



Department
of Health &
Social Care



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

13th September 2024

For the Urgent Attention of Technology Enabled Care Suppliers,

The digital telephone switchover – compatibility of telecare devices with digital lines

We are writing to you as a telecare supplier, and in the context of the digital telephone switchover, to ensure that you are no longer selling analogue-only devices and to remind you of the importance of the continued testing of telecare devices on digital lines.

It is a known risk that some analogue telecare devices may not be digitally compatible or perform as reliably on digital networks. The safety of telecare users is of the utmost importance to the government, and we are working with industry to ensure telecare users are protected during the migration from analogue to digital telephone lines.

We are grateful for the efforts that telecare suppliers have made already to understand the reliability of their analogue devices on digital telephone lines, to develop new interoperable digital products, and to inform their customers of the importance of transitioning to digital telecare as the industry led digital switchover takes place.

Sales of analogue-only telecare devices

Government expects suppliers to have stopped selling analogue-only devices in anticipation of the digital switchover. The Technology Enabled Care Services Association (TSA)'s Quality Standards Framework introduced a standard in 2022 that certified suppliers of telecare devices could no longer manufacture analogue-only equipment. TSA have indicated that as of November 2022, no new analogue-only telecare devices have been manufactured for the UK market.

We understand that analogue-only devices are in circulation through telecare service providers under current contracts but are concerned that some devices are still available to newly purchase. We want to ensure that we have a clear understanding of the scale of new sales. Please feed back to our officials as soon as possible if you are currently newly selling any analogue-only telecare devices, if you are aware of other suppliers doing so, or if there are reasons why you cannot stop selling analogue-only devices at this time. We are engaging with other stakeholders in the sector, including telecare service providers, on these issues separately.



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We are working with stakeholders, including Trading Standards and Citizen's Advice to understand whether the continued sale of analogue-only telecare devices is compatible with the Consumer Rights Act and legislation on consumer protection from unfair trading.

Testing of telecare devices and equipment

We recognise that telecare service providers need to decommission their existing analogue equipment and move to digital equipment to ensure services remain reliable. Technical issues related to equipment incompatibilities will hinder this process and so we are keen to ensure that suppliers' digital solutions continue to be tested to ensure interoperability.

We want to reiterate this government's expectation that:

- Any analogue models known to still be in use by telecare service users should be tested to ensure their reliability when operating over a digital telephone line. The results of this testing should be published.
- You should be engaging in testing with other suppliers to ensure the interoperability of digital solutions.

Please feedback to our officials if there are any suppliers or providers that you have been unable to engage with to complete interoperability testing.

Please provide a response to this letter at ASC.DASengagement@dhsc.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Minister of State for Care

Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms