

MOVING & RENTING · GUIDE 03 · 2026

THE TENANT RIGHTS SERIES

Updated Sunday, 31 May 2026

Tenant rights to full fibre and *landlord permission.*

Can your landlord stop you getting full fibre? A clear UK guide to where you stand as a renter or leaseholder: when you need permission, what the law says for houses and flats, the route when a freeholder will not respond, and the new rights on the way.

Flats vs houses

YOUR ROUTE DEPENDS ON WHICH*The law treats them differently***1.2M****FLATS WITHOUT GIGABIT ACCESS***England and Wales (DSIT, 2025)***18 months****INTERIM ACCESS A TRIBUNAL CAN
GRANT***Under TILPA 2021 when a landlord will
not engage*

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EDITOR'S NOTE · 31 MAY 2026

Good connectivity is for renters too.

For a long time, renters and flat-dwellers drew the short straw on broadband. If a freeholder would not engage, a whole block could be stuck on a slow line while the houses next door enjoyed full fibre. That is changing, and firmly for the better. The law already gives broadband providers a route into unresponsive buildings, and the government is now consulting on new rights aimed squarely at people in flats.

This guide sets out exactly where you stand today, in plain English. We explain when you need your landlord's permission, how the rules differ for houses and flats, the legal route that exists when a freeholder will not respond, and the new rights on the way. We also give you a friendly, practical script for asking your landlord, because in most cases a short, polite request is all it takes. Every legal point is sourced, with the full list at the end.

PLEASE NOTE

This guide is general information to help you understand your options, not legal advice. For your specific situation, a free housing adviser such as Citizens Advice or Shelter can help, and your chosen broadband provider can advise on access for your building.

Your rights, 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

But only around 80% for flats specifically (DSIT, 2025).

1.2M

FLATS WITHOUT GIGABIT (E&W)

The gap the new proposals aim to close (DSIT, 2025).

15 Mar 2021

TILPA RECEIVED ROYAL ASSENT

The Act that helps operators reach flats.

18 months

MAXIMUM INTERIM ACCESS

A tribunal can grant this where a landlord will not respond.

16 Feb 2026

NEW-RIGHTS CONSULTATION CLOSED

Government response awaited later in 2026.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The headline is encouraging: you can almost always get connected, and the law is moving in renters' favour. The route just depends on whether you are in a house or a flat, and on how cooperative your landlord or freeholder is. This guide shows you the fastest path for your situation.

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 to see what is available at your address, a postcode check at [broadbandswitch.uk/compare](https://broadbandswitch.uk/) does the rest.

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SECTION 01 · START HERE

Your position in sixty seconds.

QUICK ANSWER

In most cases you can get connected, but your route depends on your home. If you rent a house, you generally need the landlord's permission for any installation work such as drilling, and a polite written request is the way. If you live in a flat and the freeholder will not respond, your broadband provider can use a legal route to gain time-limited access. New rights to make this easier for people in flats are being consulted on now.

There is no single rule that covers everyone, so the first step is to know which group you are in. Here is the whole picture in brief.

- ✓ **Ordering broadband is your choice.** You never need permission simply to take out a broadband contract; permission only comes into play if physical installation work is needed.
- ✓ **Renting a house?** There is no separate statutory tenant right, so getting a new line installed comes down to your tenancy agreement and your landlord's permission for any drilling. Section 03 covers this.
- ✓ **Living in a flat?** The same permission principle applies, but a law called TILPA 2021 lets your provider gain access when the freeholder will not respond. Section 04 explains how.
- ✓ **Already have an active line or socket?** A self-install usually needs no permission at all, because nothing is being altered.
- ✓ **Change is coming.** The government is consulting on a new right for people in flats to request a gigabit connection that a freeholder could not unreasonably refuse. Section 06 has the detail.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

Do not assume the answer is no. Most landlords say yes to a clear, polite request, most flats can be reached one way or another, and the legal backstop exists precisely for the stubborn cases. Identify your situation, then follow the matching section.

SECTION 02 · PERMISSION

Do you need the landlord's permission?

QUICK ANSWER

Not to order broadband. You do usually need the landlord's agreement for any physical installation work, such as drilling to fit a new full-fibre line, because that is a change to the property. If a usable line or fibre socket already exists, a self-install normally needs no permission, as nothing is being altered.

It helps to separate two different things that often get muddled together.

Taking out a contract

Signing up for broadband in your own name is your decision as the bill-payer. No landlord permission is needed for the contract itself.

Installing or altering something

Permission matters when an engineer needs to change the property: drilling a small hole for a new fibre line, fitting the box where the fibre enters, or running a cable in. Because that is physical work, it needs the landlord's agreement, and for tenants it protects your deposit to have that agreement in writing.

Your situation	Permission needed?
Ordering a broadband contract	No.
Self-install on an existing active line	Usually no; nothing is altered.
A new full-fibre line needing drilling	Yes, get the landlord's written agreement.
Work in the shared parts of a block of flats	Yes, the freeholder's agreement is usually needed too.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The simplest setups need no permission at all. Where a fresh install is involved, a short written request almost always does the job. The rest of this guide is about what to do in the small number of cases where a landlord or freeholder will not engage.

SECTION 03 · RENTING A HOUSE

Renting a house: where you stand.

QUICK ANSWER

If you rent a house, there is no separate statutory right that forces a landlord to allow a new broadband line. Getting one installed comes down to your tenancy agreement and the landlord's permission for any drilling. The good news is that most landlords agree, because a connected home is easier to let, and a polite written request usually settles it.

The legal routes that help people in flats, which we cover next, are built around shared buildings and unresponsive freeholders. A rented house is different: there is one landlord, and the decision on physical works sits with them. That sounds restrictive, but in practice it rarely is.

What your tenancy agreement may say

Many tenancy agreements ask you to get the landlord's consent before making alterations to the property. Installing a new line can count as an alteration, so check your agreement and ask first. If you already have a working line, switching provider or doing a self-install does not alter anything, so this generally does not apply.

How to get a yes

- ✓ Explain that the work would be done by the provider's qualified engineer, at no cost to the landlord.
- ✓ Reassure them that installs are tidy and that any holes are made good, and that full fibre adds appeal for future tenants.
- ✓ Ask them to confirm their agreement in writing, by email or message, and keep a copy.

PROTECT YOUR DEPOSIT

Always get permission for installation work in writing before it goes ahead. That single step avoids any later dispute about alterations and keeps your deposit safe.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

Renting a house puts the decision in your landlord's hands, but it is rarely a closed door. Frame the request around the benefit to the property, keep it in writing, and most landlords are glad to say yes.

SECTION 04 · LIVING IN A FLAT

Living in a flat: the TILPA 2021 route.

QUICK ANSWER

If you live in a block of flats and the freeholder will not respond to a broadband provider's requests for access, the law provides a route. Under the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act 2021, your provider can serve a set sequence of notices and, if still ignored, apply to a tribunal for time-limited access of up to 18 months. Importantly, your provider drives this process, not you.

The Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act 2021, often shortened to TILPA, was created for exactly the frustration many flat-dwellers know well: a provider is willing to connect the building, but cannot get a response from the freeholder. It received Royal Assent on 15 March 2021 and added a new Part 4A to the Electronic Communications Code.

How the route works

1 You request a service from a provider

A resident in occupation of the flat asks an operator to provide a connection. This first step is simply you placing the request; everything that follows is the provider's job.

2 The provider serves notices on the landlord

If the provider needs the freeholder's permission to reach the building and gets no response, it serves a request notice, then two warning notices, then a final notice, following a set legal process.

3 The provider can apply to a tribunal

If the landlord still does not respond within 14 days of the final notice, the provider can apply to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) in England and Wales for an order granting access rights.

4 Time-limited access is granted

If the tribunal is satisfied and the landlord has not objected, it can grant access rights lasting up to 18 months, during which the provider installs the connection and seeks a longer-term agreement.

TWO KEY LIMITS

This route applies to multi-dwelling units, meaning blocks of flats, and not to individual houses. It commenced in England and Wales on 26 December 2022 and in Scotland on 1 July 2023. It is also a backstop for unresponsive landlords, not a tool against one who engages and reasonably says no.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The practical takeaway is simple: if you are in a flat and a freeholder is the blocker, ask a provider that builds in your area to take it on, and let them use this process. You do not run it yourself, and you do not need to become a legal expert to benefit from it.

SECTION 05 · WHO IS WHO

Leaseholder or renter? Why it matters.

QUICK ANSWER

A leaseholder owns a long lease on their flat, often for decades. A renter holds a shorter tenancy. Today's legal route into flats, TILPA, works through your provider and helps either group, because it targets the building's freeholder. The new rights being consulted on are aimed first at leaseholders, with an open question about extending them to renters.

These two words are often used loosely, but the difference shapes which protections apply to you.

You are a	Which means	Your strongest lever today
Leaseholder	You own a long lease on the flat.	Ask a provider to connect the building; the TILPA route covers unresponsive freeholders.
Renter (tenant)	You rent under a tenancy agreement.	Landlord permission for any works, plus the TILPA route via your provider if it is a flat.
Renting a house	One landlord, one home.	A written permission request to your landlord, see Section 03.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

Whichever label fits you, the same two practical moves cover most situations: ask a provider that builds in your area to connect the property, and put any permission request to your landlord in writing. The legal detail then works in the background.

SECTION 06 · WHAT'S COMING

The new rights on the way.

QUICK ANSWER

In December 2025 the government proposed a new right for leaseholders in England and Wales to request a gigabit-capable connection, with a duty on freeholders not to unreasonably refuse. It is aimed at the roughly 1.2 million flats that still lack gigabit access. The consultation closed on 16 February 2026, the government's response is awaited, and it is not yet law.

The direction of travel is clearly towards better connectivity for people in flats. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology consulted on giving flat leaseholders a clear right to ask for a fast connection, while protecting freeholders from unreasonable demands.

What is proposed

- ✓ **A right to request.** Leaseholders of flats in England and Wales would gain a right to request a gigabit-capable connection, meaning at least 1,000 Mbit/s.
- ✓ **A duty not to unreasonably refuse.** Freeholders would not be able to turn the request down without a good reason.
- ✓ **A question about renters.** The consultation specifically asks whether the right should be extended to renters as well as leaseholders.

What counts as a reasonable refusal

The proposals recognise that a freeholder can sometimes say no for legitimate reasons. Examples floated include where two or more suitable operators have been approached and none can provide a connection or all want to charge excessive amounts, or where the work would force the landlord to break the existing terms of a lease.

WHERE THIS STANDS

These are proposals, not law. The consultation ran from 15 December 2025 and closed on 16 February 2026, and the government has said it is analysing the responses, with its reply expected later in 2026. We will update this guide when the outcome is published.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

You cannot rely on the new right yet, but the momentum is real and positive. In the meantime, the existing TILPA route and a polite, well-aimed request still get most people connected, and the coming changes should make flats easier still.

SECTION 07 · THE ASK

How to ask your landlord, the easy way.

QUICK ANSWER

Keep it short, friendly and reassuring. Tell your landlord or letting agent you would like to arrange a broadband connection, that the work will be done by the provider's qualified engineer at no cost to them, and ask them to confirm in writing that they are happy for it to go ahead. Most say yes quickly.

A clear request removes the uncertainty that makes landlords hesitate. Cover these points and you make it easy for them to agree.

What to include in your message

- ✓ **What you are asking for.** A broadband connection at the property, naming the provider if you have chosen one.
- ✓ **Who does the work.** The provider's qualified engineer, at no cost to the landlord.
- ✓ **Reassurance on the property.** Installs are tidy, any holes are made good, and full fibre adds appeal for future tenants.
- ✓ **A simple request to confirm.** Ask them to reply confirming they are happy for it to proceed, so you have it in writing.

A LINE THAT WORKS

Try: "I would like to arrange a full-fibre broadband connection here. The provider's engineer would carry out any work at no cost to you, and would make good afterwards. Please could you confirm by reply that you are happy for this to go ahead?" Polite, specific, and easy to say yes to.

SO WHAT? PLAIN ENGLISH FOR UK CONSUMERS

The vast majority of permission questions are solved at this stage. A written request that answers a landlord's likely worries before they raise them is the single most effective thing you can do, and it keeps everyone protected.

SECTION 08 · IF YOU ARE BLOCKED

If you are blocked: your options.

QUICK ANSWER

If a landlord or freeholder will not engage, you still have good options. Ask a different provider, as networks vary street by street. In a flat, ask your provider to use the TILPA route. And whatever your home, a 4G or 5G plan gets you online in minutes with no fixed install, no drilling and no permission needed.

Work through these in order

- ✓ **Check what actually reaches the building.** A different network may already serve it, removing the need for any new install.
- ✓ **Ask another provider.** If one cannot proceed, another building to your street might, especially a smaller full-fibre network.
- ✓ **In a flat, ask the provider to use the TILPA route.** Where the freeholder is unresponsive, this is exactly what the law is for.
- ✓ **Use a 4G or 5G stopgap.** These need no engineer, no drilling and no landlord permission, so they sidestep the blockage entirely while you sort a fixed line.
- ✓ **Get free advice.** Citizens Advice or Shelter can help with your housing rights if a dispute is getting stuck.

SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK

See exactly what reaches your building

Before you assume you are stuck, check what is genuinely available. 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, so you can see whether another route is already open at your address.

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

The 4G and 5G stopgap, in brief

Mobile home broadband plugs in and connects over the mobile network in minutes, with no fixed-line install at all. Plans run on rolling monthly terms for around £20 to £35 a month, and because 5G now reaches around 90% of UK premises, performance is strong in most areas. It is the cleanest way to stay online while any permission or access question is resolved.

SISTER-SITE FAIRNESS CHECK**Test the connection you can get**

Whether you are on a fixed line or a 4G or 5G stopgap, 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

Being blocked on one route rarely means being stuck. Between a different provider, the legal route for flats and a plug-and-play mobile plan, almost everyone can get a good connection. Start with what already reaches your building, then work down the list.

SECTION 09 · THE ESSENTIALS

Five things every renter should know.

If you remember only five things from this guide, make it these.

- ✓ **You never need permission just to order broadband.** Permission only matters for physical installation work such as drilling.
- ✓ **Houses and flats follow different rules.** A house comes down to landlord permission; a flat has the TILPA legal route when a freeholder will not respond.
- ✓ **Your provider drives the legal route, not you.** In a flat, ask a provider that builds in your area to pursue access; you do not run the process yourself.
- ✓ **A written request solves most cases.** Polite, specific and reassuring, with a confirmation in writing, protects everyone and keeps your deposit safe.
- ✓ **A 4G or 5G plan is always a fallback.** No install, no drilling, no permission, so you are never truly stuck offline.

See what is available at your address in about ten seconds.

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

broadbandswitch.uk/compare →

FREE · INDEPENDENT · 35+ PROVIDERS · UPDATED DAILY

SECTION 10 · FAQ

Frequently asked questions.

Can my landlord stop me getting full fibre?

For installation work that alters the property, such as drilling for a new line, a landlord's permission is needed, so they can decline. But if you live in a flat and a freeholder is simply unresponsive, your provider can use the TILPA route to gain access. And a self-install on an existing line, or a 4G or 5G plan, needs no permission at all.

Do I need permission to install a new broadband line?

If new physical work is required, yes, get the landlord's agreement first, ideally in writing. If a usable line or fibre socket already exists, a self-install changes nothing and generally needs no permission.

What if the freeholder of my block will not respond?

This is what TILPA 2021 was made for. Ask a provider to connect the building; if the freeholder ignores the provider's notices, the provider can apply to the First-tier Tribunal in England and Wales for time-limited access of up to 18 months.

Is there a law that forces a landlord to allow broadband?

Not a general one. TILPA helps providers reach flats where a freeholder is unresponsive, and the government is consulting on a new right for flat leaseholders to request a gigabit connection that could not be unreasonably refused. For a rented house, it remains a matter of landlord permission.

Am I a tenant or a leaseholder?

A leaseholder owns a long lease on a flat, often for decades. A renter holds a shorter tenancy. The TILPA route via your provider can help either group in a flat; the proposed new right is aimed first at leaseholders, with renters under consideration.

Can I get full fibre without any drilling?

Sometimes. If the building already has fibre or a usable line, a self-install avoids new work. If not, a 4G or 5G home broadband plan connects over the mobile network with no fixed install or drilling at all.

Will the proposed new rules help renters?

Possibly. The proposals are aimed first at leaseholders, but the consultation specifically asked whether the right should be extended to renters. The government's response is expected later in 2026, and we will update this guide when it lands.

Where can I get help if I am stuck?

Your chosen broadband provider can advise on access for your building, and free housing advisers such as Citizens Advice and Shelter can help with your rights as a tenant or leaseholder.

Got your answer? Now see what you can get.

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. It is general information, not legal advice.

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.

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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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