

POLICY / TECH

England just made gigabit internet a legal requirement for new homes /
Updated regulations require new properties to be built with gigabit broadband connections and make it easier to install into existing blocks of flats across the UK.

By [JESS WEATHERBED](#)

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New laws have also been introduced to make it easier to install gigabit internet into existing flats and apartments across the UK. Image: The Verge

My years-long battle to get gigabit internet installed may soon be over, thanks to new rules introduced by the UK government that make it easier to install faster broadband into apartments and flats across the UK. Additionally, a new law has been introduced that

requires new properties in England to be built with gigabit broadband connections, sparing tenants from footing the bill for later upgrades.

Amendments to Building Regulations 2010 were announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) on January 6th that mandate new homes constructed in England to be fitted with infrastructure and connections required to achieve gigabit internet connectivity.

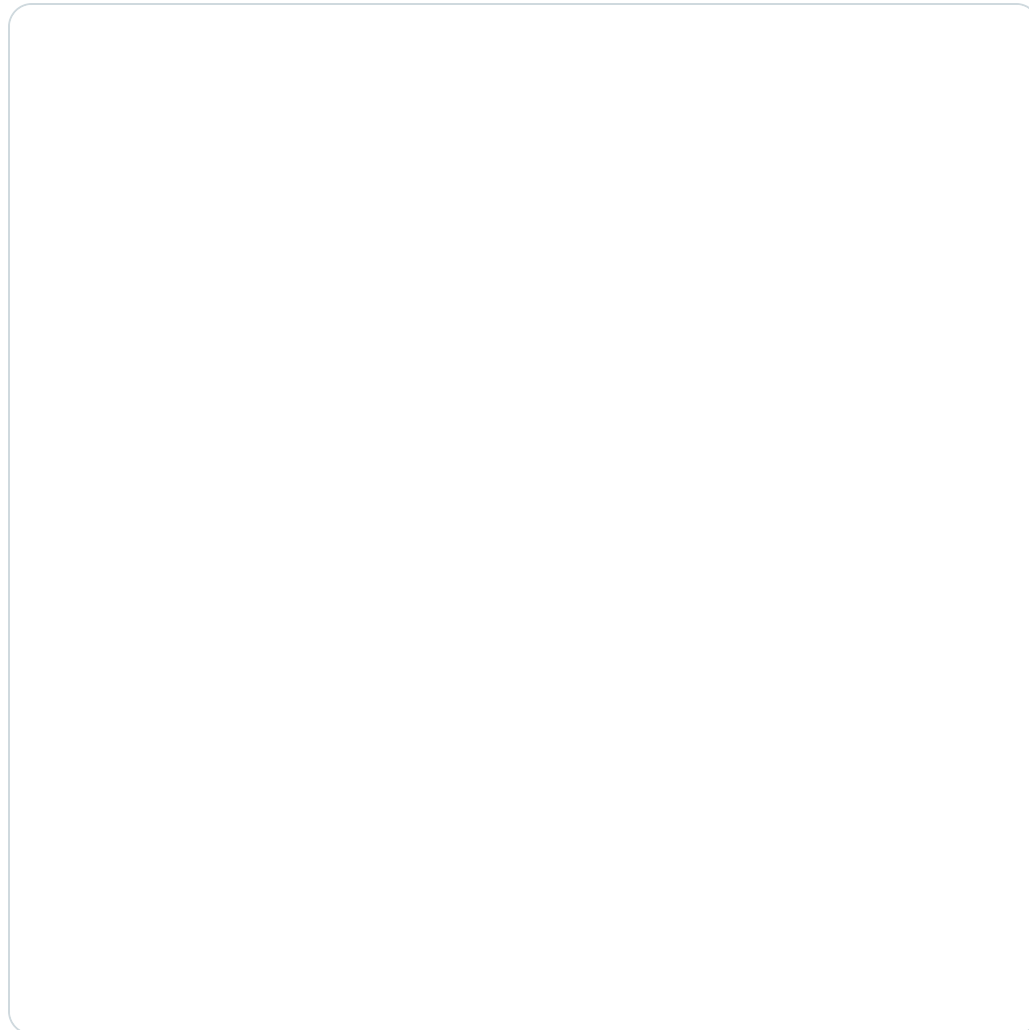
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New homes in England must now be built with [#GigabitBroadband](#) connections

New laws mean home buyers, renters, and some leaseholders will be able to get lightning-fast connections, holding landlords accountable

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10:31 AM · Jan 6, 2023



Connection costs will be capped at £2,000 per home, and developers must still install gigabit-ready infrastructure (including ducts, chambers, and termination points) and the fastest-available connection if they're unable to secure a gigabit connection within the cost cap. The UK government estimates that 98 percent of installations will fall comfortably under that cap, so it's likely been put in place to avoid spiraling chargings in remote, rural areas that need widescale line upgrades. Properties constructed in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland may be exempt from this new legislation as each country sets its own building regulations independently from England.

The new legislation was introduced on December 26th, 2022, following a 12-month technical consultation that indicated around 12 percent of 171,190 new homes constructed in England didn't have gigabit broadband access upon completion. DCMS claims that gigabit broadband is currently available in over 72 percent of UK households and is targeting full nationwide gigabit-capable broadband coverage across the UK by 2030.

Tenants in UK flats previously needed a landlord's permission to allow a broadband operator into the building – even if they own their property

In order to meet that goal, another law has also been introduced to make it easier to install faster internet connections into existing flats and apartments. Previously, millions of tenants living in the UK's estimated 480,000 multi-dwelling units (MDUs) needed to obtain permission from the landowner to allow a broadband operator to install connection upgrades. Broadband companies estimate that around 40 percent of these requests are ignored by landlords, leaving tenants unable to upgrade their services even if they're unfit for use.

Now, the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act 2021 (TILPA) allows broadband providers in England and Wales to seek access rights via court if landlords and land owners don't respond to installation requests within 35 days.

“Nothing should stop people from seizing the benefits of better broadband, whether it is an unresponsive landlord or a property developer's failure to act,” said Julia Lopez, Digital Infrastructure Minister, in a statement. “Thanks to our new laws, millions of renters will no longer be prevented from getting a broadband upgrade due to the silence of their landlord,

and those moving into newly built homes can be confident they'll have access to the fastest speeds available from the day they move in.”

Landowners and landlords can still refuse access requests for installations if they object to the upgrades

I can personally attest that getting a fiber optic network — not just gigabit — installed into flats and apartments in the UK is a nightmare. My requests for upgraded services have been ignored by every AWOL landlord or landowner for every flat I've lived in for almost 10 years, despite UK telecom providers planning to permanently switch off outdated copper-based networks (a relic from 1911) by 2025. Luckily for me, the UK also has a competitive market with over 100 internet service providers, so I can expect to find some deals now that these changes are coming into effect.

An additional 2,100 residential buildings a year are estimated to be connected to faster broadband speeds as a result of these new rules, and similar legislation is due to come into force in Scotland later this year. The existing appeals process that allows landlords to refuse access requests will not be affected.

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4

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