**Questions and Answers**

An important webinar for the sector “***Myth busting the digital landscape”*** took place on 20 October 2022, hosted by Everon, produced in partnership with TSA and Housing LIN and supported by Openreach, TalkTalk and Eseye.

To watch a recording of the Webinar “Myth Busting the Digital Landscape”, access the slide deck or to learn more about our speakers, click the [link](https://everon.net/event/myth-busting-the-digital-landscape-webinar/).

Please see below a summary of the Q&A.

**Questions for John Livermore**, **ALL IP Industry Engagement Manager at Openreach**

* **What more can Openreach do to put pressure on those Communications Providers who are not setting up their equipment in the test laboratory?**
  + Openreach invited all 690 CPs to set up their equipment for FTTP and FTTC/SOGEA in the Digital Services Test Lab. The Lab was launched 9 November 2021 and has to date had over 34 visits from 24 different Vendors. We are always keen to get more CPs to set up their equipment. To date 6 have, which are SKY, TalkTalk, Zen, BT Consumer, BT Enterprise and Vodafone
* **How many telecare providers offer a digital alternative to replace the analogue installed base?** 
  + This is something you would have to ask the TSA about
* **What are you recommending for a backup in case of power failure in the home, we are finding it very hard to get a battery backup for the router from the supplier?** 
  + Openreach do not sell Battery Backup units. Each CP will have their own arrangements for Battery Backup for their own routers and the ONT in the case of FTTP
* **We’re getting lots of reports from various LAs in Wales commenting that engineers had installed their new main connection box, disconnected the old box but left the Lifeline plugged into it. This is creating a massive problem for us. Another time, an Openreach engineer unplugged the Lifeline from the wall socket and then plugged that end into the analogue out port of the Lifeline, creating a useless loop. On neither of these instances did the engineer try the Lifeline before they left. What training is being given to engineers? What kind of education is there going to be as not all the customers eg dementia, will know they will need to test it. We are experiencing this in the Wakefield area too. Getting reports that the alarm is not working and when we visit it's been left plugged into the old socket.** 
  + I share your concern and it keeps me aware at night. My role is to educate. I’m only the messengers. We have a great contact called Gerrit in Swansea who is doing some great work. I can put you together.
  + Firstly an engineer will only arrive at the premises if it is a conversion to FTTP. All the customers who are not moving to full fibre where their master socket is remaining in situ, do not need a visit by an engineer. So you will be in the hands of the CP and it’s up to them to know if the person is on their books as vulnerable. There is a very good chance the telephone company won’t know they have telecare.
  + If the conversion is not to full fbre there is no need for an engineering visit. If it’s unknown that they are vulnerable then all the work that is being done to convert them is going to be done in the street. So the first that customer knows if it’s not working is when you go to use it and it doesn’t work. There is no current solution for that. This has been a problem for some time.
* **How can Openreach support the awareness of the digital transition to the public?**
  + What Swansea has done is contacted their telecare client base. They sent a really good letter a year ago and I’ve used this as an example to others. The letter from the council asks - If you are a telecare user please contact your telephone company and write to them to tell them you are vulnerable. It also said get your neighbours and friends involved to help you with this. That is something positive that can be done and it starts with the adult social care department, they know where their customers are. Most telephone companies won’t know where they are and Openreach doesn’t know.
* **How can Openreach ensure that their engineers protect the lives of vulnerable alarm users during the digital migration?**
  + Currently the engineer training is if you see a customer with a telecare device, you should ask - is someone coming round after I leave to plug this back in, as I can’t touch it. If they say yes I’ve got someone from the council coming they will go ahead. If not, the engineer should abort at that point and say I didn’t go ahead with that installation as I was worried I’d cut them off.
  + There has been a piece of work going on since January by the OTA (sub group of Offcom). They have been meeting to see if there is anything better than can be done. The problem is who takes liability. Openreach’s position is we stop at the socket therefore shouldn’t touch any of your equipment. At the moment, still no one has cracked this issue. We don’t touch third party equipment, but we should abort if we think there is a risk to life. Chris Murdoch, Openreach is on that group. If you have Examples – send them to me and I’ll get them investigated

**Questions for Phil Cain, Industry Vendor Liaison, TalkTalk**

* **Will my equipment work as it does now on a PSTN line if I plug it into the ATA on your router?**
  + The ATA on the TalkTalk router is there to replicate a PSTN line, so it’s likely, but not guaranteed, that analogue equipment will work when plugged in. But that’s why it’s really important that equipment is tested in advance (at our lab) and that long term it is advisable to move to an IP product
* **The equipment we use has been tested in the BT lab – so why do I need to test at TalkTalk (or other labs)?**
  + In the Openreach lab, there are several CPs in there and you can test several networks in one day but the advantage of coming to our lab is, in addition to doing the normal test, we’ve got working battery back up systems in there but crucially we have our technicians on site, so if there are any questions, there’s someone who is a very experienced engineer. So it’s a personal service and you can often solve any issues on the day with the engineer.
* **Can battery back-up units be provided free of charge to all vulnerable telecare users that will have a TalkTalk digital line?**
  + Yes we will provide two battery backups for those on a full fibre connection in TalkTalk’s case. The Optical Network Terminal (ONT) will need to have power as well.
* **What awareness of the telecare sector do TalkTalk staff have? Other communications providers have given their staff specific training to understand the increased risk of the digital migration to vulnerable alarm users.**
  + All our advisors are very well trained and work to script and have a series of questions to use to identify a vulnerable user. We’re not migrating anyone who is potentially a vulnerable customer so we’ll use a series of questions to find out if they have telecare and if they do, we won’t move forward, just to make sure we’re ready.
* **What is the date for the migration**
  + It is going on if someone asks for it but there is no date for migrating vulnerable customers.

**Questions for Nick Earle, CEO, Eseye**

* **OFCOM have notified the industry of the impending switch off of 3G cellular networks across the UK from 2023, how does this affect your solution?**
  + Eseye’s solution can switch the connection to alternative providers who still maintain 3G coverage
* **How do you see the future of SIM costs in the current environment and market situation?**
  + They will be reducing as new solutions come to market (such as Kigen) and will go to near zero as iSIMS are introduced (as they will not be needed).
* **Are there any healthcare case studies that you are aware of where this technology is being used?’**
  + Everon is one of the, if not the leading company in this space. For other case studies see our website www.eseye.com
* **We have seen roaming SIM outages in the Telecare industry over the last 12 months, how does your solution mitigate against those outages?**
  + The Everon solution using Eseye’s solution and it has 2 SIM ports and also uses an ethernet port so it is very resilient. Eseye is an MVNO that aggregates network coverage from multiple operators. So we can switch to another operator when one operator has an outage
* **Are there any UK geographical restrictions for your IoT SIMs? Can you highlight the real benefits of using cellular over hardwired networks?**
  + There are no UK restrictions. Cellular is often more reliable than hardwired as if the landline operator has an issue, somebody turns the router off or somebody changes the password it will fail. Our solution will switch automatically to another cellular network in the event of failure.
* **Are there any time limits to the calls?**
  + No – it uses Voice over IP.

**Questions for Pete Kerly, MD Everon UK**

* **What are the benefits of a SIM-based scheme solution over a hard-wired scheme solution?**
  + The big thing is connectivity. The ease of installation means all you need is a 240v supply so no cables. I know from housing providers that are frightened of the cable networks now, following on from the Grenfell situation where cables have been run and breached fire compartmentation. Here there is just not that risk. It’s also the resident’s situation, we deliver the hardware, make sure it’s working and it’s a seamless situation. Installation times for a 30 way site is less than 4 days so there are lots of benefits.
* **How do you define a vulnerable customer?**
  + It’s important that our representatives in the field are trained around safeguarding and identify where there is a risk to an individual. Many suppliers have the Quality Service Framework accreditation – Everon has been committed to this for some kind.
* **Which procurement frameworks are Everon a part of and which ones are you working towards? How do we commission how do we get access?**
  + We’re partnered on the Northern Housing Consortium with Carium. We’re on ESPO and we’re working on other procurement sites as well.
* **How interoperable is the Everon solution with the typical existing analogue scheme equipment (e.g. smoke / lift / fire / door entry etc..)**
  + Currently we are integrating into analogue fire systems. We can integrate into lifts. We can install our radio smokes to make them compatible so we’re happy to work with commissioners and we do come across smokes that need replacing but we have integrated existing smokes, and by using one of our radio tokens we can see online if one isn’t working. We can see that immediately as we ping every 30 secs.
* **How does Everon currently support their customers through the transition from existing analogue hard wired solution to the new SIM based solution?**
  + Everon UK has a structured approach to site surveys which include a GSM / Wi-Fi signal check across the site. This identifies as to whether any boosters are required and the overall suitability of the site for a GSM based solution.
  + If an order is placed, we will deliver a tenant’s consultation meeting which includes a full demonstration of the system to the managers and residents
  + Once the date of the installation is agreed we will on day one, distribute the technology into each dwelling and provide training to each resident and only then will we switch off the incumbent system.
  + We will then revisit each site to install the technology into the agreed locations and all residents are left with an instruction card and contact details for our technical helpdesk.
  + As part of the commissioning process, we will deliver in depth training on our portal to the onsite team and assist in setting up user accounts.
  + Manuals and contact details are left on site with a copy of the commissioning certificate.
  + We have a 24/7 technical helpdesk available to all clients.

**Questions for Jeremy Porteus, CE, Housing LIN**

* **There was a lot of people who applied for TAPPI. How can we all get engaged?**
  + There is the Everon White paper coming out later this year with references to TAPPI. Active engagement continues by the sector. We had over 50 unsuccessful bids and we were managing a lot of disappointment but we are keen to develop our knowledge hub. There is a fantastic report by University of Sterling on very low level technology looking at hand grips, eating and living well as they are as equally as important as the care management [LINK](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Promoting-Inclusive-living-via-Technology-Enabled-support-The-INVITE-Project/).
  + We also have the community of practice, the website, and regular news bulletins. We got some fantastic videos, blog, case studies and ideas for a regular bulletin. We completely recognize that we need to increase awareness of our sector but also want to make it very real for my mum, your aunt etc.
  + There is also an APPG on AT led by Policy Connect who have been running a smart home and independent living commission for those with impairments as well as telecare