

Broadband

An update on our Best Buy ISPs

NEED TO KNOW

Broadband is a faster way than dial-up to connect your computer to the internet. It allows you to surf the net and make phone calls simultaneously.

SPEED

Download speeds range from 512 kilobits per second (Kbps) – about ten times faster than dial-up – to super-fast 24 megabits per second (Mbps). At 512Kbps it takes around 45 seconds to download a three-minute MP3 digital music track.

CAPS

Many ISPs cap, or set limits on, the amount of data you can transfer each month. A typical MP3 track is about 5 megabytes (MB) of data.

BEST BUYS

To be a Best Buy, a broadband internet service provider (ISP) must receive very high customer satisfaction ratings in our annual survey of more than 11,000 members. Our eight Best Buys also scored top marks for customer service and were above average for connection speed and reliability, technical support and ease of set-up.

We've looked at more than 50 different packages offered by our Best Buy ISPs. Many are very similar, with the differences often amounting to things like signing up for a 12-month contract in exchange for free phone line activation or having a more flexible one-month rolling contract but paying up to £70 to have your line activated.

Instead of listing them all, we show the cheapest capped and uncapped packages for each provider in our table below.

If you do a lot of downloading, consider an uncapped service, which doesn't limit the amount of data you can transfer between your computer and the internet each month. If you're a lighter user, you could be better off with a cheaper, capped package – but if you go over your monthly limit, you'll be charged around £1 to £2 for each extra gigabyte (GB) of data that you use. 1GB is equivalent to about 800 large digital photos or 200 music tracks.

USING THE TABLE

We list the cheapest capped and uncapped packages from our eight Best Buy broadband ISPs.

Sample

Number of customers surveyed for each ISP.

Uncapped/Capped

Monthly cost Does not include short-term offers, such as reduced rates for the first few months.

Speed The maximum download speed achievable. This can vary, depending on your distance from the telephone exchange and the number of households in your area using broadband at the same time. **Limit** The maximum amount of data you can download each month. One gigabyte (GB) is equal to 1,000 megabytes (MB).

Satisfied

The percentage of readers taking part in our annual survey, of more than 11,000 members, who were very satisfied with their broadband internet service provider.

WHICH? EXTRA

For full details of deals offered by our Best Buys visit www.which.co.uk/broadband

Broadband	Sample		Uncapped			Capped			Satisfied (%)
	Survey	Monthly cost (£)	Package	Speed	Monthly cost (£)	Package	Speed	Limit (GB)	
PROVIDER									
MetroNet	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	11.75 ^a	PAYGo500	512Kbps	0.4	91
Freedom2surf	111	22.50	Pure IP 512	512Kbps	14.99	Connect Lite (Monthly)	8Mbps	2 ^b	80
Zen Internet	81	24.99	ZenADSL Home 500 ^c	512Kbps	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	79
Nildram	79	19.99	Broadband 500	512Kbps	13.99	Broadband 2g0 Lite	8Mbps	0.25	77
Eclipse Internet	107	17.99	FLEX Home 500	512Kbps ^d	14.99	Home Broadband (1GB)	2Mbps	1	73
Waitrose.com	37	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.99	Waitrose.com Broadband ^e	2Mbps	5	73
PlusNet plc	391	15.99	Teleworker	2Mbps	14.99	Broadband PAYG	2Mbps	1	71
Force9	40	15.99	Teleworker	2Mbps	14.99	Broadband PAYG	2Mbps	1	70

^a You pay £11.75 for the first 400MB and then 0.235p per MB, up to a maximum of £22.75, no matter how much you use ^b Uncapped between 1am and 6am
^c Zen Internet offers only uncapped packages ^d Can be boosted to 2Mbps on demand (surcharge payable) ^e Waitrose offers only one package