



Moving landline phones to digital technology: what you

need to know

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The technology that we currently use to make landline phone calls is being upgraded over the next few years. Here's what this means for you as a customer.

The infrastructure used to deliver landline calls is old and needs to be replaced

Landline phone calls have traditionally been delivered over a network known as the public switched telephone network (PSTN). This network is old, and becoming harder and more expensive to maintain, so it needs to be replaced.

Replacing the PSTN now will ensure that we continue to have reliable home phone services available.

This is not happening only in the UK. These changes are taking place all over the world, with many countries having now completed them.

BT has taken the decision to retire its PSTN by January 2027 and this means other providers that use BT's network must follow the same timescale. Other companies with their own networks such as Virgin Media plan follow a similar timescale.

In addition, telecoms providers are also investing in new systems and networks – for example, by [upgrading old copper-based broadband lines to full-fibre](#). They will need to switch customers away from the old PSTN at the same time as upgrading their technology.

This means that in the future, landline calls will be delivered over digital technology, called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). You might also see this referred to as 'digital phone' or 'digital voice'.

Customers who want to keep a landline phone will need to move to a VoIP service

These changes have already started, but you don't need to do anything until your provider contacts you to tell you your service is changing. Alternatively, if you want to move to a VoIP service now, you can do so by upgrading to a new phone and broadband package.

Once you have moved to a VoIP service, your landline phone will work in much the same way as it always has. However, as we explain below, there will be some differences.

Making phone calls in a power cut

Unlike some traditional corded analogue phones, a digital phone will only work in a power cut if it has a battery back-up.

If you are dependent on your landline phone – for example, if you don't have a mobile phone or don't have mobile signal at your home – your provider must offer you a solution to make sure you can contact the emergency services when a power cut occurs. For example, a mobile phone (if you have signal), or a battery back-up unit for your landline phone.

This solution should be provided free of charge to people who are dependent on their landline. If you are not eligible for a free resilience solution, you may be able to purchase one from your provider or another retailer – talk to your provider about options.

Your provider should arrange to supply the equipment needed to keep your main telephone connected

If you need any new equipment to make your main telephone work – for example, a new router, new telephone handset or if you need a new broadband service installed, your provider will arrange this.

Make sure your provider knows about your needs and circumstances

When the time comes for your landline phone to be upgraded, you should talk to your provider about your circumstances and how the service will work for you. For example, if you need extra help to change your service over, if you are dependent on your landline phone to make calls in a power cut, or if you use equipment connected to your phone line such as a telecare or burglar alarm.

You may need to change your care alarm, security alarm or fax machine

Certain devices people use at home, such as care alarms, security alarms and fax machines may also be connected to your landline. If you have a device like this, it might need to be replaced or reconfigured to continue working once you move to a VoIP service.

When you migrate to a VoIP service, your provider should tell you what you need to do if you have one of these devices. This will include informing your alarm provider so they can make the necessary changes or tell you if your alarm will work with your new VoIP service.

If you are buying a new alarm or device, you should ask the manufacturer if it is compatible with VoIP services.

Before you change to a digital landline, let your provider know if:

- you have a care alarm, health pendant or security alarm that uses the telephone line;
- you don't own a mobile phone, or you don't have enough signal at home to call the emergency services in a power cut; or
- you have a disability or any other needs that mean you need extra help with the installation.

Your VoIP service will be provided over a broadband connection

If you already have a broadband connection, for example to connect to the Internet, then the VoIP service will use this.

If you don't have a broadband connection, your provider will supply one specifically to support the VoIP service, but you shouldn't pay extra for your VoIP service if you don't take up a broadband service.

Questions to ask your provider

Before you switch to a digital landline

- What do I need to do for my new landline to work as soon as possible?
- Will my new landline work in a power cut?
- What can you provide if I only have my landline to call emergency services during a power cut?
- How do I check whether other devices (like care alarms) that use my telephone line will be compatible?
- Will my current handset work on the new system, or do you need to send me a new handset or some other equipment?

Before you change your broadband to full-fibre broadband (also known as 'fibre-to-the-premises' or 'fibre-to-the-home')

- Will I need an engineer visit? If so, what should I do to prepare for their visit?
- Will my landline voice service be affected by the change to my broadband service?
- Do I need any new equipment, such as a router? Will this be provided?

This change will affect small businesses too

Just like residential customers, small businesses that want to continue using their landlines will eventually have to move to VoIP services.

You might also have equipment such as card payment machines, alarms, and monitoring equipment connected to your landline that might not work once you have migrated to a VoIP service.

Speak to your landline provider to establish what other equipment your business uses that relies on the PSTN. You should also speak to the current supplier of this equipment for advice on options for replacing or reconfiguring it.

For any other queries, including if you have a more complex set-up at your business, please speak to your landline provider for specific advice.

More information

If you have any questions about the move to VoIP, contact your provider. You can also find more information online:

- The [Digital Landline Switchover website](#).
- Trade association techUK has explained what the [digital phone switchover](#) means for residential and business customers, and for suppliers of services or devices that use a phone line.
- Openreach has published [factsheets for businesses](#) who use phone lines to deliver services to help them understand how the move to VoIP services will affect them.

The decision to close the PSTN has been made by industry, not Ofcom or the UK Government. Our aim is to make sure customers don't face undue disruption or harm from the changes. For example,

we have [rules to protect customers in power cuts](#), and to require phone companies to provide access to emergency calls at all times. We have published a [detailed policy statement \(PDF, 647.9 KB\)](#) setting out our approach to this.

Related content

[The future of fixed telephone services](#)

In this document, we outline the changes that are taking place to the UK's telecoms networks and the roles and responsibilities of different organisations, including Ofcom.

[Guidance: Protecting access to emergency organisations when there is a power cut at the customer's premises](#)

This document confirms Ofcom's final guidance on how providers can meet their obligations as customers move from traditional landline services to phone services over a broadband connection.

[Compliance monitoring programme into access to emergency services during power outages](#)

CW/01261/07/22 Compliance monitoring programme into access to emergency services during power outages

[Experiences of moving to digital landline in the Salisbury and Mildenhall trials](#)

We commissioned research to understand customers' experience of being moved to digital landline (or VoIP) in Salisbury and Mildenhall.



How will the landline phone switch work and what do you need to do?

The old copper phone network will be switched off in 2025 and phones will instead use the internet to make calls. That doesn't mean you have to only use a mobile phone - but there are some changes coming. Here's what you need to know.



[Josephine Franks](#)

News reporter [@jos_franks](#)

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Landline services are changing in the UK.

The old system will be switched off in 2025 and landlines will use broadband to make calls.

If you rely on a landline, you will still be able to make calls but the technology that powers them will be different.

Here's everything you need to know.

I rely on a landline - can I still use it?

Yes, you will still be able to have a landline in your home.

The change means the landline will use the internet to make calls, rather than old copper network (known as PSTN, or public switched telephone network).

The new system is called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) but providers also have their own names for it such as BT Digital Voice.

What if I don't have an internet connection at home?

For those without a broadband connection at home, your supplier will install one.

If you only want to use broadband so you can keep your landline, that's fine.

Where broadband is just being used to power the telephone, your supplier should not charge you extra.

Both BT and Virgin have committed to not charging customers any extra for landline-only broadband connections.

I have broadband at home, does that make things easier?

If you already have a broadband connection, the switch should be fairly straightforward.

Your phone will be plugged into your router or a new socket, which in some cases will need an adaptor supplied by your provider.

Will I need to get a new landline phone?

You should be able to keep your current phone. If it's very old, you might need to upgrade it.

Can I keep my current number?

Yes, you can keep the same number.

Once I've gone digital, will my landline work any differently?

Your landline will still feel like your old landline after the switch - including a dial tone when you pick it up.

Digital lines also provide clearer and better quality calls, providers say.

If I'm not paying line rental for a landline, will my bills get cheaper?

Unfortunately it seems like they won't. In the eyes of phone providers, you're still getting the same service - it's just the technology that has changed.

Here's what a Virgin Media spokesperson said: "As customers will still be able to use their landline service, they will not see a reduction in their bills."

BT also won't be lowering its prices after the switch. "You'll still have the same service, and your price plan and bills will stay the same," a spokesperson said.

When is the changeover happening?

The deadline for the switch is December 2025, but providers have already started moving people over.

Your phone company will contact you when they want you to change.

Why is the old network being switched off?

The analogue network dates back to the 19th century - and in some cases relies on infrastructure dating back that far.

It's becoming harder and more expensive to maintain, so it needs to be replaced.

Switching to digital brings the phone network in line with other advances in the digital world.

What about other devices that use a phone line?

Other devices including telecare services, personal alarms and security alarms use the phone network.

Some existing devices will continue to work using digital phone services, but others will need to be replaced.

If you use telecare services, you may want to let your phone provider know in advance of the switchover.

You can also contact your telecare provider to check if your devices will work with a digital connection.

What if there's a power cut?

While some analogue phones will work in a power cut, that's not the case for a digital phone unless it has a battery back-up.

If you do not have a mobile phone - or mobile reception in your area - your provider should give you a battery back-up so you're not cut off if there is a power cut.



Are Landlines Being Phased Out ?

The UK's current Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) is based on decades-old copper technology. Maintaining this outdated system is costly, and it no longer meets modern communication needs. Digital (VoIP) calls are clearer, more efficient, and more compatible with today's technology.

UK Landline Switch-Off: What You Need to Know & How to Prepare

By 2025, traditional landlines in the UK will be switched off as the country moves from analogue (PSTN) to digital (VoIP) phone services. This means landline calls will no longer work through the old copper network but will instead use the internet. If you're wondering why this is happening, what alternatives exist, and how to prepare, this guide will answer all your questions.

Main Reasons for the Change:

- **Ageing Infrastructure** - Copper lines are deteriorating and expensive to maintain.
- **Declining Use of Landlines** - More people rely on mobile phones and internet-based communication.
- **Future-Proofing** - Digital networks are faster, more reliable, and adaptable for future innovations.
- **Better Call Quality** - VoIP calls offer clearer sound and fewer interruptions.

By December 2025, BT Openreach will have completely switched off the PSTN network, meaning everyone must transition to a digital alternative.

What Should You Do to Prepare?

If you still use a landline, here's what you need to do:

- **Check with your provider** - They will inform you about how your service will change.
- **Upgrade your phone** (if needed) - Some older handsets may require an adapter or a new VoIP-compatible device.
- Ensure you have a **stable internet connection** - VoIP relies on broadband rather than phone lines.
- **Plan for power cuts** - Unlike old landlines, digital phones won't work during power outages unless you have a backup solution.

What will replace Landline Phones ?

After the switch-off, landlines will be replaced by VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) services, which transmit voice calls over the internet rather than through traditional copper lines.

Your Main Alternatives:

- **VoIP Home Phones** - Digital landline replacements that connect via broadband.

- **Mobile Phones** - Many people are switching to mobiles as their primary phone.
- **Broadband-Connected Desk Phones** - Businesses will use VoIP-enabled desk phones.
- **VoIP Adapters** - If you want to keep your current landline phone, an adapter can connect it to your internet router.

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[View Full Range of GPO Phones](#)



[View All SIP/IP Phones](#)



[VOIP Desk Phones](#)

Do I Need to Buy a New Phone?

It depends. If your current phone is compatible with VoIP, you may just need an adapter. However, older models that don't support digital connections may need to be replaced with a VoIP-compatible handset. Your telecom provider will guide you on whether you need a new phone or additional equipment.

Do I Need to Get a New Phone Number?

No, in most cases, you can keep your existing landline number. Your provider will transfer your number to the new digital service. However, it's always best to check with your provider to confirm how they handle number transfers.

Will my Landline Phone Work without Internet ?

Yes. Since VoIP calls work over the internet, you'll need a broadband connection to use your landline. If you already have home broadband, your phone will likely connect via your router.

What If I Don't Have Internet?

If you don't have broadband, your phone provider may offer alternative solutions, such as:

- A basic digital voice service using a simple router that only connects a phone (not full internet access).
- A mobile phone solution if you prefer to switch from a landline.

- Special support for vulnerable customers who rely on landlines for essential communication.

Contact your provider to find out what options are available for you.

What Happens in a Power Cut?

Traditional landlines worked even during power outages because they drew power from the telephone exchange. However, VoIP phones rely on broadband and electricity, so they won't work if there's a power cut. Solutions for Power Cuts:

- **Use a mobile phone as a backup** - This is the easiest and most reliable option.
- **Get a battery backup** - Some providers will offer power backup solutions for digital phones.
- **Check for emergency support** - If you're vulnerable and rely on a landline, your provider must offer alternative options.

If you depend on a landline for medical devices or emergency alarms, talk to your provider to ensure you have a suitable backup plan.

Conclusion

The UK's landline switch-off marks a big step in modernising our communication systems. While change can be challenging, the move to digital landlines offers better quality, reliability, and advanced features. If you haven't already, now is the time to check with your provider and ensure a smooth transition to the new digital system.

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Are landlines being phased out?

Traditional landlines are being phased out. By 2027, new digital technology called Voice over Internet Protocol, VoIP or Digital Voice will replace them in the UK.



Why and when landlines are changing

The technology and network we use to make landline phone calls is called the Public Switched Telephone Network or PSTN. This network is very old and difficult to repair and maintain. Some equipment and parts are no longer manufactured, so it needs to be replaced. As part of a nationwide network upgrade, Openreach are currently phasing out the old landline telephone system and this will be completely switched off in 2027.



Will landlines be replaced?

Landlines will be replaced with new digital technology called Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP. More friendly terms for the new technology is Digital Voice or Digital Home Phone.

Digital Voice is a home phone service delivered through a broadband connection. The phone handset simply plugs into a broadband router.



How will I know what's happening with my landline?

The upgrade is happening to ensure we all stay connected today and well into the future.

If you've a landline service with or without a broadband connection, your provider will let you know what's changing and what your home phone options are.



Broadband networks are also changing

Openreach and other alternative network providers are also working on a broadband upgrade programme throughout the country.

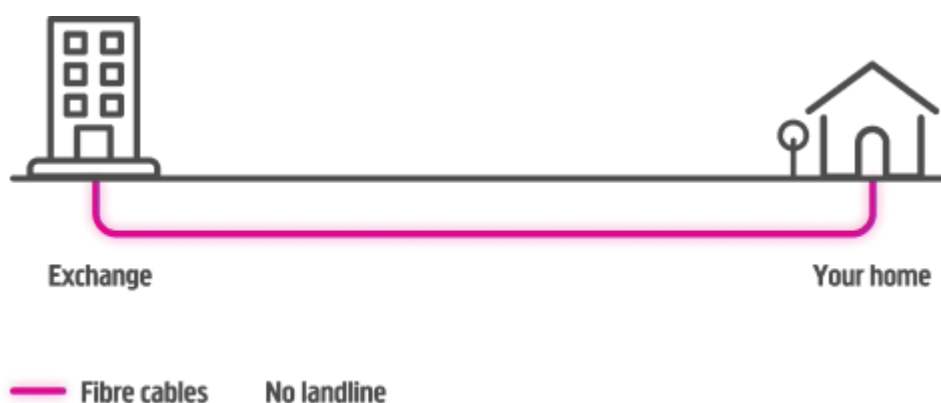
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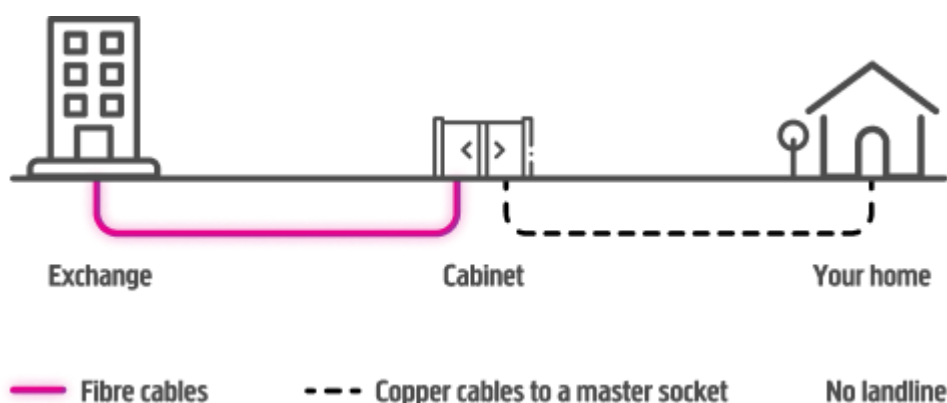
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What if I need a home phone service?

You can still have a phone service in your home. Instead of using the old network, the change means you'll use the Internet to make calls. You'd need broadband with a Digital Home Phone service.

If you've got a telecare device, personal or security alarm, speak to your equipment supplier or manufacturer, to see if it's compatible with the new Digital Home Phone.

If you're reliant on a home phone service, we'll be able to help advise on Digital Home Phone options which may be available to you. Just contact our team on 0330 1239 123.

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You can see our full [residential terms and conditions here \(opens new tab or window\)](#).

On 31 March each year the monthly plan price will increase by £3 for Broadband and out of bundle charges will increase 5%. See [About annual price changes](#) for details. Please note the cost of other services you take from us may increase or decrease while you are a Plusnet customer.

Broadband without a landline

- Your home phone will be disconnected and will no longer work.
- You will lose your home phone number and will not be able to get it back. You'll have to get a brand new number if you decide you need a home phone in the future.
- You won't be able to make or receive calls, including to emergency services.
- Healthcare alarms, medical pendants, security systems and any other services which are connected to your home phone will no longer work.

1. Broadband Packages

- Broadband packages are subject to 24 month contract and availability.
- Payment by direct debit.
- Your pre contract information and contract summary sets out your speed estimates, total monthly costs, total upfront costs and the amount you will pay once your minimum term ends. This is available at checkout.
- Please see our [price guide for all broadband charges](#).

1.1 Fibre and Full Fibre packages

- Subject to availability, geographic location, computer specifications and a line check. The exchange list and dates are subject to change.
- Prices and terms subject to change during the contract term.
- Openreach may have to carry out a survey before they can connect your home to Full Fibre. If they do, they may need access to your property, but we'll contact you first to arrange a suitable time.
- If additional work is required, this may take longer than the initial set up time provided and there could be additional costs, we'll contact you to confirm what additional work is needed and how long this will take, usually within four weeks from the date you placed your order.
- If you do not want to proceed with your upgrade based on this, you'll be able to cancel your order without being charged.

2. Existing Customers

- Please see our price guide for all [broadband and home phone charges](#), log into your account in the [Member Centre](#) or call us on 0330 1239 123 to discuss your contract.
- Please note Plusnet no longer provides email, domain or webpace accounts from 15th April 2025.

3. Speeds

- Please see our [guide to Broadband speeds](#) for more information about what speeds mean and what package is best for you.

4. EE Sim Plan

4.1 SIM Plans

30 day minimum term. Subject to terms and credit check. Monthly charges assume online billing. You will not get 5G speeds using a 4G phone. Allowances for use in UK (excluding Jersey, Guernsey & Isle of Man) and Republic of Ireland. A daily charge applies to use allowances in the EU/EEA unless you have an add-on or Inclusive Extra that includes EU Roaming. See roaming costs page for countries and details. 50GB data fair use policy applies outside the UK. See ee.co.uk/terms for countries and details. Deposit needed for roaming in limited circumstances. Use your allowance to call/text UK mobiles, and landlines starting 01, 02 and 03 when in UK & Republic of Ireland. Some numbers aren't included: calls to 070 numbers cost up to 5p/min and calls to 084, 087, 09 & 118 cost 83p/min plus the applicable service charge. See ee.co.uk/prices for the EE Price Guide for a detailed list of service charges and other charges outside of your allowance. Personal use only.

4.2 Essentials SIM

Includes speeds capped at 100Mbps, Data Gifting and Stay Connected Data

4.3 Stay Connected Data

If you have a capped data allowance (i.e. not an unlimited data plan) once you have used up your monthly data allowance your speed will be capped at 0.5Mbps. You will regain access to our fastest speeds upon (1) renewal of your monthly plan allowance, (2) by buying one of our data add-ons, or (3) If you are gifted data by someone else in your family account. Once the data add-on or gifted data runs out, you will return to the capped speed until your monthly plan allowance has renewed. Not available with No Frills plans.

4.4 Data Gifting

Account holder only can gift between pay monthly plans on the same account in increments of 500MB. Unlimited data plans can gift up to 100GB. Data usage on an unlimited data plan will be deducted from giftable allowance. No gifting to/from Smart Watches, 4G Home, 5G Home or 30-day 4G WiFi or 5G WiFi plans. Data not used in a month does not roll over, allowances are set back to zero at the start of each month. If you are outside your price plans standard countries when your monthly allowances refresh on your bill date the main account holder will not be able to gift data until you return to the UK/EU. Data can only be used in accordance with the plan terms applicable to the receiving line.

5. Broadband Extras

Plusnet Safeguard

Included with all of our broadband packages, Plusnet Safeguard filters inappropriate web content for your household. [Further information can be found here.](#)

Plusnet Protect powered by Norton™

Our security package protects you from online threats. Charges apply for Unlimited Fibre broadband customers. [Further information can be found here.](#)

Software Support for Plusnet's Broadband Devices

For further information on Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure (PSTI), software support and how to report software vulnerabilities please refer to [Software Support](#) and [Reporting Security Issues\(opens new tab or window\)](#).

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Once our broadband has activated you will be sent information on how to claim your Plusnet Reward Card, this will be sent via email within two weeks of your service activating. You must submit your claim within two months of the email being issued. The card must be activated within three months of it being issued.

This card is issued by GVS Prepaid Limited, an Electronic Money Institution authorised in the UK by the Financial Conduct Authority with Firm Reference number 900230; pursuant to licence from Mastercard International. Mastercard is a registered trademark, and the circles design is a trademark of Mastercard International Incorporated. [See Plusnet Reward Card terms\(opens new tab or window\)](#).

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£50 Plusnet Reward Card with Full Fibre 500

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Are landlines being phased out?

Landlines aren't being phased out, but the UK's telephone network is being upgraded, so landline services are changing. For most, switching over will be straightforward, but some people may need new equipment or support to make the changes.

- [What is changing?](#)
 - [Why are these changes happening?](#)
 - [When are these changes happening?](#)
 - [What happens when I change to the digital system?](#)
 - [What happens if my landline and broadband companies are different?](#)
 - [Can I keep my phone number?](#)
 - [Will I need a new phone?](#)
 - [Will anything else be affected, like my telecare?](#)
 - [Will my new phone contract be more expensive?](#)
 - [What happens if there's a power cut?](#)
 - [Is there anything I should watch out for?](#)
-

What is changing?

Landlines have been delivered through an analogue network for decades, but this is being replaced with newer digital technology.

The new system is called 'Voice over Internet Protocol' (VoIP). You may also hear this referred to as a digital landline or 'Digital Voice', the name of BT's new home phone service. BT is one of many network providers making this change.

Once you've moved to the new digital system, your landline will mainly work as it always has, although there will be some differences. For example, it won't work if there's a power cut so you'll need an alternative solution such as a mobile phone or battery backup unit for emergency calls (but we have more information about this below).

What is a digital landline? Will I need an internet connection to make phone calls?

Digital landlines use an internet connection to make and receive calls. Given this, you'll need an internet connection at home to use the new landline digital system.

If you already have a broadband connection, then the new digital landline system will use this. But don't worry – if you don't have broadband and your network provider, such as BT and Virgin Media

O2, asks you to switch, then they'll supply you with a connection to support the new digital landline system. You shouldn't pay extra for this if you don't choose to take up a broadband service.

Some network providers may not continue to offer a landline telephone. In this situation, you might have to consider changing to another provider that does offer a landline telephone, and this may cost more than your current contract.

Throughout this page, we'll be talking about broadband and broadband companies or services. When we say 'broadband', we just mean a high-speed internet connection.

Why are these changes happening?

The current analogue landline network needs to be replaced because it's old and is becoming difficult to maintain. The new digital landlines use the internet to make phone calls – this offers better quality calls as well as some additional features such as protection from scams.

UK phone and broadband companies are leading this change and are working with Ofcom, the Government and others. The aim of Ofcom (the communications regulator) is to make sure customers don't face unnecessary disruption or harm because of the changes.

When are these changes happening?

The changeover has started, and some people have already been moved to the digital system.

For most people, the changeover will have happened by January 2027.

This is an industry-wide change, but timescales may differ depending on your service provider. Originally, it was expected that for most networks the move to digital landlines would have happened by December 2025. However, BT now expects all of their customers will have moved to the new digital system by the end of January 2027. Other companies may also review their timescales.

Providers will contact their customers ahead of the change to let them know when they'll be making the switch to a digital landline.

BT is currently switching customers that:

- haven't used their landline in the last 12 months
- haven't contacted an Alarm Receiving Centre in the last 24 months
- live in an area where specific measures are in place to check if people have a telecare alarm system
- aren't known to be vulnerable or have additional needs.

From Spring 2025 (at the earliest), BT will start to contact customers who are known to be vulnerable or have additional needs – as long as they live in areas where there's a way to identify and support people with telecare alarms.

In some areas, changes to the network will mean that everyone will be contacted about moving to the digital system. You may also be moved to the new system if you decide to move to a new phone and broadband package.

Other companies have also started rolling out digital systems, and this may include all customers.

Whoever your telephone provider is, make sure they're aware if you have a telecare alarm or if you may need additional support.

What happens when I change to the digital system?

Your telephone provider will contact you in advance to let you know when your system's changing and what you need to do. In some cases, an engineer will need to visit to make changes.

For the majority of people, the change will be straightforward. If you already have a broadband connection, you may just need to plug your phone into your broadband router or you'll be sent an adapter that connects to your phone and plugs into your router. If you have more than one phone socket with separate handsets, you may need additional adapters.

When you're contacted by your provider, let them know if you have any questions or concerns about moving to the digital service, or if you need any additional help. Although everyone will need to move to the digital system at some point, you may be able to delay this if you're not ready to switch.

Once you've moved to a digital landline you'll be able to make calls as you normally would, but you'll have to dial the area code when you call people, even if it's a local number.

What happens if my landline and broadband companies are different?

If your landline and broadband providers are different companies, you'll have the choice to change from one to the other when you're in the process of switching over to the digital landline system.

Can I keep my phone number?

Yes – in most cases you'll be able to keep your current phone number.

Will I need a new phone?

Nearly all existing handsets will work with the new system. But if you do need to change your handset, your phone provider will be able to advise you on this.

Will anything else be affected, like my telecare?

The switch to digital landlines may affect telecare devices and other equipment such as personal alarms and security alarms if they're connected to your phone line. You should contact your device supplier to check if your device will work with the new system or whether any equipment will need to be upgraded.

Although your landline telephone provider will contact you before the switch takes place, you should let them know about any telecare devices that you have in advance.

If you're buying a new device that's linked to the phone system, you should also check with the seller or manufacturer that this will be compatible.

Telephone providers are working with the Government to make sure that no one who uses telecare is moved to a digital system until it's confirmed that their system is working properly. The government advise that you should avoid buying an analogue telecare device. This is because analogue devices may not work with the new digital landline system.

Will my new phone contract be more expensive?

For BT customers, there's no difference in price for its Digital Voice home phone product. Virgin Media O2 has also said that people won't pay more than what they already pay for their current service.

This means that if your provider moves you to a new service, you shouldn't face extra costs if you just need an internet connection to make calls.

If your provider no longer offers a landline and you choose to change providers, your new contract may be more expensive.

What happens if there's a power cut?

Unlike some traditional corded analogue phones, a digital phone will only work in a power cut if it has a battery back-up, because it'll run using your home electricity. In these instances, phone companies are advising people to use mobile phones as a backup.

If you're dependent on your landline phone – for example, if you don't have a mobile phone or you live somewhere where there's no or poor mobile signal, then your telephone provider must offer you a 'resilience solution' to make sure you can make emergency calls during a power cut. This could be a mobile phone (if you have mobile signal) or a battery-backup unit that connects to your landline phone and provides power in case of a power outage.

This resilience solution should be provided free of charge to people who are dependent on their landline. If you're not eligible for a free resilience solution, you may be able to purchase one from your provider or another retailer – talk to your provider about the options available to you.

Is there anything I should watch out for?

As the switchover is affecting millions of homes, this can create an opportunity for criminals to develop new scams. These scam attempts could happen over the phone, via email, or in person on your doorstep.

Remember the following scam advice when someone's contacting you about the switchover:

STOP – take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or your personal information.

CHALLENGE – could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. You should never feel rushed or pressured into making a decision.

PROTECT – contact your bank immediately if you think you've been a victim of a scam and report it to [Action Fraud](#) by calling **0300 123 2040**.

Other unscrupulous people may also try to sell you equipment or get you to sign up to expensive contracts that you don't need. In these cases, it's important that you don't rush into making any decisions. You can always seek a second opinion and speak to your phone company – they should be able to advise you about what you need.

[Find out more about how to spot a scam and keep you and your money safe](#)

Want more information?

[Avoiding scams information guide \(PDF, 2 MB\)](#)

[Find out more about moving landline phones to digital technology on the Ofcom website](#) (this is a link on the web to the info at the start of this document from Ofcom)

[Find out more about the change to digital landlines on GOV.UK](#)

We're here to help

We offer support through our free advice line on 0800 678 1602. Lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year. We also have specialist advisers at over 120 local Age UKs.

[About the Age UK Advice Line](#)

[Find your local Age UK](#)



UK transition from analogue to digital landlines

What the retirement of analogue phone lines, also known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), means for you.

From:

[Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#)

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Overview

Communications providers in the UK are replacing the technology they use to provide fixed telephone networks (landlines). For most customers, the upgrade is expected to be complete by January 2027.

Details

In November 2017, the telecoms industry announced its intention to retire analogue telephone networks such as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), which provides many analogue telephone services.. The Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), which is also used to deliver telephone services, is also being switched off. Most customers are expected to have made the switch by the end of January 2027. The industry will upgrade landline services to new digital technology using an internet connection, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Digital Voice or All-IP telephony.

For most consumers and businesses, this change will be straightforward. Nobody will have to lose their landline service because of this change, as there will still be the option for a 'landline only' service should a customer not wish to purchase a general internet connection. Communications providers will continue to be bound by the same regulatory obligations as they are today.

The upgrade of the UK's telephone lines is not a government programme and does not result from a government decision or policy, and therefore specific questions about how the upgrade programme might affect you should be directed to your service provider.

Why the old network is being replaced

Analogue networks have been in operation for decades and have reached the end of their serviceable life. The telecoms industry is finding it difficult to source the parts required to maintain or repair connections as suppliers are no longer manufacturing them. Ofcom, the telecommunications regulator, reported that 2023 saw 20% more service incidents on the PSTN compared to 2022, resulting in a 60% increase in the number of service hours lost to customers.

New digital phone lines will allow communications providers (such as BT, Virgin Media O2, Sky and Vodafone) to offer consumers and businesses clearer and better quality phone calls, as well as new features such as anonymous caller rejection or three-way calling. VoIP is also more resistant to severe weather as the cables used are waterproof, and less prone to damage during a storm or other severe weather events.

What the change means in practice, and how you can prepare

The exact migration process will depend on your communications provider and the equipment they use. If you already have an internet connection, the change may be as simple as plugging your phone into your broadband router rather than the socket on the wall.

Communications providers will contact their customers ahead of the migration taking place, so you do not need to take any action until your provider contacts you directly. You should look out for communications material from them and be careful not to confuse this with marketing material.

Not all analogue phone services will be switched off by 2027. Depending on your communications provider, you may not be required to move to digital voice services by then. If you are not sure whether you will be impacted, contact your provider to ask about when they will require all customers to use digital landlines.

If you have specific requirements (for example, if you are a vulnerable consumer or you have other devices connected to your telephone line such as alarm systems, telecare devices or fax machines), you might need to take additional actions or purchase replacement devices or adaptors. If you believe this to be the case, or if you have general questions about the migration, you should contact your communication provider or equipment manufacturer.

Vulnerable customers

Ofcom has published a [guide on treating vulnerable customers fairly and expectations on telecoms providers to ensure they support vulnerable or at-risk customers throughout the upgrade process to digital phone lines](#). Ofcom states that communications providers should take steps to identify at-risk customers and engage in effective communications to ensure all eligible customers are protected throughout the upgrade process.

If you believe you or one of your relatives is a vulnerable consumer or depends on a landline, you should notify your communications provider so that they can advise on how the migration could affect you.

It is the responsibility of the communications provider to ensure those who depend on a landline are provided a resilient solution that will allow customers to make calls to the emergency services in the event of a power outage and the government is working with Ofcom to ensure this is the case.

In December 2023, The UK's leading communications providers (such as Sky, BT, VMO2 and TalkTalk) agreed to a Charter of commitments for protecting telecare users and other vulnerable customers. The [Charter's commitments can be found here](#).

January 2024 saw the formation of the Telecare Action Board (TAB), which has brought together around 30 organisations from government, the telecoms and telecare sectors, industry bodies, local authorities and regulatory stakeholders to identify and protect telecare users and those with additional needs before they switch to digital.

A second Charter for Network Operators was also signed in March 2024 which can be found [here](#). Through this Charter, companies such as Openreach, CityFibre and CommunityFibre, agreed to a set of commitments that will ensure telecare customers have compatible solutions in place following the upgrade.

To identify and protect vulnerable customers and those with additional needs, Local Authorities and telecare providers are being asked to disclose which phone lines have telecare devices on them through data sharing agreements with communications providers. It's imperative that each organisation acts as soon as possible to ensure customers receive the right support at the right time.

Devices connected to your phone line

If you have other devices connected to your phone line, such as alarm systems, telecare devices or fax machines, you should take steps to ensure they will continue to function correctly following the migration to a digital phone line. You might need to upgrade your device to make sure it is compatible, check if it needs to have its own battery and network back-up, or purchase an adaptor to ensure it continues to function correctly.

If you are buying a new alarm or device, you should check with the provider of that equipment that it is compatible with digital phone lines and will continue to run.

If you are unsure about how a device in your home or business might be affected, we recommend you contact the equipment supplier or device manufacturer to find out whether it will remain functional on a digital phone line. If you are buying a new alarm or device, you should check it is compatible with VoIP services or can be connected to appropriate mobile services e.g. 4G.

Power cuts

The resilience of our digital infrastructure networks is becoming increasingly important for keeping people connected. In recognition of this, Ofcom is proposing to update its resilience guidance for communications providers, which sets out the measures Ofcom expects them to take to keep their networks running. This proposal is set out in the following [consultation](#).

The analogue landline carries a low voltage power connection directly from the telephone exchange, which is sufficient to power some basic corded handsets without needing to plug them into the wall. This means that in the event of a local power cut, these corded handsets will continue to function as long as the telephone exchange still has power.

Digital landlines cannot carry a power connection, which means handsets and routers must be powered from your home power supply, and they will not function in a power cut unless you have a backup power system such as a battery or generator. Telecare devices connected to a digital landline network may not work during a power cut.

Communications providers are required by Ofcom to take all necessary measures to ensure uninterrupted access to emergency organisations for their customers, including in the event of a power cut.

In 2018, [Ofcom issued guidance on how communications providers can fulfil this regulatory obligation in light of the migration to digital landlines](#). The guidance was issued following a consultation with the general public, communications providers and Ofgem, looking at data on the average length of power outages in the UK.

The guidance states that communications providers should have at least one solution available that enables access to emergency organisations for a minimum of one hour in the event of a power outage in the premises, and that this solution should be offered free of charge to those who are at risk as they depend on their landline.

For most customers, telecoms companies recommend using a mobile phone as a backup in case of a power cut. If you don't have a mobile or live somewhere where there's no signal, your landline provider should offer you a solution such as a battery back-up unit. This will mean that you can still make emergency calls during a power cut.

In the UK, national roaming is enabled in order to make emergency calls. This means you can use any mobile phone network to contact the emergency services, even if you are not a customer. You may see the message 'Emergency calls only' displayed on your handset if this is the case.

If you don't have or want broadband

The Telephony Universal Service Obligation in the 2003 Communications Act means all consumers in the UK will still have access to a landline service should they choose to do so.

If you don't use broadband some providers will offer their customers an interim, dedicated landline service designed to keep them connected while moving them off the analogue PSTN network. This interim solution allows those customers to use their current landline in the same way as they do today until a digital solution becomes available or 2030, if that comes sooner. @

Businesses and Critical National Infrastructure (CNI)

The upgrade to digital landlines will affect all customers, including businesses and CNI organisations. Businesses should consider how they can move to digital alternatives smoothly to avoid undue disruption in 2027.

Landlines may also be used for alternative devices such as lift alarms, burglar alarms or card payment systems. Communications providers will not know which devices are connected to their network, and therefore it is important for business customers to review which devices they are using and determine whether they need replacing or upgrading, or whether adaptors might be required.

If you are a business customer and you have concerns about the transition to digital phone lines, we recommend you contact your communications provider.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is also working with other government departments to ensure CNI sectors are prepared for the digital upgrades across a range of sectors.

What the government is doing

Although the migration to digital is an industry led initiative, the government is working together with the telecoms industry to ensure all sectors of the economy are protected and prepared. This

includes regularly engaging with communications providers, tracking preparedness across all affected sectors, and working closely with Ofcom.

Further information

If you have questions about how the migration might affect you, the government recommends you get in touch with your telephone provider for further information.

Ofcom, the independent regulator for telecoms, has also issued guidance on how to prepare for the migration. See [Moving landline phones to digital technology: what you need to know](#).

The Digital Connectivity Forum – the government advisory body for the digital connectivity sector – hosts a website that provides comprehensive information for a variety of audiences on the move to digital landlines: <https://digitalphoneswitchover.com/>.

Openreach has also published [factsheets for businesses](#) who use phone lines to deliver services to help them understand how the move to VoIP services will affect them.

The Local Government Association - the national membership body for local authorities - hosts a [Digital Switchover Hub](#) with resources for those working in local government.

Communications provider websites

Openreach has further information for businesses and wider industry who use phone lines to deliver services to help them understand how the move to VoIP services will affect them.

- [BT: Moving to Digital Voice](#)
- [IP technology is changing the UK's phone networks - BT Business](#)
- [VMO2: Digital Phone Switchover](#)
- [Vodafone: get PSTN switch-off ready](#)
- [KCOM for consumers](#)
- [KCOM for businesses](#)

Updates to this page

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