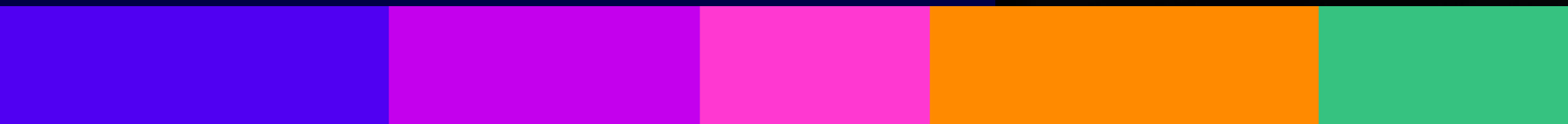




# Promoting competition and investment in fibre networks: Telecoms Access Review 2026-31

Thank you for joining us today,  
the session will begin at 8am

17 March 2026





# Promoting competition and investment in fibre networks: Telecoms Access Review 2026-31

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**Natalie Black**, Group Director Infrastructure & Connectivity

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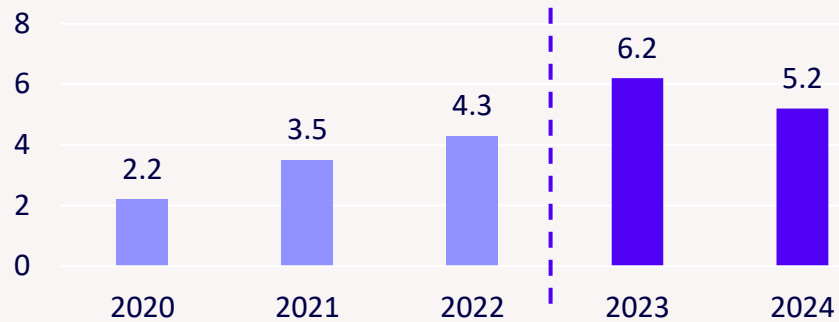
17 March 2026



# WFTMR → investment, coverage & competition

## Significant investment since 2021...

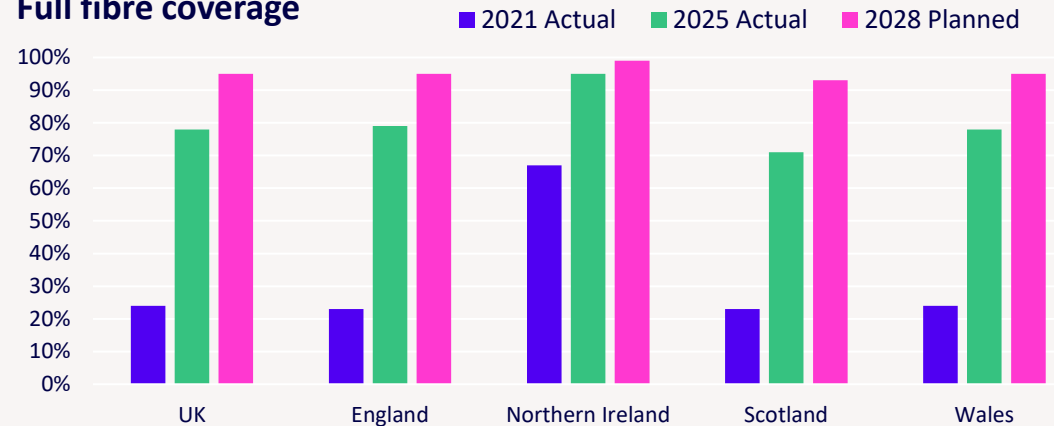
Estimated fixed access full fibre capital expenditure: 2020-2024 (£bn)



Source: Connected Nations 2025. Ofcom analysis of provider data. Notes: Adjusted for CPI (2024 prices); Figure from 2023 onwards are not directly comparable to previous years' data.

## ...has driven significant improvements in coverage...

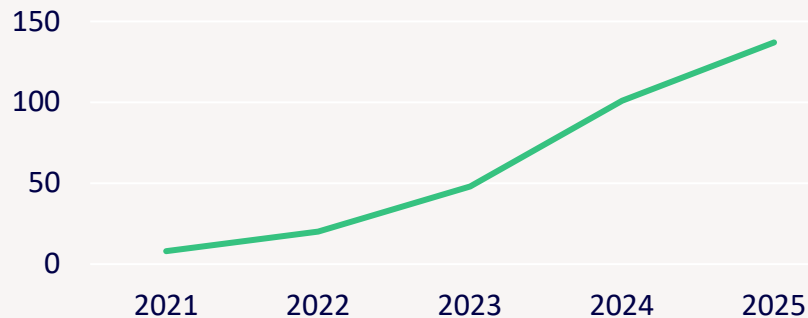
### Full fibre coverage



Source: Connected Nations 2025.

## ...enabled by regulation, including duct and pole access...

km of Duct delivered (000s)

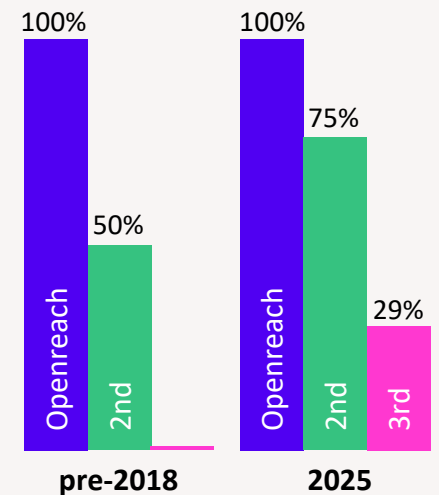


Over 150 active PIA users

## ...and greater network choice for customers

### Extent of competitive supply

Premises with at least one alternative to Openreach	75%
Premises with at least two alternatives to Openreach	29%

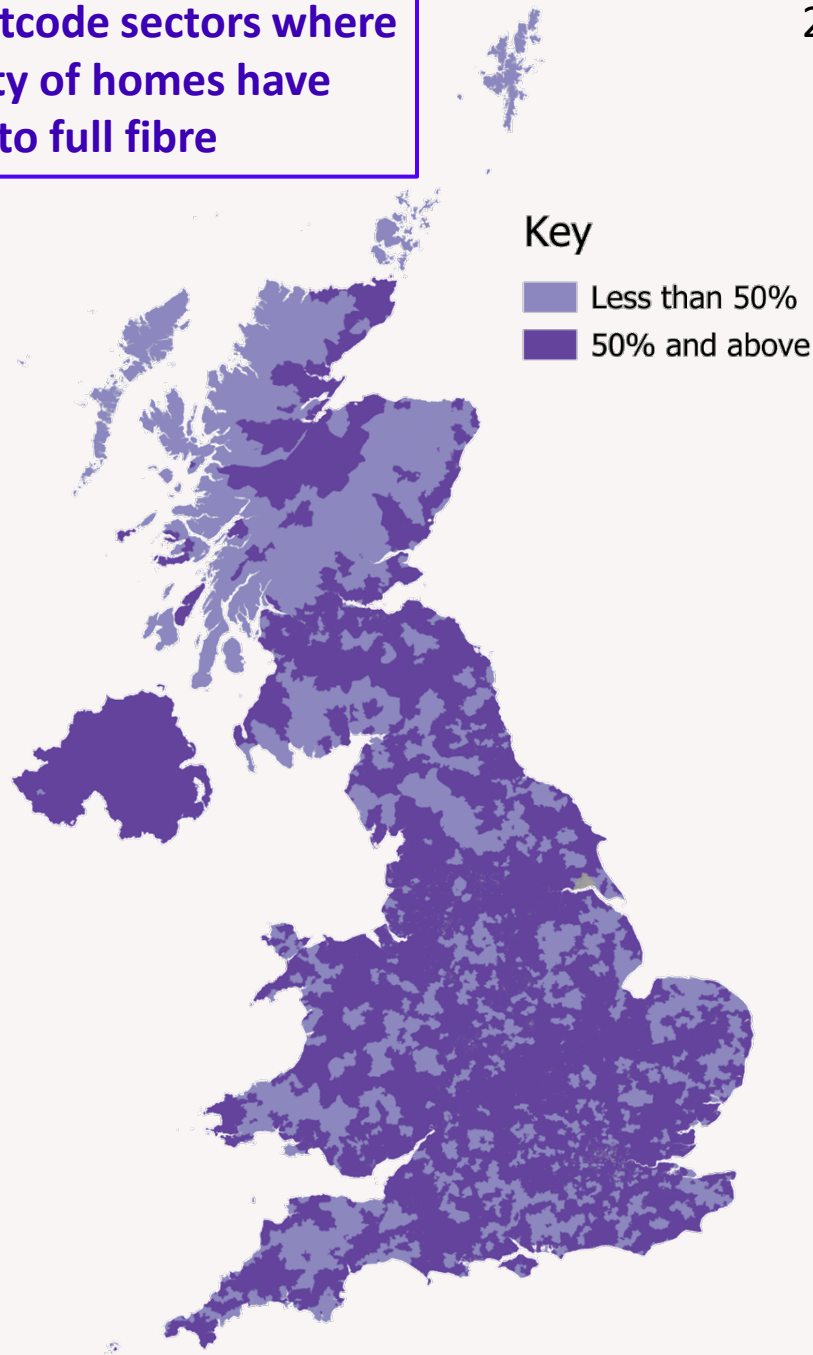


Source: Connected Nations 2025.

# But there is more to do

- **Pro-investment, pro-competition strategy**
- **Further private sector investment needed** to cover more parts of the UK. Complemented by public funds and wireless technologies in hardest to reach areas.
- **Altnet competition is still developing** and is not yet established and sustainable
- **Broadly maintaining the 2021 regulatory framework,** with updates where necessary in light of market developments

UK postcode sectors where majority of homes have access to full fibre



# Certainty, consistency and stability

		Retained from 2021	Main consultation proposals March 2025	Statement March 2026
<b>Duct &amp; pole access</b>	<i>Unrestricted access at cost based prices</i>	✓	Cost based prices updated based on new data and analysis of fair shares	Consultation position confirmed Updated fair shares and some prices
<b>Geographically targeted regulation</b>	<i>No areas are effectively competitive allowing us to remove regulation (Area 1)</i>	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	<i>Define separate Area 2 and Area 3</i>	✓	Area 2 increased from 70% to 90%	Consultation position confirmed, with minor update to Area 2 size to 86%
<b>Pricing continuity</b>	<i>No cost-based broadband prices</i>	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	<i>Inflation-adjusted anchor pricing</i>	✓	Move anchor from 40/10 to 80/20 product based on market evidence	Consultation position confirmed
	<i>Pricing flexibility on higher speeds</i>	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	<i>Premium on 80/20 FTTP versus legacy 80/20 service</i>	✓	Premium based on market evidence	Consultation position confirmed
<b>Fair wholesale pricing</b>	<i>Restriction on discriminatory geographic prices (subject to consent mechanism)</i>	✓	Include connection charges Only apply in Area 2	Consultation position confirmed Guidance issued on how we will apply our regulation
	<i>Notification of commercial terms that could deter use of alternative networks</i>	✓	120 days notice. New guidance on terms seeking to accelerate migration to fibre	Consultation position largely confirmed
	<i>Requirement for FTTP prices to be fair and reasonable at all times</i>	CHANGE	Openreach prices should not amount to a price squeeze harming network competition	Consultation position confirmed Guidance issued on how we will consider concerns around low FTTP pricing
<b>Copper retirement</b>	<i>Progressively shift regulation from copper to fibre services</i>	✓	Consulting in relation to excluding premises for Openreach to achieve Second Threshold	Consultation position confirmed + Further consultation on Second Threshold

# Certainty, consistency and stability

		Retained from 2021	Updates in proposals	Updated position
Leased Lines	3 regulated geographic markets – High Network Reach, Area 2, Area 3	✓	Larger HNR Area; Area 2/Area 3 boundary not aligned to broadband	Consultation position largely confirmed with reduction in Area 3 size to recognise more potential for build
	Pricing flexibility in High Network Reach area	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	Dark fibre available at cost based prices in Area 3 only	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	No cost based prices for active services in Area 2. Inflation-adjusted prices across all services.	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	Low bandwidth active services in Area 3 priced at cost; high bandwidth active services with inflation-adjusted prices	CHANGE	Cost based pricing on low bandwidth services	Consultation position confirmed
Inter-exchange services	De-regulate where BT faces 2 or more competitors	✓	No change	Consultation position confirmed
	Dark fibre available at cost; active services with inflation-adjusted prices	CHANGE	Dark fibre previously only available at exchanges where no nearby competitors	Consultation position confirmed
Quality Of Service	QoS standards on legacy copper services	✓	No change to standards; change in how performance assessed	Consultation position confirmed
	QoS on full fibre services	CHANGE	New backstop standards in Area 3 only	Consultation position broadly confirmed
	QoS on leased lines services (inc. dark fibre in Area 3)	✓	No change	Consultation position broadly confirmed

# Implications for investment

- *Investment to continue and coverage to increase* – Openreach and altnets
- *A balanced package overall:*
  - DPA
  - Pricing continuity
  - Fair wholesale pricing
  - Support for copper retirement
  - Fair bet
- Pace of build expected to slow
- Altnets still have plans to build further, but increasingly *focused on take-up and scale*
- Openreach on path to 25m before slowing pace of build, but *targeting 30m*

# How the market and competition is developing

- **Area 2:** 86% of UK premises = material and sustainable competition already or the potential for
- **Customers have more choice than ever** – 75% have one alternative to Openreach, 29% have two
- **Competition from new broadband networks is still developing** → It will take time
- Want to see network competition develop where **sustainable and delivers long-term benefits** to consumers
- **Take-up is critical** – pricing competitively
- Regulation maintains **opportunity for reasonably efficient altnets to compete**
- **Market is changing** – regulation needs to be flexible and adaptable
- **New guidance** – how regulation will take account of changing market conditions

# Consolidation

- Altnet build *more fragmented* than expected – over 100 operators building
- Consolidation will be an *important feature of the market* as operators look to gain scale
- Competition concerns *can arise*
- Ofcom focus on *competition and good outcomes for consumers*

# Regulation post 2031 and the fair bet

- By 2031, cost-based controls not applied for **10 years**
- **Reiterating position outlined in 2021**
- Where effective competition emerges → **deregulate**
- Where ongoing investment and evolving competition → **regulate to support this**, while ensuring consumers continue to be protected
- If not, then examine market outcomes → **light touch regulation may be appropriate**
- If did need to apply cost-based prices → **honour the fair bet**
- **Opportunity for returns above cost of capital** over whole full-fibre investment cycle
- **PIA to remain a fundamental regulatory remedy** beyond 2031

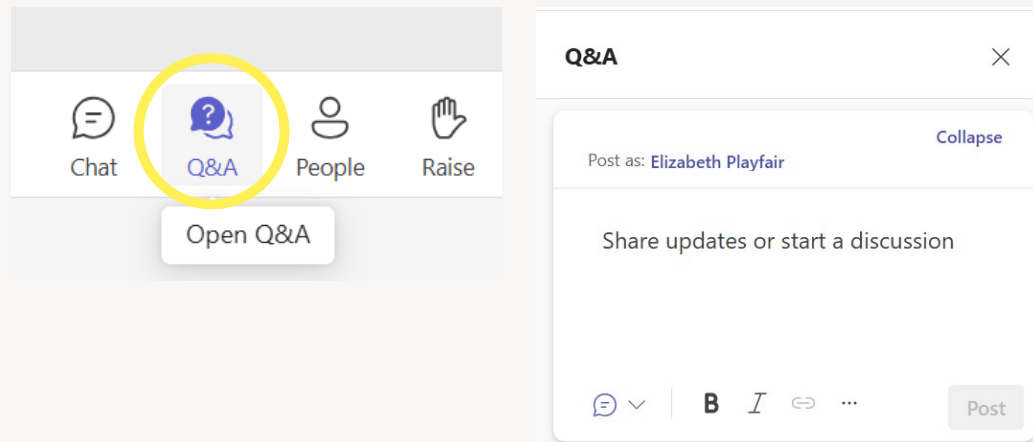
# Conclusion

- The UK fibre investment story has been a ***success – investment, coverage, competition***
- But there is more to be done to ***establish material & sustainable competition***
- ***Sticking to pro-investment, pro-competition strategy*** → more coverage, increased take-up
- Some updates while maintaining ***consistency and stability in regulation***
- Competition is ***not yet sufficiently well established***
- ***Consolidation*** will be an important feature of the market
- Network competition is likely to evolve and develop over review period – ***regulation needs to be flexible enough to adapt***
- Future approach (>2031) depends on market outcomes – ***light touch regulation may be appropriate***
- Where effective competition emerges, ***there will be no need for Ofcom to regulate***

# How to participate in the Q&A

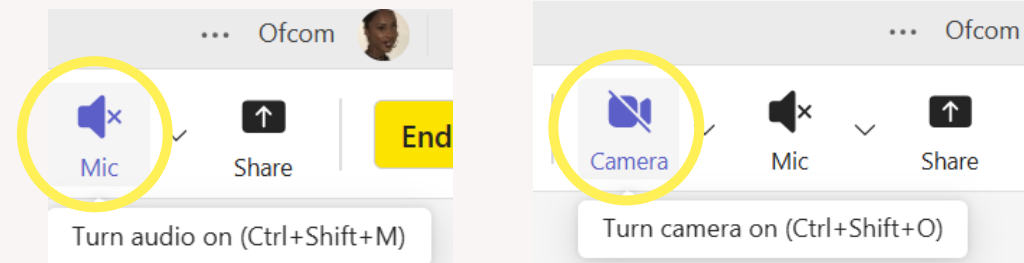
## 1. Submit your question (Before Speaking)

- Use the Q&A tab at the top of the meeting window.
- Include your name and organisation.
- Please use the Q&A tab rather than raising your hand.



## 2. When the host invites you to speak

- Unmute your microphone — click the mic icon.
- Turn on your camera (optional) — click the camera icon.
- Ask your question clearly.



Dial-in participants: email [analyst.relations@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:analyst.relations@ofcom.org.uk).  
If your question isn't answered live, email us after the call.