

Choosing internet access

These questions may help you decide what type of internet access is best for you. Read each question, then put a tick by your answer.

Where do you want to use your device?

- (a) At home
- (b) Out and about

What device do you have?

- (a) Desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smart TV (**Please note: you can only use fixed internet on these devices**)
- (b) Smartphone

How often do you want to use the internet?

- (a) Often e.g. every day for most of the day
- (b) A little – every few days

How much do you want to spend approximately each month?

- (a) £20 or more
- (b) less than £20

Add up how many a's you ticked. Add together how many b's you ticked.

If you got **mostly a's**, **fixed internet** may be best for you.

If you got **mostly b's**, **mobile internet** may be best for you.

Find out about fixed and mobile internet on the next pages.

Please note, this is just a guideline and does not mean you should have one type of internet or another.

Fixed internet

Fixed internet provides internet access in one place e.g. your home. It is also called broadband, fibre-optic or wifi.

It is provided by internet service providers.

You need a modem or router to make it work. This will be given to you by the internet service provider.

You can use it to access the internet on desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smart TVs and smartphones as long as they are in your home.

You usually have a contract and pay a monthly fee of around £20 or higher. Sometimes you can pay less than this.

Choosing an internet service provider

There are lots of internet service providers. BT, Virgin Media, Sky, PlusNet and TalkTalk are popular ones.

Your telephone provider may be able to upgrade your telephone package to include internet access.

It is worth checking other services as costs can vary.

Look out for:

- Price of the package
- Length of the contract
- If it includes telephone line rental
- If there is a set-up fee
- Average speed - average speed is measured in Megabytes (Mb) and means how fast a website loads or an app downloads.

A good place to check and compare internet packages is uSwitch: www.uswitch.com/broadband

Once you've chosen an internet service provider and a package, the internet service provider will arrange for a computer technician to come to your home and set up your internet connection. This can sometimes take a few weeks.

Mobile internet

Mobile internet provides internet access both at home and when you are out and about.

It is provided by mobile phone networks.

You can use it to access the internet on a smartphone.

Costs can vary from £10 every few months to more than £30 a month, depending on what plan you choose.

Choosing a mobile phone network and plan

There are lots of mobile phone network providers. O2, GiffGaff and EE are popular ones.

Choose one that has good coverage in your area and meets your needs.

You will need to choose either a pay-as-you-go plan, a sim-only deal, or a contract. This is how you pay for the mobile internet.

Pay-as-you-go plan

You pay money to the mobile phone network which gives you a credit balance. When you use your phone to make calls,

send texts or use the internet, some money will be taken from your credit balance. When your credit balance has run out, you need to 'top it up' or pay the provider again.

SIM-only deal

You pay a set amount each month which gives you a set allowance of calls, texts and data (internet) to use for free. If you go over the set amount, you will be charged extra. SIM-only deals are fairly easy to change or stop.

Contract

Like a SIM-only deal, you pay a set amount each month which gives you an allowance of calls, texts and data (internet) for free. Contracts are usually more expensive because they include paying for the phone. Contracts may be difficult to stop until the contract length is finished.

Money Saving Expert compares pay-as-you-go SIM cards:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/mobiles/best-pay-as-you-go-sim-cards/>

uSwitch compares SIM-only deals:

https://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/compare/sim_only_deals/

uSwitch compares mobile phone contracts:

https://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/compare/cheap_mobile_phones/

Further support

Telephone support from Manchester Digital Champions

Got a device that connects to the Internet? Need help using it? We have a team of digital champions who offer telephone support to Manchester residents. Calls can be made in 15 languages.

Text **07860 064128** or email **digitalinclusion@manchester.gov.uk** leave your name and we'll call you back and help!

Stay connected through COVID-19

If you need help and support to get online, call the Community COVID-19 Support Helpline on **0800 234 6123**, or email us at **digitalinclusion@manchester.gov.uk**

Find out more at:

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7239/stay_connected_through_covid-19_leaflets

This guide was produced in partnership with the following groups, networks and organisations:



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