

BT Report on progress against the Broadband USO

Date: April 2024

1. Broadband Universal Service

Overview

At BT Group, we are working hard to improve the UK's digital infrastructure and bringing the benefits of good connectivity to all parts of the country.

Since 2020, the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) has played a small, but important, role as a safety net for some of the most isolated premises in the country. As the current designated Universal Service Provider for the UK (excluding Hull), BT is obliged to provide a minimum broadband service of 10Mbps to those who request if the following conditions are met:

- no suitable alternative service is available from BT or another supplier.
- no suitable improvements are planned within 12 months via a public procurement programme.
- customers fund the excess costs of an upgrade if they are more than the set contribution of BT.

BT is required to upgrade a premises' connectivity to meet the USO criteria at no cost to the customer if the necessary works cost less than £3,400, with these costs met by BT/industry rather than the Government. Where the necessary works cost more than £3,400, customers have the option to pay any additional costs.

In practice, upgrades typically result in us building a gigabit-capable, full-fibre connections. By the end of March 2024, we had built a USO connection to over 7954 premises, with a further 265 builds in progress.

This report covers the period between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024.

Looking ahead, the government is considering the future direction of the USO programme alongside what more can be done to improve broadband connectivity for so called Very Hard To Reach premises. We continue to engage in this process following DSIT's consultation in October 2023.

2. Performance Update

2.1 Number of requests

Broadband USO Requests	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Number of broadband USO Requests received by the USO Helpdesk	273	200	179	252	202	122

2.2 Number of ineligible requests

Ineligible Broadband USO Requests	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
i. Referred to an existing BT product that already meets the broadband USO criteria	190	120	92	139	128	106
ii. Referred to an existing product belonging to another company that already meets the broadband USO criteria	76	77	86	110	60	0
iii. Referred to broadband network build supported by a government scheme that is due to be completed in the next 12 months	2	3	1	3	4	8

Numbers refer to the date of the response to the consumer.

2.3 Number of confirmed orders

Eligible Broadband USO Requests	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Number of Confirmed Orders	6	4	6	5	3	1
i. Which will lead to the build of a new broadband network free of charge (i.e. below the cost threshold)	5	3	6	5	3	1
ii. Which require a customer to contribute to the costs (i.e. above the cost threshold)	1	1	0	0	0	0

2.4 Number of USO requests responded to within 30 days

Time taken to respond	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Number of eligible Requests responded to within 30 days	18	12	20	27	22	23
Number of eligible Requests responded to after 30 days	0	0	0	0	0	0

Numbers refer to the date of the response to the consumer. Ineligible requests are not included in the table, as they are all responded to within 30 days

2.5 Provision of broadband services relating to the Broadband USO

Provision of Broadband Services	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Number of Broadband Services delivered	123	136	107	115	83	72
Number of Broadband Services delivered between 0-6 months	99	110	89	97	66	63
Number of Broadband Services delivered between 6-12 months	19	16	11	12	10	7
Number of Broadband Services delivered between 12-18 months	4	8	6	3	3	1
Number of Broadband Services delivered between 18-24 months	1	2	1	3	4	1
Number of Broadband Services delivered beyond 24 months	0	0	0	0	0	0

“Broadband Services” means both a broadband connection and a service provided to a customer on a network build under the USO Conditions. This table therefore does not reflect the total number of services available but not activated by the consumer.

2.6 Complaint and dispute resolution relating to the Broadband USO

Complaint and Dispute Resolution	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Number of Complaints Received by BT	2	6	1	2	2	3
Number of Complaints Resolved by BT	0	2	1	3	0	0
Number of Complaints Not Resolved by BT	4	3	0	0	4	1
Number of Complaints referred to the ADR Scheme	2	0	1	0	1	0

Numbers reflect when actions were completed rather than when initial complaint received.

Complaints are marked as resolved or not resolved based upon a customer’s acceptance/rejection of BT’s response.

2.7 Quality of service measurement for broadband USO services

Quality of Service Measurement	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Supply of Broadband Services (days)	95	92	74	80	116	74
Fault Rate per Access Line	0.11	-	-	0.04	0.04	0.02
Fault Repair Time for Broadband USO Services (hours)	46.96	-	-	69.09	21.75	18.77

Please note, this data relates to QoS of a small cohort of BB USO premises, therefore big peaks in the table represent small fluctuations in the actual numbers.

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