

Planned Network Deployments 2026

Methodology Annex

This annex explains our approach to obtaining and analysing information from network providers for the purposes of our reporting on planned network deployments supporting very high-speed broadband services in the UK.

Fixed networks

Data collection

- We collect planned network deployment information from providers from which we collect information on existing fixed network coverage as part of our Connected Nations reporting.¹ Other providers which have not been included in our information gathering exercise may also have plans to deploy networks.
- Specifically, we requested those providers to provide information, as of January 2026, on all properties which they plan to cover with a new very high capacity network (VHCN). For the purposes of our request, we defined a VHCN as an electronic communications network which consists wholly of optical fibre elements at least up to the distribution point at the serving location.
- The report only focuses on deployment plans from network providers. It does not include public authorities' aspirations and plans to support network build (such as devolved administrations' plans). We expect that where such public authorities' aspirations or plans result in network deployment plans by providers going forward, these will be captured in future reports.
- There are some other aspects to be noted concerning the data covered by this report on planned network deployments of VHCNs in the UK:
 - In total, we received data for just over 11 million UK premises.
 - Individual premises may be targeted for coverage by more than one network provider, but over different timescales or with different levels of certainty (confidence).
 - Some providers also provided us with their plans beyond our requested three-year timeframe. To avoid inconsistencies with data from providers who did not provide such additional information, our reported findings do not take account of any of the responses going beyond our requested three-year timeframe.

¹ Section A2 of the [Methodology Annex to Connected Nations 2025](#) lists most of the providers we requested information from for this report.

Planned coverage reporting

- To determine the anticipated full-fibre and gigabit-capable coverage over the next three years, we combine the stated deployment plans with existing full-fibre and gigabit-capable coverage as of January 2026, based on the data collected for our [Connected Nations Spring 2026 update](#).
- We asked providers to confirm both the financial and planning status of their planned network deployments. Specifically, we asked whether the plans had reached a design stage of at least ‘Low Level Design Complete’ and whether funding had been committed for the plans.²
- We consider plans to be of ‘High Confidence’ if they have reached at least the Low Level Design Complete stage and funding has been committed. We report on anticipated coverage over the next three years based on: (i) all plans (including plans at all planning stages and funding stages) and (ii) High Confidence plans only.
- All planned and existing coverage is reported against the ‘premise base’ described below. We determined our ‘premise base’, i.e., the properties that form the basis for our analysis, in the same way as for our Connected Nations Spring 2026 update on existing coverage.
- The total number of properties in scope is 32.5 million, of which 30.5 million are classified as residential. Of the latter, 26.1 million are classified as urban and 4.3 million as rural.

Calculating the ‘premise base’

- We use Ordnance Survey’s AddressBase® Premium and Islands products³ to provide the base dataset used to assess broadband coverage for residential and commercial premises.
- For each Connected Nations update we re-calculate the premise base, using the release closest to the reference date of the collected information. For the premise base for the Spring 2026 update, and hence this report, we used Epoch 123, which was released in November 2025.⁴
- We combined AddressBase® data with additional geographical classifications from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) National Statistics Postcode Lookup table for November 2025⁵ and Urban and Rural categories derived from the Locale classification.⁶
- Locale is a third-party data source based on analysis of census output areas. Each output area is assigned to one of seven Locale Groups. Each premises is assigned to an output area based on its postcode. The Locale classification of the output area determines the classification of the premises as Urban or Rural, using the following mapping:

² These criteria were chosen to align with the classifications and criteria set out in BDUK’s National Rolling Open Market Review ([National Rolling Open Market Review September 2025 Request For Information – GOV.UK](#))

³ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/>

⁴ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/products/addressbase-epoch-dates>

⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/geographicalproducts/postcodeproducts>

⁶ https://www.bluewavegeographics.com/images/LOCALE_Classification.pdf

- Urban: Groups A to E
- Rural: Groups F and G.
- For further details on our approach to identifying the premise base and our approach to address matching, please see the Methodology Annex to our Connected Nations 2025 report.⁷

Fixed Wireless Access

- Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services can be provided on a mobile network by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) or on a dedicated wireless network by Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs). Where FWA services are available on mobile networks, the capacity is shared with mobile users.
- Our analysis of FWA coverage uses planned deployment data from two MNOs and one WISP.
- From both types of FWA operators, we collected build plans for the next three years (as of January 2026) to extend or upgrade any part of their network, so as to provide a mast site supported by a fibre or 1 Gbit/s or greater backhaul service (using other connectivity e.g. radio).
- This is because, while we aim to report on plans to extend or upgrade any part of a FWA network so as to provide download speeds of at least 100 Mbit/s, for wireless transmission and operation, it can be very difficult to know whether a service will achieve 100 Mbit/s to a particular property. Discussions held in preparation of our first Planned Network Deployment report revealed that no operators were planning to deploy services which would guarantee such a service. Consequently, we collect information on future planned masts that will be supported by a fibre or 1 Gbit/s or greater backhaul service. We consider these masts could attain a 100 Mbit/s level of service if an antenna capable of supporting such speeds was installed.
- We asked for the site identity and location of each new planned mast supported by such a high level of backhaul along with the anticipated timescales for deployment.
- For the reasons above, individual property address matching was not undertaken, and we report solely on the location of the relevant masts for the purposes of future FWA network deployment.

⁷ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/connected-nations-2025>