

Getting Online - Broadband Tips

Unless you're living in University of Aberdeen halls, you'll almost certainly want to get broadband in your student home. After all, studying without internet access where you're living would leave you at the mercy of library opening hours – and you might not be able to keep in touch as much as you'd like.

Broadband is a big purchase and you really need to do your homework before you buy. To help you make the right decision we've broken down the top 7 things you need to consider before buying broadband.

1. Check availability

Broadband is very widely available across Aberdeen, though the availability of fibre optic broadband is lower than in some other Scottish cities.

The first step to working out the best student broadband deal for your needs is to find out what's available in your part of the city. You can either do this by researching each of the different Aberdeen broadband providers individually, but you'll certainly find it a lot quicker and easier to use a postcode checker on one of the digital comparison sites accredited by Ofcom, see: [Price comparison - Ofcom](#).

2. Line rental

You'll need an active phone line and to pay line rental. Line rental can add up to around £25 to your broadband bill each month, and if you haven't got an active phone line or you have a line that requires reactivation that may cost £100 or more.

Find out the status of your phone line and then look again at the broadband deals you found in Step 1. Compare the providers in your area to find the one that can give you the best deal on broadband and line rental, and on the cost of having a line installed or reactivated if that's something you need.

Bear in mind that your cheapest option may be to pay line rental to your broadband provider, rather than to BT. So, consider all of options from all of the providers in your area before you buy.

3. Broadband speeds

Broadband speeds in Aberdeen range from around 5Mbps up to 80Mbps or more for customers using fibre optic broadband and who live near to their local exchange.

In short, the more people you'll be sharing your broadband with and/or the more demanding the online tasks you'll be undertaking, the faster your broadband service will need to be.

If you're living on your own and are only likely to be using your broadband for checking into Facebook and researching your coursework you should be able to do all of this and more with a basic up to 8Mbps package.

However, if you're going to be downloading a lot of movies, listening to loads of music on Spotify and catching up with the soaps online – and especially if you'll be just one person in a houseful doing so – you will need a much higher speed.

In some areas you may be able to get 80Mbps broadband packages and in certain parts of Aberdeen you can even now get 100Mbps+ fibre optic options. For example, see [Vodafone broadband deals](#) and [BT full fibre FTTP broadband](#).

From March 2020, if you don't have access to a home broadband service that can offer at least a download speed of 10Mbps and an upload speed of 1Mbps, you can request an upgrade from BT. See: [Your right to request a decent broadband service: What you need to know - Ofcom](#).

4. Monthly usage limits

You might not be able to choose your download speed, but you should have plenty of options when it comes to monthly usage allowances. Some providers refer to these as download limits, but that name is a little misleading. Your usage limit is the total amount of data that you can upload as well as download in each month.

Again, if you're going to be the only person using your broadband service and if you'll be doing fairly lightweight activities then a monthly usage allowance of around 10-20GB should be plenty. But if there's going to be a houseful of you streaming music and movies all month long you will need an unlimited package – or you risk being penalised by your ISP.

5. Contracts

Most providers offer their broadband packages and bundles on contracts of 12-24 months. Now, these might be ideal if you're planning on staying in the same house for your whole course, but if you're only going to be in Aberdeen until the end of the current academic year you'll need to find a short contract broadband deal.

Some Aberdeen providers offer broadband on contracts of one, three and nine month contracts which will allow you to terminate your service when the time comes to leave the city. However, whatever contract you're on you'll still need to give your provider 30 days notice for cancellation – otherwise you will continue to be billed.

The thing with broadband contracts is that if you leave early, you'll most likely be charged an early termination fee. It's up to you to work out when you'll be leaving Aberdeen, and to plan ahead to get the right broadband contract to suit your plans.

6. Broadband bundles

When you buy broadband, you'll very often get inclusive calls thrown into the deal. These will probably entitle you to make free calls of an hour or less to UK landlines at the weekend. For a little extra each month you could add weekday evening calls too, or for a little extra again add anytime calls. But would you really see a benefit from doing so? Probably not.

Some providers also offer broadband in bundles with digital TV. The two main choices for broadband and TV bundles in Aberdeen are BT and Sky, and each has a range of TV options including sports channel packs, movies and more.

It may be very tempting to get TV bundled with your broadband but bear in mind the contract length and how much you'll be paying. You really must stick to your budget, and with a TV bundle you'll need to factor in the cost of a TV license too, which is currently £159.00 per year (1 April 2021).

7. Understanding your charges

In addition to the cost of your broadband, line rental and the cost of any bundled services there are some other costs to take into account:

Installation & activation fees – if your broadband is of a type that requires an engineer’s visit to complete the installation then you may be charged for this. However, with the exception of fibre optic broadband you should be able to install your broadband yourself, and everything you need should be sent to you in the post.

Activation fees – in some instances you may still be charged a one-off fee for connection even if an engineer’s visit isn’t required.

Delivery charge – many broadband providers now charge customers to cover the delivery of their wireless router.

Payment handling fees – these days, all broadband providers expect their customers to pay by Direct Debit. You may be able to pay by other methods, but you will almost certainly be charged up to £5 a month extra for doing so.

Paper bill fees – most providers use ebilling to cut down on the paper they use, and to save themselves money! With ebilling your statement will be emailed to you once a month, or you'll have to login to your account to see it. You can request paper bills through the post instead, but you will be charged an admin fee of up to £5 per month.