

Reference: 1810657

Information Requests  
[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

20 May 2024

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about UK broadband subscribers.

We received this request on 19 April 2024 and it has been passed to the Information Requests team to consider under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

### *Your request*

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*I'm looking to get in touch with someone in the research department (perhaps you?) who can provide me with the numbers of UK broadband subscribers. I need it segmented by network operators/internet providers, ideally covering the past 5-10 years and split by technology (e.g., Fiber, Cable, xDSL) and type (private/business). I've been through Ofcom's website but haven't found anything useful in this regard.*

### **Our response**

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We hold the data requested covering the period mentioned. However, we cannot provide splits by network provider/Internet Service Provider (ISP) as we consider this information exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act.

In particular, section 44(1)(a) of the FOI Act exempts disclosure of information if its disclosure is prohibited under another enactment. Ofcom is prohibited under section 393 of the Communications Act 2003 (‘the Communications Act’) from disclosing information about a business which we have obtained in the course of exercising a power conferred by the Communications Act among others, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which applies here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to a public interest test.

Ofcom collects quarterly data from around 35 UK fixed telecom providers, including the number of fixed broadband connections at the end of each quarter. We publish a summary of this information in our [Telecommunications Market Data Updates](#).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Ofcom telecoms data updates](#)

The latest data, which shows the number of lines split by ADSL, Cable and Other (inc. FTTx) can be found in Table 16 in the fixed telecoms section of the [Q4 2023 Telecommunications Market Data Update](#).<sup>2</sup> This shows that there were 28.2 million residential and small business broadband connections at the end of December 2023.

A more detailed breakdown of broadband connections by technology is published annually in the Telecoms and Networks section of the [Communications Market Report 2023 interactive report](#). This includes broadband line numbers with separate splits by technology and ISP.

The latest published data shows 28.0 million UK fixed broadband connections at the end of 2022. Seventy per cent of broadband connections were provided using fibre technologies at the end of 2022, with the number of fibre-to-the-cabinet (FTTC) connections having fallen for the first time during the year (down by 0.1 million to 16.6 million) while the number of full fibre lines increased by 52% to 3.1 million during the year.

We will publish the 2024 Communications Market Report, which will include more recent information, on 18 July this year.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) – quoting the reference number above in future communications.

Yours sincerely,

## Information Requests

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### Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress.

Please email the Information Requests team ([information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)) to request an internal review.

### Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).

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<sup>2</sup> [Telecommunications Market Data Update Q4 2023](#)