

The PSTN is closing December 2025



WLR withdrawal and latest on Openreach IP products

May 2020 Newsletter • Issue 5

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Welcome to the fifth issue of our newsletter, which includes key information about our move to all-IP and WLR withdrawal.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, a lot has changed in the world since our last issue in December 2019 but work on WLR withdrawal and all-IP migration still continues on. We're working very hard with our customers to safely minimise the impact of the current situation on them, and the overall programme, so that we're still able to hit those planned key milestone dates.

Since our last newsletter, we've published our draft trial industry best practice guide and had an industry working group session in January 2020, which covered an update on Salisbury, a presentation by Tunstall Healthcare, and an overview of that completed draft best practice guide. The March 2020 industry working group session had to be changed to a conference call, but we were still able to successfully cover a wide array of content, such as migration planning, number portability, and an update on the best practice guide. We've also been busy running two more focussed session conference calls, during April 2020. These sessions took a deeper dive into the key topics of forced migration, and vulnerable end customers.

More recently we had our biggest ever industry working group with over 170 attendees joining the call. The main callouts here was our evolving approach to working in the trial areas, and an update on our FTTP exchange upgrade plans.

Make sure to keep an eye out on your inbox and on our briefings page for updates on all our upcoming sessions.

Key dates for your calendars, please refer to briefings GEN 103/19 and GEN 104/19:

- 1 December 2020 Salisbury Products Stop Sell
- 4 May 2021 Mildenhall Products Stop Sell

- 5 December 2022 Salisbury Products withdrawal
- 5 December 2022 Mildenhall Products withdrawal
- 16 December 2022 Trials close

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Reminder of the key milestone dates and impacted products



Impacted products, collectively referred to as Wholesale Line Rental in this newsletter, are:

- WLR3 analogue
- ISDN 2
- ISDN 30
- LLU SMPF
- SLU SMPF
- Narrowband Line Share
- Classic

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December 2018

Five year stop selling to CPs notification (GEN073/18)

September 2023

Restriction of WLR3 new supply

December 2025

WLR withdrawal



WLR withdrawal – the product team's view



James Lilley – head of copper and service products

The past few months have been a challenging time for many of us. In response, we've had a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes to support our customers during this difficult time.

One question we've been receiving often is whether we plan to push any of the dates associated with this programme. It's important here to mention that the 2025 WLR withdrawal date is not something that can be pushed back, as it was one set out of necessity, due to the BT group PSTN network infrastructure reaching its end of life. Which means it's crucial that the other key dates that lead up to that 2025 withdrawal date, also aren't pushed back. This is so that we can ensure that as an industry, we'll be well prepared, once we reach that 2025 withdrawal date.

In line with that, the Salisbury and Mildenhall trials successfully commenced as planned on 6 January 2020 and are still on plan for their published stop sell dates. CPs are encouraged to make use of the commercial offer to support voluntary migrations of the existing copper base to the all-IP product alternatives (please refer to briefings **NGA 001/20** and **NGA 007/20**).

This month we have made a couple of further significant announcements in the next step in upgrading the UK from copper to Fibre. Firstly, we have upped our ambition with the aim of now reaching 20m premises with our FTTP network by the mid to late 2020's. Secondly, you may remember that last year we consulted on an approach to upgrade exchanges with FTTP

and to stop selling legacy copper products. The proposed approach was that we would give 12 months notification of stop selling of non FTTP products in exchange areas that hit Ultrafast (FTTP + GFAST >300Mb) coverage of >75%. We are now moving ahead with the first wave of exchanges and recently announced that 118 exchange areas will have reached or be beyond the 75% coverage point by June 2021. We plan to issue the first set of 12 month stop sell notifications in these exchanges in June 2020. This is a significant milestone and signifies the first move at scale to migrate customers from copper to fibre. We have much work to do together as an industry to be ready and ensure this is a great experience for our customers.

For SOGEA and SOGfast, I'm happy to say that they have now officially launched and the associated low bandwidth offering, to support voice only end customers, is anticipated to launch later in July 2020. Likewise, FTTP also launched multiple new speed tiers in March 2020, which included a low bandwidth offering.

Our industry working group sessions are now well established and well attended, which is an indication of their importance as we move into the next 12 months. These meetings are running bimonthly and are supported by more focused sessions that enable us to get into the finer detail. We encourage all our CPs and industry groups to get involved. These sessions are an opportunity for Openreach to provide updates and offer an environment for us to work together to design new industry processes. Please note that due to the current COVID-19 situation, the working group sessions will now be run as conference calls for the foreseeable future. Our next session will be on 21 May 2020.

Don't be left behind; start planning and understand the rules so you are prepared and ready. If you need to talk things through in more detail please contact a member of the WLR team either via your business development manager or via the consultation **email account** to request a bilateral meeting.

Over the next three months we'll be working with you to maximise the learning from the trials; further developing the draft industry trial best practice guide and focusing on developing the next steps for managing orphaned end customers to ensure no one is left disconnected.

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over **15m**
lines and channels to go

Update from the business development team

Matt Dexter – Head of Client Partnerships



The last few weeks have been very busy in Openreach as I am sure it has been for all of our Communications Providers as you come to terms with what COVID-19 means to you and your end customers. We've been working hard to support you and keep you updated as things develop, and below are some common questions we've received.

With everything happening, will there be delays to the WLR3 Withdrawal programme and the trials?

There are currently no plans to push out any of the key dates associated with the trials and WLR3 withdrawal programme.

Does openreach have any other plans on announcing more exchanges to stop sell WLR3/MPF?

This was discussed with industry at the CFPCG on 13 May 2020 with a briefing planned for June 2020.

Do we have a process for mass number porting?

In short no, but standalone single line port orders (NPORs) submitted to the Openreach port desk are processed in a highly automated manner, as are product migration orders with an integrated port. CPs do also have the option of submitting porting orders in bulk (NPAR) via the SDEDS channel. In addition, CPs can submit a bulk activation request.

If I want a bilateral meeting to discuss WLR3 and the future, who do I contact?

Contact your business development manager (or.srm.team@openreach.co.uk) who will be happy to help.

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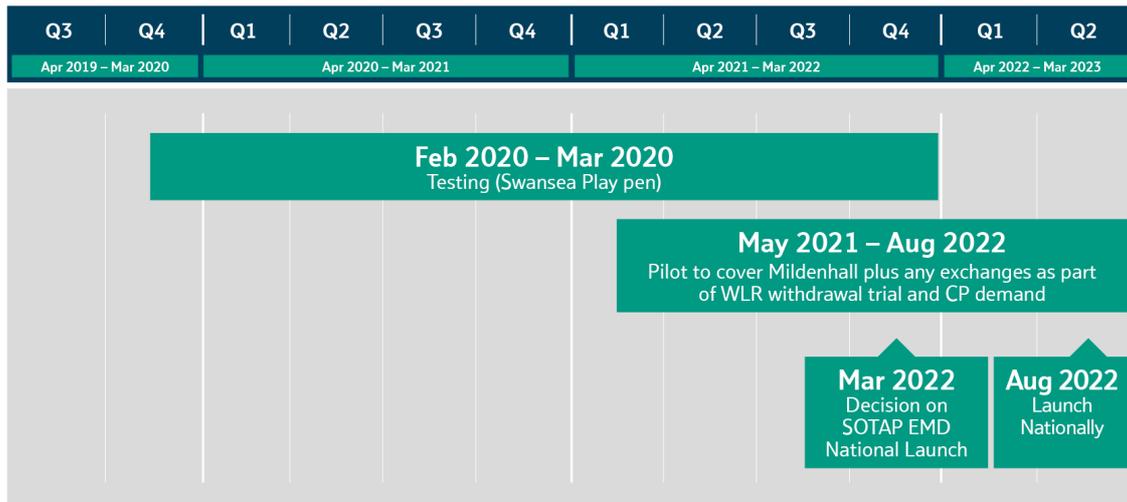
Update on the Single Order Transitional Access Product (SOTAP) development

The development of SOTAP is progressing well in terms of both functionality deployed and the trial, which commenced earlier this year in February 2020. This trial is taking place in a controlled environment using test lines and is testing functionality as it is being deployed.

The timeline has had to be slightly amended so that it is more closely aligned to WLR withdrawal timescales. We now aim to pilot SOTAP in May 2021, initially only in Mildenhall exchange. The pilot will be extended to other locations as part of further WLR withdrawal areas or CP demand. Following the pilot, we'll be looking to launch SOTAP fully in August 2022.

CPs intending to consume SOTAP will either need a point of presence in the telephone exchange based on LLU infrastructure, or they will need to consume the product via a wholesaler who is offering SOTAP.

If you require more information or a bilateral meeting to discuss anything regarding SOTAP please contact **Tony Birkbeck**.



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Exciting GEA-FTTP announcements

- GEA-FTTP is now available to more than 2.5m premises.
- In February 2020 we announced plans to bring FTTP to market towns, villages and rural areas with 227 locations announced for build by March 2021. The full list of market towns and villages included in this phase of build can be found at: www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/
- 5 new speed tiers have been added to our portfolio in March 2020 (these are 1000/115Mb, 550/75Mb, 220/30Mb, 115/20Mb and 0.5/0.5Mb) for use by CPs in shaping their own products for market sale.
- During 2020 and as part of wider return to provision work, we will be trialling FTTP delivery to selected business parks within 3 locations: Salisbury, Welwyn Garden City and Ponders End (North London).

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SOGEA and SOGfast latest news

- SOGEA and SOGfast have now officially launched as of 1 April 2020 with nearly a quarter of a million lines on the products now.
- Openreach is currently planning to launch a 0.5mb/s voice only bandwidth variant on 3 July 2020, to help CPs with migrating their voice only customers.

Dates for your diary

23 July 2020: WLR withdrawal main working group

Full working group – invite to follow

24 September 2020: WLR withdrawal main working group

Full working group – invite to follow

The full **schedule of forthcoming sessions** is available on our website. Please note that you'll need your Openreach portal ID and password.

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If you have any questions or want to discuss your migration planning requirements, please contact your Openreach business development manager, or for more information, visit

www.openreach.co.uk/futureofWLR

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