The PSTN is closing
December 2025

WLR withdrawal and latest on Openreach IP products

March 2019 Newsletter ● **Issue 1**

Welcome to our new quarterly newsletter, the aim of which is to keep you informed and share key information in relation to our move to all-IP and WLR withdrawal.

Following our consultation in May 2018, Openreach formally announced, in December 2018, that Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) is being withdrawn and we're moving to new digital, internet based (all-IP) services by 2025. We'll stop selling new WLR supply from September 2023. This is obviously a big challenge and we can't do this alone. It's vital you talk to us now to understand what we're doing and to share your individual migration plans, to ensure sure the transition goes as smoothly as possible.

We're committed to working together with Communications Providers (CPs) and industry groups and hold regular working group sessions to discuss key topics (see full **schedule**).

At the last session our CPs and industry groups asked for our support to provide communications materials to enable you to provide clear messaging to your customers.
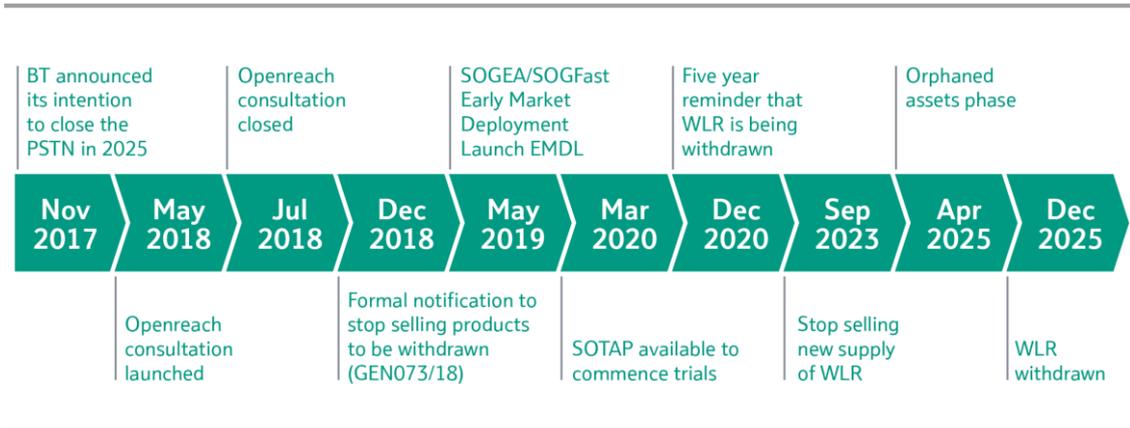
As a starting point, we're introducing this quarterly newsletter, to keep you up to date with the WLR withdrawal journey and the latest news and views from across the teams within Openreach.

In this edition we've included:

- WLR withdrawal – The product team's view
- Update from the business development team

- Update on the Single Order Transitional Access Product (SOTAP) development
- Exciting GEA-FTTP announcements
- SOGEA and SOGFast latest news
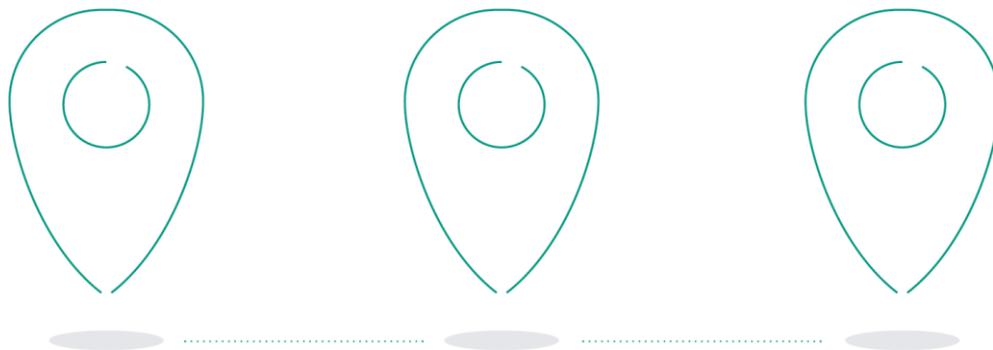- Dates for your diary and useful links

Nov 2017	May 2018	Jul 2018	Dec 2018	May 2019	Mar 2020	Dec 2020	Sep 2023	Apr 2025	Dec 2025
BT announced its intention to close the PSTN in 2025	Openreach consultation closed		SOGEA/SOGFast Early Market Deployment Launch EMDL		Five year reminder that WLR is being withdrawn			Orphaned assets phase	
	Openreach consultation launched		Formal notification to stop selling products to be withdrawn (GEN073/18)		SOTAP available to commence trials		Stop selling new supply of WLR		WLR withdrawn

Reminder of the key milestone dates and impacted products

Impacted products, collectively referred to as Wholesale Line Rental in this newsletter: WLR3 analogue, ISDN 2, ISDN 30, LLU SMPF, SLU SMPF, Narrowband Line Share and Classic.

December 2018
Five year stop selling to CPs notification (GEN073/18 refers)

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 said:

Openreach has been communicating and discussing with CPs now for nearly 11 months about the withdrawal of WLR. The consultation on the closure of WLR was launched back in May 2018 and what a lot has happened in that time.

Openreach published its **response** to comments received on the consultation on 1 October 2018 and, as part of this, agreed to set up and run regular industry working groups, to work through and discuss key themes with our CPs and industry groups who supply services over WLR lines. This may include third party provided services, such as alarms and health monitoring devices. These are now well underway and the collateral and terms of reference are published on the Openreach web site. To date, we've held three events which have received really positive feedback from the people who attended. **See future events dates, register and get involved.**

Some of the key topics we've discussed so far are: CP communication material, CP and CP resellers engagement, building a CP inventory of lines, WLR stop sell order journeys, the need to trial WLR withdrawal in advance of the national proposed stop sell in September 2023 and capturing industry requirements for a testing facility. We've updated the **Openreach web page** and added a section in preparation for the new CP communication material which is being developed to support CPs in understanding what is happening and the timescales.

Over the next three months we'll be working with you and sharing our plans on the WLR withdrawal trial, the process on how we plan to do this, migration planning, developing the next steps for managing orphaned end customers to ensure no one is left disconnected and updates on the testing facility requirements as they evolve.

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lines and channels to go

Update from the business development team (SRMs) here in Openreach

Russell Tarrant – Senior Business Development Manager said:

We appreciate that this is a challenging time for our customers with lots of decisions to be made; we like to think of this as a translation to all IP and the future rather than the withdrawal of WLR.

The main queries that we've been receiving into our team are:

1. **Will this actually happen?** The answer is most definitely yes; please ask your SRM if you have any specific questions.

2. **What are we doing to make the transition easier for end customers?** We're working with industry to build a CP inventory of line connections to determine the impact on end customers. This is where we need your help and insight through the working groups mentioned in this newsletter. Openreach sales and relationship managers will in parallel be working with you to develop your migrations plan. We want you to help us deliver the best outcomes for industry. Please engage with us, we're here to help!

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

SOTAP will not supply a managed voice service or associated calling and network features. It will be the responsibility of the CPs selling these services to the end customers to arrange the appropriate services if required. SOTAP is being developed specifically to facilitate a better migration journey because in the majority of cases (where LLU Shared Metallic Path Facility (SMPF) already exists on the line) no physical engineering activities will be required as SOTAP is intended to reuse the LLU SMPF exchange equipment.

CPs consuming SOTAP would either need a Point of Presence in the telephone exchange based on LLU infrastructure or they would need to consume the product via a wholesaler who is offering SOTAP in that area.

The product definition documents are available from the **Openreach website**

2019	Development commenced
March 2020	Target to commence trial 1
June 2020	Target to commence trial 2
January 2021	Ready for CP end to end pilot testing
September 2021	Target launch date

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Exciting GEA-FTTP announcements

- Ambition to have passed three million premises by the end of 2020
- We're providing GEA-FTTP to both existing greenfield and brownfield sites
- We're covering 25 cities; these include the **11 recently announced** on the 28 January 2019
- Trial pricing announced on 1 February 2019 for specific exchange areas (**NGA2001/19**). Full details can be found in the **special offer section of the price list**

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SOGEA and SOGFast

- The core product developments for SOGEA and SOGFast are ready for launch
- Both products are being piloted in Northern Ireland, North East, East and South East England

- Full national operational expansion by early April 2019 and Early Market Deployment Launch (EMDL) by May 2019 (subject to achieving pilot volume and quality criteria)
- Pilot pricing and special offer are available on the Openreach **price list**
- Industry working groups are held every month – details are on the copper and fibre product commercial group **collaboration** area

Dates for your diary

25 April: WLR withdrawal main working group
Objective: Main working group providing programme updates and focus on specific sub working group topics
Location: TalkTalk Offices, Soapworks, Colgate Lane, Salford Quays, Salford, Manchester, M5 3TT

20 June: WLR withdrawal main working group
Objective: Main working group providing programme updates and focus on specific sub working group topics
Location: Ofcom, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HA

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 to discuss your migration planning requirements please contact your Openreach sales and relationship manager or for more information, go to

www.openreach.co.uk/futureofWLR