



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

The Digital Switchover



What is the Digital Switchover or 'landline switch off'?

The UK telephone network is being upgraded. By 31st January 2027, telephone providers are committed to moving customers from old analogue landlines to new digital landline services.

This change is happening across the UK and is led by the telecommunications industry. The new digital system uses modern technology, including fibre, to provide a more reliable and future-proof service. This work has been ongoing for a few years and many lines across the UK, including within Cumbria, have already been moved.

As part of the switchover, anything that uses a traditional landline will be affected. This may include:

- Home phones
- Phones designed for people with hearing loss
- Telecare and personal alarm systems
- Fall and motion detectors
- Some healthcare devices, such as monitors

Your provider will contact you before your service is switched. They will explain what you need to do so your phone and any important devices continue to work as normal.

How will this affect me/ what do I need to do

The good news is that your landline is not going away. For most people, the change will be straightforward, and many households are already using a digital phone service as part of their broadband connection.

Your telephone provider (such as BT, Virgin Media or O2) will contact you before your switchover date. It is important that you read any letters, emails, text messages or appointment notifications you receive and take any action requested.

The most important thing residents can do is respond when contacted by their provider. Many customers across the UK have already completed the switch successfully, but some people are missing or ignoring communications offering support and information about the change.

If your provider contacts you, they may ask you to:

- Confirm a free engineer appointment.
- Contact them to discuss the support available to you.
- Check whether you use any devices connected to your landline.
- Prepare equipment for the switchover.

Engineer visits are offered for all Full Fibre installations, vulnerable customers and customers who use telecare or other critical services. If you receive an appointment notification from Openreach or your telecoms provider, it is important that you confirm the appointment so the work can go ahead.

In many cases, if you have broadband, the only change will be plugging your phone into your broadband router instead of the wall socket. However, this will not be the case for every handset, you may be required to buy an adapter or a new handset. BT says that 99% of current phones will work with its Digital Voice service, but some older models may need to be replaced. If you need a new phone, you can order one at a discounted rate from BT rather than an adaptor. Please see further advice here:

[How to Video - Analogue to Digital Telephone Landline Switchover Advice VOIP.](#)

[Will My Old Phone Work On VoIP? Adapting Legacy Hardware](#)

[Digital Voice and the landline switch-off: what it means for you - Which?](#)

You may need to take extra steps if you rely on certain devices:

- If you use a landline regularly or have a telecare device such as a personal alarm, lifeline or fall monitor, let your provider know. They can check your setup and arrange any additional support that may be needed.
- If you have other devices connected to your phone line, such as alarm systems, these may need to be upgraded to work with the new digital service.
- If you are unsure whether a device will be affected, contact the equipment supplier or manufacturer for advice.



Customers who only have a home phone

If you do not use broadband, you will not be required to take a broadband package simply because fibre broadband becomes available in your area. Your landline provider will contact you directly if any action is needed.

Some providers offer an interim landline-only service designed to keep customers connected while the analogue PSTN network is withdrawn. This allows eligible customers to continue using a landline service without taking a broadband package.

Openreach has confirmed that its Dedicated Landline Service is self-powered, meaning existing telephone handsets and compatible devices connected to the phone line can continue to work, including during a power cut.

Knowing what to expect, checking your equipment and responding promptly when your provider contacts you will help ensure your service continues to operate safely and reliably.

Vulnerable residents need to take action

What “vulnerable” means:

You or someone you know may be considered vulnerable if any of the following apply. In these cases, extra support may be available. Please contact your telephone provider if you:

- Are aged 75 or over
- Use a personal alarm or medical device
- Do not have broadband at home
- Live in an area without mobile signal or do not have a mobile phone
- Have additional needs

How to register as vulnerable:

If you or a family member may be vulnerable, you can let your telephone provider know by dialling 150 from your landline. If this number does not work, use the contact number shown on your bill. Tell them you need extra support due to vulnerability, and they will explain what to do next and arrange any help or equipment you may need.

You may also wish to register with Electricity North West's **Extra Care Register (ECR)**. [Join Our Extra Care register | SP Electricity North West](#) This free service provides additional support to customers who may need extra assistance during power cuts, including people who rely on telecare equipment, have health conditions, are of pensionable age, or depend on communications services to stay safe and connected. As digital landlines rely on electricity to operate, joining the Priority Services Register can help ensure you receive additional support and information during power outages.

If you or someone you know has a telecare safety device

If you or someone you know relies on a landline, or uses a device connected to it (such as a fall monitor, lifeline or personal alarm), you should contact the company that provides this service. They can explain how the switchover may affect the device and what support is available.

People who are considered vulnerable and rely on important services such as telecare or telehealth may be eligible for additional support from their telecoms provider. This can include a free backup solution during power cuts and, where needed, support from an engineer to help set up equipment safely.

In an emergency

Digital landlines do not work during a power cut because they cannot carry power through the phone line.

If you have a mobile phone, you can still use it to make calls in an emergency. If you do not have another way to contact emergency services, your telecoms provider will make sure you have a suitable solution so you can still make emergency calls. You must let your telecom provider know that you are vulnerable so they can install a backup solution at your property.

Any backup power equipment provided by your telecoms provider is intended to support access to emergency communications during a power cut. These devices typically have limited battery capacity and should not be relied upon for routine phone calls, internet use, streaming services or working from home during an outage. Using the backup power supply only when needed for essential or emergency communications will help ensure it remains available when it is most needed.

Support for Communities

Prepare for power outages by familiarising yourself with local community resilience arrangements and support networks in your area. Many communities have resilience groups or emergency plans in place to help residents during incidents such as severe weather, flooding or prolonged power cuts.

You can find guidance on preparing for emergencies through the Cumbria Prepared website and details of your local parish council through the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC).

If you would like to find out whether there is a Community Resilience Group in your area, please contact support.cumbria@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk. You may also find community emergency planning resources, such as those provided by Action with Communities in Cumbria, helpful in preparing for disruptions to power and communication services.

Useful links:

[Preparing for Emergencies | Cumbria Prepared](#)

[CALC - Cumbria Association of Local Councils](#)

[Community Emergency Planning - Rural and community development charity for Cumbria - Action with Communities in Cumbria, Penrith, Cumbria](#)

Stay safe from scams

As the telephone network changes, some criminals may try to take advantage of this. It's important to stay alert.

Be cautious of calls from anyone asking you to pay for or renew telecare services over the phone. Scammers may pretend to be from a new provider and ask for your bank details to set up payments.

Your council will never ask you to pay for telecare over the phone.

Do not share personal or bank details if you are unsure who you are speaking to.

If you receive a suspicious call:

- Hang up straight away
- Report it to Action Fraud (online or by calling 0300 123 2040)
- If in doubt, do not give any information and end the call

You can also:

- Visit the Age UK website for advice on avoiding phone scams
- Sign up to the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) to reduce marketing calls
- Being aware and cautious can help protect you and others from scams.



Useful links

[Digital switchover FAQs | Local Government Association](#)

[Digital switchover telecare checklist | Local Government Association](#)

[Connected Together - All-IP - About BT | BT Plc](#)

[Moving landline phones to digital technology: what you need to know](#)

[Digital Voice and the landline switch-off: what it means for you - Which?](#)

[Are landlines being phased out? Changes to landline telephones | Age UK](#)

[UK transition from analogue to digital landlines - GOV.UK](#)

[Community Emergency Planning - Rural and community development charity for Cumbria - Action with Communities in Cumbria, Penrith, Cumbria?](#)

