

● UK SPEED GUIDE · JUNE 2026

BUY THE RIGHT SPEED

Wednesday, 10 June 2026

What Speed Do I Need, by *household size?*

Gigabit sounds great, but do you actually need it? Here is the honest maths: what each activity really uses, what your household adds up to, and the speed worth paying for.

25

MBPS PER 4K STREAM

Netflix's own number

100+

THE FAMILY SWEET SPOT

For most mixed homes

17%

STILL ON SUB-100 PLANS

And many are just fine

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

Reviewed by **Adrian James**

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SECTION 01 · THE 60-SECOND ANSWER

The answer in 60 seconds

QUICK ANSWER

For most UK homes, **100 to 300 Mbps is the sweet spot**. Go lower if you live alone and use it lightly, higher if four or more of you stream in 4K, game and upload at once. The right number is simply what your busiest evening adds up to, plus headroom, and this guide shows you the maths.

Find your household

YOUR HOUSEHOLD	A TYPICAL EVENING	LOOK FOR
1-2 people, light use	One stream, browsing, calls	50-100 Mbps
3-4 people, mixed use	Two streams, gaming, homework	100-300 Mbps
4+ people, heavy use	Multiple 4K streams plus gaming	300-500 Mbps
Power users, creators	4K everywhere, big uploads, smart home	500+ Mbps

BroadbandSwitch.uk editorial guidance, built from the activity figures on the next page. These bands are what to look for, not what you must buy: a steady connection at the bottom of your band beats an unreliable one at the top.

KEY FACTS · VERIFIED JUNE 2026

One 4K stream needs 15 to 25 Mbps; Netflix's own recommendation is 25 Mbps per stream, and streams add up, they do not share.

An HD stream needs just 5 to 8 Mbps, and a group video call around 4 Mbps.

Gaming needs little speed but low latency: playing online uses around 3 Mbps; it is lag, not bandwidth, that ruins it.

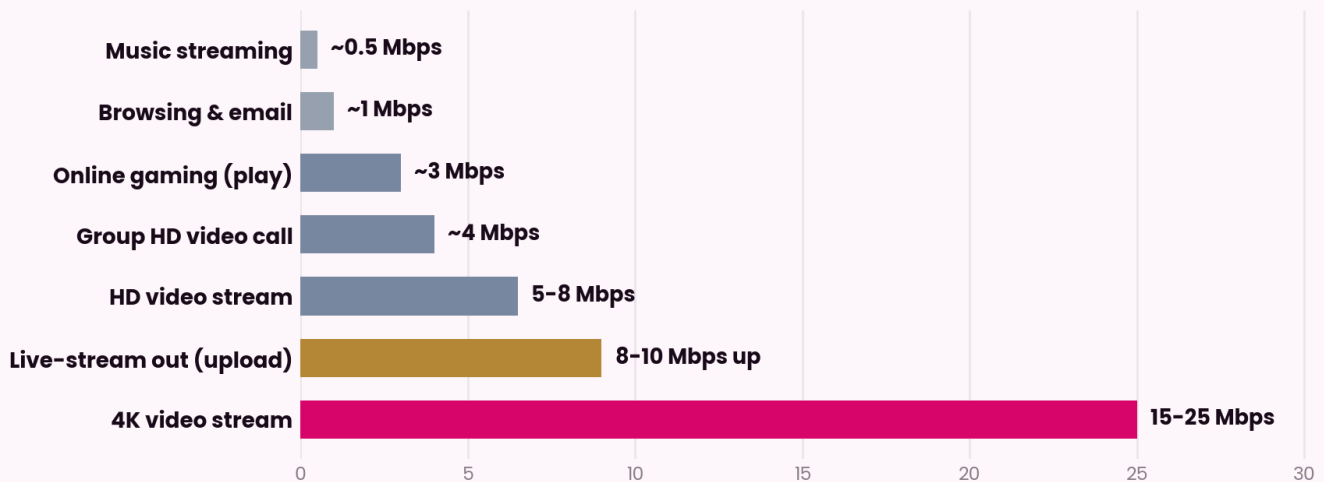
17% of UK homes still take plans under 100 Mbps (Ofcom, 2025), and for light users that is often a perfectly sound choice.

Upload matters if you create or work from home: live-streaming out needs 8 to 10 Mbps of upload on its own.

SECTION 02 · THE MATHS

Build your bandwidth budget

Speed shopping gets easy once you know what each activity actually uses. These are the platforms' own recommendations, per person or stream.



Typical need per person or stream, Mbps (platform recommendations; 4K shown at Netflix's 25)

What each activity typically needs, per person or stream. Platform recommendations: Netflix puts a single 4K stream at 25 Mbps, YouTube 4K at 20, HD at 5 to 8.

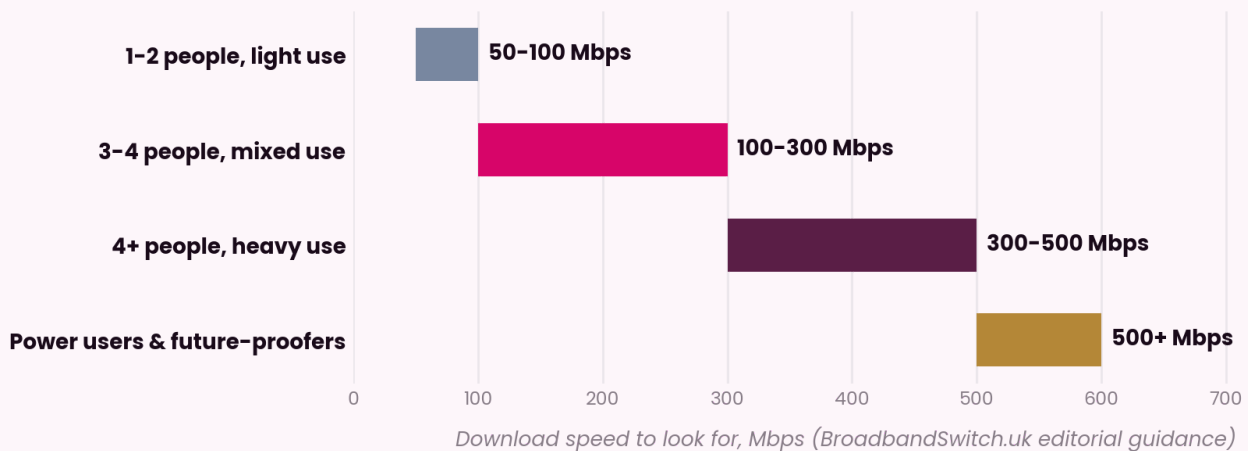
Three steps to your number

- 1 Count your busiest evening, not your average day.**
 How many screens stream at once at 8pm on your fullest night, and at what quality? Two 4K streams alone is 50 Mbps.
- 2 Add the rest of the house.**
 Calls, gaming, homework, music and a houseful of phones quietly add another 10 to 20 Mbps.
- 3 Add a third again as headroom.**
 Background updates, smart devices and the normal ebb of real-world speeds mean a 30 to 50% buffer keeps everything smooth.

A worked example: two 4K streams (50) plus a gamer (3), a video call (4) and the background hum (15) is 72 Mbps. Add headroom and a 100 Mbps plan fits beautifully, which is why it is the family sweet spot.

SECTION 03 · OUR GUIDANCE

What to buy, by household



The speed bands to look for, by household profile. BroadbandSwitch.uk editorial guidance, built from the activity figures on page 3.

- ✓ **1-2 people, light use.** Streaming in HD, browsing, video calls. Entry full fibre around 50 to 100 Mbps covers this with room to spare, often for the lowest price on the market.
- ✓ **3-4 people, mixed use.** Simultaneous streams, gaming and homework. 100 to 300 Mbps keeps every evening smooth, and is where the best value per megabit usually sits.
- ✓ **4+ people, heavy use.** Several 4K streams plus gaming and calls at once. 300 to 500 Mbps means nobody negotiates over the bandwidth.
- ✓ **Power users and future-proofers.** Creators uploading big files, serious smart homes, or anyone who simply never wants to think about it. 500 Mbps up to gigabit, and weight the **upload** as heavily as the download. Why upload deserves more attention: broadbandswitch.uk/upload-speed-vs-download-speed-what-broadband-switchers-should-compare.html.

SECTION 04 · THE HONEST BIT

When more speed will not help

We compare broadband for a living, and here is the truth: plenty of homes are sold speed they will never feel. Three things matter more than the headline number.

- ✓ **Latency beats bandwidth for gaming and calls.** Online play uses around 3 Mbps; what ruins it is lag. If games stutter on a fast plan, the fix is the connection quality, not a bigger number. The hidden metrics explained: broadbandswitch.uk/latency-jitter-packet-loss-hidden-broadband-metrics.html.
- ✓ **Your Wi-Fi can waste what you buy.** A gigabit plan through a poorly placed router can feel slower than 100 Mbps done well. If pages crawl in the back bedroom, fix the Wi-Fi before upgrading the plan.
- ✓ **A steady 100 beats a flaky 500.** Reliability and consistency at peak time are worth more than headline speed, which is why full fibre at a modest tier often feels faster than it sounds.

AND IF MONEY IS TIGHT

Social tariffs offer solid speeds at a fraction of standard prices for households on qualifying benefits, and they are typically exempt from mid-contract rises. The full picture:

broadbandswitch.uk/social-tariffs-uk.html.

• GOT YOUR NUMBER?

Now see what that speed costs at your address.

Compare live deals in your band, from every network that reaches your postcode.

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

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SECTION · REFERENCES

References and sources



Written by **Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith** (CMgr, MBA, LL.M, DBA), Lead Editor. Reviewed by **Adrian James**.
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.

Activity figures are the platforms' own published recommendations; UK market figures are Ofcom's. The household bands are our editorial guidance, derived openly from the activity maths on page 3. Sources in APA 7th edition format.

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REMEMBER

Count your busiest evening, add headroom, and buy the band that fits: 50–100 solo, 100–300 for families, 300–500 for full houses, 500+ for power users. Then, if reality falls short of the label, our companion guide on lower-than-advertised speeds shows you exactly what to do. Price your band at broadbandswitch.uk/compare.

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