

Reference: 02246396

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

18 August 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about UK areas unable to get affordable broadband.

We received this request on 21 July 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

Please can you tell me the areas in the UK where premises (both commercial and residential) are deemed to be unable to get fixed or satellite affordable broadband connection. Ofcom estimates there are 4,000 premises that fit into this category and I would like to know which areas they fall into. This can be at council ward level or similar if there are concerns about identifying any specific premises.

Our response

In our [Connected Nations Spring 2026 update](#), published in May, we reported that, based on January 2026 data, around 39,000 premises in the UK were unable to access 'decent' broadband, in line with the Universal Service Obligation, from either a fixed-line or fixed wireless access connection.

Of those premises, around 4,000 were unable to access 'decent' broadband through any technology, including satellite. This means that around 35,000 of the 39,000 premises unable to access USO-compliant broadband through fixed-line or fixed wireless access could access a USO-compliant service via satellite.

The broadband Universal Service Obligation is technology neutral. The change in the number of premises able to receive a USO-compliant service is driven primarily by the falling price of satellite broadband, which means that satellite services are now within the affordability threshold. Prices and availability especially of satellite services can vary so the numbers are subject to variation.

While we hold information on the geographic breakdown of the data, we consider its disclosure is exempt under the FOI Act. In particular, under section 44 of the FOI Act, information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. The enactment that prohibits the disclosure of this information is section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 ("the Communications Act"). Under this section, we are prohibited from disclosing information with respect to a particular business that has been obtained in the exercise of our regulatory functions, unless that business consents or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 of the FOI Act is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to the public interest test.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).