DIGITAL SWITCHOVER STATEMENT BY OPENREACH MAY 2024

You may have heard of BT Group’s announcement this morning, around their intention to reset the date for the switching off of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).  The original date we’ve all been working towards was December 2025.  BT Group announced today the reset of this date to **31 January 2027**.

Our copper product ‘Wholesale Line Rental’ (WLR) relies on the PSTN to work and we planned to withdraw this product in December 2025 in line with the PSTN switch-off.  Openreach will realign the withdrawal of WLR date to 31 January 2027. This **additional 13 months** allows more time for Communications Providers (CPs) to safely migrate their vulnerable customers off of the PSTN.

**How does this change affect CPs** (also known as Service Providers, like Sky, TalkTalk, BT etc)  
Our message to CPs is to continue migrating at pace (where it is safe to do so).   
CPs now have more time to identify and safely migrate their vulnerable customers, but we encourage them to do this as soon as they can.  
We will continue to work with CPs on complex migration scenarios.

**What does this mean for you?**  
You should by now have an inventory of all your lines and associated Service Provider(s). If you’re not already talking to your Service Provider, please make plans to do so ASAP.  
  
**Please continue to audit any devices on your estate**, whether that’s a lift alarm, monitoring service or telecare device. Reach out to your device suppliers and get help and advice on the compatibility of these devices on a digital network.

The urgency for switching customers onto digital services grows by the day because the 40-year-old analogue landline technology is becoming increasingly fragile and harder to maintain service. **We encourage you to continue with your current plans to switch to digital as soon as possible.**

**What about the vulnerable?**  
We’ve been working closely with CPs to develop a new ‘Prove Telecare’ service which would help to ensure that telecare devices still work after an engineering visit to upgrade an end customer to a digital service. This service will be trialled later this year.

BT Business plan to launch a new service (available until 2030) called ‘[Pre-digital Phone Line](https://pages.btwholesale.com/m043039-regpage.html)’. BT Business are inviting CPs to register their interest to become resellers of this service to their customers. This service will give end customers an analogue type of voice service, with power on the line via their master socket. This is a temporary solution rather than a long-term alternative to digital.

In December 2023, many CPs signed a UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) [PSTN Charter to protect vulnerable customers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-switched-telephone-network-charter/public-switched-telephone-network-charter). And, in January 2024, we signed a complimentary [Network Operator Charter](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/network-operator-charter/network-operator-charter). This led to several CPs pausing their non-voluntary migrations to make adjustments to their processes. This includes further work to identify vulnerable their customers.

We’ve updated our FAQs regarding the PSTN switch-off reset, in the first instance please check [here](https://www.openreach.co.uk/cpportal/content/dam/cpportal/public/images-and-documents/home/products/product-withdrawal/wlr-withdrawal/documents/All_IP_FAQ_May2024_Updates.pdf) if you have any questions

Regards

John Livermore

A blue text on a black background

Description automatically generated

All-IP Industry Engagement Manager

Mobile:   07889 207939

[www.linkedin.com/in/John-Livermore-ALL-IP-openreach](http://www.linkedin.com/in/John-Livermore-ALL-IP-openreach)

Web: [openreach.co.uk](http://www.openreach.co.uk/)