

UK 'to decide on Huawei 5G next week'

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The United States has banned Huawei from the rollout of its 5G network because of concerns that the firm could be under the control of Beijing

Britain is expected to announce next week whether to allow China's Huawei to develop its 5G network, an official said Friday, amid indications it will agree to grant at least limited access despite intense US opposition.

A senior UK official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the decision had not yet been taken but likely would be next week—and strongly hinted at a [green light](#) for Huawei.

The United States has banned Huawei from the rollout of its next generation 5G [mobile networks](#) because of concerns—strongly denied—that the firm could be under the control of Beijing.

Washington has been lobbying Britain to do the same, even threatening to limit intelligence sharing between the two allies if the UK goes its own way.

There has been widespread speculation that Britain would allow Huawei into "non-core" elements of 5G networks, such as antennae and [base stations](#) attached to masts and roofs.

British Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said this week that a decision would be made "soon", adding that many factors were being considered.

These included "the availability of other providers" and "the work that Huawei has already done in the United Kingdom", she said.

The official said that Britain—unlike the United States—had been using Huawei technology in its systems for the past 15 years.

Security agencies believe they have managed the risk so far and will be able to do so with the 5G network, the official said.

Banning Huawei entirely could also cost "billions" of pounds and delay the rollout of 5G and full-fibre broadband, the official said.

Experts say that if firms already using Huawei technology want to

exclude it in the future, they would have to uninstall the Chinese company's equipment in their 3G and 4G networks and then replace it—at huge cost.

There is also a problem in that few other firms have the technology that Huawei does—an issue raised publicly by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Huawei is widely viewed as providing the most advanced alternative for super-fast data transfers behind technologies such as self-driving cars and remotely operated factory robots.

"The British public deserve to have access to the best possible technology. I have talked about infrastructure and technology. We want to put in gigabit broadband for everybody," said Johnson.

"Now, if people oppose one brand or another, then they have to tell us which is the alternative," he told BBC television in an interview last week.

"There is a market failure here," the official said, adding that while this could be addressed in the future, for now "we are where we are".

Britain's debate about Huawei has dragged on for more than a year, amid intense political turmoil over its exit from the European Union.

Brexit day is now set for January 31.

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