



Borough Profile – Brent

What you need to know about digital infrastructure in the borough



Borough profile:

Brent

Key contacts

Digital Champion

Rehana Ramesh, Head of Digital Transformation

rehana.ramesh@brent.gov.uk

020 8937 1935

Digital infrastructure coordination

Madeleine Leathley, Workstream Lead (Digital Programme)

madeleine.leathley@brent.gov.uk

020 8937 2651

Digital Ambassador

Peter Gadsdon, Strategic Director – Customer & Digital Services

Peter.gadsdon@brent.gov.uk

About the borough's strategy

[Digital Strategy 2022 - 2026](#)

[Brent Council - Local plan](#)

How we are improving connectivity in Brent

The Digital Strategy commits Brent to having consistent technology and connectivity available to enable Brent to be a digital borough that is accessible for both businesses and residents.

Brent has worked with providers to retrofit fibre cabling to over 6,000 premises within Brent's housing stock, increasing our residents' access to full fibre broadband at affordable prices. Connections to community buildings have also been delivered, helping to ensure everyone can benefit from improved internet access and improve the public services delivered from these buildings.

Some of the key actions outlined in Brent's Digital Strategy to improve connectivity include:

- Investing in an LPWAN (low-power wide-area network) to support the introduction of monitoring sensors that provide real time information to our systems. We will utilise the LPWAN and other available technology to measure footfall in town centres to better understand and support high streets Covid19 recovery and inform future plans for the local area, including the promotion of active travel
- The 'Living Room' and Brent Hubs will be used to support employers and employees to access digital training.
- Engaging the market to ensure Brent receives investment for the rollout of 5G to enable smart cities technology and make societies more sustainable and supportive by:
 - Enabling 5G connections between appliances and service providers so residents can reduce their household energy use and costs
 - Helping to care for people in their homes and within care settings by using telehealth to monitor vital signs remotely, reduce loneliness and observe medicine administration using 4K video
- Continuing to work with providers to increase the number of properties able to access FTTP Broadband at an affordable cost. And, in partnership with the West London Alliance, we will secure free gigabit capable connections for key community buildings, to ensure everyone can access fast and stable broadband.

We will continue our commitment to the London Recovery Board's Digital Access for All Mission goal for 'Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025' through Brent's Resident Support Fund - providing devices and connectivity to our digitally excluded residents.

Our digitally excluded areas and what is being done to help

The three most digitally excluded wards in Brent are Harlesden, Stonebridge and Dollis Hill. All wards are identified as digitally excluded due to low levels of connectivity, digital skills and limited access to devices. To improve digital inclusion in these areas, the Council is working with existing and new providers to improve connectivity in the area across council housing, private housing and community centres.

Alongside this, the council is committed to ensuring all digitally excluded residents have access to a digital device. This is being enabled through our Resident Support Fund which is open to all digital excluded residents, our digital support fund for children and young people which provides free laptops and connectivity via schools, and our digital support fund for businesses which supports digitally excluded businesses with devices and digital skills training at both a beginner and intermediate level.

We also work with our partner, AgeUK, to provide face to face digital skills support to our residents through weekly digital cafes at our community hubs. At these sessions, residents are able to receive support with setting up email addresses, accessing council services and learning how to use an existing device.

Support within the community is also key to ensuring digital inclusion across the borough. We are investing in training for 500 digital champions by 2025. These digital champions will be based in council frontline services and community organisations to support our residents with developing their digital skills and accessing services, both local and universal, online.