



---

## Choosing a Broadband Supplier

---

All Internet Service Providers are not the same.

### Service Guarantees, Restrictions & Questions to Ask

What download speeds are offered in the contract?	You will pay for the download speeds you sign up for. Standard Broadband contracts normally stipulate a maximum of 38mbs or 76mbs speeds, but some ISP's offer different speed packages (e.g. 52mbs instead of 38mbs). As a rule of thumb the higher speed you want the more costly it is.
What Actual Download Speeds will I get on my line?	Good Internet Service Providers should be able to tell you what speed you will get, not just an "up to..." Some will guarantee a minimum speed for your service and allow you to cancel the contract if they can't deliver. <b>Don't sign up for a contract that has a higher speed than your line can deliver (e.g. if you line can only deliver 25mbs, signing a contract for 76mbs won't give you a better speed).</b>
Are there Guaranteed Fix Times?	How quickly will a fault be fixed? Is there a Service Level Guarantee? Most ISP's do not offer an SLG on Broadband, but should do on the telephone line. Openreach offer a guaranteed 6 hour fix service to any ISP, but most don't opt to pay for this. If it's important to you, ask your ISP about it.
Can I escalate a fault for a faster fix?	ISP's should be able to escalate a fault (or provision) for faster fix/delivery. If you don't feel your fault is being resolved in a timely manner, you can request an escalation.
Are there Free Helpdesk Numbers?	You need to know if you will be paying high call charges to report a fault or ask for advice. 0800 number is free from landlines. 0845 or 0870 numbers will be chargeable at different rates as all other numbers will be.
Do you use Traffic Management to restrict broadband speeds?	Some ISP's may use Traffic Management to reduce broadband speeds at different times to manage demand and capacity. Make sure you know if yours does. That could be why your broadband speeds slow down at different times.

End to End Response Times?	The line speed on your broadband (from the exchange to your house) is only part of the picture. Do you get good speeds over the internet? Use a speed checker that has servers across the UK (or even Europe) to get a reliable view of the service.
Can I retain my email address and Telephone Number?	You should be able to keep using your email address when you move ISP's, but there may be a charge. If you can't then make sure you tell everyone about your new address (and change any website login details that use your email ID or you may not be able to update passwords or receive updates).
Any Free Services?	Does your ISP offer free/reduced price services such as cloud storage, VOIP services (like Skype), free calls, free software or internet security?
Any Problems with interference or Weather Impact?	If you are using Wi-Fi broadband services, how reliable are they when the weather or the landscape changes? Even leaves growing on trees can cause interference in Spring and Summer!
Are there data download limitations?	Is there a download limit on your service? If so, are there charges for going over the limit? What are they? These can make a cheap service really expensive.

