

Going digital

Changes to the UK's telephone network and how it might affect you

What is going to happen and why?

The UK's existing telephone infrastructure is old and becoming unable to manage the increase in use due to people accessing the internet and using electronic devices in their homes. As a result telephone line providers (e.g. BT) are modernising the system. The new network is digital, and uses the internet to make and receive phone calls, which means everyone will need to plug their phones into a broadband hub, rather than into a socket on the wall. Currently telephone line providers are not charging an extra fee for the broadband hub in addition to your telephone service, but you should confirm this with your telephone line provider.

When will it happen?

Telephone line providers have already begun work, and the whole network is planned to be fully digital by the end of 2025.

What changes will it mean for my phone and telecare service?

Once your phone line is digital, you shouldn't notice any change in the way you make and receive telephone calls, and your phone number should remain the same.

Telephone line providers have advised that most telephone handsets will continue to work, but a few may need to be replaced. You should contact your telephone line provider if you have any questions.

Some Lifeline units may also need to be plugged into a new broadband hub. In some cases, you may need a new Lifeline unit, and your telecare provider can supply this if this is the case.

How will I know when it happens?

Your telephone line provider should contact you to arrange a time for your telephone line to move from the old network to a digital connection. They should provide you with any instructions you need to follow at the time.

What will I need to do?

When your telephone line provider contacts you to arrange for your line to switch over to digital, you should tell them that you have telecare equipment. You should also contact your telecare provider to tell them your line is becoming digital. Once your line has been switched to digital, you should follow the instructions sent to you by your telephone provider, for example plugging your phone into a new broadband hub, but you can also contact your telecare provider if you have any questions.

It's also a good idea to make a test call to the monitoring centre using your telecare equipment before and after your line is switched over to make sure everything is in working order.

How can I find out more?

Your telephone line provider should be in touch before your line switches to digital, but you should contact them with any concerns in the meantime.