

# Changes to landline telephones

The UK's telephone network is being upgraded, which means that landline services are changing. You'll still be able to have a landline in your home, but the technology that powers it will be a bit different and you may need to upgrade some of your equipment.

## What's changing and when?

The technology we currently use to make calls on landlines, called 'analogue', is being replaced with an internet-based version, called an 'IP network'.

Landlines will still exist, and you can still have a phone line in your home - but the system that underpins it will be different.

The changeover needs to happen by December 2025, as this is when the old technology will stop working. Phone providers have already started work on switching over the network, but you don't need to do anything until they get in touch with you.

## Why are these changes happening?

The equipment that makes the current landline network run isn't fit for the future and needs to be upgraded. The new system will use the internet to make phone calls.

Phone and broadband companies are leading this change. The Government and Ofcom (the communications regulator) are supporting it.

## Will my landline phone be affected?

Everyone who has a landline will move over to the new system. You don't need to do anything yet - your phone company will get in touch with you.

For lots of people, the change will be as simple as plugging their phone into their broadband router.

## Can I keep my phone number?

Yes, in most cases you'll be able to keep your current phone number.

## **Will I need a new phone?**

If your phone handset is very old, you might need to change it. Your phone provider will be able to advise you.

## **Will anything else be affected, like my telecare?**

The switch to digital landlines may affect telecare devices and personal alarms. This process will be gradual and won't be complete until the end of 2025.

Your telephone service provider should contact you before the switch takes place. But you may wish to contact the supplier of any telecare devices you use to check if the device will work with the new system or whether any equipment may need to be upgraded.

## **What if I don't have, or don't want, the internet at home?**

Because the new system runs off the internet, you won't be able to make calls without an internet connection at home.

If you already have broadband, you can use that. If not and you don't want a high-speed internet connection, you should be given the option to use a simple internet connection just for making calls.

## **Will I have to pay more?**

BT, which provides the majority of landlines, have committed to not raising prices above inflation for 'voice only' customers – those who don't have home broadband. This commitment is for at least the next 5 years and will mean that whatever technology your landline uses, the old system or the new, your bill should not rise significantly. This means that you shouldn't face extra costs if you need a new simple internet connection to make calls.

## **Is it true that I won't be able to make phone calls if there's a power cut?**

Because the new system will work off your home electricity, if there's a power cut it'll mean you can't make phone calls. In these instances, phone companies are advising that you should use a mobile phone as a backup.

If you don't have a mobile, live somewhere where there's no or poor signal, or depend on your landline, for example because you're disabled, your home phone provider should offer you a solution like a battery-operated handset. This will mean that you can make emergency calls during a power cut.

## Is there anything I should watch out for?

As the switchover is affecting millions of homes, this can create an opportunity for criminals to develop new scams. These could be over the phone, via email, or at your doorstep.

Remember the key advice when someone is contacting you about the switchover:

**STOP** – Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

**CHALLENGE** – Could it be fake? It is ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush you.

**PROTECT** – Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to [Action Fraud](https://www.actionfraud.org.uk) 0300 123 2040

Other unscrupulous people may also try to sell you equipment or get you to sign up to expensive contracts that you don't need. Don't rush into any decisions, seek a second opinion, and speak to your phone company who will be to advise you about what you need.

This information has been produced by Age UK and can be found on Age UK website