

The race to Gigabit broadband

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Most UK homes still rely on Victorian copper phone lines for broadband delivery. This historic infrastructure is the main reason why the UK trails behind many other countries in the broadband speed league. According to Global speed index results (<https://www.speedtest.net/global-index>), the UK is ranked 47th with an average broadband speed of 81.07Mbps. Thailand currently has the fastest broadband connection with an average speed of 308.35Mbps, Romania is 4th with 190.60Mbps and France 8th with 178.87Mbps.

As more people switch to remote working and with growing opportunities to stream 4K TV, faster and more reliable infrastructure is desperately needed in the UK.

UK Broadband provision

Openreach holds the largest share of the UK's broadband infrastructure, with a network that's available to 31.8 million premises. The availability of full fibre broadband continues to increase at a rapid pace, Openreach expect their full fibre network to reach 4.2 million homes by the end of March 2021, with an ambitious goal of reaching 20 million premises by the mid to late 2020's

Gigabit speeds are now available to 27% of UK homes (7.9 million). Gigabit capable broadband is a connection speed of 1 Gbit/s and is currently achieved using a combination of: full fibre networks, hybrid fibre and coaxial cable.

18% of UK homes (5.1 million) have access to full fibre broadband, also known as fibre to the premises (FTTP).

Superfast broadband is classed as broadband with a connection speed of over 30Mbps. Superfast broadband is available to over 96% of UK premises.

Virgin Media (a subsidiary of Liberty Global plc) operate an independent cable network which currently covers 44% of UK homes. Virgin Media is the UK's fastest (widely available) internet service provider (ISP), with an average download speed of 516Mbps. Their current roll out of Gig1 Fibre is averaging 1,104Mbps.

Altnet provider help boost UK broadband speeds

Altnet stands for 'alternative network' and it's a growing business area in the UK. Providers like: B4RN, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre and Gigaclear focus on connecting more rural areas.

Altnet providers are not limited to provision in rural areas. CityFibre are the largest altnet company in the UK and they've been rolling out full fibre networks in major urban areas since 2012.

What customers think

B4RN were a new addition to Faster Broadband (<https://www.fasterbroadband.co.uk>) in late 2020. Early indications are that customer service is outstanding with overall satisfaction scored at 4.9 out of a possible 5 stars. This certainly help to explain the success of B4RN's uptake figures – an average of 65% of all properties within the communities that they cover. Compare broadband reviews (<https://www.fasterbroadband.co.uk/best-broadband-reviews>) on FasterBroadband.

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