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Subject: Background info Wales BT landline switchover
Date: 14 December 2021 at 07:50
To: David Harrison computer@cardiffu3a.org.uk

JS

Hi David,

I'm a member of NPC Wales Executive so got the following email from the chair yesterday. It's an extract of some of the things he's going to raise at a meeting, but is useful additional background for 'our' article.
Jenny

INFO from Dereck Roberts, Chair, National Pensioners Convention Wales, to be given to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales monthly meeting of Older People's Groups on 16th December .

The Landline Switch as NPC Wales currently understands it: The Switch which will gradually move landline customers from the country's traditional telephone network – the 'public switched telephone network' (PSTN) – to newer digital technology known as 'voice over internet protocol' (VoIP), which carries calls over a broadband connection.

In 2019m OfCom, the regulator, published The future of fixed telephone services Policy positioning statement.

BT Openreach have published a time scale

By Sept 2023 – BT intend to stop selling products reliant on the PSTN

By Dec 2025 – BT intend to withdraw all products reliant on the PSTN

Virgin media have confirmed that they will follow the same process.

In Wales the "Stop Sell" process started in 2021 in exchanges located in:

Flintshire
Cardiff
Denbighshire
Gwynedd
Swansea
Vale of Glamorgan

And will roll out through 2022 as well

Carmarthenshire
Isle of Anglesey
Aberdare
Carmarthen
CE Fibre Cities - Cardiff
Denbigh
Flint
Pontardulais
Caerphilly
Merthyr Tydfil

In terms of costs users may have to buy new phone and other kit compatible with the Broadband Hub. As for ongoing costs, who knows, but the regulator does have a role to play. There will also be an additional

but the regulator does have a role to play. There will also be an additional home electricity charge as you will have to keep your broadband hub plugged in at all times if you want to make or receive calls 24/7.

The first problem is, of course, one of digital exclusion again

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

For housing, health and social care providers who deliver essential care services supported by telecare, the PSTN switch off provides significant cause for concern. If local authorities, housing associations and other care providers fail to address the switchover in a timely manner, vulnerable adults may be left without the emergency assistance they rely on.

Within the telecare space, there is a misconception that analogue telecare units will still work within digital telephone networks, such as VoIP. Analogue telecare equipment will not work within the digital requirements, and will cause an influx of call failures, which could be fatal for service users in need.

So for Local Authorities, Social Care providers there is a need to act now. **To get ahead of the PSTN switch off, businesses and service providers need to act now by upgrading to VoIP.**

BT Say

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. (And hope you remember to keep it charged up and know where it is).

BT: 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. How?

Virgin Media have started contacting their customers:

Our home phone services will soon be provided over our fibre network. This means your phone will need to be plugged directly into your broadband Hub.

As our fibre phone line runs over our broadband network, it doesn't have its own back-up power source. This means if there's a local power cut or network outage, the fibre phone line will stop working and you won't be able to make calls.

If you have accessibility needs or don't have a mobile phone, we'll give

you an Emergency Backup Line at no extra cost. This lets you call 999/112 emergency services during a power cut or network outage.

Customers with accessibility needs and customers without access to a mobile phone can get our Emergency Backup Line, at no extra cost.

The Emergency Backup Line is a small box that connects the fibre phone line from the Hub to your home phone handset. It won't change the way you use your home phone but if there's ever a power cut or network outage, it'll automatically connect to the mobile network so you can still call emergency services.

One of our technicians will pop by and install it for you. Just make sure you keep the Emergency Backup Line connected to the mains power so its rechargeable battery is always fully charged and ready to use.

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