FORGE

FORGE CONNECTIVITY WHITE PAPER 01

Mobile Network Reliability for UK Businesses

How to use coverage data, test real working conditions and plan for loss of service.

Predicted 4G coverage across UK landmass



Source [1]. Ofcom signal-strength predictions as of January 2026. Both figures use UK landmass as the denominator.

A mobile network can cover most of the UK and still leave a business exposed in the warehouse, on a service route or inside a customer site. Before moving staff lines or relying on mobile backup, test the tasks that need to work in those places.

NOVEMBER 2026

What coverage can tell you

Ofcom’s January 2026 estimates show good 4G geographic coverage on 96% of UK landmass from at least one reporting network and on 84% from all four. In the same update, each reporting network covered at least 99% of UK premises outdoors. Landmass and outdoor premises are different measures. Each can help shortlist networks for testing. [1]

How well the connection works

Ofcom’s Mobile Matters 2026 uses crowdsourced measurements collected from August 2025 to July 2026. It looks at whether data connects successfully, whether video streams, how quickly the network responds, and how fast it uploads or downloads. For a field team sending photos, upload success and time to completion are more useful buying criteria than a headline download speed. [2]

Travel makes the difference tangible. On 24 rail segments across England, Scotland and Wales, Ofcom found poor performance on 58% to 83% of tests, depending on the network. The regulator defined good performance using download, upload and latency thresholds together. Those results describe the rail segments tested. [3]

Where businesses can reduce exposure

An SME can start by identifying named sites and routes where a failed call, delayed payment or stalled job upload would interrupt work. Test the practical alternatives there, then choose which lines, sites or devices need a second connection.

Example | A service team uploads job photos

Test both shortlisted networks with the phones and apps the team already uses. Repeat the same upload from the customer’s premises at typical working hours. Record the time taken, failures and retries. If the job can wait, an app with offline queuing may be enough. If dispatch needs the upload immediately, trial a second network on critical lines.

A field test before committing

1. List the places and tasks that matter

Pick the sites, indoor zones and routes where a failure would cost time, revenue or service quality. Name the task and set a pass threshold before testing.

2. Trial the networks on the actual devices

Repeat calls, uploads or transactions on the devices and plans you expect to use. Log location, time, completion time and failures. Repeat during peak demand and on different days.

3. Test recovery before rollout

For a site that needs backup, disconnect the primary link and time how long it takes for the payment terminal or critical app to work again. Check whether the backup shares the same underlying network, power supply or equipment.

Where Forge fits

Forge helps UK businesses assess mobile, broadband and IoT options against the places and devices they need to connect. Start a connectivity review with a list of critical locations, the devices or apps in use, and any recurring service issues.
forgemyway.com

Sources and scope

[1] Ofcom. Connected Nations update Spring 2026. Published 13 May 2026. Vodafone and Three were reported separately in this dataset.

[2] Ofcom. Mobile Matters 2026. Published 16 October 2026. Crowdsourced UK mobile data.

[3] Ofcom. Mobile performance on trains. Published 3 June 2026. Measurements on selected rail segments.

This white paper is Forge Connectivity’s analysis of published evidence. The service-team example is illustrative.