

Ofcom Reference: 00360710

21 November 2016

Alburgh Parish Council
c/o Mrs J Ellis
5 Henry Ward Road
Harleston
Norfolk
IP20 9EZ

Dear Mrs Ellis

Thank you for your letter to Ofcom dated 9 November 2016. I was sorry to learn of the issues the residents of your village are facing with their broadband service.

I understand that many residents are unhappy with their broadband service as this is subject to intermittent faults which, on occasions, cause several losses of service each day. I appreciate this is concerning for you.

Ofcom's primary concern when it comes to broadband is those consumers in rural areas that cannot receive a decent broadband speed, or have no broadband at all. We have advised the Government that we think most consumers now need broadband speeds of at least 10Mbit/s.

In addition, as part of the Broadband Delivery UK scheme, £1.7 billion is already being invested by Government into improving broadband, with an ambition to provide superfast broadband to 95% of UK premises by 2017. For those in the final 5%, which includes those in urban as well as rural areas, a number of pilots of alternative technologies are underway. The Government also offers a subsidised satellite broadband scheme for those properties that cannot receive 2Mbit/s broadband.

I should explain that while providers cannot guarantee an entirely fault free service, it should be working hard to maintain the level of service that was promised. If a problem should arise with a getting a fault repaired, providers can directly contact Openreach, who is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure. Openreach has service level agreements with providers regarding how long it should take for the necessary work to be completed. If these service level agreements are not met, providers can claim compensation from Openreach, and consumers can claim compensation from their own provider in line with their contract.

With this in mind, residents can complain to their service provider who in turn can escalate the matter with Openreach. It may also be of interest to know that if a provider feels that Openreach is not acting correctly, it has the option of raising this with Ofcom as a competition complaint.

While I appreciate this situation is frustrating, it is important to note that there is currently no obligation on providers to offer broadband in any form, whether superfast or otherwise. I have, however, made a full log of the issues you have raised which enables us to effectively monitor the telecoms industry and take relevant action when necessary.