

Advice for consumers: Broadband speeds



Mobile broadband

The Code of Practice doesn't currently cover mobile broadband. Speed of mobile broadband depends on factors such as coverage where you are, distance from the transmitter and the number of people using it in the same location. They can vary a lot depending on the time of day and where you are. If you are experiencing problems with your mobile broadband service then ask your provider to see if they can improve the situation.

Ofcom has published a separate consumer guide on mobile broadband which can be found at

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/guides/mobilebb.pdf>

Contact details

If you are thinking of taking out a broadband service and would like to find out which ISPs have signed up to the Code of Practice, please visit our [website](#) or call the Ofcom Advisory Team.

If you don't think your ISP is following the Code, let us know by completing our [online complaints form](#).

Broadband Speeds Code of Practice:

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/broadbandcode/>

Online reporting form:

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consumeradvice/internet/bbspeeds/>



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As we ask the internet to do more and more for us – such as bringing us TV programmes, movies and games – a rising number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are selling their services by claiming faster and faster broadband speeds.

This guide gives advice on what to expect from your provider when you take a new home broadband service, and gives troubleshooting tips if you are not getting the speeds you expected.



July 2009



Your Broadband Speed

Although your broadband package will have a headline speed (e.g. “up to 8Mb per second”), you are unlikely to be able to get this speed all of the time.

Ofcom and the leading ISPs have put together a Code of Practice which ensures that your provider gives you information about the speed you can expect to get. Under this Code, ISPs have committed to:

- * provide you with an estimate of the maximum speed you can get at point of sale;
- * explain clearly and simply how technical factors (such as how far you live from the exchange) may slow down the speed that you may get and give you help and advice if you can do something yourself at home to improve the situation; and
- * offer an alternative package (if there is one), without any penalties, if the actual speed is a lot lower than their original estimate.

When getting or changing a broadband service, check whether your ISP has signed up to the **Code** and make sure you get an estimate of the maximum broadband speed you can get.

Fair Usage Policies

Many ISPs have a fair usage policy which allows them to manage the traffic on their network. Some customers may have their speeds temporarily reduced if they have been using the internet heavily.

If ISPs do this, they must explain their rules clearly on their website, in an obvious place (such as in Frequently Asked Questions).

How to speed up your broadband service

- * If your broadband speed is lower than you expected, your ISP should be able to give you advice. Some broadband services can be affected by electrical interference and your ISP should be able to recommend ways that this can be reduced (e.g. fitting additional filters to your telephone sockets);
- * You may find that your broadband speed is a lot slower at some times of the day. Like the roads, internet speed depends on how much other people are using it. At peak times (usually afternoons and evenings) your broadband speed may be slower;
- * Your speed might be being cut by your ISP if you have breached their fair usage policy. If your speed has been cut in this way then you may want to contact your ISP and ask them why and how you can avoid being affected in this way in the future. If your ISP has signed up to the Code, they should tell you this automatically;
- * Moving to a faster broadband package can help but you may not always be able to get the higher speed because of where you live. Your ISP should be able to let you know whether you can get a higher speed package, and what the maximum speed your particular line can get; and
- * Switching your ISP may improve speeds. Comparison websites and ‘best buy’ guides can provide consumers with an indication of ISPs with good speed performance, and also let you know whether other customers are happy with that ISP.

Ofcom has published research which shows that ISPs vary in their performance. The research can be found at http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/telecoms/reports/broadband_speeds/.