



Analogue to digital telephone switchover

Introduction

Work has been progressing since 2016 to switch off analogue telephone services in the UK and replace them with digital systems using internet protocol (IP) technology. From September 2023 all new connections must be on full or part fibre lines. By December 31 2025 work will be fully completed and all analogue lines will be disconnected and all voice calls will take place over VoIP through a router.

The move from analogue to digital will be made by Communications Providers, according to their own timescales for their own customers, so you will not see a telephone exchange moving all its customers on the same day. This switchover is already happening and will affect all devices that plug into a telephone socket.

Why is this change necessary?

The UK's telephony network was last upgraded in the 1980s. It was originally designed for voice calls rather than Broadband. The equipment is now failing and needs to be upgraded. This programme of work has been progressing since 2016 with Openreach rolling out full fibre lines over the UK.

How will this impact Local Authorities?

The change will impact business, communities and services, as well as things like Lift Alarms, ATMs, lines used for water, gas and electricity monitoring services and others, which will also need to start using a router where they previously just needed to plug their devices into the telephone socket.

There will be challenges for some local authority services and equipment that use analogue devices which plug into the master or extension socket in their premises on a daily basis.

These devices can only continue to be used if they work through a router. This includes:

- Telecare services for social care
- Switchboards and main comms
- Lifts
- Building alarms
- Fax machines
- Car park barriers
- PSTN lines

- Traffic lights
- Some air conditioning systems

The Local Government Digital Office have been working with local authorities and telecare service providers since 2016 to support the transition to digital. All HSCP and Local Authority telecare service providers are now engaged with the analogue to digital programme and are actively transitioning. It's not clear how Councils are progressing addressing the wider implications of this switch.

Making the switch from analogue to digital will have financial implications, but there will be major benefits to moving to Fibre which include quicker broadband and the ability to transfer larger amounts of data.

Why hasn't there be a national communication campaign about this switch?

The change is being industry led, and so unlike the switch for analogue to digital television there will be no government-led national campaign. COSLA will continue to remind you of this switch and work with telecommunication colleagues to address any concerns you have.

Is your Local Authority ready for the switch? Some things to consider:

- Do you have IP Ready devices?
- What devices do you currently use, and will they transfer seamlessly to the router?
- Will your Communication Provider (CP) provide you with an analogue port on the back of the router?
- Who will move analogue products you want to continue to use from the wall sockets to the router?
- You will no longer get power provided down the telephone line (50v). Do your devices rely on that today?
- What will you do in a power outage locally? UPS? Battery Back-up?
- How will your procurement policy be affected by this?

Further questions

To answer any further questions that you may have we have arranged 3 short webinars with John Livermore from Openreach.

Friday 11th November 2:00-2:30 ([Click here to join the meeting](#))

Monday 21st November 11:30-12:00 ([Click here to join the meeting](#))

Wednesday 23rd November 2:00-2:30 ([Click here to join the meeting](#))