

Guernsey Disability Alliance

Equality • Dignity • Inclusion

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Your Ref: T1557G

Dear Fergus

Call for Information: Future Caller Access to Emergency Services in a Fibre to the Premises (FTTYP) Network

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd August 2021 and for permitting an extension to the consultation period for the GDA to submit its response to the above call for information. I have answered the questions from the consultation document as appropriate under the 5 parts of that document. I have repeated the questions in this document, for ease of reference, and will place the response on the GDA website shortly.

Whilst the comments are within the limit context of emergency calls we want to ensure that it is clear that we welcome the progress to broadband optical fibre for all.

The GDA is always looking to reduce barriers to full participation in all aspects of life by people affected by disability be that people with impairments or carers. The move from a universal service whereby everyone can pick up any landline phone during a power outage and still be able to call the emergency services to one where possible only a few people may be afforded this service appears a retrograde step. It is not clear from the documentation why the cost of replacing this universal provision is not a budgeted cost in the replacement programme or why the cost is prohibitively expensive in the roll out.

As there are over a quarter of all households with at least one person with an impairment and nearly 14,000 people with impairments in Guernsey and Alderney from babies to pensioners it would not be possible to say when or where they would need to call the emergency services.

Moreover, it is also not just people affected by disability that require emergency services. We are all vulnerable to needing emergency services. We may all therefore want to rely on landline phones during a power cut.

Everyone with a landline pays rental on their line e.g. Sure Home at £13.20 Sure HomeOne at £16.20 or Sure HomeTwo at £20.20 (see <https://www.sure.com/guernsey/broadband-and-home/smart-home-and-phone/landline-rental/>). It is not clear why any equipment is not covered in this rental charge or has not been budgeted for in the cost of the project to convert to fibre for all customers.

Part 1 Who are the vulnerable consumer groups that should receive free back-up solutions?

Response:

a) *Emergency Service Reliance:*

Everyone needing an emergency service is vulnerable at the time they need that service. In this respect we are all reliant on emergency services and our need to be able to contact them in an emergency is essential.

The potential frequency of requiring the service is possibly less important than the severity of the risk of not being able to call the emergency services which ultimately could result in death.

You may be reliant on a neighbour call the emergency services on your behalf if you have an increased risk of requiring the emergency services due to a serious health condition, higher risk of exposure to domestic or other violence or to fire, flood or other disaster. You might be incapacitated and unable to phone yourself or your home might not be safe.

This would mean that there would be no reasonable way to determine who should receive a free back-up solution solely on the emergency service reliance. This would therefore cover the total population of 63,155 within 24,809 households (Table 5.4.2: Household composition type (at 31st March 2020) source: Guernsey Annual Electronic Census Report, 28th January 2021 [Annual ECensus Report 2020v2.indd \(gov.gg\)](#))

b) *Landline reliance:*

A free alternative should be provided where there is no alternative other than the landline. This might be due to no mobile phone or no signal in a particular area. But it might also be due to other reasons such as linking a cardiac

defibrillator to the emergency services, increased use of telemedicine, linking personal alarms to phone systems, emergency phones in lifts, as well as other fire and burglar alarms.

Personal alarms, used by many people with impairments, often use the telephone landline to provide the alarm service (see: Fox Guard Security <https://www.foxguardsecurity.com/blog/how-does-home-security-monitoring-work/>).

The issues of the emergency services or monitoring centres receiving false alarms during a power cut also needs to be considered. If monitoring centres for any alarms cannot get hold of an emergency contact then emergency services may be dispatched during a power cut unnecessarily as the monitoring centre would not necessarily know there was a power cut locally.

Whilst many people will have given a mobile as an emergency contact, where a landline has been given to the monitoring company that landline number should be protected during power outages.

Some households may rely on nearby pay phones rather than their own landlines. Any pay phone should have uninterrupted service when there is a power cut.

Most people are not reliant on their landlines and will have a mobile phone. According to the Pew Research Center 97% of the USA population have mobile phones but this drops to 92% of over 65 year olds whereas 100% of Americans aged 18-49 have a mobile (see <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>).

Pew Research Center gives the proportion of the American population with smart phones as 85% for 2020-21 whereas Newzoo's 2020 Global Mobile Market Report shows the USAs smartphone penetration as 81% with the UK running at 78.9% (see: countries/markets sorted by smartphone penetration - percentage of population actively using a smartphone from Newzoo's Global Mobile Market Report 2020 - Light Version https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_smartphone_penetration#cite_note-1).

Newzoo's report is in relation to smartphones only but the Pew report shows that the percentage of people with smartphones compared with other mobile phones decreases with age. 61% of Americans over 65 have smart phones compared with 96% of Americans aged 18-29.

I could not find any similar figures for Guernsey. If mobile phone use is similar to the USA and UK it is likely that a very high proportion of people will have a mobile and be used to using it and keeping it charged. This means that they

would have an alternative means of contacting the emergency services rather than just a landline.

Of those that would not have access to a mobile phone it is likely to be the over 50s and the under 18s, particularly below senior school age. Young children may have been taught to use the landline in an emergency so that the operator will know where they are calling from. This may be important where they act as a carer for parents, if an accident happens or if they live in an abusive household.

c) *Combination approach:*

The stated purpose of the consultation is to change the license agreements for companies so that they are not *“obligated to implement potentially difficult and expensive measures to ensure all its customers could place emergency calls...”*

It is not clear how much expense an alternative solution would cost per household but presumably the telecoms operators would be looking to reduce the number of households provided with any solution from the total number in Guernsey of 24,809 households. It is not clear how much within the plans for a £37.5m (see Guernsey Press 13th September 2021, <https://guernseypress.com/news/2021/09/13/plans-for-fibre-broadband-to-every-guernsey-property-unveiled/>) roll-out of high speed fibre broadband has been budgeted for solving this issue.

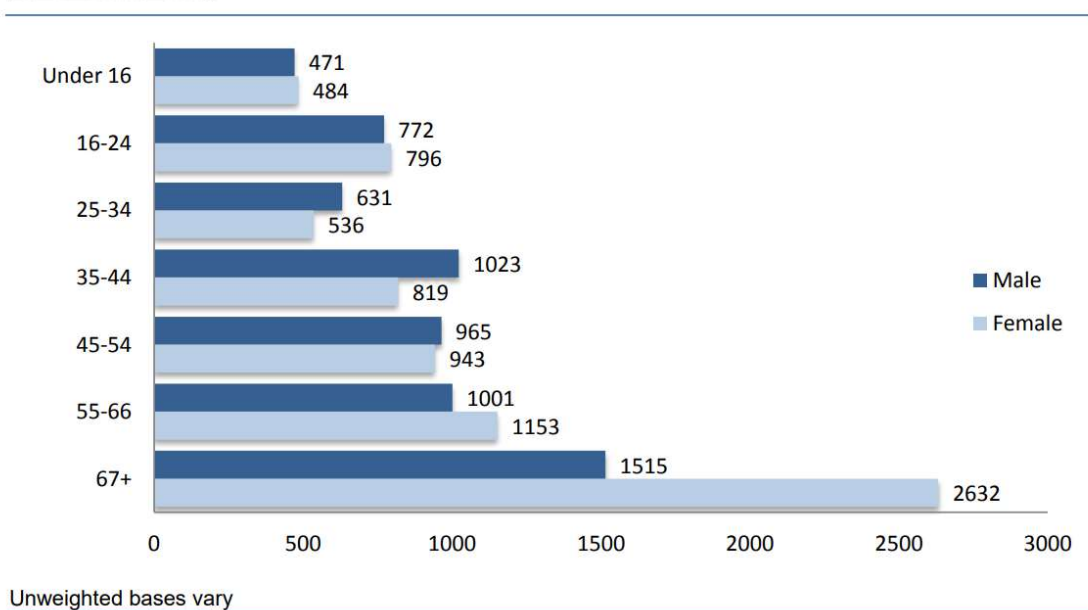
The view that is expressed under a) above, that all people requiring emergency assistance are vulnerable, would not narrow the numbers down of those households that would require assistance following the conversion.

This would leave the narrowing down in relation to landline reliance only if both conditions a) and b) were to be met.

In relation to the provisions for people with impairments, who the GDA represent, the following information may be useful if the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority is minded to narrow down vulnerability. However, I would strongly urge a wide a definition as possible to reduce barriers to uptake for people that are in need as assessing vulnerability for the telecoms provider will otherwise potentially be more difficult and costly than providing the necessary equipment.

With increased age comes a higher proportion of people with impairments. The Disability Needs Survey: Review of prevalence across Guernsey and Alderney Prepared for: States of Guernsey; October 2012 (see: <http://www.signpost.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=98914&p=0>) gave the following graph of the estimated number of people in Guernsey and Alderney with long-term conditions, by age band and gender.

Figure 6: Estimated number of people in Guernsey and Alderney with long-term conditions, by age band and gender (All people with a long-term condition – based on valid responses)



It was estimated that 21% of people in Guernsey had a long-term condition from the 2012 report with an estimated 13,742 in Guernsey and Alderney.

The 2012 survey found that just over 1 in every 4 households (27%) had at least one person with a disability. This compared to 29% of households found in the 2010/11 English Housing Survey. The total number of households at March 2020 was 24,809 (Table 5.4.2: Household composition type (at 31st March 2020) source: Guernsey Annual Electronic Census Report, 28th January 2021 [Annual ECensus Report 2020v2.indd \(gov.gg\)](#)) which would give 6,698 households with at least one person living there with a disability.

The 2012 report states:

“From the age of 55 onwards, in terms of pure numbers, there are considerably more women than men with long-term conditions that affect their day-to-day lives.

- *In the 55-66 age group, 27 women in 100 have a long-term condition, compared to 24 men in every 100.*
- *In the 67+ age group, 43 women in 100 have a long-term condition, compared to 31 men in every 100.”*

This age group is less likely to have mobile phones and the problems of power outages will affect more women than men with long term conditions who are over 55.

Q1) Is it appropriate for a vulnerable group to receive a free back-up solution from the telecommunications provider/operator on the conversion to FTTP and should they have this solution periodically replaced for free by the operator/provider? Please provide your reasons for this (which may include social, economic and other policy reasons).

Response:

Yes, it is appropriate for a vulnerable group to receive a free back-up solution which should be replaced/maintained for free. However, everyone requiring assistance from the emergency services is vulnerable at that time and the vulnerable group should therefore be as wide a possible – see above comments.

In reducing the operational robustness of the telephone network during a power outage there is a moral responsibility for an alternative to be provided. If the current conditions require all licensed telecommunication network operators and service providers to provide an uninterrupted public emergency service then this should be provided for anyone, particularly those reliant on a landline.

Q2) Which of the above qualification tests (Emergency Service Reliance, Landline Reliance or particular Combination approach) or any other should be adopted to determine whether a household is vulnerable and qualifies for a free power back-up solution? Please detail why your chosen solution is the most appropriate (you may wish to consider its social, economic and technological desirability, effects or its costs and ease of administration).

Response:

See the general comments on the three tests above.

It is not clear economically as to what is reasonable or not for the telecoms provider or government to spend either

- overall or
- per household or
- per person

as part of the budget for the changeover.

It is also not clear why any cost for providing emergency cover could not be covered under the cost of the landline rental (see <https://www.sure.com/guernsey/broadband-and-home/smart-home-and-phone/landline-rental/>). Alternatively these costs could have been included in the overall budget for in the cost of the project to convert to fibre for all customers.

Sure Guernsey is 100% owned by Batelco whose nett assets were 504,880,000 Bahraini Dinars (£ 982,597,456 at 1BD = 1.9462 GBP exchange rate) in its 2018 consolidated financial statement (see <https://batelco.com/pdf/financial-results/2018/financial-result-2018-q4.pdf>). In the chairman's report for that year it was stated:

“Operating profits have increased year over year by 25% from BD58.4M (US\$154.9M) in 2017 to BD72.7M (US\$192.8M) for 2018.”

It can be seen that this is a very profitable multi million pound business but no clear economic argument has been put forward why the telecoms companies cannot meet the costs of all required changes.

The consultation document states:

“Under current licence conditions, a fixed telecommunications network operator intending to switch to FTTP would be obligated to implement potentially difficult and expensive measures to ensure all its customers could place emergency calls across that FTTP system. Such a cost might unduly hamper or prevent such an FTTP conversion, stifling technological progress, new products and market evolution. This technological switch to FTTP requires a reconsideration of whether alternative rules/measures can be imposed in place of the uninterruptable emergency call obligation which strike a more proportionate balance between cost, progress and the protection of life and health.”

It does not quantify or qualify “*potentially difficult and expensive measures*” and whilst it “*might unduly hamper or prevent such an FTTP conversion*” it might not, as no evidence is provided to support this assertion.

If evidence were provided to the GCRA that the telecoms operators could not reasonably be expected to uphold their current licence agreements for all landline phones an amount would then need to be decided upon which would be reasonable. Having agreed the upper boundary of what is reasonable it would then make sense to prioritise where that money is spent.

Priority 1

Of the 24,809 households some may have more than 1 landline, and some may have no land lines. The telecoms operators should have full knowledge of the numbers of landlines per household and should be able to know where they have a contract for a mobile at the same address. They therefore should be able to provide free equipment to addresses where there is no mobile contract at a landline residential address. This should be undertaken as an exercise to identify and offer the equipment to be fitted rather than as an application. This will mean that the timing for roll outs can coincide with the planned changes to fibre and be part of a co-ordinated approach.

Anyone self-identifying as having an impairment/ disability/ long term condition and applies to have the equipment. A doctor's certificate etc should not be required as this will cost the person to obtain it which would negate having the equipment free. Equally the telecoms staff should not need to know any details of any impairment and the processing of medical information will require special handling in line with data protection legislation if it is collected, possibly requiring changes to data bases.

Anyone identified at risk of abuse where the equipment is part of their safety plan. The police, social workers, Safer, Witness and Victim Support etc who work with victims of domestic and other abuse can liaise with the provider to ensure instalment of equipment. Again information captured in relation to any victim or perpetrator must be handled with care and preferably not passed to the telecoms provider at all.

Any young carer who has been identified as needing the equipment. Social workers, schools, Youth Commission etc can liaise with young carers. Again information captured in relation to any carer or family members they care for must be handled with care and preferably not passed to the telecoms provider at all.

All landlines used for medical alerts, alarms, medical equipment, telemetry, lift phones at residential addresses should have equipment provided. This should include residential and nursing homes etc. Whilst this is about the machinery care would need to be taken is any medical information is recorded as a requirement of any provision.

Any lifts with public access.

All pay phones, regardless of where they are located, should be provided with equipment.

Charities, not for profit organisations and businesses providing care facilities, habilitation or rehabilitation services, social services, community facilities, education facilities, sport facilities or entertainment facilities.

Priority 2

Anyone who applies for the equipment. – The requirement to apply for the equipment will mean that not everyone will do so but will ensure that personal questions will not need to be asked by telecoms staff over vulnerability.

Priority 3

Everyone who wants it provide free of charge to any domestic landlines as part on the ongoing roll out of fibre. The more universal the approach the more economies of scale will be able to be made. No special data will need to be captured or recorded by the telecoms operator.

There needs to be significant justification why the telecoms operators should not provide universal coverage.

Priority 4

Small businesses

Priority 5

Large businesses

Q3) Should all lift, fire and burglar alarm lines be provided with free power back-up systems or should this depend on whether the household ultimately served is within Emergency Service Reliance, Landline Reliance or a particular Combination approach?

Response:

See prioritised response to Q2) above. I suggest that this would fall in priority 1 for residential premises.

Anyone with a mobility impairment has no option but to use lifts in many cases. If the power goes out they will be stuck in the lift potentially with no means of contact anyone to help unless they can use the lifts emergency phone so all public lifts should be fitted with the ability to call for help.

Lifts that are only used for staff should also have the ability to call for help but the balance of whether the business or the telecoms operator pays for it means that it is in a lower priority 4 and 5 above.

Q4) Should the above qualification tests be applied to each person in the household (as suggested above) or only to the landline subscriber and, in the former case, how best should one determine/define what should constitute a household for these purposes?

Response:

Any qualification such as vulnerability that is person specific would need to be applied to each person.

Other criteria in relation to landline reliance would need to apply to the landline i.e. in Priority 1 above each landline in the household with no mobile registered should be provided with the equipment as you would not know which line had the equipment in place in an emergency with no power in the house.

Other qualifications might depend on the existence of a feature such as a lift, alarm etc.

Households are already defined by a number of agencies – housing for houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), benefits and census. If these are not

all the same I would suggest choosing one that provides for more rather than fewer households.

Q5) Should business premises and subscribers using the service for the conduct of a business, be excluded from the above free back-up solutions and, if so: Is there any particular class of subscriber conducting a business from residential premises who should still enjoy these free solutions? Should business lift, fire and burglar alarms enjoy these free solutions?

Response:

See prioritisation above.

I have suggested all residential premises whether rented or owned or provided by a residential or nursing home should be included in the highest priority.

Many charities and not for profit organisations are also registered companies limited by guarantee. Where facilities are provided for community activities the phone lines also need to be provided with equipment as suggested in Priority 1 above, even if they are run by a business, such as nurseys.

Lifts used by the public, rather than staff need to be prioritised for free equipment but all lifts should be fitted with such equipment. Fire and burglar alarms have less of a priority for free equipment but should still be provided.

Part 2 What is the appropriate back-up solution?

Response:

Many of the part 2 questions are technical and have been included for completeness but the answers would not be known by the Guernsey Disability Alliance.

Q6) What has been the frequency, duration, cause and location of power outages in Guernsey in the last five years?

Response:

Not known

Q7) Which areas of Guernsey (if any) are more affected by power outages, to what extent and why?

Response:

Not known

Q8) Are there foreseeable/predictable, if exceptional, events that may cause longer than normal outages, and if so, what are these events and what length of power outages would they be likely to cause?

Response:

Not known

Q9) Does the mobile communications network have the capacity to handle the increased call volumes during an outage, where consumers have all migrated to an FTTP system (and there is no PSTN)? Please provide details of relevant capacities, expected increase in call volumes and your calculations in regard to the above.

Response:

Not known

Q10) If the capacity of the mobile network is exceeded by calls placed during an outage, to what extent and with what degree of certainty, can emergency calls still be identified, prioritised and connected?

Response:

Not known

Q11) In what specific areas of Guernsey is there mobile reception that would be sufficiently poor to risk 999 call failures or prevent adequate communication on any connected call?

Response:

Not known

Q12) To what extent are all poor reception areas known and well documented or, if not, able to be easily and accurately determined (and, if so, how is this determinable)? How large is the number of potentially affected households?

Response:

Not known

Q13) For what period could the mobile network be expected to function (on reserve battery power) in an ongoing outage, where there is only a FTTP system (and no PSTN) and factoring in any expected increase in mobile usage during such an outage? (Please show relevant calculations, expected call loads and consequent duration of back-up power sources to mobile masts etc)

Response:

Not known

Q14) What are the installation costs of and the relevant specifications, size and bulk costs of BBU units able to deliver 1, 4, and 8 hours of standby power (and what talk time would each deliver)?

Response:

Not known

Q15) What are the relevant specifications and bulk costs of PAYG mobile phones (without SIM cards) able to provide 1, 4, and 8 hours of standby power (and what length of talk time would each deliver)?

Response:

Not known

Q16) With due regard to the above and any other relevant factors you describe, for what minimum period of time should any back-up solution provide the ability to make emergency calls?

Response:

For the length of the power outage.

Q17) Where both solutions (BBU and PAYG mobile) are available, which is superior/preferable? Please detail why.

Response:

Both would be required in different circumstances. A person used to their landline should be able to keep what they are used to using with a back up power. A young carer may prefer a mobile phone as back up depending on their age.

Lifts alarms etc will need BBU rather than a mobile.

If you are limited to only one solution it should be to provide the power to the landline, as this is what will be failing.

Q18) Are there particular subscribers for which either a BBU or PAYG mobile would be an unsuitable solution, given any relevant factors (including technical competence to operate, charge and maintain)? Please detail who these would be and why.

Response:

In an emergency a person should not be trying to use something they are unfamiliar with. They should be able to use whatever their day to day solution is in a normal way without worrying whether it is going to work due to the power outage.

As previously stated in Part 1 older people are more likely to have an impairment and less likely to own a mobile phone. They are also more likely to trip in the dark if the power goes off at night. Knowing where the landline is if it is attached to the wall can help them get help when they might not be able to see clearly.

Others might prefer to have a pay as you go or other type of device to call for help. Medical alarms are important to ensure they work in a power outage as these are usually kept close to the user.

Being able to call for help in a lift during a power outage is essential as you would not know why the lift has stopped.

Part 3 Should the provider be required to install battery back-up solutions for non-vulnerable subscribers prepared to pay for it and how should this be regulated?

Q19) In the circumstances outlined above, do you have any information that might indicate the level of demand for paid BBU installation, the financial viability/profitability of such a BBU installation business (particularly for a telecommunications operator) and likely pricing levels? If so, please provide the same.

Response:

No.

Q20) Should an operator be legally required to install a BBU unit for a subscriber that requests it and is willing to pay for it?

Response:

Yes.

Q21) If network operators do provide BBU installation to subscribers converting to FTTP, to what extent does an operator enjoy a position of market power to raise BBU pricing above a competitive level?

Response:

That would depend on market forces. There are BBU solutions or alternatives available on the internet so competition would not just be on island but see next response.

Q22) Would it be proportionate for the GCRA regulate the pricing of telecommunications operators for installing a BBU, in order to prevent any abuse of market power in BBU installation (such as unreasonably high prices) and to ensure an affordable price and, if so, on what basis should such regulation proceed?

Response:

If there are any barriers to the importation or fitting of BBU (e.g. batteries wont be sent to Guernsey) then it would be proportionate to regulate. If units are widely available and can easily be installed there should be no reason to regulate.

Q23) To what extent should the network operator be required to: independently price its BBU installation and not bundle the same, not design its FTTP in a fashion that unreasonably restricts compatibility with third party BBUs, provide reasonable logistical and technical cooperation to third party BBU installers and inform customers of their right to have their BBU installed by an independent installer.

Response:

The more barriers there are to competition the more the price should be regulated but the barriers should not be allowed to be developed in the first place.

Part 4 How should the FTTP migration process work to best implement safeguards for the ability to make emergency calls ?

Response:

This is not really for the GDA to answer but this part has been included for completeness.

Q24) What subscriber and household data do network operators hold from which they may be able to determine/deduce: (i) Emergency Service Reliance or (ii) Landline Reliance (and how would this be done)?

Response:

It was assumed earlier that the operators would have access to the households that were landline reliant although this would not necessarily be 100% accurate and there would need to be a mechanism of applying to them if a household or subscriber had not been identified.

It has been suggested above that the operators should be discouraged from holding any special data such as medical records, victim status, perpetrator status etc and therefore they would not be able to identify anyone as being a member of a vulnerable group.

Q25) What subscriber and household data could operators obtain from retail broadband providers or other sources that would allow them to deduce (i) Emergency Service Reliance or (ii) Landline Reliance (and how would this be done)?

Response:

Not known.

Q26) To what extent would network operators be dependent on subscribers providing the information necessary to determine their (i) Emergency Service Reliance or (ii) Landline Reliance.

Response:

I would have thought they would be almost wholly reliant on subscribers providing information on their emergency service reliance unless they agree with my view that we are all reliant on the emergency services. The Joint Emergency Services Control Centre in Guernsey (JESCC) would know who the frequent callers were but might not be able to share this information.

Frequency and severity are two different measures and anyone can need the emergency services to prevent serious harm or death.

Q27) To what extent, in what circumstances and how would a network operator be likely to migrate subscribers, en masse and/or without consent, to an FTTP system?

Response:

Not known

Q28) How and at what stage of an FTTP migration process, especially an involuntary migration, would the operator be able to:

- **provide information to transitioning subscribers as to the requirements to be able to claim vulnerable status and the process for doing so?;**
- **obtain the information necessary to determine a subscriber's Emergency Service Reliance or Landline Reliance and then implement any solution?**
- **determine a non-vulnerable subscriber's desire to purchase a BBU and then install it?**
- **explain the risks of FTTP (especially in power outages) and for the subscriber to opt out of any migration (if the PSTN remains)?**
- **explain the operation, testing and maintenance of any back-up solution supplied/installed?**

Response:

Not known.

Part 5 How can the vulnerable groups be reliably protected into the future?

Q29) On what time-scale should (i) PAYG mobiles and (ii) BBU units be replaced to ensure reliable operation and appropriate back-up duration?

Response:

Not known.

Q30) Should network operators be required to replace PAYG mobiles/BBUs at the end of their effective life, if they become faulty or malfunction and what would be the projected costs of imposing this duty on operators?

Response:

Yes.

Not known.

Q31) What testing may be required of BBUs or PAYG mobiles to ensure they are still functioning normally and reliably on an ongoing basis (and what testing equipment can be supplied with the solution to enable this to be done easily by laymen)?

Response:

PAYG should be simple to test as it would be working as a normal phone providing it is charged.

BBU should be able to show charge by light etc but design not known.

Q32) Should the duty to test for reliable functioning of the solution be imposed on vulnerable subscribers or on operators (and what would be the costs of imposing this on operators)? Please provide full reasoning and costing.

Response:

People should be given the option. If it is easy most people would do it themselves this will not only depend on the design but on the instructions provided. Any instructions should be written accessibly.

Q33) Which, if any, particular categories of vulnerable subscribers would not be capable of doing any testing of back-up devices (whether BBU or PAYG mobile) and would it, in any such case, be more appropriate to impose this duty on the operator?

Response:

This will depend on the device and its design as well as the instruction available. Some impairments might make it difficult or impossible to do any testing of back up devices if the device is not adapted for that persons use. Other people might be weary or touching anything attached to the phone or electricity and would prefer to have someone do it for them. The responsibility should rest with the operator.

Q34) Should a network operator be required to monitor whether a subscriber has become vulnerable and is entitled to the relevant back-up protections, and if so, in what fashion and how regularly should it conduct such monitoring?

Response:

A network operator would not be in a position to monitor if anyone has become vulnerable or conversely if someone is no longer vulnerable. They can invite application in on a regular basis through targeted PR campaigns.

The better solution is to provide equipment universally free to anyone who wants it.

Q35) Should a network operator be required to investigate and respond to a change of a vulnerable subscriber's address (which might require protective measures at a new site) or their switching to a new FTTP provider (who might need to be informed of his/her vulnerable status)?

Response:

A subscriber must have to notify the company if they are moving to get the subscription moved and bill sorted. If the house has a device made available then it would be up to the company to have a record of that and assume that it will be needed again unless they ask the question as to whether it is needed in the new premises. They should ask the subscriber or the person who is vulnerable about transferring their information to another company – data

protection rules would apply. If there is universal coverage for all residential addresses these questions would not need to be asked.

Q36) Comment on any matters relevant to a potential dispute resolution process that may need to be put in place, including the:

- Obligation to provide documentation or evidence (and what this should be) in order for a household to establish a proper claim to vulnerable status;
- Operator complaint/claim procedures to process and resolve subscriber claims for vulnerable status;
- Time limits and milestones for the processing and resolution of claims by operators;
- Obligations by operators to provide written reasons to claimants for any decision to refuse their claim;

Response:

- The person making any declaration of vulnerable status should not need to provide any medical evidence to make the claim or to resolve the dispute. The cost of seeing a doctor in Guernsey would be more than the cost of providing a Phone Line Cut Adapter - Landline to Cellular Backup Automatic Alarm Switch GSM approx. £27 (<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/282238520692?hash=item41b6ba0d74:g:GfMAAOSwB09YFswD>) compared with £72 for a consultation (grant not claimable).

Everyone needing a 999 service is vulnerable at that time and should be able to get through to the emergency services on their landline even if the power is down. They should not need to further demonstrate additional vulnerability.

- A third party should be able to arbitrate where there is an ongoing dispute between a subscriber and the company if it cannot be resolved at an initial lower level.
- 28 days would seem reasonable for any decision although the instalment of any equipment should be timed in relation to the rollout of fibre.
- Any refusal should be in writing stating the reasons for refusal and the process that and time limits explained on how the decision can be challenged.

Carol Le Page
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Guernsey Disability Alliance