icuk.net

GUIDE TO: Broadband Engineer Charges

The Likelihood of Engineer Charges Being Raised

70% of all engineer visits end up being chargeable in cases where the phone line and broadband diagnosis haven't identified a specific fault outside the customer premises.

So, if the phone line test says:

> REPORT FAULT? Not recommended - please do further checks.

.. and the broadband KBD diagnostics outcome is:

> PROBLEM EXPLANATION: No issue has been identified in the BTW network.
> RESOLUTION / RECOMMENDATION: KBD test indicates no BTW network fault.

Then, statistically, there's a 70% chance you will be charged for the engineer visit. Please do everything you can to make sure you're in the 30%. If either of the above tests have found a fault external to the premises, then you can be confident that an engineer visit will not be chargeable.

How Much Are The Charges?

They range from £90 to £250 (exclusive of VAT) per visit depending on the reason for the charge and how much work was done by the engineer investigating and trying to fix a fault.

What Determines A Chargeable Visit?

The visit **WILL be chargeable** if:

- The fault is found to be in the End User's (EU) side. This includes anything past the master phone socket. It includes the customer's router, cables, filter, extension wiring, internal non-BT wiring (for example wiring put in by an alarm engineer).
- The fault is found to be voice affecting. If your line doesn't work for voice calls, then don't expect it to function normally for broadband. Sending a broadband engineer to fix the voice issue is the wrong option.
- The engineer judges that there is 'no fault is found' or the line is 'right when tested'. This is more complicated than the connection working or not. We have found cases where the customer believes there is a fault, and can demonstrate this to the engineer, but the engineer has not considered the connection to be in a fault state.
- When the engineer attended they couldn't gain access to the premises. Please note that they are not obliged to call you prior to attendance. If a slot of booked it is expected that you are present and ready to accept the engineer.

The visit **WON'T be chargeable** if:

- If the fault is traced to the BT network, including the copper line, the cabinet and exchange equipment.

How to Avoid a ‘Right When Tested’ Charge?

To avoid a ‘right when tested’ charge, you have to be confident that the engineer will see the connection in a fault condition. This doesn’t always match what the EU considers a fault condition to be.

Scenario 1: Broadband Offline

When the engineer removes the End Users (EU) equipment from the phone socket and plugs in their own, if they can’t get sync then there is clearly a fault and the engineer can’t say ‘right when tested’. If the EU cannot get online, but the engineer can get online using his own equipment without any changes having been made, the visit will be chargeable. This is why you must test all EU equipment.

Scenario 2: Broadband Dropping

ADSL and FTTC connection do drop and this is normal behaviour. The frequency of dropping determines whether it’s seen in a fault state or not. If it’s dropping once or twice a day, this won’t usually be seen as a fault and the visit will be chargeable, not least because the engineer may not be able to witness the issue. BT themselves give a guideline that connection must be dropping around 10 times per day to be classed as an intermittent fault. Please bear this in mind before booking an engineer.

Scenario 3: Slow Speed Issues

The download sync speed has to be a fair way below the predicted speed for the engineer to consider it in a fault condition. To check if there’s a risk of the engineer saying ‘Right When Tested’, please do the following:

1. Please put the phone number in question in here: https://www.icuk.net/broadband/internet_checker.asp
2. Next check the sync speed of the connection under ‘Sync Profile History’ in the control panel.
3. Compare the two speeds. If the sync speed is more than 70% of the predicted speed in the broadband checker, the engineer may say there is no speed issue and there may be a ‘Right When Tested’ charge. If the sync speed is over 70% of the predicted speed, but the speed the EU is actually getting is much lower, then the issue is likely to be congestion at the exchange. Be wary of sending an engineer in these cases. The engineer may test the sync speed as say the connection is fine. Only if the throughput really is significantly lower than the sync speed and this can be demonstrated to the engineer should you consider an engineer visit.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON UPLOAD SPEEDS: Engineer visits booked to deal with UPLOAD speeds (where download speeds are fine) are nearly always chargeable. The upload speed is not guaranteed and the engineer will only look at slow download speeds.

Real Examples of Charges Raised

We are providing you with examples of real engineer charges and the notes from the engineer. We want to give you an insight into how easy it is for charges to be applied especially if an engineer attends and can demonstrate the service as functioning correctly, or the customer's equipment can be seen to be at fault. We sometimes get criticised for the amount of questions we ask prior to booking an engineer visit, but we do so to avoid situations like these:

Example 1 (£180 + VAT Charge)

Engineer notes: Engineer arrived on site and found. Proved fault to internal wiring / block terminal before NTE5. Faulty extension wiring had been connected to internal wiring causing a loop fault so disconnected faulty wiring to restore service.

Example 2 (£120 + VAT Charge)

Engineer notes: EU reports slow upload speeds when uploading data. Throughput from router using BT wholesale test from this laptop via Ethernet cable up/down 0.36/15.25mb. This is what I would expect from an ADSL line. No fault found, service working as expected. EU re quires further upload speed and have therefore recommended he look at different services as this is the maximum achievable with this ADSL line.

Example 3 (£140 + VAT Charge)

Engineer notes: EU has lost B/B connection on their own system. They have an Openreach Modem behind the main desk and then a patch cable that drops through the floor and into their Netgear system. Everything is in sync at the modem, getting max speeds. Closeout test, fast test and pq tests all ok. Tried a different router and back online. Right when tested.

Example 4 (£140 + VAT Charge)

Engineer notes: Fibre fault reported, fault found to be that customer wasn't putting in correct password on the log in on his shop bought router. Test and demo to customer.