

Retirement of copper landlines – Digital Switchover

1 Summary of the retirement of telephone landlines

The UK's telephone network is changing. Between now and the end of 2025 most telephone providers will be switching their customers from old analogue (copper-based) landlines to new upgraded services using digital technology. You may see updates in the media about 'Digital Switchover' or 'Digital Voice'.

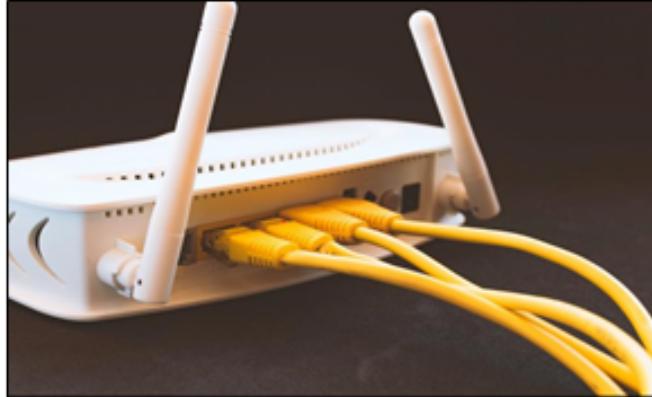
The digital switchover applies to all phone lines no matter who your telephone provider is (BT, Virgin, Sky, TalkTalk etc).

If you call a communications provider (e.g. BT) today to set up a brand new phone line, you will not be offered a traditional copper line. Instead, you may find that communications providers suggest deals that include broadband, as phones will all require broadband to work after the digital switchover has completed.

Note – It may be worth considering deals that include broadband, as some of these may be cheaper than landline only.

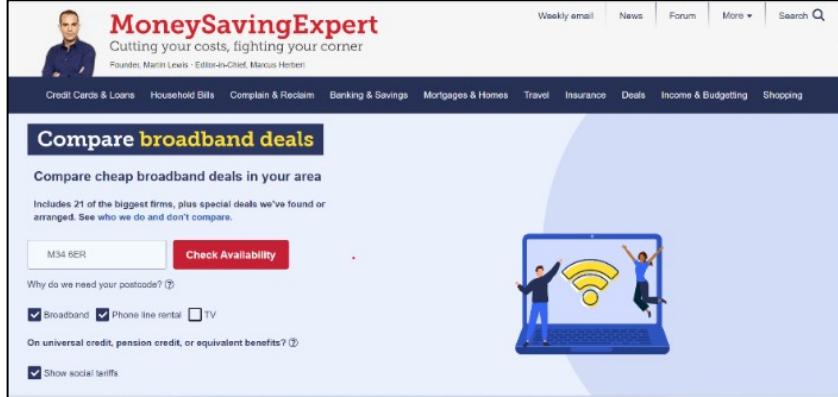
BT have advised that a solution will be available by the end of 2025 for new digital telephone only plans. These will use a digital adapter that will provide minimum broadband to enable a digital landline only.



2	<p>When will the Digital Switchover happen?</p> <p>The BT digital switchover is planned to be completed by the end of 2025, whereas Virgin may not be fully completed until 2027.</p> <p>Your communications provider will let you know when your digital switchover is happening, and you won't need to do anything about your phone service until then.</p> <p>From the date of the switchover, landline telephones will no longer work via the socket on the wall. Instead, they will need to be connected to a broadband router or digital adapter.</p>	 <p>BT are now switching customers in North West England, and will notify customers four weeks in advance of the changes. (October 2023)</p>
3	<p>What do I need to do?</p> <p>For most households that already have broadband the change will be straightforward or may have already happened. The change will be something as simple as plugging your phone into your broadband router instead of the wall socket.</p> <p>Your telephone company will send you instructions on how to connect your phone to the router and may also include an adapter to do this. Depending on your current router, your telephone provider may have to send you an upgraded one at no extra cost.</p> <p>Note: If you are unsure if you are going to be affected by the digital switchover, call your telephone provider to see if you need to do anything extra.</p>	

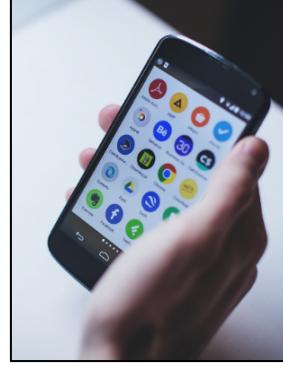
<p>4 Traditional landline</p> <p>If you have a traditional landline phone and don't have broadband, then it is likely you have a copper-based phone line and you will be affected by this change.</p> <p>When the time comes, you will be supplied with a small adapter that you will plug your phone into so you can receive digital phone services.</p> <p>BT Openreach - If you are a BT customer in this category, they have advised you will be left towards the end of 2025 before you are switched over to digital services.</p> <p>Virgin - We understand that all Virgin customers within a local area will be switched to digital services at the same time and there will not be an option to opt out or postpone the date.</p>	
<p>5 Some options if you have a copper landline only:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Take the plunge and invest in broadband at home 2) Find out if you are eligible for a cheaper broadband package if you are on a low income (social tariffs) 3) Wait for the basic Digital Voice adapter that provides just enough broadband to run a phone. In October 2023, BT advised the digital adapter is in development so there are no further details yet. 4) Decide to just use a mobile phone. 	<p>See the Starting Point guide on low-cost broadband deals. Call the DigiKnow helpline on 07724 217888 to request a copy.</p>

6	<p>Can I opt out of the digital switchover?</p> <p>No – you cannot opt out of the digital switchover, but you could receive additional help to ensure you are not left without vital services.</p> <p>BT customers - BT have said they will leave the following customers to last when doing the switchover to their Digital Voice service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers with a healthcare pendant • Customers who only use landlines • Customers with no mobile signal • Customers who have disclosed any additional needs • Customers who are over 70 <p>BT will also offer additional support to people over 70 who are ready to switch.</p> <p>Virgin customers – We understand that Virgin will be switching all customers in a local area at the same time. If you consider you are a vulnerable customer, it is important you let Virgin know so they can ensure you have any additional help you may need for the switchover.</p> <p>Other telephone providers - If your landline only provider is not BT or Virgin and you feel you are a vulnerable customer, it's worth contacting your provider to check they know you fit into this category.</p>	<p>If you fall into any of the categories listed, call your communications provider to ensure they have your circumstances on record.</p>
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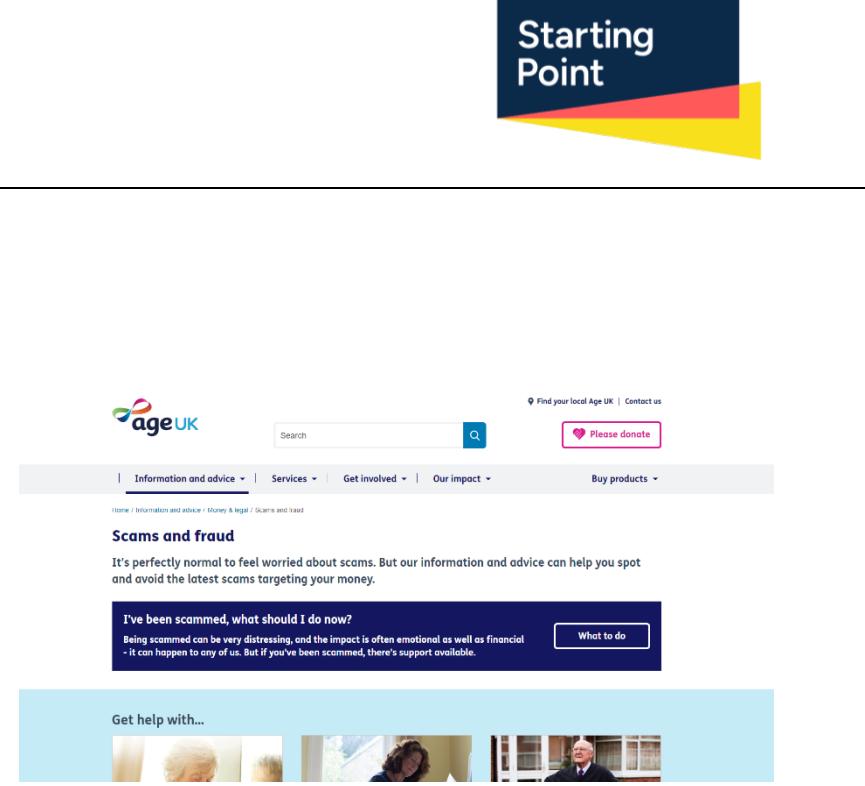
7	<p>Will I have to pay more for the digital switchover?</p> <p>BT and Virgin have both committed to customers on 'phone only' deals not having to pay more than they do already when the digital switchover happens. Age UK say this very confidently on their website that customers should not have to pay more. BT have also stated this in their digital switchover advertising features.</p> <p>Some companies, e.g. Vodafone, direct any queries about the copper line switch off directly to broadband options as they do not offer landline only (verified with Vodafone customer care 10/10/23).</p>	
8	<p>Invest in broadband at home</p> <p>If you have been thinking about getting broadband at home, this is a great time to look at deals and decide what's best for you.</p> <p>To view broadband deals available at your home, visit https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/compare-broadbanddeals/?feature=setupCosts to compare the different services/prices available.</p> <p>Take your time to research the best deal, and don't feel pressured to buy a broadband package right away.</p>	

9	<p>Low-income households may qualify for discounted broadband deals called social tariffs.</p> <p>Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit, and some other benefits.</p> <p>See information guide on Low-cost broadband to view some of the options that might be available for you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting Point have a guide to social tariffs. • Ring the DigiKnow helpline for information on social tariffs 07724 217888 • You can tick the 'social tariff' box on the 'Money saving expert' website to see these deals for yourself. <p>https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/compare-broadbanddeals/?feature=setupCosts</p>	
10	<p>Decide to just use a mobile phone</p> <p>Many households already just use their mobile phones and don't have a landline. However, make sure your signal is good enough in your area, and that you understand how much calls cost to different numbers from your mobile before you decide, so you can make an informed choice.</p> <p>Just using a mobile is not an option if you have alarms connected to your current landline.</p>	

11	<p>Alarms</p> <p>If you have an alarm connected to your phone line, you may have to upgrade your device to make sure it is compatible with the new system.</p> <p>The current advice is to contact your alarm provider to ask about the copper line switch off.</p>	
12	<p>Vulnerable customers</p> <p>If you are dependent on your landline and qualify as a vulnerable customer, then your telephone provider will help with a battery back-up solution free of charge.</p> <p>When your provider contacts you about the change, let them know if you: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a care alarm, health pendant or security alarm that uses the telephone line. • don't own a mobile phone, or you don't have enough signal at home to call the emergency services in a power cut. • have a disability or any other needs that mean you need extra help with the installation. <p>Power cut – in the event of a power cut you can use the battery back-up to make calls in an emergency.</p>	 <p><i>You may want to speak to your telephone provider before they contact you about the change to ensure they are aware of your situation.</i></p>

<p>13 Do I need a mobile phone?</p> <p>It is advisable that you have a mobile phone as back-up. This is because your internet connection won't work if there is a power cut.</p> <p>Basic mobiles can be purchased for around £16. (Starting Point have information guide on purchasing low-cost devices. Call the DigiKnow helpline for further information 07724 217888).</p> <p>If you do not qualify as a vulnerable customer, you may wish to purchase a Battery Backup unit. Prices range from £40 to £100s.</p>	 <p>Remember to keep the mobile charged should it be needed during a power cut.</p>
<p>14 Do I need to contact anyone?</p> <p>If you or someone you know uses a telecare device connected to a phone line (such as a fall monitor, lifeline, or personal alarm), you should contact the provider of this service so that they can advise on how the switch could affect you.</p> <p>If you have other devices connected to your phone line, such as alarm systems, you might need to upgrade your device to make sure it is compatible. If you are unsure about how a device in your home or business might be affected, contact the equipment supplier or manufacturer to find out whether it will remain functional on a digital phone line.</p>	 <p>You should tell your communications provider now if you have no other way of making emergency calls.</p>

15	<p>Will there be scams around related to this? What should I watch out for?</p> <p>Any change is an opportunity for new scams, and sadly some scammers may see this as a chance to take advantage of people, over the phone, via email, or in person on the doorstep.</p> <p>Age UK have excellent advice on avoiding scams on their website:</p> <p>Remember the following scam advice when someone's contacting you about the switchover:</p> <p>STOP – take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or your personal information.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/scams-fraud/>

16	Contact details for phone providers Some phone numbers below are specific support related to the copper phone line switch off, others are the general customer service number, depending on what the different companies are providing. 0330 numbers are charged at the same rate as any call to a landline. If your provider is not listed below, contact the DigiKnow helpline for help to research the number: 07724 217888	
BT	https://www.bt.com/broadband/digital-voice	0800 800 150
	https://www.bt.com/help/contact-bt/technical-support/landline	
Plusnet	https://www.plus.net/help/my-account/changes-to-broadband-andphone-faqs/	0800 432 0200
	https://www.plus.net/contact-us	
Virgin	https://www.virginmedia.com/help/digital-voice-switchover	150 from a Virgin Media home phone or Virgin Mobile phone, or 0345 454 1111
	https://www.virginmedia.com/help/landline?openExternal=true	
Vodafone	https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/smart-living/everything-youneed-to-know-about/your-landline-is-changing-everything-you-need-toknow/	0333 304 0191
EE	https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/smart-living/everything-youneed-to-know-about/how-to-contact-vodafone-uk-customer-servicesand-how-to-complain/	Text for a call back: Text PHONE to 66033 (charge may apply at your standard rate)
		0330 123 1105
Now	https://help.nowtv.com/get-in-touch/now-broadband-calls	0330 332 3050. Option 1
Shell	https://www.shellenergy.co.uk/contact-us/broadband	0330 094 5801
Sky	https://www.sky.com/help/home/sky-talk	03337591350
Talk Talk	https://community.talktalk.co.uk/t5/Articles/How-to-contact-TalkTalkBroadband/	Free to call from Talk Talk line. 0345 172 0088
The Phone co-op	https://broadband.yourcoop.coop/big-switch-off/	01608 434 000 Option 2
	https://broadband.yourcoop.coop/help-resources/contact-us/	
Direct save Telecom	https://www.directsavetelecom.co.uk/contact_us.php	01923709709 Option 2