

MOVING & RENTING · GUIDE 05 · 2026

THE MOVING HOME SERIES

Updated Sunday, 31 May 2026

How to check broadband before *you move in.*

Five minutes now saves a fortnight offline later. A clear UK guide to checking exactly what broadband you can get at a new address before you commit: which checkers to use, how to read the results, and what to do if the home is not yet covered.

5 mins**TO CHECK BEFORE YOU COMMIT***A postcode and the exact address***~84%****UK PREMISES FULL-FIBRE READY***Best estimate, 2026 (thinkbroadband)***Same
street****AVAILABILITY CAN STILL DIFFER***Always check the exact premises*

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EDITOR'S NOTE · 31 MAY 2026

Check first, move in happy.

Of all the jobs on a moving list, checking broadband availability is the quickest and the most rewarding. It takes about five minutes, it costs nothing, and it tells you exactly what you can get at the new address before you sign a thing. Do it early and you avoid the single most common moving-day headache: discovering, too late, that the deal you wanted does not reach your new front door.

This guide shows you precisely how to check, how to make sense of the results, and what your options are if the home is not yet covered. We are honest about the quirks too, because no single checker is perfect and availability really can vary house by house. Every figure here is sourced, with the full list at the end. When you are ready, a single postcode check turns all of this into live prices for your address.

The five minutes you spend checking before you move are the most valuable five minutes of the whole move.

BROADBANDSWITCH.UK EDITORIAL TEAM

Checking availability, at a glance

~84%

FULL-FIBRE AVAILABILITY

Best estimate, 2026. Ofcom's last official figure was 78% (23.7m homes), Nov 2025.

~89%

GIGABIT-CAPABLE COVERAGE

Best estimate, 2026. Ofcom's last official figure was 87%, Nov 2025.

25M

PREMISES OPENREACH AIMS TO PASS

With full fibre by the end of 2026.

3 results

AVAILABLE, COMING SOON, OR NOT PLANNED

What a checker typically tells you.

2 networks

BEYOND OPENREACH TO CHECK

Virgin Media and the altnets run their own.

90%

5G COVERAGE OF UK PREMISES

A strong fallback if a fixed line is not ready.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The headline is simple and cheerful: in most of the UK you now have real choice, often several full-fibre options at one address. The job is just to confirm what reaches your specific new home, so you choose with confidence rather than hope.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

What's covered.

Each section opens with a short Quick Answer so you can scan straight to what you need. When you want live prices for your address, a postcode check at broadbandswitch.uk/compare does the rest.

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SECTION 01 · START HERE

The five-minute check.

QUICK ANSWER

Enter the full new postcode into a comparison checker, then select the exact address from the list. In one go you will see which technologies and providers reach the property and at what speeds. Because availability can vary even within a street, always check the specific premises, not just the area, and do it before you commit to a deal.

Here is the whole job in brief. The rest of the guide explains each step and the quirks worth knowing, but this is all most people need.

- ✓ **Have the full address ready.** The postcode narrows it down; selecting your exact property gives an accurate answer, because results can differ door to door.
- ✓ **Use a checker that covers all networks.** A single comparison check is the fastest way to see Openreach-based providers, Virgin Media and the smaller full-fibre networks together.
- ✓ **Read the result type.** You will usually see available now, coming soon with a rough date, or not currently planned.
- ✓ **Note the speeds and providers.** Availability is not just yes or no; it tells you which speed tiers and which providers you can actually choose from.
- ✓ **Have a fallback in mind.** If a fixed line is not ready, a 4G or 5G plan can bridge the gap, so you are never stuck.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

This single check shapes every other broadband decision in your move. Done first, it means you only ever compare deals you can actually get, and you walk into the new home knowing exactly how you will get online.

SECTION 02 · WHY IT MATTERS

Why check before you move?

QUICK ANSWER

Because broadband is tied to the specific address, and what you can get there may be very different from your current home. Checking first means no nasty surprises, the chance to book an early install date, and the freedom to pick the best deal for the new property rather than scrambling on moving day.

Unlike water or electricity, which are generally live when you arrive, broadband has to be ordered and sometimes installed for your specific address. And what is available is intensely local, so your new home will not necessarily offer what your old one did.

What a five-minute check buys you

- ✓ **No moving-day shock.** You will know in advance whether your preferred deal reaches the property.
- ✓ **An early install slot.** Knowing what is available lets you order ahead and pick the earliest engineer or activation date.
- ✓ **The best value, not the nearest grab.** You can compare the whole market for the address calmly, rather than taking whatever is quickest under pressure.
- ✓ **A plan B if needed.** If the line is not ready, you will know early enough to line up a stopgap.

THE LOCAL TRUTH

Availability really can vary within a single street, and even between flats in one building, because networks are built in stages. That is why the exact-address check matters so much more than a glance at the area.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The cost of checking is five minutes; the cost of not checking can be a week or more offline at the worst possible time. It is the highest-value, lowest-effort task in the whole move.

SECTION 03 · THE TOOLS

The checkers, and what each one shows.

QUICK ANSWER

A comparison checker is the fastest way to see every network at once. Individual tools exist too: the Openreach checker shows only Openreach-network providers, Virgin Media has its own, and the smaller full-fibre networks each have theirs. A government rollout checker for England and Wales shows build plans, though plan dates can be optimistic.

There are several checkers, and knowing what each does, and does not, show saves confusion. The key thing to understand is that Openreach is just one network; Virgin Media and the altnets run their own, so a single-network checker never tells the whole story.

Checker	What it shows
A comparison checker	All networks at once, with live deals and prices for the address. The quickest single check.
Openreach fibre checker	Availability on the Openreach network only, used by most national providers. Does not show Virgin Media or altnets.
Virgin Media checker	Virgin Media's own cable and full-fibre network only.
Altnet checkers	Each smaller full-fibre network has its own, useful where one builds in your area.
Government rollout checker	Build plans for England and Wales, whether commercial or Project Gigabit. Helpful for the future, but plan dates can be optimistic.

BE A LITTLE SCEPTICAL OF PLAN DATES

Rollout and "coming soon" dates are estimates, not promises, and they sometimes show an address as covered before it truly is. Treat a future date as encouraging rather than guaranteed, and confirm with the provider before you rely on it.

SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

See every network on one map

BroadbandMap.org.uk is a free, postcode-level UK coverage map showing which technologies, full fibre, part fibre, cable, 4G and 5G, reach which streets, drawing on the latest Openreach, Virgin Media O2 and altnet data. It is the clearest way to picture all your options at the new address in one view.

Part of the same SearchSwitchSave network as BroadbandSwitch.uk. Visit broadbandmap.org.uk.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

If you only do one thing, run a comparison check that pulls every network together, then sense-check anything marked "coming soon". That gives you the complete, honest picture in a single step rather than hopping between separate tools.

SECTION 04 · READING RESULTS

How to read the results.

QUICK ANSWER

Results are not a simple yes or no. You will usually see one of three states: available now, meaning you can order today; coming soon, often with a rough date; or not currently planned. Alongside that, look at the speed tiers and the named providers, because those tell you what you can actually choose and roughly what it will cost.

The three result states

What you see	What it means for you
Available now	You can place an order today. If a line already exists, this may be a quick self-install.
Coming soon, with a date	The network is being built. Useful for planning, but treat the date as an estimate and have a stopgap ready.
Not currently planned	No build is scheduled yet on that network. Check other networks, and consider 4G or 5G, see Section 06.

Beyond yes or no

- ✓ **Speed tiers.** Note the maximum download and upload available, so you can match a plan to your household.
- ✓ **Named providers.** See which providers you can choose from, which shapes both price and service quality.
- ✓ **Technology type.** Full fibre, part fibre or cable each behave differently, as the next section explains.
- ✓ **Existing line.** If the property already has an active connection, you may be online within days.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

Read the result as a menu, not a light switch. "Available now" with three providers and a choice of speed tiers is very different from a lone "coming soon", and knowing which you are looking at tells you exactly how to plan your move.

SECTION 05 · THE TECHNOLOGIES

The technologies you might see.

QUICK ANSWER

The main types are full fibre (FTTP), the fastest and most reliable, running fibre right into the home; part fibre (FTTC), which uses fibre to a street cabinet then copper, so speeds drop with distance; cable, used by Virgin Media; and 4G or 5G home broadband, which needs no fixed line at all. Where full fibre is available, it is usually the best default.

Technology	Typical speeds	In short
Full fibre (FTTP)	150 Mbit/s to 1 Gbit/s+	Fibre all the way to the home. Fastest, most reliable, often with strong uploads. The best default where available.
Part fibre (FTTC)	Around 30 to 80 Mbit/s	Fibre to a street cabinet, copper for the last stretch, so speed falls with distance.
Cable	Up to 1 Gbit/s+	Virgin Media's network; fast downloads, increasingly upgraded to full fibre.
4G or 5G home broadband	100 to 300 Mbit/s on 5G	Connects over the mobile network, no fixed install. Ideal as a stopgap or in not-yet-covered homes.

The big shift across the UK is the move to full fibre, and it is worth knowing that the old copper phone network is being switched off by 31 January 2027. So if a new address still relies on older copper-based broadband, full fibre or another modern option is the future-proof choice when it becomes available.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

If your check shows full fibre, that is almost always the one to choose: faster, steadier and increasingly the same price as older options. If it shows only part fibre today, it is well worth seeing whether full fibre is coming soon, and using a stopgap in the meantime if you need to.

SECTION 06 · IF NOT YET COVERED

If the address is not yet covered.

QUICK ANSWER

Do not panic, you still have options. Check the other networks, since Virgin Media or an altnet may serve the address even when Openreach does not. Look at whether full fibre is coming soon. And remember a 4G or 5G home broadband plan gets you online in minutes with no fixed line, which works almost anywhere 5G reaches, now around 90% of UK premises.

Work through these in order

- ✓ **Check every network, not just one.** A single-network checker showing nothing does not mean the address is unreachable; another network may already serve it.
- ✓ **Look for a "coming soon" date.** If a build is scheduled, you may only need a short bridge until it lands.
- ✓ **Consider 4G or 5G home broadband.** No engineer, no drilling, online in minutes, on rolling monthly terms for around £20 to £35 a month.
- ✓ **Look at satellite as a last resort.** For genuinely remote homes that fixed lines and mobile do not reach, satellite broadband is now a credible everyday option.

YOUR LEGAL SAFETY NET

If you genuinely cannot get a decent connection, the Universal Service Obligation gives eligible homes a right to request one up to a set cost. It is rarely needed now that coverage is so high, but it exists as a backstop for the hardest-to-reach properties.

SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

Check the connection you can get today

If you are bridging with 4G or 5G, or testing a line that is already there, it helps to know what you are actually getting. UKSpeedTest.co.uk (branded Pulse) is a free, no-signup, ad-free test for download, upload and jitter, and HowFast.uk runs a quick line and performance check in the browser.

Built by the same SearchSwitchSave editorial team that publishes BroadbandSwitch.uk. Visit ukspeedtest.co.uk and howfast.uk.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

"Not available on one network" almost never means "no broadband". Between the other networks, a coming-soon build and a plug-and-play mobile plan, nearly every home in the UK can get online, often better than the first check suggested.

SECTION 07 · NEW AND UNLISTED

New builds and addresses not yet listed.

QUICK ANSWER

If your new home does not appear in a checker, it may be a new build whose address has not been added to the databases yet. Ask the developer or letting agent which network serves the building, check back as the address is added, and use a 4G or 5G plan in the meantime so you are online from day one.

Brand-new and recently built homes sometimes sit in a short gap: the property exists, but the postcode or address has not yet flowed through to every checker. That can make a perfectly connectable home look unavailable.

What to do

- ✓ **Ask who serves the building.** Developers often partner with a specific full-fibre network, so the developer or agent can tell you who to order from.
- ✓ **Try the address a few ways.** A new address may appear under a plot number or a slightly different format while records catch up.
- ✓ **Check back as you near move-in.** Databases update constantly, so an address missing today may appear within weeks.
- ✓ **Bridge with 4G or 5G.** A rolling mobile plan keeps you online from the day you move while the fixed line is sorted.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

A new build not showing up is usually a paperwork lag, not a connectivity problem. Ask the developer who serves the building, keep a stopgap ready, and you will be online without fuss while the records catch up.

SECTION 08 · NEXT STEP

From availability to the right deal.

QUICK ANSWER

Once you know what is available, turn that into the right deal: size the speed to your household, compare by total contract cost rather than headline price, and order two to four weeks before you move so you can pick an early activation date. A single postcode comparison does the availability check and the deal comparison in one.

Checking availability is step one; choosing well is step two. The good news is that a proper comparison check does both at once, showing you not just what reaches the address but what each option actually costs over its full term.

1 Right-size the speed

Match the plan to how many people will be online at once. Most one to two-person homes are fine on 60 to 100 Mbit/s; busier households want more.

2 Compare by total contract cost

Add the monthly price, any setup fee and the in-contract rises, then compare the all-in total over the full term, not just the first month.

3 Order two to four weeks ahead

Place the order against the new address with an activation date around your move-in, so any engineer visit is comfortably booked.

SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

Right-size your speed before you overspend

Not sure how much speed the new home needs? RightSpeed.co.uk asks eight short questions about people, streaming, gaming, calls, uploads and cameras, then recommends the tier that genuinely fits, in plain English, in under a minute.

Authored by Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith. Free, no signup, no ads. Visit rightspeak.co.uk.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

Availability tells you what is possible; a good comparison turns that into the best-value choice. Do both in one postcode check and you move in already knowing your connection is sorted and sensibly priced.

SECTION 09 · PITFALLS

Five mistakes to avoid.

Sidestep these and your availability check will serve you perfectly.

- ⚠ **Checking the area, not the address.** Availability varies door to door, so always select the exact premises, not just the postcode.
- ⚠ **Relying on one network's checker.** An Openreach-only check misses Virgin Media and the altnets; use a checker that covers everything.
- ⚠ **Trusting a "coming soon" date as a promise.** Build dates are estimates and can slip, so keep a stopgap in mind.
- ⚠ **Assuming a new build is unreachable.** A missing address is usually a database lag; ask the developer who serves the building.
- ⚠ **Leaving the check until moving day.** Check early so you can order ahead and pick an early install date.

Check your new address in about ten seconds.

Postcode in, real prices out. Every network, no name, no email, no phone number needed.

broadbandswitch.uk/compare →

FREE · INDEPENDENT · 35+ PROVIDERS · UPDATED DAILY

SECTION 10 · FAQ

Frequently asked questions.

How do I check what broadband I can get at a new address?

Enter the full postcode into a comparison checker and select the exact property. In one step you will see which technologies and providers reach the address and at what speeds. Always check the specific premises, as availability can vary within a street.

Why does the Openreach checker not show Virgin Media?

Because Virgin Media runs its own separate network, as do the smaller full-fibre altnets. The Openreach checker only shows providers on the Openreach network, so use a comparison checker to see every option in one place.

Can availability really differ on the same street?

Yes. Networks are built in stages, so one house can have full fibre while a neighbour does not, and flats in one block can differ too. That is exactly why checking the exact address matters.

What do "available", "coming soon" and "not planned" mean?

Available means you can order today. Coming soon means a build is scheduled, often with a rough date, though treat it as an estimate. Not planned means no build is currently scheduled on that network, so check others and consider 4G or 5G.

The new home is not in any checker. What now?

It is likely a new build whose address has not been added to the databases yet. Ask the developer or letting agent which network serves the building, check back nearer move-in, and use a 4G or 5G plan in the meantime.

Should I trust the government rollout checker's dates?

Use it as a guide, not a guarantee. Rollout-plan data can be optimistic and has sometimes shown addresses as covered before they truly are, so confirm with the provider before relying on a date.

What if I cannot get full fibre yet?

Check whether part fibre or cable is available now, see if full fibre is coming soon, and use a 4G or 5G home broadband plan as a bridge. For very remote homes, satellite is a credible option.

How far ahead should I check?

As soon as you have the new address. Checking early lets you order two to four weeks before moving and pick the earliest activation or engineer date.

Got your answer? Now check your address.

Live UK comparison. Postcode in, deals out. The average switcher saves £180 to £292 a year.

broadbandswitch.uk/compare →

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SECTION 11 · STANDARDS

Editorial standards.

This guide is part of the Moving & Renting Broadband series from BroadbandSwitch.uk, the UK's independent consumer broadband resource.

How we work

- ✓ We name the author and reviewer on every dated guide.
- ✓ We rank every deal in our comparison tool by total contract cost, never by paid placement.
- ✓ We earn a commission when readers switch through our journey; this never changes which deals we show or their order.
- ✓ We publish a public corrections log; any factual error is logged, dated and credited.
- ✓ We see the best in every provider in the British market and frame changes as positive consumer outcomes wherever we honestly can.

Ownership and sister sites

BroadbandSwitch.uk is part of the SearchSwitchSave Group's FBRE.uk network of UK broadband sites. One editorial team, one set of standards, one goal: helping Great Britain get online with confidence.

- **RightSpeed.co.uk** is an eight-question speed-needs calculator that right-sizes your plan before you overspend.
- **UKSpeedTest.co.uk** (branded Pulse) is a free, no-signup, ad-free speed test for download, upload and jitter.
- **HowFast.uk** is a quick browser-based line and performance check.
- **BroadbandMap.org.uk** is a postcode-level coverage map of full fibre, part fibre, cable, 4G and 5G.
- **ParentalControl.uk** is a free home-network and online-safety tool, useful when families set up a new home.

About the author

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Adrian reviews BroadbandSwitch.uk guides with a focus on commercial accuracy and consumer fairness in UK telecoms reporting, making sure every recommendation genuinely serves the reader.

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Got a question this guide did not answer? Reach out on LinkedIn and a real member of our team will be glad to help.

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