

Coronavirus information

Staying Connected

Help with phone and internet bills and allowances

During these unprecedented times, it's become more important than ever to stay connected through technology both old and new. Telecoms providers and the industry regulator Ofcom are working together so that staying connected on the phone and through the internet is kept as easy and affordable as possible. The companies listed in this guide have all committed to the following until at least the end of June:

- Working with customers who find it difficult to pay their bill due to Covid-19 to ensure that they are treated fairly and appropriately supported.
- Remove all data caps on fixed broadband services. A broadband cap is when you have a specific amount of data to use each month to do things like use the internet or stream TV shows. Once you reach this cap, you'll typically incur charges.
- Offer new mobile and landline packages to ensure people are connected and the most vulnerable continue to be supported. For example, some of these packages include mobile data boosts at low prices and free calls from their landline or mobile.

- All providers will ensure that vulnerable customers or those self-isolating receive alternative methods of communication wherever possible if priority repairs to fixed broadband and landlines cannot be carried out.

Ofcom also have [advice and tips to stay connected during lockdown](#).

If you are struggling with your bill, speak to your telecoms provider about what support they can offer. This could be:

- Pausing or reducing payments for a few months
- Giving you more time to pay
- Giving you more call minutes or data usage
- Moving you to a contract that better suits your needs
- Allowing you to pay your bill in a different way

Contact your provider to find out what's available and how much it costs.

Please note all information in this guide correct at time of writing on 8 June 2020. For further information, check your providers website or get in touch with them online or on the phone.

BT

BT are capping charges to £5 a month for landline customers with no fixed broadband in their home. This also applies to customers with Home Phone Saver. Eligible customers will continue

to pay the normal fixed cost of their home phone contract but any charges for those not on unlimited call plans will be capped at £5 a month. Bill capping applies to calls made from a BT landline to another UK landline or mobile. **Calls to international and**

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premium rate numbers are not included. The change will be applied automatically to your bill and applies to all eligible calls from the 19th March 2020. BT have said they will “continue to review as the coronavirus situation develops”.

BT are also permanently removing all caps on broadband packages so every customer has unlimited data. From February 2020, customers will not be charged for going over their data limit.

If you're in a vulnerable situation and need extra help, **contact BT by calling 0800 919 591.**

Sky

Sky is offering its **Sky Talk home phone customers free calls to landline numbers.**

As many providers are doing, Sky are providing free mobile access to NHS websites without it reducing your mobile data allowances. They've also removed their charges for Sky Mobile customers to call Hospedia hospital bedside phones. Hospedia will still charge 13p a minute to cover the cost of running the service.

Sky have said that they are only answering calls from vulnerable and key worker customers, **speak to them on 0344 241 0333.**

Virgin Media

Customers on Virgin Media's Talk Protected plans will now receive free daytime calls to other landlines, alongside their existing free evening and weekend minutes.

Virgin Media are giving their broadband customers with speeds under 100Mbps, a free boost to their ultrafast M100 Fibre Broadband. They're also

boosting Oomph customers with M100 Fibre Broadband to M200 Fibre Broadband.

Like other companies, Virgin Media are providing free mobile access to NHS websites.

Broadband, TV, and home phone customers can **call customer services on 150** from a Virgin phone or mobile or 0345 454 1111 from any other number.

TalkTalk

TalkTalk customers with the Unlimited UK Calls Boost will now be able to make free calls up to 180 minutes in length - increased from up to 60 minute length calls. This is alongside their existing unlimited free calls to UK landlines and mobiles. Any customers currently on a promotional price for the Unlimited Calls Boost will have their monthly cost frozen between May – July 2020.

All TalkTalk broadband plans already include totally unlimited data usage.

TalkTalk have made a commitment not to disconnect anyone if they struggle to pay due to reasons associated with Covid-19. Customers who need extra time to pay their bill, have the option of deferring their next payment. TalkTalk have also stopped inflationary increases in bills from April and are continuing to provide end of contract notifications

TalkTalk have said they are prioritising phone lines for customers who have already registered as needing additional accessibility support. **Call Customer Services on 0345 172 0088.**

02

02 says all its Pay Monthly customers including

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those on Sim only contracts will get unlimited minutes to mobile and landline numbers. There's no set end date for this, but O2 will let customers know when it's coming to an end.

Like other companies, O2 are providing free mobile access to NHS websites. They are also giving free access to websites of [several organisations providing advice and support](#). O2 have also removed their charges for calling Hospedia hospital bedside phones and have offered to credit any charges back to anyone that's used this service since the start of the pandemic.

Speak to O2's Payment Management team dedicated to providing support if you are struggling to pay your bills on 0800 902 0217.

EE

EE have a dedicated team to help people with any concerns about their monthly bills due to the Coronavirus pandemic. **Customers should call the company on 150** from their EE mobile number to talk about how to get through the next bill cycle.

EE has also offered all its vulnerable and disabled customers free calls, texts, and data so that they can stay connected to family and friends whilst social distancing or self-isolating.

Like other companies, EE are providing free mobile access to NHS websites.

Vodafone

Vodafone has introduced 30-days free access to unlimited mobile data for half a million Pay Monthly customers. **Vodafone will be automatically upgrading its Pay Monthly customers who are**

flagged as vulnerable in its systems to this 30-day unlimited data offer. Eligible customers will be notified by text and all other customers should visit the VeryMe section of the My Vodafone App to claim the offer.

Like other companies, Vodafone are providing free mobile access to NHS websites.

Speak to Vodafone's Vulnerable Customer team on 0333 304 3222.

Three

Like other companies, Three are providing free mobile access to NHS websites.

If you're struggling to pay your bill, Three has a dedicated team that can help. Customers should call 333 free from their Three number and select the relevant automated option. They have promised to not stop services for those struggling to pay during this period.