Amica24 Broadband guide

# What is Broadband?

## Broadband has long been the generic term for any kind of internet service in the UK which allows you access to the web, email, streaming TV and other online services at high speed.

Broadband in the UK first emerged in the early 2000's and was provided through BT phone lines as an always on service meaning there was no need to connect and disconnect when you wanted to use it and was independent of your telephone service so you could use the internet and make phone calls at the same time.

# home broadband

## When trying to decide if [home broadband](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/broadband/) is the right choice for you there are a few things you need to consider:

**Location** - Home broadband is a fixed service that is tied to your house. Although it's simple to make the service wireless within your own property (and indeed most providers will provide you with a wireless router to do just this) you can only use it at home.

**Phone lines** - In most cases you'll also need to take a working phone line installed (the only real exception being Virgin Media's fibre optic broadband which you can take without a phone line if you wish, but these deals are not available in all areas).

**Speed** - If speed is important to you then home broadband is the fastest type of broadband you are likely to be able to get for the vast majority of the UK.

**Download allowances** - Similarly download allowances tend to be much more generous than for other types of broadband.

**Multiple users** - If you wish to connect multiple computers and devices at the same time then home broadband is much simpler to setup for this than other types of broadband.

**Stability** - Home broadband tends to be more stable than other types of broadband.

**Contracts** - There are no pay as you go home broadband deals (but there are short contract deals available starting from 1 month, but they tend to be more expensive than longer contract deals).

At the end of the day if you expect most of your broadband use to be at home and you want reliability, fast speeds and to potentially share your connection amongst a number of devices at the same time then a home broadband connection is for you

# What should I look for when I compare home broadband providers?

## It can be difficult when comparing [broadband deals](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/deals/) against each other, but here's our handy checklist of things to look for:

**Availability** - Not all deals are available in all areas, so it's vital to use a postcode checker that can tell you what's available where you are. We have our own [Ofcom approved postcode checker](https://www.broadband.co.uk/checker/) or try this alternative [broadband checker](https://www.broadbandcheck.co.uk/).

**Download speeds** - This is usually a key one for most people, it's the maximum speed that the deal offers. It's important to check the difference between what the deal offers and what you are likely to get at your house, again our postcode checker will help you with seeing the difference here.

**Download allowance** - You'll find that this factor can vary a lot between different providers and different deals. Depending on how much you expect to use your connection and what you expect to use it for will determine how much download allowance you will need.

**Technical Support** - Are you technically confident or more of a luddite? Some providers give far better levels of technical support than others, but technical support is a big cost for providers, so if you think you might need to make frequent use of support then expect this to be factored into the cost of your package.

**Contract Length** - Some suppliers like to tie you into long contracts, sometimes up to 24 months long, whereas other can be much more flexible offering deals that are for only 1 month minimum terms (also known as [no contract broadband](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/no-contract-broadband/)). With all contract lengths pay attention to the small print to check for hidden charges.

**Equipment** - Many deals come with free or subsidised routers; others expect you to provide your own.

**Freebies** - It's more and more common to see enticements such as shopping vouchers or free gifts to try and persuade you to sign up.

**Cost** - cold hard money, this is what for most people is the most important factor. It's not always easy to work out the exact cost of a deal as there may be hidden charges or monthly prices that increase after an introductory period. [Our postcode checker](https://www.broadband.co.uk/checker/) will help you understand the true cost of each deal as we work out the complete first year cost for you on every deal we list.

## A bundle is when you take your broadband service in conjunction with another product from the same provider, most commonly this will be a [broadband and phone line](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/phone-bundles/) together, but could also be [broadband/phone/TV](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/tv-bundles/) and in some cases a mobile phone connection as well.

The advantages of a bundle is that they can provide extremely good value for money in many cases, most of the cheapest prices quoted for broadband are for suppliers who require that you bundle up the phone supply with them.

However, for some customers it may not always be best to bundle as it can restrict you from getting the most suitable service for all your needs.

But for the vast majority of people a bundles are a great way to save money and get a great deal, so if price is you major motivating factor when choosing a provider then you should give serious consideration to bundles.

For more information see our up to date [list of broadband bundles](http://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/#phone-bundles).

# How can I tell if a provider is good to sign up with?

## When considering signing up with a new broadband provider, as with any service that locks you into a potentially long contract, it's key to look at feedback from real customers.

Here is a detailed [broadband reviews section](https://www.broadband.co.uk/broadband/reviews/) and [mobile broadband reviews](https://www.broadband.co.uk/mobile-broadband/reviews/) which covers a huge range of providers full of warts and all reviews from real customers.

When reading reviews, it's important to remember that with some providers having millions of subscribers that there are always likely to be occasions when for some customers things go wrong. It's therefore important to look for common themes cropping up and to look at the reviews for a number of suppliers before making your mind up.

# What affects my broadband speed?

## One of the most confusing aspects of many types of broadband connection is that the download and upload speeds can be affected by a great deal of factors.

**Distance from the telephone exchange (or in the case of some fibre optic deals distance from the street cabinet).** The ability of copper-based telephone lines to hold a reliable speed is reduced the further you live from your telephone exchange. This is why speeds in rural areas are usually much lower than those in urban areas where houses tend to be located closer to the telephone exchange.

**Internal electrical interference,** such as poor internal telephone wiring and faulty or poorly shielded electrical equipment can have a negative impact on broadband speeds. A common cause of such interference at Christmas time are cheap flashing light decorations.

**Viruses and Malware**, an infected machine can overload your broadband connection as it connects to the outside world trying to propagate itself making your broadband connection seem much slower than usual.

# How do I find out what broadband providers are available in my area?

As not all providers and deals are available in all areas it's really important to use a broadband comparison tool that will show availability for your exact area. You can use this [broadband postcode checker](https://www.broadband.co.uk/checker/) which is approved by Ofcom (who are the government agency which regulates broadband in the UK) and will show you what deals are available in your area in an impartial and transparent way. Our checker can also tell you what sort of broadband speeds you should expect to get in your area (Tip: enter your phone number as well as your postcode for the most accurate results).

# broadband.co.uk

## BroadBand.co.uk are a site founded way back in 2004 dedicated to helping UK consumers get the most out of their broadband connection in a number of ways:

**Educate** - We aim to provide the best guides to help you with all aspects of getting setup with understanding, and then getting the most out of your broadband connection.

**Protect -** We are on your side when making sure that broadband suppliers provide you with the service you are paying for with free access to tools such as our broadband speed test.

**Inform** - We maintain a huge database of the UK's broadband deals and detailed local information as to broadband capabilities for every postcode and telephone number in the UK with free access for all to find the right deal for them.

**Help** - We are here to help with any broadband query you have, and you can contact us by phone [**0800 014 2738**](https://www.broadband.co.uk/help/call-us/) with any questions you have about broadband and signing up.