



# The great switch off

How to prepare your business for the 2025 PSTN switch off

# What is happening?

In 2025, the UK's telephony infrastructure will enter a new era as the nation's biggest operator shuts down its PSTN circuits completely.

This presents an undeniable challenge for businesses, but it also opens up a new world of opportunity for those looking to adopt technology that makes organisations more relevant and ready for the digital world.

**In this guide we take a look at the implications of the switch-off for businesses, and discuss how planning ahead is the best way to ensure you are ready for the PTSN transition.**

## The key terms in plain english

### PSTN

#### **Public Switched Telephone Network**

A centuries-old network of analogue cables and hardware that allows traditional telephones to connect to each other.

### ISDN

#### **Integrated Services Digital Network**

Launched in 1986 to update traditional landlines, ISDN allows transmission of voice and data digitally, enabling things like video conferencing.

### VoIP

#### **Voice over Internet Protocol**

The new national telecoms network, which allows voice communications over IP networks such as the internet. VoIP calls only need an internet connection and can be made from almost any internet-enabled device.

### Hosted VoIP

#### **A telephony system using VoIP and based in the cloud**

Businesses can access all the features and functionality of VoIP without having to buy, manage or maintain expensive hardware on-site.



# Why is PSTN being switched off?

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The PSTN network was first introduced in the 1800s and consists of miles and miles of telephone lines and cables, as well as satellites, microwave transmission links, cellular networks and a whole host of other hardware needed for analogue telephones to talk to each other.

It is a sprawling infrastructure that is costly and cumbersome to maintain.

**Now the technology exists to support a more streamlined system for public telecommunications, BT is keen to get moving with a nationwide IP network.**



PSTN has become increasingly difficult and costly to fix, cumbersome to maintain and will cease to be reliable over time.

## What will the new network look like?

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The alternative technology will run on one fibre broadband network that provides the bandwidth and speed necessary to support VoIP for everyone.

**From 2025, all consumers and businesses will make phone calls using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that allows voice communications over IP networks like the internet.**

VoIP calls can be made using a wide range of devices, including desktop computers, mobile phone, landlines and almost any other internet-ready device.

By eliminating the need for costly hardware and maintenance and moving to a VoIP network reliant on fibre broadband, your business will be running on more robust, up to date technology, keeping up with the demands of digital communications. analogue lines to transmit data.

## Who will be affected by the switch?

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Any person or business currently using analogue PSTN or ISDN systems, be it fax machines telephone lines, CCTV or EPOS, will be impacted by the move to VoIP.

The switch off is expected to affect **42% of SMEs** (over 2.4 million) and **33% of larger firms** which are reportedly still using analogue lines to transmit data.



# How will businesses be affected?

The impact of the switch-off will very much depend on how reliant businesses are on ISDN or PSTN for operations, and what kind of hardware is being used.

The biggest impact will be felt by those that send and receive a lot of faxes or payments and those with heavy usage of landline telephones.

But it's not just about telephone calls. Businesses will need to identify and review everything that is connected to and working via the phone lines.

**For some businesses, this will include things like door entry systems, payment services, Epos, Paypoint and building or fire alarms.**

After the switch-off, there will be no maintenance or recovery of phone lines, and data sent will no longer be carried through ISDN and PSTNs, so it is essential that businesses have migrated to VoIP before the switch off happens.

## Affected services

- PSTN
- ISDN
- ADSL
- FTTC
- G.FAST
- WLR

### Timeline for change

November 2017

BT Group announced its intention to close the PSTN in 2025

May 2018

Openreach consultation on WLR withdrawal launched

December 2018

Openreach issued formal notification of WLR stop sell

December 2020

5 year reminder that WLR is being withdrawn, Copper stop sell for the Salisbury trial

May 2021

WLR stop sell for the Mildenhall trial

January 2022

Contract termination notices served for trial in Mildenhall and Salisbury

April 2022

Trial managed migrations commence (12 months)

April 2023

WLR assets withdrawn\* in Mildenhall and Salisbury

September 2023

Stop selling new supply of WLR in the UK

December 2025

WLR withdrawn, PSTN closure

# Preparing for what's next

## How can businesses switch to VoIP?

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**A move to VoIP can be simple and quick, and it could save businesses a lot of money.**

There are several ways for businesses to switch. Certain hardware can be made VoIP-ready with a simple adaptor device, which gives fax machines and phones reliant on landlines internet connectivity and works by converting the data into a format readable by VoIP.

For most business this won't be enough, and it will be sensible to future proof systems with a more robust, all-encompassing solution.

Assessment of connectivity options and network setup is where most businesses need to start looking. What are the digital connectivity options to build the infrastructure for services your business needs?

## The benefits of cloud-based VoIP

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A hosted VoIP service based in the cloud presents possibly the best, most cost-efficient way for businesses to prepare for the switch-off. It requires no storage space and comes with none of the worry and cost associated with maintaining on-site hardware.

A cloud-based solution gives businesses all the technology and functionality they need to maintain, and even grow, their operations, for a small monthly subscription fee.


The pay-as-you-use model adds to enhanced budget predictability, and there is no need to fork out for new hardware.

IP telephony saves businesses money with low-cost international calls from any internet-enabled device worldwide, ensuring users can stay connected. Most VoIP providers will also offer a wide range of advanced features including audio conferencing and inbound call management.

Features can be added, removed and scaled as required, and rolling, flexible contracts allow for ultimate responsibility.



# A chance to future proof digital infrastructure



With the PSTN switch-off, business leaders have a golden opportunity to fully embrace digital transformation to future proof operations and remain relevant to customers and partners who are demanding more and more digital readiness

Stepping into the Cloud with a VoIP solution for telecommunications will open up a world of cost-efficiencies, streamlined processes, automation and enhanced customer experiences that will help all businesses grow and adapt for years to come.

Businesses need agile, flexible and user-centric IT that adapts with their environment and grows with them, and the cloud offers solutions that scale and flex without limits.

An all-digital communications environment means businesses can connect applications and systems with video chat, calls and collaboration tools, so that they are closer to customers and colleagues alike.

And with everything in the cloud, everything is accessible for everyone and from anywhere, making hybrid and remote working easily achievable and, last but not least, keeping business services and customer experience relevant in the marketplace.

From connectivity and cyber security to backup, networking and UC, cloud providers are offering all-in-one IT solutions to keep people, locations and devices connected, businesses compliant and technology and people working together.

# Why now?

## Assess business impact and needs

Making even small changes to the technology environment can be a complicated task that has a ripple effect across the entire business.

While BT's PSTN switch-off isn't a choice business leaders have made, it now falls to them to ensure there is no fallout from the move to VoIP, and the rest of the IT environment will work seamlessly with the new system.

A well thought through and considered technology roadmap can help businesses see how one seemingly small change can open the door to new and exciting opportunities for growth and transformation.

## Three questions a business should consider

1

### What is missing in your business?

How much do you know about your existing infrastructure and what more can you do using your existing set up? Is continuous digitalisation still on your plan and if so, what are the opportunities you can discuss with your service provider to help you keep IT operations cost-effective and develop a strategy for the longer term.

2

### What is your next for tech?

What do customers and partners want to see more of, and does it make sense to build this into the plan now so you can be proactive rather than reactive? Consider the technological and digital advancements of the past five years and think about where the business would be if there were similar developments over the next five - what can you do now to be ready for whatever comes next?

3

### Does your business need a tech roadmap?

A technology roadmap helps businesses plan the best way to introduce technological change and can include everything from rolling out new solutions replacing legacy infrastructure, to upgrading networks and security, cloud migrations and unified communications roll out.



# Are you ready for the next step?

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Our team of specialists is here to help you navigate a seamless migration from PSTN to VoIP, with no headaches and no disruption.

We can help to evaluate your business's needs, supporting you to take the steps you need transition to new networks, and unlock opportunities to power your business into the future.

By equipping you with all the technology, infrastructure and services you need, we are committed to getting you and your business ready for bigger, better and brighter things to come.

## For more information

Call **0161 406 1820**

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