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Broadband outages and compensation: what you can claim

If your broadband stops working, you may be owed money. In the UK, Ofcom's automatic compensation scheme covers many home customers, and you should not normally have to chase it.

First, check for an outage

Use another device on mobile data to look at your provider's outage checker or app. Note the time the problem started. Openreach, which runs much of the national network, may also be dealing with a fault in your area.

What the scheme covers

The scheme applies to the larger providers, including BT, EE, Sky, Virgin Media, Vodafone and others, for home broadband and landline customers. Providers must pay compensation in these situations:

- Your service stops and is not fixed within two full working days.
- An engineer misses an appointment or cancels with less than 24 hours' notice.
- A new service starts late compared with the date you were promised.

The amounts change each year, so check Ofcom's website for the current figures rather than relying on old numbers you may see online.

How it is paid

Compensation is normally credited to your bill, and you should not have to ask. Some providers may offer another form of payment if you prefer.

What to do

1. Report the fault to your provider as soon as it starts, and keep the reference number.
2. Write down dates and times, including the engineer's promised appointment.
3. Take screenshots of any outage messages.
4. Check your next bills for a credit.

If it is not paid

Contact your provider and politely quote the Ofcom scheme and your reference number. If you are unhappy with the reply, you can ask them to put it in writing and take it to the free alternative dispute resolution scheme that your provider belongs to. Your provider's complaints page will say which.

Smaller providers may not be in the scheme, but they may have their own policies.

When to get more help

If you are unsure whether the fault is with the line or your own equipment, we can help work that out before you contact your provider.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.