

RC/KL/NSI 004 20 (1)

19 February 2020

To: All Fire Gold, Fire Silver, Guarding Gold and Guarding Silver approved companies and applicants

Dear Colleague,

TRANSFORMING THE UK TELEPHONE NETWORK INTO AN ALL IP PLATFORM

BT networks has asked the NSI to inform our installer approved and applicant companies of the following and NSI are now informing all Fire companies as all intruder alarm companies and ARCs have been previously notified.

We are notifying all Guarding companies of the plans for the UK Telephone network switch to an All IP platform and the following details are for information purposes only.

BT plans to transition to ALL IP and expects to complete the change by 2025.

What's happening and why?

In 2017, BT Openreach announced their intention to move all voice communications to IP over the coming years. This is a move that will have implications for our industry.

In a similar fashion to the UK migration to digital TV a few years ago, telephone providers are looking at the same kind of switch for telephony services to an all IP network. As a result of this migration, many existing alarm devices may not work as they have done in the past.

Whilst 2025 is the proposed end target date, digital services are already available and consequently signalling systems could be affected before the 2025 end date.

The security and fire industry still has a significant number of customers that rely on analogue phone lines to provide voltage and dial tone to connected alarm devices and this configuration will change with the transition to an all IP digital platform.

BT envisages that security service providers will cease buying analogue equipment in the near future and that they will move to more compatible solutions that are designed to communicate digitally on an IP infrastructure. With the opening of BT's digital services lab at their R&D centre, alarm providers (installers and manufacturers) are now able to test both their existing and any new 'all IP' digital systems.

BT is keen to work with NSI and the wider security and fire industry to protect consumers during this transition by ensuring that those who rely on their current analogue alarm devices move to the new IP digital phone service in a controlled way to ensure that alarm services continue to perform their critical role.

Sodhi Dhillon, who heads up the engagement team for BT said, "It's really important that we get the message of the switchover out to the industry as quickly and as widely as possible. It's a massive programme of change, bigger than the switch over from analogue TV to digital TV, and we want to make sure nobody is left vulnerable when the analogue systems stop working".

What does BT Consumer want from us and why?

BT Consumer has asked NSI to contact all of their Installer companies and ARCs, firstly to convey their desire to help with testing of alarm equipment at the BT Labs and, secondly, to request that Alarm Receiving Centres help their users in the following way.

How can Alarm Receiving Centres help ensure their users aren't left without service?

BT Consumer is asking ARCs to provide their incoming alarm receiver telephone numbers (the number the alarm device dials). They can use this number to see who has a special service on their line and make sure no one is left vulnerable or without service from the switchover.

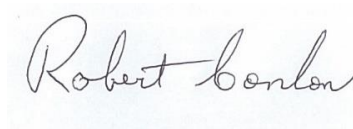
- BT will look for these numbers in their calls records to identify the customers who have dialled them in the last 12 months and will put a marker in their account. (It's reasonable to assume that any calls to this number would be from a device of some sort).
- They won't note the supplier, type of service or make/model of any special services device on those customers' lines, just the fact that it's likely there's a special services device on that line.
- It will allow BT to take extra care with those customers at the time of upgrading them onto digital voice services.
- No numbers or customer information will be shared with anybody else and BT Consumer will put in place a Non-Disclosure Agreement if required.

Next steps!

You can provide your incoming telephone numbers or request further information from BT by email at btdigitalvoice@bt.com. With Openreach trials in Salisbury and Mildenhall this year, it's really important all ARCs provide numbers as soon as possible.

If you wish to arrange a testing of your signalling equipment (communication using the PSTN), you can find out more on the dedicated BT website <https://www.btplc.com/DigitalServicesLab/index.htm>.

Yours sincerely,



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