



ISSUE 53

SCAMS AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter



Digital Switchover

Landlines in the UK are going digital. (Digital Landline Switchover). The existing analogue technology (which has supported phone and broadband services for decades) is being retired and switched off. By the end of January 2027, customers will be provided with a broadband line, you will make calls the same way but using 'Voice over IP' (VoIP) technology that uses an internet connection. Digital landlines will be easier to maintain and will underpin many of the new digital services for homes and businesses, providing a better service for customers. Cheshire is scheduled to transfer to VoIP this summer. The switchover is a necessary upgrade and is free; however, criminals are taking advantage of the changes to steal our money. **No payment or payment verification are required for the switch.**

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Digital Voice

Digital Voice is BT's new home phone service, delivered over a broadband connection. For most customers, the switch to Digital Voice will be as simple as connecting your home phone handset to a router rather than the phone socket on the wall. Prior to the switchover you will receive written information from BT on what to expect Moving to Digital Voice | BT Help and how to contact them if you require any any support.

Be aware

Criminals, impersonating BT staff, are cold calling consumers demanding payment or personal information under the guise of upgrading your existing landline service to the "Digital Voice". Employing threats and scare tactics they warn victims that they will lose their landline and/or internet connection if they don't pay fees immediately. This can be extremely worrying for people, particularly those who do not have a mobile phone, live alone or have a medical alert pendant.



Do you need to upgrade equipment

For some of us we might find that older devices using our landline connection, such as home phones and personal care or security alarms, may need updating or they'll no longer work. However, your provider should write to you explaining what the switchover means for you and will give you advice and support with any changes you need to make.

REMEMBER

Your landline provider will never ask you to make payments or verify your payment information in order for your landline to be upgraded to the digital service.

Mobile Phones



Criminals aren't just targeting landline customers. Fraudsters are also calling people on their mobile phones, who don't have a landline. Telling potential victims that the Digital Switchover will mean they'd lose their home internet connection if they didn't confirm their details. But this isn't true.



to do..

Steps you can take

- Do block unwanted calls, use call-blocking services (most providers offer call blocking or filtering services)
Unwanted calls: phone services that can help - Ofcom
- Do register for the Telephone Preference Service Telephone Preference Service to reduce marketing calls. 0345 070 0707
- Do contact your bank if you have sent money or provided any banking details. Remember you can call the centralised number **159** and speak directly to the fraud department of your bank.
- Do report to Action Fraud Action Fraud 0300 123 2040

Be alert

Things to look out for include:

- Always treat unsolicited calls with extreme caution, remember you didn't ask them to call you, you are under no obligation to engage in conversation with them. If in doubt hang up, wait a few minutes for the line to clear and call the official customer service number of the organisation directly.
- Never give out personal details, such as bank details or passwords, over the phone.
- Don't allow someone to pressure you into doing something you are not comfortable with.
- Don't allow anyone to take remote control of your laptop or computer (i.e. to check your broadband speed or upgrade your software, etc...).

Phishing Scam

Chester University was recently the victim of an email (phishing) scam. Emails were sent out to the student body claiming that students had an outstanding balance due on their tuition fees. Students were encouraged to click on a link and pay the outstanding balance quickly to ensure progression to the next year/graduation. Luckily the University was alerted to the fraud quickly. Always remain vigilant and check unexpected emails carefully, particularly if they are requesting urgent payments. You can report emails to report@phishing.gov.uk

Department of Work & Pensions Fraud

We have received several phone calls from concerned Cheshire residents who have received unsolicited calls and/or text messages from people purporting to be from the Department of Work & Pension (DWP). The callers claim that they can guarantee your benefits for the next three years if you pay an upfront fee. Never disclose personal details, such as banking or password information. Hang up and call the DWP directly on 0800 731 0469 if you are unsure.

Don't forget Age UK Cheshire's Information & Advice service can help on a range of issues, including benefits like Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance and Personal Independence Payment. Call 01606 305 001 or email enquiries@ageukcheshire.org.uk

If you are affected by the content of this bulletin, you can talk to us. Our Scams Awareness and Aftercare Team can offer free support, advice and guidance. Contact our team today on:



01625 612958



scams@ageukcheshire.org.uk