



A customer's response to BT Openreach's Customer Charter

Like some of you, TalkTalk is a BT customer. We, and many other telecoms companies, depend on BT Openreach (the part of BT that runs the wires and cable making up the main broadband network) to deliver our customers' broadband.

We were pleased when BT published a customer charter, promising to improve speeds and broadband coverage. But, as one of their customers, we think they could – and should – be doing much more. Britain could be one

of the world's most advanced digital nations, but to make this happen, BT Openreach's plans will have to be much better and much bolder.

Here's what BT Openreach has promised, and what we, as one of their biggest customers, think they should be delivering for the UK.

Only when BT Openreach's service gets better, can we make sure that all UK customers get the service they deserve.

What BT Openreach promised



Coverage

- To honour their existing promise to get superfast broadband to **95% of the UK by 2017**.
- To go further, but only if they receive more Government 'support'.
- To extend the 'co-funding scheme', where communities and small business parks help cover cost of new superfast connections.
- To provide better information about who can connect to superfast broadband.

What it really means

- BT Openreach already has a **£1.7bn** Government contract to bring superfast broadband to 95% of the country – they're only promising not to break their deal.
- The co-funding scheme is very expensive, costing a around **£20,000** of their own money to take part.
- Parliament has repeatedly asked BT to be more open about how they're spending taxpayers' money, and BT has promised to be more transparent in the past. After all, people deserve to know where their cash is going, especially those still waiting to be connected.

As BT Openreach customers, we're asking for:

BT Openreach needs to share more information with customers, internet companies, and local councils. Be open and honest so we can work together to deliver better broadband for everyone. If we don't know which bit of the country BT's is leaving until last, or where they're not going to at all, others can't come in to help.

BT needs to be open about how much of this is coming out of their pocket, not just how much is coming out of ours.



Speed

- To give every home and business in the country broadband speeds of at least **5-10Mbps**.
- To give **10 million homes** and businesses ultrafast speeds of **300-500 Mbps** by the end of 2020.
- To bring speeds of **1 Gbps** where people want it.

- **85% of people already get at least 4Mbps** – it's the bare minimum you need to watch iPlayer and set-top TV.
- BT has already broken one promise to bring ultrafast broadband to **2.5 million homes by 2012**. As customers, how do we know they'll stick to this one?
- BT won't say how much the ultrafast service (G.fast) will cost – it's got to be affordable for customers.
- Like the superfast rollout, BT won't say who will get ultrafast, or when.

BT needs to think better and bolder! The future is fibre right up to people's homes, replacing the slowest part of the network – the copper phone line. Let's give people the freedom to stop worrying about their broadband, and just get on with whatever they want to do online.

This can happen now, not in 10 years' time, if every provider (not just the biggest company in the market) is allowed to play their part.



Service

- To bring in a minimum level of service for high speed business broadband.
- To make sure **95% of broadband connections are finished on time by 2017**.
- A new 'View my Engineer' service which texts customers their engineer's name, number and arrival time.

- BT Openreach is currently breaching both their commitments on service – those to the regulator and those to customers.
- These aren't the first promises to get better. The first time we heard them was 2006, just one year after Openreach was formed!
- View My Engineer isn't new – and other industries like transport and energy have done this for years.
- A text message doesn't help if BT misses an appointment all together. In August, BT Openreach missed **one in twelve repairs or appointments** for TalkTalk customers alone.

We want BT Openreach to improve their service for all customers – they've failed to meet targets for seven years and it's got to stop.

But there is a lot of work to do. The standards they're talking about are just the bare minimum.

They have to get much, much better, at the very least so they aren't breaking their contracts with customers.



Investment

- To bring high-speed broadband to even more people.
- To bring ultrafast broadband (using a technology called G.fast), to **10m homes and businesses by 2020**.
- To extend, upgrade and maintain the broadband networks.

- BT isn't putting up any new money to meet these promises. In fact, they say it's only possible with more of *your* money.
- Taking inflation into account, **BT spends less on their network now than they did in 2008** – even though customer demand is surging.
- Without any extra money, the core broadband network, which runs on copper telephone lines, will continue to worsen. This means slow speeds and an even poorer service for customers.

We all know Britain deserves the best broadband network possible – we can't just sit back and rely on a 100 year old technology for ever.

We need investment to make it happen; but customers must be able to trust that BT is investing in Britain, instead of Britain investing in BT.

TalkTalk, Sky and others are already investing in bringing affordable, ultrafast fibre straight to people's homes. We all would like BT Openreach to join us and invest in Britain's ultrafast future.

With a fair, competitive market, we can work together to transform the country's broadband and make sure UK homes and businesses enjoy the world-class broadband they deserve.