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**ADVERTISED BROADBAND 'UP-TO' SPEEDS FALL BY A THIRD (33%) AFTER STRICTER
NEW RULES COME INTO FORCE**

Following the changes to the ways internet service providers can advertise broadband speeds^[1], new research by independent price comparison and switching service uSwitch.com shows that advertised speeds on non-fibre products bought by uSwitch.com customers have dropped from up-to 21.66 Mbps to up-to 14.58 Mbps, a difference of 7.08 Mbps, or 33%^[2].

Before the ruling came into force on 1st April 2012, most ISPs were quoting the fastest download speeds possible, with the only exception being Virgin Media, who already tried to be more representative of average speeds. Excluding Virgin Media, Plusnet and BT fibre packages, uSwitch.com looked at the same non-fibre broadband packages being sold before and after 1st April.

The new rules, designed to stop ISPs quoting unrealistic speeds, mean that providers can only quote an 'up-to' speed if it can deliver that speed to at least 10% of its customers.

Julia Stent, Director of Telecoms at uSwitch.com, comments: "The unfortunate reality for many broadband users – particularly those in rural areas where the infrastructure isn't yet up to scratch – is that the up-to speeds previously advertised by broadband providers are not the speeds they actually receive. This change in advertising regulation is a positive step for consumers as it provides a much more accurate picture of which speeds you can expect than before. Many providers have also now started to display up-to speeds to individual customers based on postcode and phone number, which give you an even better idea of the top speed you might be able to get.

“And let's not forget that essentially, broadband is a local product, which means that quality very much depends on local conditions such as distance from telephone exchange and the number of people using broadband in the area.

“It’s a good idea to check your broadband speed regularly to ensure that you are getting the best possible package for your area. The easiest way to find out a true picture of likely speeds for different providers is to perform an online broadband speed test for your postcode - and don’t be afraid about switching providers if you feel you can get a better service elsewhere.”

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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Notes to editors:

1. On April 1st 2012, new regulations by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) on broadband speed claims and the use of “unlimited” claims in telecoms advertising came into effect. See http://www.cap.org.uk/Media-Centre/2012/~/_media/Files/CAP/Help%20notes%20new/speed%20claims.ashx
2. uSwitch.com compared the advertised ‘up-to-speeds’ of suppliers’ broadband packages actually sold on uSwitch.com between 24th February and 25th March 2012 with the revised advertised ‘up-to-speeds’ post the new advertising regulations.

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign’s Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost ‘Send us your bill’ service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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