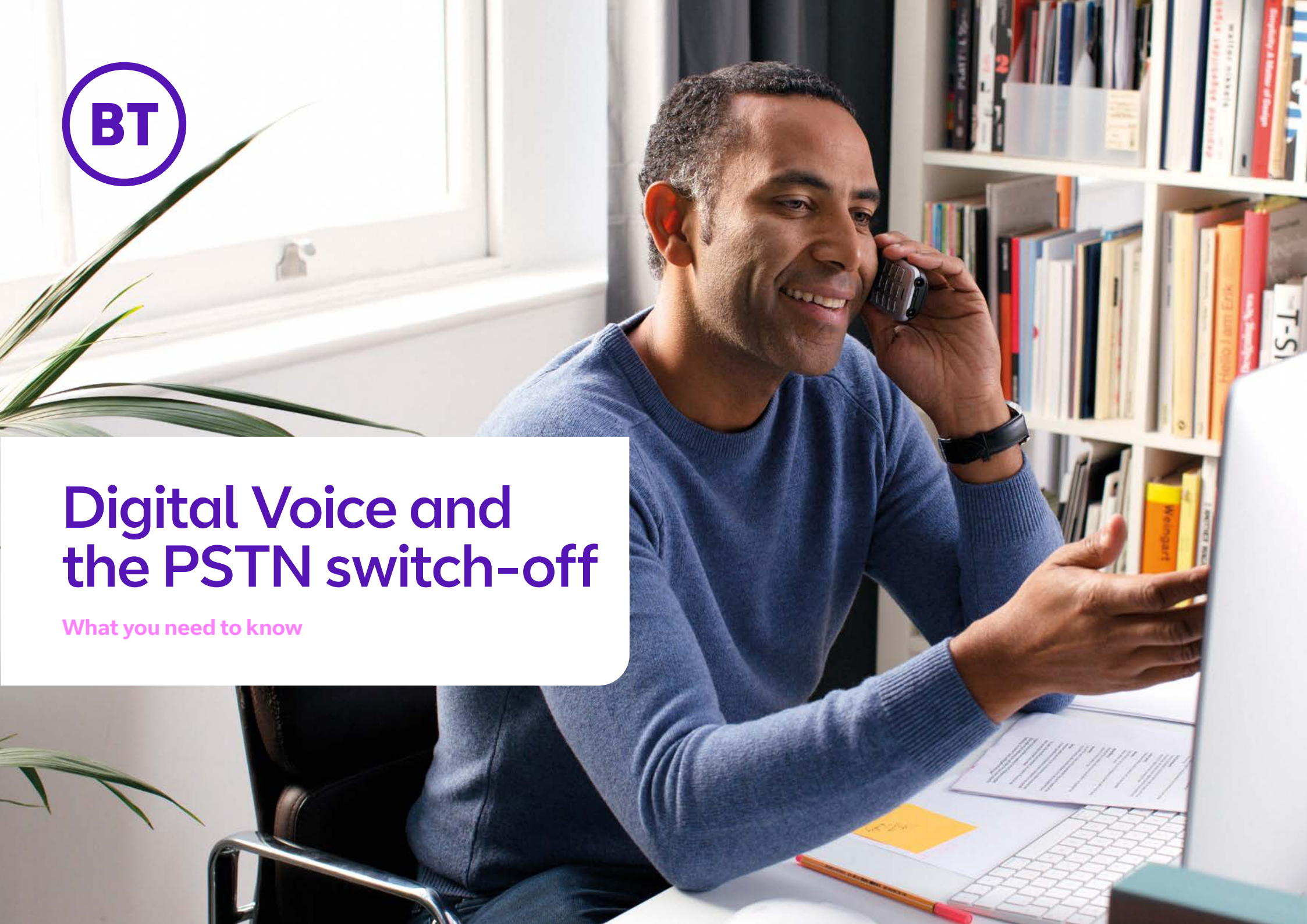




Digital Voice and the PSTN switch-off

What you need to know



The UK is now embarking on the next step in the digital transformation of our telecoms services.

The analogue Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) has been the backbone of our phone service for decades. But it's now old, inefficient, increasingly difficult to maintain and can't meet the changing demands of households, businesses and public services.

That's why, together with all other network providers, we're moving all our customers from the old analogue PSTN services to BT's next generation home phone service, Digital Voice, with calls routed over Internet Protocol (or 'All IP') by the end of 2025.

This means that voice calls will be carried in the same way as data over a broadband connection, ensuring everyone is ready for when the whole of the UK is connected via full fibre. It will deliver higher quality, more reliable, more flexible and greener voice services.

This is a global trend, with other countries including Germany, Japan, Switzerland, and Sweden already in the process of upgrading to digital telephone services.

This is a critical and positive step in creating a truly digital UK – but we understand that some customers have concerns about what it means for them and the services they rely on. So, we want to set out the facts and address some of the myths around the upgrade to Digital Voice/All IP.

What changes with Digital Voice?

For most households, upgrading to Digital Voice will mean very little change to how they use their phone today – but will deliver crystal-clear voice quality, the ability to block nuisance calls at the touch of a button, and make it easier to connect to their voice service.

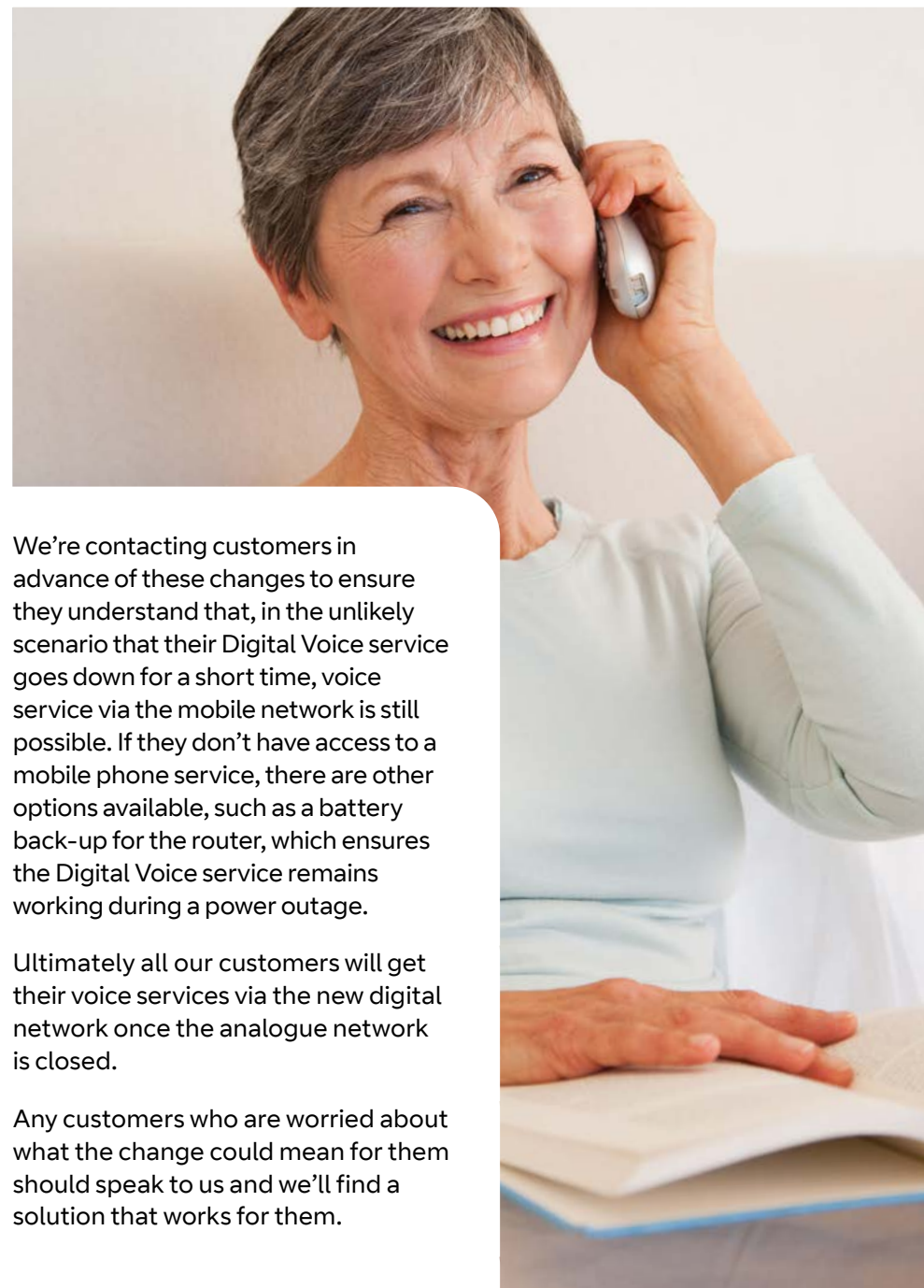
Instead of connecting a home phone into a telephone socket on the wall, Digital Voice handsets connect to the router over wi-fi. Calls are then placed over the digital data link, and additional devices can then be connected wirelessly and positioned throughout the home.

Customers can keep their existing phone number and can also continue to use their old phone – by plugging it into a specific port on the new home hub so it will continue to work in the same way while enjoying a better sounding call. Cordless (DECT) phones can also be used in this way, with the main handset plugged into the new router and any additional ones connected using the cordless phones radio connection as before.

There's no difference in cost for Digital Voice compared to the analogue system for households, and all new Digital Voice customers have the option of receiving a new Digital Voice compatible handset or adapter free of charge to ensure they experience the full benefits.

Because the Digital Voice service will be delivered primarily via fibre optic cables that can't carry electricity, you'll need to have a working power source in your home for the Digital Voice phone to work, just the same as a cordless handset today.

This means that our current advice to have a corded phone available for emergency calls, will also change. Using mobile phones in an emergency or, if that isn't possible, a battery back-up system for the Digital Voice will be the way forward for emergency calls.



We're contacting customers in advance of these changes to ensure they understand that, in the unlikely scenario that their Digital Voice service goes down for a short time, voice service via the mobile network is still possible. If they don't have access to a mobile phone service, there are other options available, such as a battery back-up for the router, which ensures the Digital Voice service remains working during a power outage.

Ultimately all our customers will get their voice services via the new digital network once the analogue network is closed.

Any customers who are worried about what the change could mean for them should speak to us and we'll find a solution that works for them.



What support is in place for more vulnerable customers?

Protecting our vulnerable customers is a huge priority and we're making this change very gradually to ensure we have addressed all concerns. We understand that the introduction of any new technology can feel worrying.

We're working to identify vulnerable customers early on and will be partnering with groups such as Citizens Advice and Age UK to raise awareness of the change and make sure they have all the information and support they need.

Since 2017, we've been working with the providers and manufacturers of equipment such as burglar alarms and care pendants to help make sure that these services are ready for All IP networks. If this applies to you then the supplier of your equipment is best placed to advise if any changes are needed to your alarm or health care service to take advantage of Digital Voice lines.

Customers we identify as vulnerable on our systems won't be moved to Digital Voice in the early stages and we will work with these customers to ensure they do not lose access to vital services that are currently connected via the PSTN.

What about customers with no broadband?

At the moment, customers who don't currently have a broadband connection in their homes and who just take a voice service from BT won't be moved over to Digital Voice. These customers will be able to continue to use their current phone service for the time being.

However, as the PSTN will be closed by the end of 2025, they will ultimately need to move to Digital Voice. We'll be in touch with them later in the process with solutions to move them over to a modern digital solution and will give extra help and assistance for those who need it.



When will customers start to be moved to Digital Voice?

With 10 million BT customers to move over to the new digital service before the old analogue system closes in 2025, we're starting to move as many customers as possible now and over the next few years.

We're contacting all customers before making any changes, but we won't be moving everyone in an area at the same time.

We're starting with areas where our full fibre deployment is well advanced and we will focus initially on existing and new broadband customers who, our records show, aren't vulnerable and don't have alarm systems or other analogue services that may need to be upgraded.

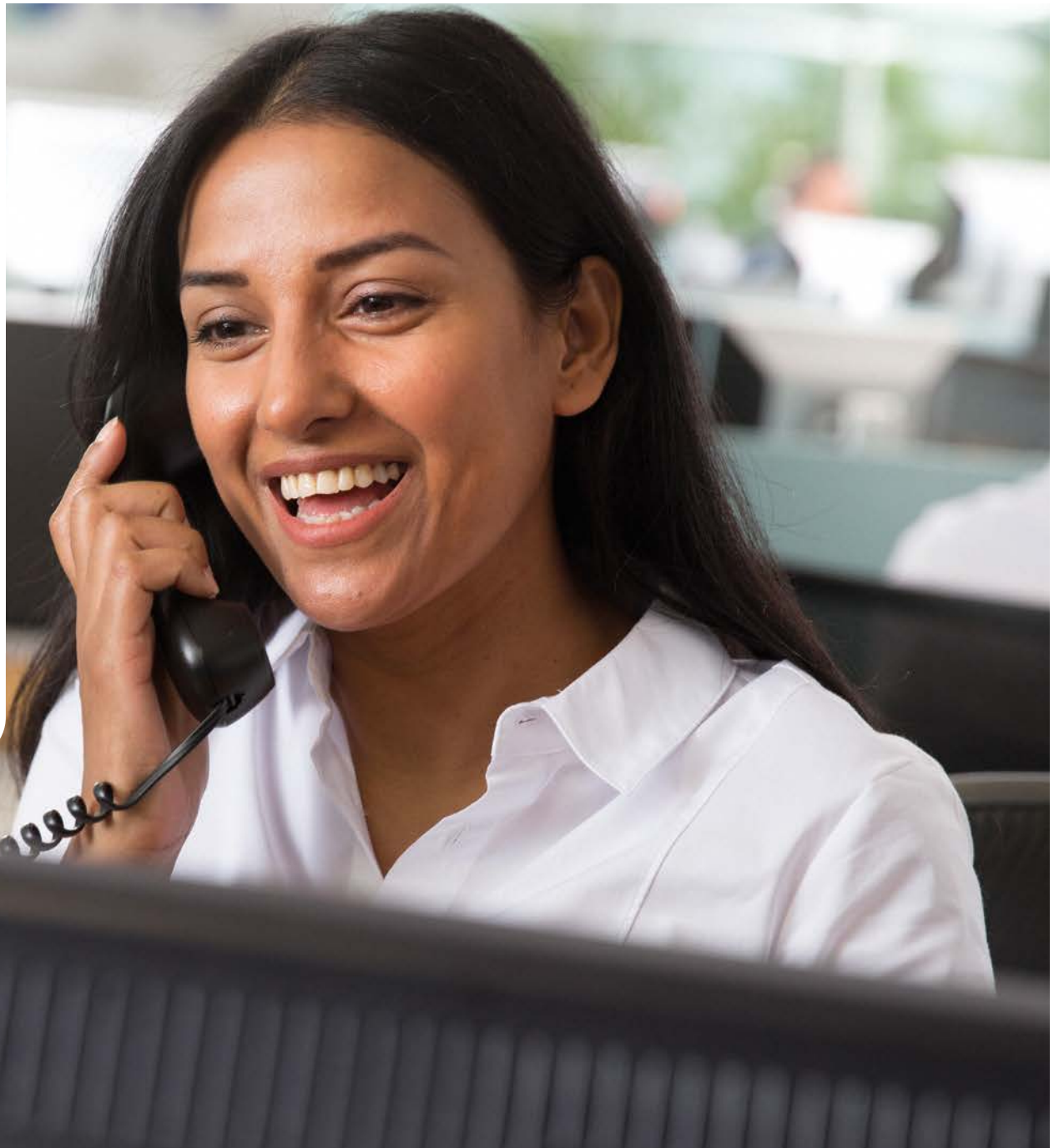
Other providers are also making these changes for their customers as well, but may well be doing them at different times to BT in the same area.

What does this mean for organisations and public services who currently rely on PSTN services?

All current users of the PSTN will move to All IP.

We know that for many organisations, they rely on a range of services, beyond voice, provided by the PSTN.

We're working closely with our enterprise customers across the private, public and third sectors to ensure they're prepared for, and benefit from, the move to All IP.



Further information

The telecoms industry is working together on a communications campaign to support customers through this upgrade to our telecoms infrastructure. Please visit the [Future of Voice](#) website, which has been set up to answer questions from the public.

If you are an elected representative and have further questions on behalf of constituents who are BT customers and require further information, please contact us at public.affairs2@bt.com

For BT customers looking for further information please visit: bt.com/whatisdigitalvoice
Or call **0800 800 150**



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