Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Stay connected online and improve your internet connection

Broadband and mobile networks can run slower when lots of people and devices are connected to them. Whether you're working from home, streaming music, TV or films, gaming or making video or internet calls, there are things you can try to speed up your internet connection.

Use your landline or Wi-Fi to make calls

You may find you get a more reliable connection using your landline. If you do need to use your mobile, try using your settings to turn on '**Wifi calling**'. Some smartphones and mobile packages allow your phone to make calls over your broadband network, which often provides the best sound quality. You can make voice calls over the internet using apps like Facetime, Skype, Zoom or WhatsApp.

Move your router clear of other devices

Keep your router as far away as possible from other devices and those which operate without wireless. Cordless phones, baby monitors, halogen lamps, dimmer switches, stereos and computer speakers, TVs and monitors can all affect your WiFi if they're too close to your router. Don't use the microwave when you're making video calls, watching HD videos or doing something important online. Place your router on a table or shelf rather than on the floor and keep it switched on.

Lower the demands on your connection

The more devices attached to your WiFi, the lower the speed you get. Devices like tablets and smartphones often work in the background. Switch off the WiFi on these when you're not using them.

If you're making video calls, turn the video off and just use audio. This takes less internet bandwidth. You could schedule the other people in your homes online activity, so that everyone isn't carrying out data-heavy tasks (like HD streaming, gaming or video calls) all at the same time. Downloading video in advance, instead of streaming it, can also help.

Try wired rather than wireless

For the best broadband speeds, use an Ethernet cable to connect your computer directly to your router rather than using WiFi. This is a computer networking cable which should give you a faster, more reliable connection. They're available from as little as £3.

Plug your router directly into your main phone socket

Where possible, try not to use a telephone extension lead, as these can cause interference which could lower your speed. If you have to use an extension lead, use a new, high-quality cable with the shortest possible length. Tangled and coiled cables can also affect speeds. So can interference from your phone line, so try plugging '**microfilters**' into every phone socket in your home. They look like little white boxes and split the phone and broadband signals so that they don't affect each other. Different providers have varying setups in the home, so always check their website before unplugging any cables.

Test the speed on your broadband line

Find out what speed you're actually getting. You can **run a broadband speed test** using Ofcom's official mobile and broadband checker. If possible, carry out tests over a few days and at different times of day. You can download Ofcom's checker as a smartphone app in Apple's App store or Google Play or use it through your internet browser.

Get advice from your broadband provider

If the other items 1-6 don't help, then call your provider. During the Coronavirus they will deal with vulnerable customers as a priority.

Useful links

- **Internet and broadband**
- **Mobile phones**
- **Having problems using InformationNOW**
- **How to tailor InformationNOW to your access needs**

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Useful Organisations

Digital UK

Website: www.digitaluk.co.uk

Telephone: 03456 50 50 50

Digital Unite

Email: du@digitalunite.com

Website: www.digitalunite.com

Digital Voice

Email: julie@digitalvoice.org.uk

Website: https://www.digitalvoice.org.uk/

Telephone: 01207 566 866

Address: Chopwell Community Centre, NE17 7HS

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