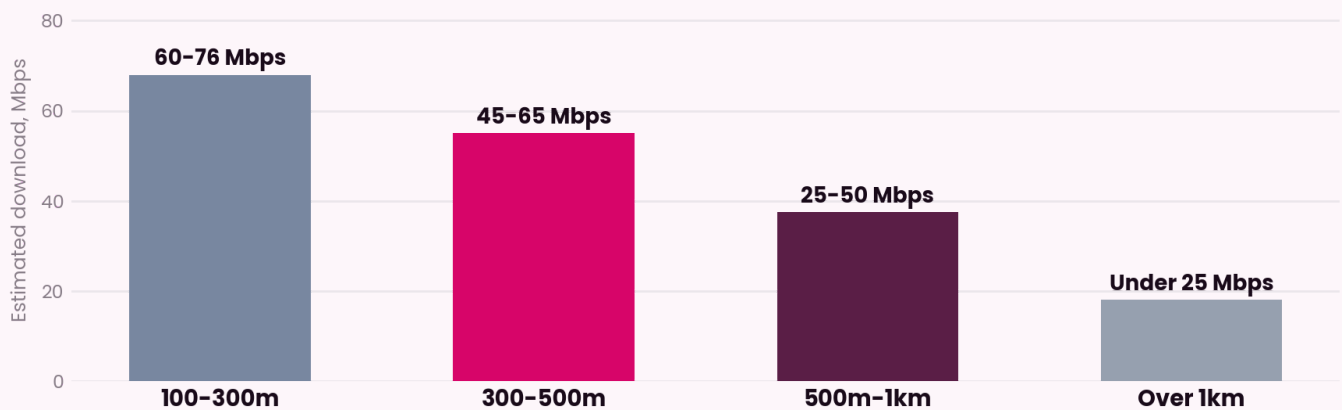
The next two pages take the suspects in turn: first the advert and the line, then your own four walls. Page 5 turns it into a five-minute diagnosis.

SECTION 02 · SUSPECTS ONE AND TWO

The advert, and the line

Suspect one is the advert itself. Since May 2018, an advertised "average" speed must be available to at least 50% of customers at peak time. That is a far fairer rule than the old "up to" claims, but it still means half of customers get less than the headline at peak, perfectly legally. Your contract's personal estimate and guaranteed minimum are the numbers that actually bind.

Suspect two is the line, and it mostly applies to part-fibre. On FTTC, fibre reaches the street cabinet and copper does the rest, so every metre of copper costs you speed.



Distance from the street cabinet, on an '80 Mbps' part-fibre (FTTC) line in good condition

Estimated download on an "80 Mbps" part-fibre line in good condition, by distance from the cabinet. Industry estimates consistent with Openreach guidance; wiring quality and interference vary it further.

- ✓ **Even the best part-fibre line undersells the label.** The "80 Mbps" product syncs at about 76 Mbps of real throughput at most, before distance takes its share.
- ✓ **Crosstalk makes it worse, unpredictably.** As more neighbours take part-fibre on the same cabinet, the copper signals interfere, and speeds can sag through no fault of yours.
- ✓ **Full fibre does not play this game.** Light down glass barely fades with distance, which is why full fibre delivers its advertised tier so much more faithfully. See what reaches you: broadbandswitch.uk/fttp-broadband-deals.html.

SECTION 03 · SUSPECT THREE

Your own four walls

Here is the suspect nobody wants it to be: the gap is very often inside the house. The line delivers its number to the router, and the home network loses it on the way to your screen.

- ✓ **Wi-Fi distance and walls.** Speed falls with every wall between you and the router. A router in a cupboard or behind the telly is a self-inflicted speed cut, so give it height and open air.
- ✓ **Cheap extenders halve it.** A single-radio extender must receive and re-transmit on the same radio, losing around half the speed. A tri-band or wired mesh keeps roughly 90%.
- ✓ **Old devices cap it.** An ageing laptop or streaming stick with an old Wi-Fi radio cannot go faster than its own hardware, whatever plan you buy.
- ✓ **Peak-time contention.** Copper and cable connections show the largest proportional dips in the busy evening hours, while full fibre stays steadiest. If your speed is fine at 2pm and sags at 9pm, this is your suspect.
- ✓ **Background noise.** Cloud backups, game downloads and a VPN can quietly eat or throttle your measured speed mid-test.

THE ONE TEST THAT SETTLES IT

Plug a laptop into the router with an ethernet cable and test there. Wired speed close to your plan means the line is fine and the gap is your Wi-Fi. Wired speed well below your guaranteed minimum means the line is the problem, and that is the one your provider must fix.

SECTION 04 · THE FIVE-MINUTE DIAGNOSIS

Find your fix in five minutes

Run a wired speed test at the router, once at peak (8 to 10pm) and once off-peak, at ukspeedtest.co.uk. Then read your result here.

WHAT YOU FOUND	LIKELY CAUSE	QUICKEST FIX
Wired fast, Wi-Fi slow	Home network	Move the router; mesh, not cheap extenders
Slow only at 8–10pm	Peak congestion	Full fibre holds up best; compare your options
Slow on one device only	That device's radio	Update it, use 5GHz, or wire it
Wired test below your guaranteed minimum	The line itself	Report it, start the 30-day clock

Your guaranteed minimum speed is on your order confirmation. If the wired test sits below it, the code gives your provider 30 days from your report to fix it, or you can leave penalty-free, including linked landline and TV bought at the same time.

1

Gather the evidence.

Two or three dated wired test results, peak and off-peak, plus your guaranteed minimum from the order.

2

Report it and say the words.

Tell your provider the wired speed is below your guaranteed minimum and you are invoking the speeds code. The 30-day clock starts now.

3

Day 31: fixed, or free.

Not fixed? Exit penalty-free and pick a line that delivers. If they refuse or stall, the complaints ladder in our Escalation Hub guide applies, with the rest of our guides at broadbandswitch.uk/guides.html.

• LINE NOT DELIVERING?

See what your postcode can really get.

Compare full fibre and every other option at your address, with speeds that mean what they say.

[Compare live deals at your postcode →](#)

BROADBANDSWITCH.UK/COMPARE · 35+ PROVIDERS · 429 ISPS TRACKED

SECTION · REFERENCES

References and sources



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Published 10 June 2026, next review within 90 days. Every figure is sourced below and logged in our public corrections process at broadbandswitch.uk/corrections-log.html.

Advertising rules are the ASA's published standards; consumer rights are Ofcom's; line-speed figures are industry engineering estimates, labelled as such. Sources in APA 7th edition format.

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Citing this guide: BroadbandSwitch.uk. (2026, June 10). *Why are my broadband speeds lower than advertised?* SearchSwitchSave. <https://broadbandswitch.uk/guides/speeds-lower-than-advertised/>

REMEMBER

Test wired at the router, peak and off-peak. Wi-Fi gap: fix the home network. Peak-only sag: congestion, and full fibre holds up best. Below your guaranteed minimum: report it, give them 30 days, then walk free. And if you are buying afresh, our companion guide on speed by household size gets the number right first time. Compare at broadbandswitch.uk/compare.

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