UK’s ultrafast broadband expansion set to reach 96% of homes by 2027, Ofcom reports

The UK’s ultrafast broadband roll-out is entering its “final phase” and could reach nearly all homes by 2027, according to Ofcom.

The industry regulator revealed that data from telecoms firms suggests 96 per cent of homes and businesses would have access to full-fibre by 2027 with the right investment and regulation, as reported by City AM.

The UK has experienced one of Europe’s fastest roll-outs due to billion-pound investments and regulatory changes.

Currently, around 69 per cent, or 20.7m premises, have access to full fibre, while gigabit-capable network coverage surged over 40 per cent to 25m last year.

On Thursday, Ofcom announced proposals it believes will enable the UK to achieve the 2027 target.

These include fostering competition between broadband networks and strengthening rules around Openreach’s wholesale deals and discounts to prevent it from “unfairly stifling” growth.

Openreach, a BT Group subsidiary, is responsible for building and maintaining the UK’s primary telecoms network infrastructure.

Ofcom also proposed increased investment in Openreach’s rural network, which has significantly lagged in fibre coverage.



A BT Openreach van
(Image: Peter Dazeley/Getty Images)

BT faces stricter plans

Under the plans, Openreach will face stricter oversight on pricing. The regulator intends to cap the nominal price that Openreach can charge its retail providers, such as Sky or TalkTalk, for downloads up to a certain speed.

However, the statement also mentioned that Openreach should avoid unnecessary costs by running two networks simultaneously, as it supports the shift from old “copper lines to fibre.”

Natalie Black, Ofcom’s Group Director for Networks and Communications, commented on the progress: “The roll out of full fibre across the UK is a British infrastructure success story,” and “Four years ago, less than a quarter of UK homes and offices had access, and it now stands at nearly seven in 10. But we do not take this momentum for granted and today, we

are setting out how we can work with the sector to finish the job."

She further added, "It means that people and businesses in nearly all corners of the country will get faster, better broadband, fuelling economic growth and enabling technologies like artificial intelligence to benefit everyone."

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