



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology



Department
of Health &
Social Care

All Pharmacies

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August 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

Public Switched Telephone Network Migration – Action Required

As you may know, the telecommunications industry is in the final stages of upgrading telephone networks from analogue to digital. This is also known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), migration to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The industry's decision to upgrade the PSTN is due to necessity, as the network is increasingly unreliable and prone to failure.

The upgrade is a critical step in modernising our telecommunications infrastructure. It will significantly improve reliability and efficiency in communications. VoIP offers several advantages over traditional PSTN services, including improved call quality, greater scalability, enhanced reliability, and cost-effectiveness. This improvement in our digital infrastructure supports wider work to digitalise the NHS.

What do pharmacies need to do

All pharmacies should ensure that their telephony systems have been successfully migrated to VoIP as soon as possible. Please contact your communications provider (BT, VMO2, Sky, Vodafone, TalkTalk etc.) as a priority to arrange the upgrade or switch off services you no longer require. The PSTN will be completely closed in January 2027.

The PSTN may not only support your telephony services, but also other systems such as fire and lift alarms, payment services, fax machines, some medical devices, or other such uses. It is critical that you identify which services, if any, use the PSTN for connectivity and either upgrade or terminate a service where it is no longer needed. The first step is to contact your communications provider.

In particular, it is critical that prescription services are not affected by the switch-off. We would ask that you ensure, as a priority, that all services supporting prescriptions that rely on the PSTN are upgraded well ahead of January 2027.

How will this impact your customers

Many of your customers will have already had their residential services upgraded. However, the government and communication providers have recognised the importance of safeguarding vulnerable patients, particularly those who rely on telecare (personal care alarms).

We have attached communication materials to this letter and would appreciate if you can display these as a community notice.

If your pharmacy has not yet been upgraded, please contact your communication provider to arrange to do so as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Holly Creek
Deputy Director, Markets and Consumer
Digital Infrastructure Directorate
Department for Science, Innovation and
Technology

Alette Addison
Deputy Director of Pharmacy, Eye Care and
Controlled Drugs
Department of Health and Social Care

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Creek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Alette Addison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.