

## **Analogue to Digital Switchover and Telecare**

Update for Area Community Planning Groups

January 2024

All telephone lines within the UK are migrating from traditional copper analogue lines to digital ones and the deadline for this is June 2025. This is led by industry (the telephone providers) due to the costs of maintaining the analogue lines. BT have indicated that they are planning to migrate the majority of telephone lines in Scotland towards the end of 2024.

The switch to digital lines has an impact on telecare and we need to swap over all analogue devices to ones that are compatible with a digital telephone line (broadband) or which operate over the mobile signal. It is important to note that at this time, connection over broadband is not yet possible as the technology at the supplier end is not yet able to connect in this method. We expect this to be operational in the coming months but this is not something that we have control over.

We have a programme to swap over all analogue units with digital ones and are currently rolling this out, which will happen over the next 18 months. We are initially focusing on those who have already moved onto a digital line and those who live in areas of very good mobile signal. 25% of all clients in Argyll and Bute currently have a digitally capable telecare device.

We have mapped out every telecare client in Argyll and Bute against the Ofcom mobile signal checker to make sure that we are putting in the right solution at the right time for clients. For our telecare clients who live in areas of poor mobile signal, we are deliberately not switching analogue units at this time until a connection over broadband is available to ensure that telecare clients are still able to receive a working telecare service.

If people do go to a digital line but live in an area with no mobile signal, we have a work-around solution that enables them to still have telecare whilst we await connection via broadband/the digital line. This is currently being utilised by 17 clients across Argyll and Bute. However, there have been a couple of occasions where this has failed (with Sky customers) and as a result, we are no longer able to provide a telecare service until connection over broadband is possible.

BT are trying to assure us that they are not proactively moving people with telecare onto digital lines “unless they choose to do so themselves” but we know that this does not match with the information telecare clients are reporting to ourselves. Our advice to anyone at this time who lives in an area of poor mobile signal and requires telecare is to tell BT that they require an analogue line for telecare as the mobile signal is poor and that they require to be left until last in terms of migrating over to a digital line.

We communicate regularly through newsletters to all telecare clients and ask them to make us aware if they move to a digital line. When it comes to changing the device over to a digital one as part of the roll-out, the TEC team will be in contact with the individual or their families where appropriate to make the arrangements to switch the device in advance.

My understanding from meetings at a national level is that after the June 2025 date, analogue lines will continue to be available for a time (undefined) but only digital lines will be able to be purchased for new customers/contracts. We will continue to support both analogue and digital telecare devices for as long as required and will not be insisting that people have to be on a digital line in order to receive telecare if they still have an analogue line in the property after this date.

Our key ask of all partners supporting telecare clients is to:

- Inform the team if someone has moved to a digital line so we can ensure their telecare is working – 01546 605517
- Remind telecare clients to do a monthly test call to ensure it is working and let us know if any issues
- Ask clients to ensure the telephone provider knows they have telecare to try and avoid any forced migrations unless the client wishes to move to a digital line

**Samantha Somers**

TEC Lead, [Samantha.somers@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha.somers@argyll-bute.gov.uk)