

## KEVIN HOLLINRAKE MP



### HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Celia Pontin  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2A Southwark Bridge Road  
London, SE1 9HA

20 October 2017

Dear Ms Pontin,

We write to support Ofcom's proposed changes to the Broadband Speeds Code of Practice – and to call for an *absolute guaranteed speed* to provide even stronger consumer protection.

We welcome proposals to require providers to clearly state the *minimum guaranteed speed* and peak-time speed estimates, as well as plans to establish a 30-day limit to fix low speeds and extend right to exit to include landline and pay-TV packages. However, we feel the proposals would not provide sufficient protection for customers in hard-to-reach areas who receive the very lowest speeds.

We would like to raise the case of our constituent, Mr Tim Hawcroft from the village of Leppington. He was promised speeds between 0.5mpbs and 2mpbs. After signing up, he found his local conventional broadband infrastructure supported speeds at the very lowest end of this scale and never reached 2mpbs.

When he looked to join other villagers in making the move *en masse* to a higher-speed wireless service called Beeline, he discovered he would be required to pay all outstanding monthly payments in order to sever his 24-month BT broadband, landline and TV package. The total cost would be more than £500.

This case highlights particular problems facing hard-to-reach areas, with conventional providers effectively locking customers into their contracts and blocking moves to competitors. We strongly believe it is wrong for broadband providers to force customers, for who it is failing to yet provide anything like usable speeds, to pay to exit their contracts as they pursue higher-speed alternatives. Speeds of 0.5mpbs are not sufficient, yet such low speeds currently fulfil BT's contract obligation and comply with the Ofcom Code of Practice.

We therefore ask Ofcom to look into establishing an *absolute guaranteed speed*, e.g. 2mpbs, below which customers should have the right to exit without penalty if their provider cannot fix the problem.

We will soon live in a county – and a country – where almost everyone has access to high-speed conventional broadband. Until that time, we ask you to consider this additional protection to aid customers in hard-to-reach areas.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kee'.

**Kevin Hollinrake MP**  
Thirsk and Malton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keane Duncan'.

**Cty Cllr Keane Duncan**  
North Yorkshire County Council

cc. Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Minister for Digital  
Cty Cllr Carl Les, NYCC Leader  
Cty Cllr Don Mackenzie, NYCC Executive Member for Access  
David Bowe, NYCC Corporate Director  
Scott Walters, NYNet Chief Executive  
Ian Marr, NYNet Project Manager