

News Release Herefordshire Council

16 April 2026

Herefordshire residents encouraged to get ready for changes to home phone lines

Telecare and Technology Enabled Care users may be affected by the digital switchover

Herefordshire Council is reminding people that home phone lines across the UK are changing, and all old-style landlines will move onto a new digital network system in January 2027.

The UK Digital Switchover means all phone calls will be made over the internet instead of the old analogue landline network, which has become difficult to maintain and breaks more often. The upgrade will be by the phone companies, on a gradual 'area by area' basis. Residents don't need to do anything yet – they will be contacted by their phone company.

Cllr Pete Stoddart, Herefordshire Council's Digital Champion and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources, said: "Most people won't see much change, but we want to make sure everyone is aware, especially those using telecare and other Technology Enabled Care services which are vital to helping people live safely and independently at home."

Herefordshire Council's Technology Enabled Services (TECS) team has already made sure the 3,000 households using its 'Lifeline' telecare devices are ready for the digital switchover.

However, some residents using different suppliers may need extra support because older alarms and devices were designed to work with the old analogue phone system and may need upgrading by the provider, particularly if they:

- Use a medical alarm or pendant alarm
- Rely on a landline for essential communication
- Have hearing aids that work with your phone
- Use assistive technology connected to your phone line
- Have mobility issues that make phone access crucial
- Live alone and depend on your home phone for safety

Cllr Stoddart added: "If you're unsure about how a device in your home or business might be affected, please contact the equipment supplier or device manufacturer to find out whether it will still work on a digital phone line. Although we've already ensured Council TECS users are digitally-ready, we want to ensure everyone who uses this technology is aware."

"For most residents, the switch will be simple, and your phone company will guide you. We're advising anyone using a private telecare to contact their provider to confirm their equipment is compatible and act early if any updates are needed. We

want everyone in Herefordshire to stay safe, connected, and supported during this change."

Further information:

- Your phone provider will contact you before anything changes.
- More information is available at: www.digitalswitchover.com
- Support Openreach: <https://www.openreach.com/help-and-support/support-for-vulnerable-customers>