

Digital Update CPP Management Meeting

Fixed Broadband R100 Update

The current programme being rolled out by the Scottish Government is the Reaching 100% better known as the R100 programme this is a £600M programme to extend Superfast Broadband (SFB) access to 100% of Scottish premises.

Currently there are over 6000 premises in Argyll and Bute in scope of this programme which will provide a number of remote premises access to a Superfast connection. Although this is Superfast Programme every premise in scope will be given access to a Full Fibre Ultrafast connection. However, on the negative side not every premise without descent access is currently going to be served. To counteract this both the UK and Scottish Governments along with OpenReach are aware of the complexities of such a huge infrastructure project. Both UK (project Gigabit) and Scottish Governments (SBVS) are running voucher scheme to provide these premises with assistance out with any government or commercial schemes. OpenReach also have there Fibre Community Partnership intervention that supports communities out with these programmes to access these vouchers as they are supplier led.

There has been some significant delays in the build of R100 across our area as OpenReach engage with the Councils Roads Department however measure are in place to mitigate these delays with an accelerated build across the whole area. We will update the partners on a regular basis outlining where build will be happening to alert individual communities to expect significant disruption particularly with traffic movements.

Currently

95.1% of Argyll and Bute premises are connected to the fibre network

87.6% can access speeds >30Mbps

0.8% are between 24 and 30 Mbps

2.2% are between 15 and 24 Mbps

1.6% are between 10 and 15Mbps

4.8% are between 2 and 10Mbps

3.0% are below 2Mbps

Full Fibre/Ultra-Fast Broadband (>100 Mbps) availability is currently at 15.1%

Shared Rural Network (SRN) and Scottish Government 4G infill programme (S4GI)

As we all know Argyll and Bute along with other rural areas have been underserved when it comes to mobile coverage from the 4 Mobile Network Operators Vodafone, O2 (now Virgin Media O2 VMO2), EE and Three. EE were the first operator to aggressively build in rural areas due to them being awarded the Emergency Service Network (ESN) as such EE currently have 75% geographic coverage across Argyll and Bute.

The S4GI and was a Scottish Government Intervention to provide infrastructure in areas that were not commercially viable. Argyll and Bute have had 7 new multi operator suitable mast built in Southend, Glenbarr, Crinan, Jura x 2 and Mull x 2.

Similarly, the SRN this is a £1B programme funded by UK Government and the 4MNO's in a joint venture and is in 2 parts, Partial Not Spot (PNS) sites industry funded £500M+ and Total Not Spot (TNS) sites Government funded £500M.

The challenge to this program is that virtually all of these sites sit in remote rural areas and very often designated planning area which comes with added levels of scrutiny by our statutory consultees and can take a considerable amount of time to get through the planning process. As with fixed broadband infrastructure build there is potential for significant disruption in the short term due to the civils work on the road network that is required. In most cases must require a power connection and a fibre connection to provide the backhaul to the network.

Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) Switch off

The main purpose of this update is to make the partners aware of the upcoming switch off of the PSTN. Reportedly this will be completed by the end of 2025 and has caused significant concern among numerous groups. It is wrongly perceived that this is Openreach turning off copper which people that don't currently have full fibre provision rely on for broadband and telephone connections. The copper network is not getting switched off it is the old analogue switching gear in telephone exchanges that is getting made redundant.

Agreed that currently in the event of a power cut homes that still have a old analogue phone can plug it straight into the phone socket in the wall and still make/receive calls as power comes from the exchange will no longer be available but alternative solutions are available and more will be available when the time comes. To allay people fears it will be no more than plugging your existing handset from the wall socket into the back of your broadband router. 99% of phone handsets are compatible with a digital phone service.

I request partners to help spread the word

The UK's home phone (landline) service is getting an upgrade. The transition has already started and will continue over the next few years. Soon, most landline calls will be made over a broadband line. The switchover should be straightforward. Your phone number will remain the same, and most handsets work fine with the new system. However, there are some steps you need to take to make sure your landline services continue to work. Your phone company will inform you ahead of the migration, but preparing now can make the transition smoother for you.

Nothing Changes for you if

- You already have Digital Voice or Internet calls service from your provider.
- You are a mobile-only household.

If your landline is migrating

- Check if other devices are connected to your landline (e.g. telecare, burglar alarms, etc.).
- Ask the device manufacturers if those connected devices are digital-ready.
- Inform your phone company about your devices.
- Let your phone company know if you are a vulnerable customer

What you need to do

If you already have broadband, the switchover could be as simple as unplugging your phone line from the wall-mounted socket and plugging it into the back of your broadband router. If you don't have access to broadband you don't need to worry. Phone companies are working on solutions to keep all customers connected and will be in touch. Some households may have other devices connected to the phone line (burglar alarms, telecare devices, fax machines, etc.). If you use such connected devices, check with the equipment providers whether your kit needs upgrading. And, let your phone company know.

Beware of Scams

Criminals may use the switchover as an opportunity to scam others. If someone contacts you, follow this advice:

1. STOP – Take a moment to stop and think before sharing personal information!
2. CHALLENGE – Never feel rushed or pressured into making a decision. If you're suspicious, hang up and call the official company number.
3. PROTECT – If you think you've been a victim of a scam report it to your communications provider and to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040.

Power Outages

In the event of a power outage, digital landlines won't function until power is restored. We strongly recommend you have a mobile phone available for emergencies. Device providers and phone companies have different support on offer for those who need it.

Currently there are 2 solutions available

- Battery Back-up Units (BBU's): most suitable for customers that do not have mobile signal. These will be offered to vulnerable customers for free.
- Hybrid Phones with built batteries, which switch to mobile network connections when necessary: most suitable for customers with mobile signal. These will be offered to vulnerable customers for free.

Vulnerable Customers

Vulnerable customers, like telecare users, should inform their phone company about their needs and check if their equipment is "digital-ready." Telcos are working with local authorities and telecare providers to assist vulnerable customers. Encourage those relying on landlines to contact their phone company and social care provider

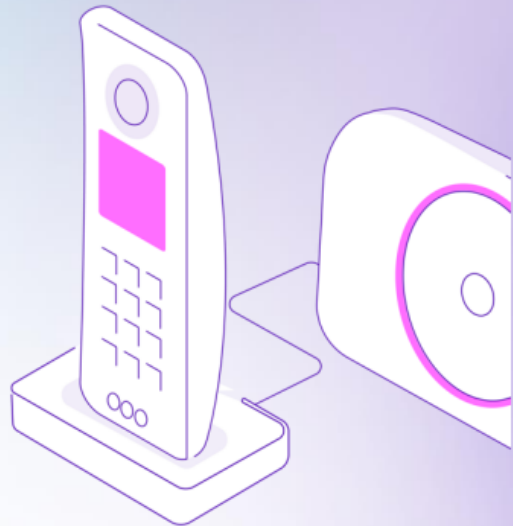
There have been 4 groups categorised as vulnerable these are

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Registered Disabled
- Telecare user

It is crucial that your telephone provider are aware that an individual sits with-in one of these groups so that measures can be put in place as to not migrate their line at the moment and that they are aware that they are eligible for free power outage resilience.

A guide to Digital Voice

Digital Voice is BT's new home phone service, powered by your broadband connection



For most customers, the switch to Digital Voice will be as simple as connecting your home phone handset to a router rather than the phone socket on the wall.

BT is inviting customers to switch to its digital home phone service on a region-by-region basis.



Over 99% of phone handsets are compatible with our digital home phone service. And if yours isn't compatible, we have a range of handsets that you can add to your order.

FREE

For most BT customers, it is a simple and completely free transition to Digital Voice with no home installation work required. And you can keep your current phone number.



Digital Voice prevents the majority of scam calls, provides clearer call quality and allows users to easily divert calls to their mobile if they're out of the house.



Customers will be contacted four weeks before making the switch, to help ensure they're ready to make the move.

What about customers with additional needs?

Initially, we won't be proactively switching over customers (where this information is available):

- with a healthcare pendant
- who only use landlines
- with no mobile signal
- who have disclosed any additional needs

BT will take extra time and will provide additional support to customers who are over 70 and are ready to make the switch. If customers want to make the switch to Digital Voice, they can contact BT at any time to do so.

What if there's a power cut?

We understand that for many, particularly those with additional needs, the landline is a lifeline. We want to be sure everyone remains connected. We've been working to make battery back-up units available to those that need them. Customers with additional needs such as health pendants or without mobile signal, can take advantage of free additional support, on request. We're also working closely with the power companies to establish processes which help them to restore power as quickly as possible.



For more information, visit www.bt.com/digital-voice

The charter of commitments for customers with Telecare

Communications Providers must:

1. Not undertake any non-voluntary migrations, until they have **full confidence they are taking all possible steps to protect vulnerable people** through the migration process.
2. Not migrate Telecare users without CP's, the customer, or the telecare company **confirming they have a compatible and functioning telecare** solution in place.
3. Work to provide battery backup solutions **that go beyond the Ofcom minimum of 1 hour of continued** access to emergency services in the event of a power outage.
4. Collectively work with Ofcom and Government to create a **shared definition of 'vulnerable'** customer groups that require greater support, specific to the digital landline migration.
5. Conduct checks on customers who've already been migrated to **ensure they don't have telecare devices we were unaware of**, and if they do, ensure suitable support is provided.

