Openreach All IP Programme
Frequently Asked Questions

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Q1. What do you mean by ALL IP?

ALL IP refers to the telephony network in the UK being made so that all services work over the internet (Internet Protocol)

Q2. How does this differ from today?

Today the UK network has a copper and fibre mix of lines and will continue to do so for many years to come. However, the copper lines network and the associated telephone exchanges, were designed for voice calls and since then we have the internet which uses broadband technology to pass data over these lines at speeds and reliability that is determined by the makeup of these lines. Fibre is a far better medium for transmitting large amounts of data quickly and the more fibre we can use, instead of copper, the better the service will be.

Q3 What is Fibre First?

This is a programme that openreach are using to get as much of the UK Network on to a fibre line and so improve the reliability and speed of connections and data transmission.

Q4 What's the difference between FTTC and FTTP?

Currently many premises receive their services over a copper line that runs from the local telephone exchange into green cabinets in the street and then on to a local distribution point like a telegraph pole. This then enters the premises. FTTP or Fibre To The Premises, connects the customers premises all the way to the openreach exchange or node without going through the green street cabinets and provides fast broadband and voice over the internet (VoIP). This service is being rolled out by openreach in a programme costing billions of pounds and will continue for years to come, until the whole of the UK is able to consume this service.

FTTC or Fibre To The Cabinet, is a service that is already available to 95% of the UK and allows a telephone line to be connected from their premises to the green street cabinet as it does today, however at the cabinet, the internet part of the customers service is transferred on to fibre and allows greater speeds, whist the customers voice calls, carry on to the exchange over the existing copper connection.

Q5 What is SoGEA?

SoGEA stands for Single order Generic Ethernet Access and is the product name that openreach use when selling this service to their customers, who are CPs (Communications Providers like SKY, TalkTalk and BT). This is similar to FTTC, but when a customer moves to this service, they agree to move their voice calls to the internet and the copper line from the green street cabinet back to the telephone exchange is no longer used. The service is copper from the customer's premises to the green street cabinet and then fibre for everything from then on. This means that to make voice calls you will need to connect to your router in the premises either through WIFI or through a voice port in the back of the router, if one is supplied by the CP.

Q6 How will this affect other devices I use in the premises?

If you have FTTP or SoGEA, you will need to connect any devices that currently are plugged into the telephony wall socket in the premises, into the router if a voice port has been provided by the CP. This could include Telecare devices, Intruder alarm etc. you should contact your device service provider if you are concerned, to make sure that they will continue to work.

Q7 How will I know if my CP moves me to FTTP or SoGEA?

Openreach have advised all CPs that they need to migrate, all their customers on to either FTTP or SoGEA by the end of 2025. This is when openreach will no longer provide traditional analogue services. At some point before this end date, your CP will have to contact you to arrange for your service to be migrated on to an ALL IP service, which will be either FTTP or SoGEA.

Q8 What services will be withdrawn at the end of 2025?

All services known as part of the WLR analogue or Wholesale Line Rental family will be terminated. These include standard lines, ISDN 2, ISDN 30, LLU, SMPF, SLU SMPF, NBLS and Classic. Your CP will be able to tell you which of these you are on, if you wish to know.

Q9 Will anything happen before the end of 2025?

Yes your CP will need to contact you and arrange for you to migrate your services on to one of the ALL IP services (FTTP, SoGEA).

To help make sure that the older analogue services don't keep getting used and increasing the number of lines that will need migrating, openreach have set "stop sell" dates which are dates after which CPs will no longer be able to obtain new supply for their customers of these analogue services. There is a national "stop sell" date of September 2023, but some exchanges will hit their "stop sell" dates earlier, as openreach roll out FTTP into the area and the exchange coverage reaches 75% of premises. There is a list of these exchanges on the openreach web site.

Q10. Does Stop Sell just mean that a CP won't be able to order new connections of analogue services from openreach?

Stop Sell refers not only to new provision of analogue services, but also any of the following scenarios: Working Line Take overs; Start of a stopped line; Addition of lines and channels to existing installations; Migrations; CP Transfers; Bandwidth Modify and Addition of Broadband to copper voice lines.

Q11. What should I do now?

We encourage you to carry out an inventory for your own organisation to find out what devices you use today that rely on the analogue service provided by an all copper line which in future will be replaced by an ALL IP service like FTTP or SoGEA and check with your service provider to see if this will work when your CP migrates you.

Q12. What is SogFAST?

SogFAST is similar to SoGEA, but offers ultrafast broadband speeds, as it has additional equipment at the green street cabinet which boosts the speed.

Q13. In the event of a power cut, can I power the router independently and still have connectivity?

If you can provide a Battery Back Up for your Router, then it will continue to allow access to the router and onward services.

Q14. Will Communication Providers be providing routers with battery back-up to provide some resilience?

CPs must provide a Battery Back Up unit for vulnerable customers that will give a minimum of one hour of power for the router. This has been outlined by OFCOM. If you do not qualify as a vulnerable customer, you may wish to purchase one of these units for an independent supplier.

Q15. I don't think 1 hour is long enough for a Battery Back Up Unit, what should I do?

OFCOM have directed CPs to provide a unit that will give at least one hour of power to a router for critical 999 calls. If you wish to add more power units these can be purchased independently. They usually need to be 12 volt units.

Q16. If the Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) withdrawal programme fails – what arrangements are in place to 'pause' the withdrawal of PSTN? How and who will make that decision?

The roll-out of Fibre To The Premises around the country is a clear aspiration for openreach and already 95% of premises have access to SoGEA as part of Fibre To The Cabinet. Openreach do not envisage any failure in the programme, however in the unlikely event of an issue arising that cannot be resolved without something akin to WLR, then the Government may ask for an intervention on a case by case basis.

Q17. Is the rollout on schedule?

Openreach do not publish a forward schedule of which exchanges will have Fibre To The Premises, as this is commercially sensitive information, however this link shows where FTTP is being rolled out, but not by date. https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fibre-first. Communication Providers will have their own plans.

Q18. Have Communication Providers expressed concerns about the ALL IP programme?

CPs have been involved in the programme since 2017. They are invited to regular industry meetings and get regular updates. They can also contact OFCOM and The Office of the Telecommunications Adjudicator (The OTA) http://www.offta.org.uk/home

Q19. What will be our resilience option be post 2025 in the event of a power failure across an area/region?

At the end of 2025, Telephone Exchanges will no longer provide the 50V current that has been supplied in the past to the premises. This means that all back up will need to be provided by the customers own Battery Back Up arrangements.

Q20. What will happen to telephone numbers?

There are no plans to change anyone's phone number as part of the ALL IP programme. This function is managed not by openreach, but by the Communications Providers. There may be exceptional circumstances, whereby a CP may have to change a customer's phone number, but this is seen generally as not being very likely.

Q21. Have OFCOM have defined what "vulnerable" means in the context of this programme for free Battery Back Up?

OFCOM have not set rigid rules for this definition, they are leaving this to Communication Providers. More information can be found at https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/123118/guidance-emergency-access-power-cut.pdf

Q22. Who is responsible for supporting vulnerable end users in migrating to fibre products?

Openreach will supply the network, but cannot take responsibility for the devices that are connected by the customer in their premises. Communications Providers may be able to advise, but the general advice would be for the customer to contact the supplier or maintainer of their devices and confirm whether they will work with ALL IP and also who will attend the customer's premises to make any changes if necessary.

Q23. What does the change to ALL IP mean for rural communities?

Openreach are making sure that as much as the country as possible has access to either Fibre To The Premises or SoGEA via Fibre To The Cabinet. This means that speeds and connectively should be good for the majority of the UK. Where there is neither FTTP or SoGEA, openreach have offered CPs a transitional product called SoTAP, which offers them a single copper line from the customers premises to the Telephone Exchange, but leaves it to the CP to arrange for what goes on the end, in terms of voice and data.

Q24. Why is there no major advertising campaign making the public aware of the analogue switch off like there was with the change to digital TV?

Currently we are not aware of any plan to carry out a national campaign on the All IP changes. The UK Government sponsored the TV change but have not indicated that a similar campaign will be run. Openreach are spending many hours doing events with Industry to make them aware and several CPs are doing the same. Once a CP decides that its customers will be migrated from Analogue to Digital, they will contact their customers to let them know.

Q25. Do Openreach or OFCOM have a 'Non-Branded' video or guidance which can be provided to our clients?

Openreach are working to launch a new All IP web page and this will contain the slides, communications and stop sell data for Industry contacts to use. We may also add videos at some point. This should be available shortly.

Q26. Where can I get a list of “stop sell” exchanges?

This is available on the Openreach Portal for CPs and will also be available on our new All IP webpage when launched. They can also be sent to you via email if you choose. Contact Openreach at all-ip@openreach.co.uk

Q27. Is the migration going to be by postcode?

CPs will all carry out their migrations at different times and locations depending on their own plans. This may be on an exchange by exchange basis, but it will be down to the CP to manage their own customer migrations.

Q28. How will all customers in the UK migrate to All IP and what happens to those who don't?

The current analogue network will be withdrawn at the end of 2025. This means that all CPs need to migrate all of their customers to a line that is either Full Fibre (FTTP) or part Fibre (SoGEA see question 5). Anyone who doesn't move to one of these line types will no longer we able to continue with a service that is provided to their CP by Openreach.

Q29. How have Openreach chosen which areas will benefit from its Fibre First Build programme and why has Northern Ireland been so well covered in contrast?

Openreach has committed to rolling out FTTP to 20M premises by the late 2020s. This shows that we still need to invest in FTTP, as this clearly won't be enough to cover the whole of the UK. In the meantime, FTTC which will become SoGEA on migration (see question 5) is already available to 95% of the UK and gives at least part fibre with its much improved speeds and bandwidth. Openreach could have put all of its FTTP build into cities, but we have tried to spread out the build around the UK, so that all parts have some full fibre exchange areas. Northern Ireland has a proportion of the build which is representative of the roll out to the whole UK. This link shows the map for FTTP in the UK. Fibre First: Your future with broadband | Openreach

Q30. How much notice will be given by CP's to their customers regarding migration?

There are around 650 CPs operating in the UK and they will contact their customers concerning the migration to All IP when they are ready to make the move. It is presumed that all will give a responsible notice period, but we recommend that you contact your CP to ask them what their plans are and how much notice they will be giving their customers.

Services to be withdrawn

Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) enables CPs to offer their own-brand telephony service over the analogue network.

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) is a telephone-based network system that transmits voice and data over copper wires. ISDN enables customers to make phone calls while transmitting files and videoconferencing. There are two types of ISDN: ISDN2 and ISDN30.

ISDN2 comes in two variants; ISDN Standard and ISDN System and can deliver two simultaneous 64kbps connections over a single line. ISDN30 offers speeds of 64kbps over up to 30 channels per bearer.

Local Loop Unbundling Shared Metallic Path Facility (LLU SMPF) enables CPs to offer broadband services over an analogue line while another CP (or the same CP) supplies voice services on the same line – hence it being "shared".

Sub-Loop Unbundling Shared Metallic Path Facility (SLU SMPF) provides access (via an access point) to the local network (usually the Openreach street cabinet) to enable SLU CPs to connect to their Fibre network, providing voice services over copper and broadband over fibre.

Remaining Services

Single Order GEA (SOGEA) will offer similar connectivity to GEA-FTTC without the need for an underlying voice access product, offering speeds up to 80Mbps.

Single Order Gfast (SOGfast) is a cutting edge technology that allows us to deliver ultrafast speeds over existing copper lines of up to 330Mbps, through a single order variant which forms part of the Openreach developing product portfolio.

Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) is a form of fibre optic communication delivery in which the optical fibre runs all the way from the exchange to the street cabinet and uses the existing copper network to reach the home or office.

The remaining part of the access network from the cabinet to the customer is usually copper wire but could use other technologies, such as wireless.

Fibre to the Premises (GEA-FTTP) already enables CPs to offer ultrafast broadband speeds of up to 1Gbps download and 220Mbps upload and can be purchased on its own.

Metallic Path facility (MPF) allows CPs to provide phone and broadband services to their customers over the Openreach network. MPF is not affected by the withdrawal of WLR products as traffic is managed through the CPs own core network rather than the PSTN.

Ethernet offers a wide choice of high bandwidth, permanently connected, point-to-point services designed to help CPs extend their own networks and deliver a range of high quality services to their customers. The Ethernet fibre network that underpins them offers unrivalled geographic coverage of the UK, embracing many out-of-town locations where manufacturing takes place and where many data centres of the future will be located.

Single Order Transitional Access Product (SOTAP) is a new product that will deliver a copper path between the end customer's premises and the SOTAP CPs exchange infrastructure, over which the SOTAP CP can provide broadband and IP voice services. This is different from MPF because it facilitates the use of existing exchange infrastructure which currently supports LLU SMPF and therefore provides a better experience for end customers migrating away from WLR products (with or without SMPF).