

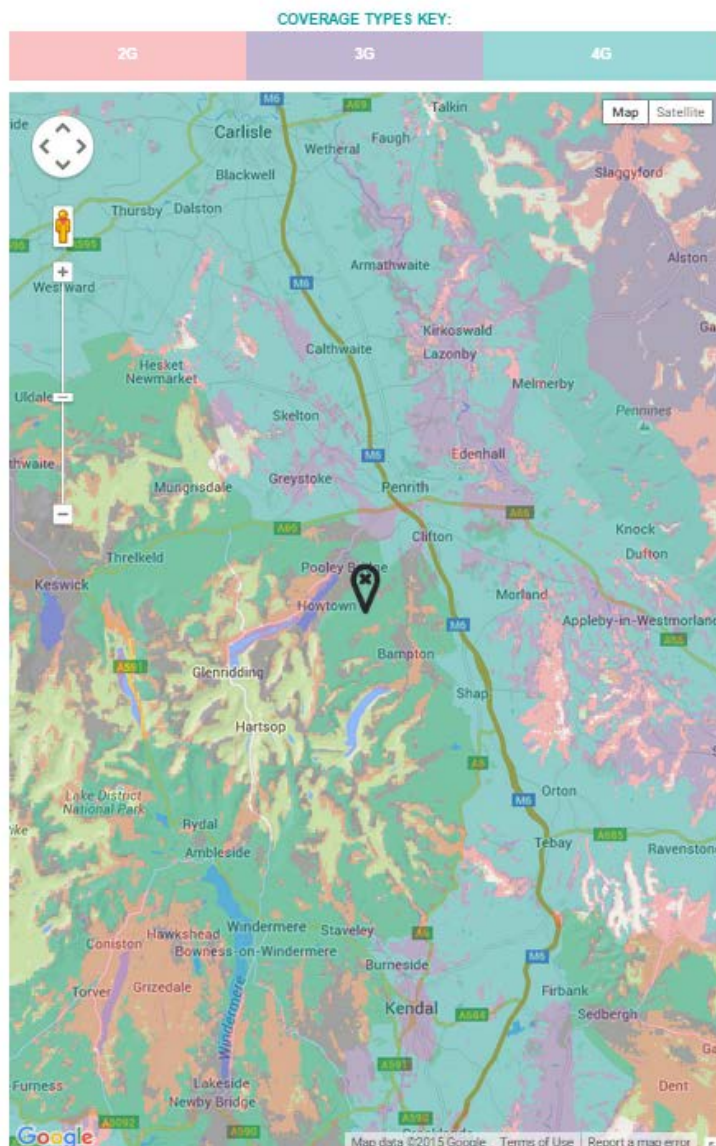
## Connectivity to broadband and mobile networks in Cumbria

As a sparsely populated area, Cumbria suffers from poor connectivity to both broadband and mobile networks. The situation is changing fast, but up to date maps can be found for both types of networks.

### Mobile networks

The best coverage maps are from the mobile operators, for example EE (now owned by BT) at <http://ee.co.uk/ee-and-me/network/4gee/coverage-checker> and Vodafone at <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/explore/network/uk-coverage-map/index.htm>.

The graphic below was a snapshot taken on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 from the EE website and shows that large parts of Cumbria have no mobile coverage at all ('not-spots'). The 4G coverage is good around the M6 corridor, but poor elsewhere. This means that smartphone applications that use data (eg. apps for sharing data, tablet or phone based interfaces to patient information databases) cannot be used in many areas (those that only have 2G coverage). Some areas have no mobile signal at all, so that even phone calls and SMS messaging cannot be received.



There is also a coverage checker on the OFCOM website <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage> where you can enter a postcode and check signal by type (phone, data) and by indoor/outdoor for each mobile provider.

The government issues licences to mobile operators and there are now targets for them to provide coverage to a larger percentage of the UK by various future dates. Details can be found here <http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/news/five-point-plan-to-improving-mobile-coverage/>

The implications for health and social care are that some devices, products and services will only work to a limited extent. Well designed products will work 'offline' and then can be synchronised once the user is back on a network (eg. to update any data that you have entered whilst out in the field). However, if the product relies on messaging that needs a network, this will not be usable.

This map is only a guide and not a guarantee of service availability in a particular location. As with all radio-based systems, service may be affected by a number of local factors, such as building materials, tree cover and weather conditions. You'll need a 4G phone, SIM and plan as well as 4G coverage to use 4G. [Why the map isn't perfect](#).

## **Broadband networks**

Broadband coverage is also limited within Cumbria. The best fibre-based superfast broadband is only available in 26% of the county (Ofcom, September 2015). Overall the average sync speed is 8.4 Mbit/s. This means that health and care products and services that rely on email or data transfer using Wi-Fi or fixed line broadband will not work. Again, products can be designed to work offline and then sync with the main system later.

Maps showing connectivity are available at Ofcom <http://maps.ofcom.org.uk/broadband/> and more detail can be found via Connecting Cumbria (<http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/home>)

“Connecting Cumbria is a project to bring superfast broadband to 93% of homes and businesses in the county by the end of 2015. Connecting Cumbria is a collaboration between Cumbria County Council and BT, that will boost the local economy by creating and protecting jobs over the next few years.

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Connecting Cumbria is a collaboration between Cumbria County Council and BT, that will boost the local economy by creating and protecting jobs over the next few years. The county’s enterprise zones are a key priority as superfast broadband will help local businesses to become more competitive. The project will also be of significant benefit to those Cumbrian premises which currently receive speeds of less than 2Mbps.

Every citizen within Cumbria can benefit from this project as it helps to uplift Cumbria's economy over coming years. We'll work with local communities as well as help small businesses to adopt technologies and grow”.

Connecting Cumbria has received funding to extend the availability of Superfast Broadband across Cumbria and will achieve an additional 2% coverage (equivalent to 5000 homes and businesses) by the end of 2015. They held public consultations to ask for comments on the target areas. More details can be found on the website.

To view the Connecting Cumbria brochure, click here

[http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/media/410191/8499\\_ConnectingCumbria\\_Brochure\\_4\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.connectingcumbria.org.uk/media/410191/8499_ConnectingCumbria_Brochure_4_WEB.pdf).