
12 November 2021

An update on Openreach Copper stop sell

Why are Openreach changing the network? What's wrong with the current one?

The current network has been around for over 35 years and has served the country well, however the equipment in the telephone exchanges is now reaching end of life.

Openreach are committed to providing fast broadband across the UK and this is best achieved by replacing the existing Copper network with an Ultrafast Full Fibre digital network. Where Ultrafast Full Fibre is available, a digital phone service will be the only one that is provided.

As you may already know, Openreach has signposted intent to fully 'switch off' the traditional analogue (PSTN) Copper network by the end of 2025. From now until the end of 2025, Openreach will move tranches of exchanges into a 'stop sell' position. This happens when we have Full Fibre coverage to 75% of addresses in an exchange which then allows us, at an address level, to stop selling WLR and PSTN products to CPs. This in effect leaves these addresses the only option of taking services over the new Ultrafast Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) infrastructure. Openreach are committed to providing fast broadband across the UK and this is best achieved by replacing the existing Copper network with an Ultrafast Full Fibre digital network. Where Ultrafast Full Fibre is available, an All-IP (digital) phone service will be the only one that is provided.

Where this isn't yet available Single Order Generic Ethernet Access (SoGEA) will be provided. This is a new product which enables users to order Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) without a phone line, the existing Copper will remain in place from the premises to the street cabinet which will be connected to the exchange by fibre for faster broadband speeds. By the end of 2025 all telephone lines will need to be digital phones lines provided over the internet.

For new sites we want to ensure that we only build one infrastructure which is FTTP. We want to remove the dependency on providing small amounts of Copper solely for the purpose of special service lines. This aligns to the fact that many exchanges are already moving to stop sell as part of the journey toward the final backstop of end 2025.

What's changing?

From 15 November

- **Large 20+ plot residential/mixed use sites:** Any site contracting with us for FTTP will no longer be offered additional Copper for the sole purpose of service lines. Given that Openreach advise developers for at least 6 months lead time to First Service Date (FSD), this still gives you time to ensure you have an All-IP (digital phone line) solution in place for your service line needs.

- **Small Sub 20 plot sites:** Openreach will still offer FTTP on the national developer contribution rate card or free of charge where commercially viable. This means some small sites may still default to older FTTC or even Copper technologies where the developer chooses to not contribute on the Openreach national rate card.
- **Commercial only sites:** We no longer offer Copper, either as the main provide or to augment fibre infrastructure. All fibre infrastructure (FTTP/NIA) remains fully chargeable unless the site is 20+ plots thus making it eligible for free FTTP. Note that NIA is always fully chargeable regardless of site size.

What about service lines?

Some service lines use equipment which still relies on traditional analogue signal and/or the DC voltage carried over the Copper network. Openreach has been engaged with industry over the past few years to ensure that Communication/Service Providers (CPs) and the suppliers in these industries are prepared to move to an All-IP network. There are plenty of support resources for industry available on the Openreach website – [Click here to view these resources.](#)

The Openreach network ends at the Optical Network Termination (ONT), any service line solution that connects to the Openreach network is the responsibility of the CP and the supplier of any equipment to solution. Openreach is unable to provide network solutions beyond our ONT, or to configure any customer equipment, but any CP or industry supplier can reach out to the Openreach All-IP team for support here - All-ip@openreach.co.uk

Another consideration will need to be local power contingency. Two years ago, OFCOM mandated that any local power backup for special lines should move to the CP to provide. Local power backup means the service line will continue to work, for a period of time, in the event of a power outage. Traditional Copper networks provide a DC voltage from the exchange which has its own power contingency, hence this has been one of the key industry concerns with moving to an All-IP network. Following the OFCOM decision, Openreach stopped providing Battery Backup Units (BBUs) to all its FTTP installs. It is now down to the CP to provide a local Universal Power Supply (UPS) which will need to provide power contingency for both the CP equipment (router/switch) and the Openreach ONT.

Lift lines?

A common key requirement for Copper is the emergency telephone line for lifts. It's worth noting that the majority of lift manufacturers are now able to offer a mobile solution for lift emergency services as an alternative to fixed line solutions. This is dependent on signal strength meaning sometimes that fixed line is the only viable option. Openreach advise that you should consider discussing a non-Openreach mobile solution with your lift manufacturer should they or your CP advise they cannot use our FTTP infrastructure.

Openreach is currently working through a live trial with KONE, one of the UK's major lift manufacturers, and a CP to test and demonstrate a working lift line over FTTP for both a digital and analogue lift application. Openreach will fully brief the outcome of this trial shortly and share the technical requirements involved for other lift manufacturers and CPs to follow for their own respective solutions.

Will Openreach make exceptions?

Openreach may be prepared to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis if we see a legitimate requirement to do so. To reiterate, the change in policy on **15 November** is for sites newly contracting with Openreach, meaning these sites should still have at least 6 months' notice to FSD. This should allow plenty of time for you to engage with your chosen CP and equipment supplier. However, if there is a significant service risk then these exceptions should be flagged to your Developer Relationship Manager or to your local Field Based Co-ordinator (FBC).

What can I do to help?

Despite Openreach signposting clear intent to move to an All-IP digital network there are some equipment suppliers and even some CPs who may not be ready to migrate. To help drive this migration faster, we urge you all to engage with your suppliers and chosen CPs now rather than in 6 months' time. As stated earlier, Openreach will support any CP or equipment supplier needing supporting testing an All-IP compatible solution here - All-ip@openreach.co.uk.

Anything else?

The key is that you engage early with Openreach if you have any concerns. Whilst Openreach wants to increase the pace of removing Copper from new sites, it's also important that there is no service impact. Using the strong relationships that Openreach has built with you all over the past few years, we want to ensure that this is as smooth a transition as possible but appreciate there may be concerns or issues with some of your suppliers and/or CPs. The main thing to do here is feed this information back as soon as possible so that Openreach can support in these conversations and offer to help with any testing. Delivering excellent customer service is the number one priority for Openreach and the service benefit is clear regarding providing all services over one infrastructure compared to co-ordinating the additional build of Copper alongside the main FTTP provide.

Openreach appreciates your support in helping to remove the legacy requirements of Copper so that we can all be fully focussed on delivery our Ultrafast FTTP infrastructure, on-time and ready for your customers moving in.