

How can I contact ComReg?

By phone (LoCall): **1890 229668, (01) 804 9668**
(9.00am to 5.30pm) Monday to Friday

By fax: **(01) 804 9680**

By email: consumerline@comreg.ie

Our websites are:

www.comreg.ie / www.askcomreg.ie / www.callcosts.ie

By post: **ComReg Consumer Team, Irish Life Centre
Block DEF, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1**

Callcosts



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August 2008

Who we are

The Callcosts website, www.callcosts.ie, is a free, up-to-date, easy to use and independent website that covers most telephone, mobile and broadband plans available in Ireland. It is run by ComReg, the Commission for Communications Regulation.

The Callcosts website helps people to compare the cost of different plans available for their home phone, mobile and broadband services. Many providers offer different types of plans and sometimes it is hard to know if the plan you are on is the best one for you.

In this guide we will tell you:

- about the Callcosts website, and
- how the website works and its main sections.

How does the Callcosts website work?

The Callcosts website, www.callcosts.ie, gives you a list of plans in order of price, based on the information you put in. This makes it easier for you to compare the plans available and to make an informed decision about switching plan or provider. If you are on a plan that doesn't suit how you use your phone or broadband connection, you could save money by switching to another plan.

Sections

There are four main sections on the site:

- Mobile,
- Home Phone,
- Broadband, and
- Combined (Home Phone and Broadband together).

Each of the four sections has the plans that providers are currently offering.

Usage

Each section has a calculator. This asks some questions about the type of plan you are looking for and how you use your phone or broadband (usage). It's a good idea to look at your bills before you answer these questions. When you have filled in the answers, you will get a list of results.

Results

This list of results has all the plans that match how you use your phone or broadband. The plans are listed in order of price, with the cheapest plan first. The information you put in must be as correct as possible so that the suggested plans will actually fit how you use your phone or broadband.



Enter more detailed usage' option

The Mobile, Home Phone and Combined sections each have an 'Enter more detailed usage' option. You can use this option to put in more information about how you use your phone to get better results.

When you click this button you will see another screen that shows your estimated monthly usage details. We base these details on the information you entered on the first screen and on the model assumptions that we developed for the website. Model assumptions are patterns of how we think people usually use their phone based on general information from providers.

Using this information, the Callcosts website divides your total minutes between:

- peak, off-peak and weekend times,
- landline and mobile networks,
- voicemail, and
- preferred numbers.

You can change the details that are on this screen if, for example, you use more of your minutes at a particular time of day or call people on one network more than others.

The website also looks at how you use other services like text messages and picture messages, if you use them.

Mobile

The Mobile section has all voice plans from the mobile providers. These include pre-pay and bill pay plans. In this section, you put in:

- your usage every day or every month,
- when you use your mobile,
- how many minutes you spend on calls,
- the percentage of your calls to other mobiles, and
- how many texts and pictures you send.

After you have filled this in, you will get a list of results and you can look at each plan in more detail by clicking on it.

Most mobile plans offer customers the option to buy extra voice minutes or texts at reduced rates. These are called 'add-ons'. The Callcosts calculator will apply an add-on to your plan if it is good value for you.

'Enter more detailed usage' option

The Mobile section has an 'Enter more detailed usage' section. Here, you can see how the website model has spread your minutes that you entered on the first screen. You can change these to be more specific about how you call mobiles and landlines.

The website assumes that 5% of your calls are to your voicemail. You can change the number of minutes here.

Some providers might offer free or reduced rates for calls to a chosen number, called 'preferred numbers'. These numbers usually come with conditions; you must choose or nominate the number and tell your mobile provider before you use it.

The website model assumes that 5% of your calls are to 'preferred numbers', if the operator offers this. You can change the number of minutes here if you want.



Home Phone

The Home Phone section deals with plans for calls on your home phone line. It covers local, national, mobile and international calls.

Bills

Some phone companies offer a single bill for home phones. This means that you get only one bill for line rental and calls. If your phone provider does not offer a single bill, you have to pay your line rental to another provider. You will then get two bills – one for calls from one provider and one for line rental from another.

Calls

In Domestic Call Usage, you enter when you usually make calls and details of your calls to local, national and mobile numbers.

You can also enter details of any international calls to countries you call the most. You can choose up to three countries and you can also say when you usually make these calls: during the day, evening and/or at weekends. The plans in the results will include the cost of the international calls you have entered.

'Enter more detailed usage' option

In the 'Enter more detailed usage' option here, you can change how the website model has spread the minutes you entered on the first screen. For your landline to mobile calls, we spread these minutes based on the time of day you usually make your calls. We also use information about the mobile networks to tell us on which networks you will most likely use your minutes. If you have a different calling pattern, you can change these network details.

The website model also assumes that 5% of your calls are to 'preferred numbers', if your operator offers this. For home phone services, some operators might offer discounted or free minutes for calls to a limited amount of specific numbers; these are usually landline numbers. If you call one or two numbers more or less often, you can change the number of minutes here if you want.

Broadband

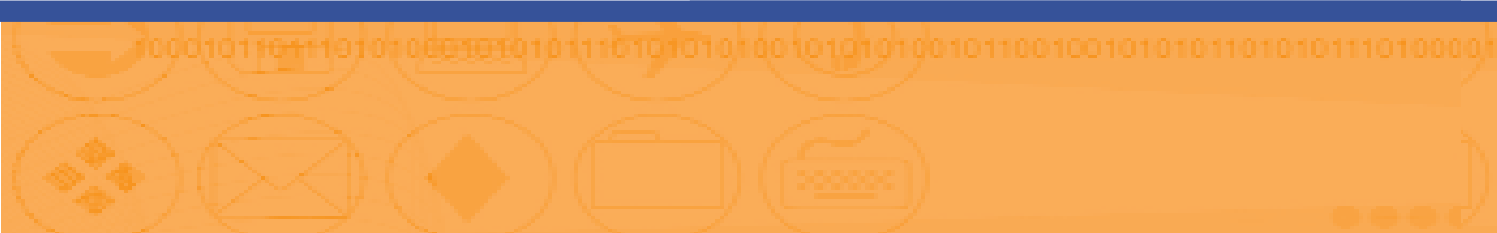
There are different types of broadband services in this section: DSL, cable, wireless, satellite and mobile broadband. Broadband providers usually price their broadband packages in two ways.

- 'Always on' broadband lets you pay a flat fee (for example a fixed price every month) no matter how long you are connected to the Internet. However, if you go over your download allowance, you might have to pay extra charges.
- 'Time based' broadband is based on a set amount of hours of broadband access each month. If you go over these hours, you pay excess usage charges.

If you think both broadband options might meet your needs, pick the 'Don't Mind' option. Your results will be much wider. You can always repeat and narrow down your search later if you want.

Broadband speed

Providers usually offer speeds according to how much you can download per second. If you have a higher download speed you can open web pages and download files faster. This would be useful if, for example, you use the Internet for online gaming. If you are not sure what download speed you need, pick 'Don't Mind' and your results will include plans covering the range of maximum download speeds available.



Telephone line rental

You can only get some broadband services if you have a telephone line. You can get other broadband services through wireless, satellite, cable TV connection or mobile broadband. Although you do not need a telephone line for these, the services might offer home phone services.

When you are comparing the cost of broadband services, you might want to look at telephone line rental costs as well. You can choose whether or not to include the cost of a home phone service in your broadband results.

You can read more about broadband in our broadband consumer guide on the ComReg website:
<http://www.askcomreg.ie>

Other points

There are some other things you should look at when you are deciding what broadband plan is best for you.

- **Contention ratio.** This indicates how many users may share one line. If your service has a contention ratio of 20:1, for example, it means that you share the line with 19 other users. The contention ratio is not stated for mobile broadband products because it depends on how many users are in a particular cell (mobile broadband area) at a given time.
- **Excess charges.** You can be charged more if you download more than you are allowed to in your plan. You should check these charges.
- **Broadband availability.** The type and availability of broadband can depend on where you live. On the Callcosts website, you can filter your results to check whether a particular broadband service is available in your county. There is also a link to the broadband providers' websites, where you can get more specific availability information.

If you are not sure about any part of a plan that you are on, or want to move to, you should contact the provider directly.

Combined Home and Broadband (bundles)

The Combined Home and Broadband (bundles) section has plans offering both home phone and broadband services. Use this section if you want to compare the costs of broadband together with line rental and telephone calls.

Plans that combine home phone and broadband services together are called 'bundled' plans; they are offered as one plan. If you take a bundled plan, it can often be cheaper than taking separate home phone and broadband plans. You also get one bill for both your home phone and broadband services.

Usage

In this section, you put in details of your Home Phone usage, including local, national and international calls. For more information on this, please look at our Home Phone section above.

After putting in your Home Phone usage information, you can click on the Broadband section. Alternatively, you can select the 'Enter more detailed usage' option. The Home Phone section above has more information about this.

When you go to the Broadband details screen, enter details of the type of broadband service you are looking for. When you have filled this in, you will get the list of results.



Results

The results give you a list of the cost of bundled plans compared with the cost of taking separate broadband and home phone plans (non-bundle) with a provider. If the plans are non-bundled, we will show both the individual and total cost of taking two separate home phone and broadband plans with one provider.

Tips for using the Callcosts website

- Before you start, look at your phone, mobile and/or Internet usage bills. This should tell you what plan you are on, if any. It will also give you a better idea of how you use your phone and Internet. If you have a pre-pay mobile, you won't get a bill, but most mobiles have a counter, so you can track the number of texts you send and the number of calls you make over a certain time.
- If you are not sure of your usage or the type of service you are looking for, you should enter zero or pick the 'Don't Mind' option. This will give you wider cost comparisons. You can always repeat and narrow down your search later if you want.
- When you are comparing plans in the results, consider other things besides price, such as:
 - customer service,
 - billing and payment options, and
 - commitments such as the minimum contract period and terms and conditions.You can see these details when you click the plan details in the results list.
- The Callcosts website includes residential (non-business) plans that are currently available. If you are on an old price plan that is no longer available to new customers,

your plan will not be in the results. To get details of this price plan, you should contact your service provider:

- Remember that the plans listed in the results match the usage you put in the calculator. If you use your phone or broadband more than shown in these results, you might be charged more, meaning your bill will be higher than the price shown.
- All prices shown on the website include value added tax (VAT).

Other links

ComReg Consumer website:
www.askcomreg.ie

Broadband information:
www.broadband.gov.ie

Online security information:
www.makeitsecure.ie

