

Phone and Broadband Social Tariffs

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How a social tariff could help you

- **It's available to those on a variety of benefits.** If you or someone in your household claims Universal Credit, you could switch to any of the tariffs available.
- **It's cheaper than a regular package.** Current prices range from £10 to £20.
- **Fast, unlimited broadband.** Most tariffs offer superfast broadband at speeds over 30 Mbit/s – fast enough for you to keep in touch with friends and family, stream HD films or shop online.
- **You'll pay next-to-nothing to get set up.** If you do have to pay any setup costs, these should only be small. Your provider should tell you before you sign up.
- **It could cost nothing to switch.** If your provider offers a social tariff, you can switch to it at any time, free of charge.
- **The price won't go up mid-contract.** You won't pay any more than what you agree at the start of the contract.
- **It costs nothing to leave.** You won't pay a fee to leave the tariff before the end of your contract.

Who could qualify

If you or someone in your household claims Universal Credit, you could switch to any of the tariffs available. Some providers also include people on other benefits such as Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance, and Income Support. The person receiving the benefit will need to be the main person on the contract.

How to apply

First, check if your current provider offers a social tariff. Our table below lists all of the tariffs available now. You can apply for most tariffs online, or call your provider and ask to switch.

If your provider doesn't offer a social tariff, you can switch to one that does. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee.

Package	Price	Average speed	You could qualify if you receive...
BT Broadband Air Support	£20 a month	100 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
BT Home Essentials	£15 a month	Around 36 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
BT Home Essentials 2	£20 a month	Around 67 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
Country Connect Social Tariff	£15 a month	50 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
G.Network Essential Fibre Broadband	£15 a month	50 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
Hyperoptic Fair Fibre 50	£15 a month	50 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*

Package	Price	Average speed	You could qualify if you receive...
Hyperoptic Fair Fibre 150	£25 a month	150 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
KCOM Full Fibre Flex	£14.99 a month	30 Mbit/s	Various benefits (in and out of work)*
NOW Broadband Basics	£20 a month	36 Mbit/s	Universal Credit or Pension Credit
Sky Broadband Basics	£20 a month	36 Mbit/s	Universal Credit or Pension Credit
Virgin Media Essential Broadband	£15 a month	15 Mbit/s	Universal Credit
VOXI For Now	£10 a month	5G where available	Various benefits (in and out of work)*

- **8 million households having problems affording communications services – doubling since 2021**
- **97% of eligible low-income households yet to take advantage of specially-discounted superfast broadband deals**
- **Ofcom presses firms to consider whether large price rises can be justified at time of exceptional financial hardship – and demands collective industry action to better promote social tariffs**

Ofcom is today urging telecoms firms to do more to support their customers through the cost-of-living crisis, as new research reveals record numbers of households are struggling to afford their communications services.

The cost-of-living crisis is putting an unprecedented strain on household budgets. It is essential that the industry puts its customers first, and focuses on what more it can do to help support them.

This includes a much stronger emphasis on offering and promoting social tariffs, as well as thinking carefully about whether significant price rises can be justified at a time when the finances of their customers are under such pressure.

Lindsey Fussell, Ofcom's Networks and Communications Group Director

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Could you qualify for a cheaper phone or broadband package?

If you're having difficulty paying for your phone or broadband service, speak to your provider as soon as possible to see how they might be able to help you.

There's a number of things they may be able to offer – one of these is called a 'social tariff', which is a cheaper package offered by some providers to some customers depending on their circumstances, which usually include receiving certain government benefits such as Universal Credit.

1. Check if you're in or out of contract

When you sign up for a new service, you're typically tied in for 12, 18 or 24 months. This usually means that you're not able to leave your service provider without paying a fee. If you haven't spoken to your provider in the last couple of years, the chances are you're out of contract.

2. Find the best deals in the market

If you're out of contract, it's time to find out if there's a better deal available for you. Comparison websites, provide information on the best deals out there.

It's never been simpler to switch – you can switch mobile network with a simple text message, and cancel your broadband contract if you're not getting the speeds you were promised when you signed up.

3. Ask if your current provider will match it

If you're out of contract, you're probably paying too much, and it's time to speak to your provider. They might be able to match, or even beat, better deals you've seen elsewhere.

By spending as little as five minutes on the phone to your provider you could save hundreds of pounds. If you're unsure what to ask them, the following questions should help:

- Am I still in my initial contract period?
- How much am I paying?
- What am I getting for that price?
- Can I get a better service, and how much will it cost?
- How long will that contract be for?
- Do I need to pay any fees to sign up to a new deal?
- What happens when that contract ends?

Check your pay-TV packages – do you need them all?

Lots of homes have multiple subscriptions for different pay-TV and streaming services. However, there is often overlap when it comes to the content shown on these services – you might be getting the same films and TV series delivered by more than one service, for example.

Take a look at what film and TV packages you're getting via your services and think about whether you'd be missing out significantly if you were to cancel one or more of them.

Many streaming services can be cancelled straight away without needing to pay any sort of penalty, so even if it's a temporary measure it's worth thinking about whether you can get by without any of the services you currently use.







<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/tips-for-cutting-phone-broadband-and-pay-tv-costs>

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/record-number-of-households-struggle-to-pay-bills>

Cheaper internet is available to customers on benefits

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit, and some other benefits. They're reliable, fast enough for most customers and easy to switch to. Tariffs start from £15 a month.

	Availability	Monthly price	Speed	
BT	UK wide	£15	36 Mb	
		£20	67 Mb	
Sky	UK wide	£20	36 Mb	
NOW Broadband	UK wide	£20	36 Mb	
Virgin Media	Most of UK	£15	15 Mb	
Hyperoptic	Selected towns and cities	£15	50 Mb	
		£25	150 Mb	
Air Broadband	Selected towns and cities	£20	100 Mb	

Regional offers

London: [G.Network](#) £15 a month for 50 Mb.

Hull area: [KCom](#) £14.99 a month for 30 Mb.

Wales: [CountryConnect](#) £15 a month for 50 Mb.

Mobile internet

[VOXI by Vodafone](#) offers unlimited data, calls and texts for £10 per month on a sim-only deal.

For more details on the offers, follow the links provided or search for "Ofcom social tariffs".