

## Introduction

Finding the right mobile data deal comes down to three factors: finding a network that reaches your specific postcode, choosing a budget provider that runs on that network, and picking a data allowance that fits your routine without overpaying.

This guide brings together local signal coverage, Stockport retailer options, step-by-step instructions for keeping your phone number, and a full price comparison across budget SIMs and instant eSIMs.

## Network Coverage

Before picking a provider, check which underlying network gives the strongest signal where you use your device the most. Every budget provider in the UK runs on one of the four main national networks: Our research indicates:-

- **EE**
  - Powers Spusu and Lyca Mobile. Known for broad 4G/5G coverage around Stockport Town Centre, Hazel Grove, Bramhall, and Cheadle Hulme.
- **O2**
  - Powers giffgaff and Tesco Mobile. Offers reliable indoor reception across Cheadle, Edgeley, Heaton Moor, and Reddish.
- **Three**
  - Powers SMARTY, iD Mobile, and Superdrug Mobile. Delivers strong 5G speeds in central Stockport, ideal for heavy data and home wireless routers.
- **Vodafone:**
  - Powers Lebara, Asda Mobile, Talkmobile and VOXI. Solid coverage across Bredbury, Marple, Romiley, and Woodley.

## How to check your postcode

1. Go to Ofcom's Mobile Coverage Checker ([ofcom.org.uk/mobile](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile))
2. Enter your full postcode to see independent indoor and outdoor signal ratings across all four host networks.

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## Local Retailers

If you prefer to pick up a physical SIM card on the High Street, several local stores in and around Stockport stock budget SIM packs (often for 50p to £1.00):

- **Tesco Extra (Stockport / Handforth Dean):**
  - Stocks Tesco Mobile SIMs and offers Clubcard pricing, fixed contract rates, and bill discounts using loyalty points.
- **Asda Stockport Superstore:**
  - Stocks Asda Mobile SIMs for 30-day rolling bundles with top-up options directly at checkout.
- **Superdrug (Merseyway Shopping Centre):**
  - Pick up Superdrug Mobile SIMs to earn Health & Beautycard points, including 50% back in points on your first month.
- **Currys (Stockport Retail Park):**
  - Sells iD Mobile SIMs and contracts for major networks including O2, Vodafone, and Three.
- **Argos (Inside Sainsbury's Hazel Grove / Stockport Retail Parks):**
  - Stocks physical SIM starter packs for giffgaff, SMARTY, VOXI, EE, O2, Vodafone, and Three.
- **B&M, Home Bargains & Poundland (Merseyway & Local Retail Parks):**
  - Great for cheap starter SIM packs from Lebara Mobile, Lyca Mobile, giffgaff, and SMARTY.

## How to switch and keep your mobile number

Switching networks in the UK takes less than 5 minutes, costs nothing, and allows you to keep your existing phone number:

- **Get your PAC Code:** Text PAC to 65075 from your current mobile phone. Your existing network will text you back within 60 seconds with your 9-digit PAC code (valid for 30 days).
- **Obtain Your New SIM or eSIM:** Purchase a SIM in-store or order online for physical delivery or instant digital eSIM setup.
- **Submit Your Code:** Log into your new provider's website or app and enter your PAC code. Your phone number will automatically transfer, usually within 24 hours, and your old account will close automatically.

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## Understanding Data Allowances

| Usage Tier   | Monthly Allowance  | What this data covers                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Best suited for                                                                                         |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low Usage    | Under 10 GB        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light daily browsing and news reading</li> <li>WhatsApp text and group messages</li> <li>Occasional Google Maps navigation</li> <li>Music/podcast streaming (~1 hour/day)</li> </ul>                  | Users who stay connected to home/work Wi-Fi and only need mobile data for basic tasks on the go.        |
| Medium Usage | 10 GB - 50 GB      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily social media scrolling (Instagram, TikTok)</li> <li>Regular music and podcast streaming</li> <li>Daily Google Maps &amp; GPS usage</li> <li>Video streaming in SD/HD (1–2 hours/day)</li> </ul> | Everyday smartphone users who stream content during commutes and rely on 4G/5G away from home.          |
| High Usage   | 50 GB to Unlimited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy HD/4K video streaming (YouTube, Netflix)</li> <li>Mobile hotspot / tethering for laptops</li> <li>Large app downloads and mobile gaming</li> <li>Fixed home broadband replacement</li> </ul>    | Power users, commuters, remote workers, or anyone replacing fixed-line home broadband with mobile data. |

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Price Comparison Table (other providers and retailers may be available)

| Provider/<br>Retailer | Host<br>Network | Low Usage<br>( < 10 GB) | Medium<br>Usage (10 -<br>50 GB) | High/Unlimited<br>Usage (50+ GB) | Availability and Perks                                                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spusu                 | EE              | £3.90 3GB<br>£4.50 5GB  | £8.90 30GB                      | £14.90 150GB                     | Online only. Lowest-cost gateway to the EE network.                         |
| Lebara                | Vodafone        | £4.50 5GB               | £5.99 10GB<br>£7.99 50GB        | £15 Unlimited                    | B&M, Home Bargains, Poundland. Includes free international call minutes.    |
| Talkmobile            | Vodafone        | £4.95 5GB               | £6.95 45GB<br>£7.95 80GB        | £8.95 100GB<br>£16 Unlimited     | Online / Direct owned by Vodafone. Great mid-tier value with EU roaming     |
| Lyca                  | EE/O2           | £5.00 5GB               | £8.00 30GB                      | £12 100GB<br>£15 Unlimited       | B&M, local convenience stores. Low-cost rolling plans; SIMs widely stocked. |
| Asda                  | Vodafone        | £5.00 3GB               | £7.95 50GB                      | £12 100GB<br>£22 Unlimited       | Asda Stockport Superstore. 30-day flexible bundles; top up at checkouts.    |
| iD                    | Three           | £6.00<br>25GB           | £8.00 50GB                      | £10 120GB<br>£15 Unlimited       | Currys Stockport. Automatic monthly data rollover; Currys' dedicated brand. |

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Price Comparison Table continued (other providers and retailers may be available)

| Provider/<br>Retailer | Host<br>Network | Low Usage<br>( < 10 GB) | Medium<br>Usage (10 -<br>50 GB) | High/Unlimited<br>Usage (50+ GB) | Availability and Perks                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>giffgaff</b>       | O2              | £6.00 2GB               | £10.00 25GB                     | £15 100GB<br>£25+ Unlimited      | Argos, Sainsbury's Hazel Grove. Flexible rolling terms; strong online community.       |
| <b>SMARTY</b>         | Three           | £6.00 18GB              | £9.00 95GB                      | £15 Unlimited                    | Argos, Morrisons Stockport. Fast 5G; cash back for unused data on select plans.        |
| <b>Tesco</b>          | O2              | £6.00 6GB               | £9.00 12GB<br>£11.00 45GB       | £14 100GB<br>£20 Unlimited       | Tesco Extra Stockport. Clubcard Prices freeze rates; earn points on bills.             |
| <b>Superdrug</b>      | Three           | £7.00 10GB              | £10.00 30GB                     | £16 £100GB<br>£20 Unlimited      | Superdrug Merseyway. Earns Health and Beautycard points; 50% back in points month one. |
| <b>VOXI</b>           | Vodafone        | £10.00<br>15GB          | £12.00 60GB                     | £15 100GB<br>£20+ Unlimited      | Argos, Vodafone Store Merseyway. Endless Social Media and Video streaming passes.      |

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## eSIMs

An eSIM (embedded SIM) is a software profile downloaded directly to your device, removing the need for a physical plastic SIM card.

### Benefits of Using an eSIM:

- Instant Activation: Order online and get connected in under 5 minutes without waiting for post.
- Dual-SIM Flexibility: Keep your physical SIM slot free for your main phone number or personal line while running cheap mobile data off an eSIM.
- Easy Network Testing: Try out a new host network (e.g., testing Three signal vs Vodafone signal in Stockport) without taking out your main SIM.
- Device Compatibility: Supported by most modern smartphones, including iPhone (XS through 17+), Samsung Galaxy (S20 through S26+), Google Pixel (3 through 10+), and recent Motorola/Xiaomi models.

## eSIM Price Comparison Part 1

| Provider/<br>Retailer | Host<br>Network | Monthly<br>Starting<br>Price | Sample eSIM<br>deal     | Setup and Activation                                 | Key Perks                                  |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Spusu                 | EE              | £3.90                        | £3.90 3GB<br>£4.50 5GB  | Instant QR code delivered by email upon purchase     | Lowest starting price for an EE-based eSIM |
| Lebara                | Vodafone        | £4.50                        | £4.50 5GB<br>£7.99 50GB | Select eSIM at checkout; QR code sent to your inbox. | Includes free international call minutes.  |
| Talkmobile            | Vodafone        | £4.95                        | £4.95 5GB<br>£7.95 80GB | Select eSIM at online checkout                       | Includes EU roaming                        |

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eSIM Price Comparison continued

| Provider/<br>Retailer | Host<br>Network | Monthly<br>Starting<br>Price | Sample eSIM<br>deal        | Setup and Activation                                           | Key Perks                                                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lyca                  | EE/O2           | £5.00                        | £5.00 5GB<br>£8.00 30GB    | Choose eSIM option during online sign-up.                      | Low price entry on EE/O2 coverage.                             |
| iD                    | Three           | £6.00                        | £6.00 25GB<br>£8.00 50GB   | Request eSIM during online checkout or via the iD app.         | Includes automatic data rollover to the next month.            |
| giffgaff              | O2              | £6.00                        | £6.00 2GB<br>£10.00 25GB   | Download giffgaff app, pick a plan, and switch to eSIM in-app. | No contract commitment, 30-day flexible rolling.               |
| SMARTY                | Three           | £6.00                        | £6.00 18GB<br>£9.00 95GB   | Select eSIM at online checkout or activate via the SMARTY app. | Unrestricted 5G speeds, simple 30-day terms.                   |
| VOXI                  | Vodafone        | £10.00                       | £10.00 15GB<br>£12.00 60GB | Instant eSIM directly through the VOXI app.                    | Social media and video apps don't consume your data allowance. |

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## **Best value data (SIM) - October 2026**

**Use this page to make notes of any good value SIM deals you may find that are not included in this guide.**

**Please let one of the Starting Point team know so the deal can be added to future updates.**