

# Digital Switch Readiness Survey 2022

Research Report

October 2022



The **Local Government Association** and **Association of Directors of Adult Social Services** are **Partners in Care and Health** (PCH) working with well-respected organisations.

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## Summary

### Background

In August 2022 the LGA and PCH's Digital Switchover Working Group conducted a readiness survey to gauge councils' position on awareness, planning, and implementation of the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN). The purpose of the survey was to inform our support offer to councils, as the switchover has urgent implications for the sector and the millions of people who rely on telecare in the UK. The survey also asked about the impact on services more widely, for example, on alarm systems, traffic controls and lifts. Councils need to move to digital systems by 2025 to ensure that care technology reliability and safety is not compromised.

The online survey was launched at the end of August and responses were accepted up to 26th September. A total of 59 completed surveys were received, two of which were joint responses from shire district councils working in partnership, giving a response rate of 18 per cent.

### Key findings

- Three quarters (76 per cent) of respondent organisations were fully aware of the impact of the digital shift on telecare services and the remaining 24 per cent had some awareness.
- Levels of awareness varied between different groups across organisations with almost all (97 per cent) Telecare Operational Teams having full or some awareness compared to less than half (49 per cent) of elected members.
- Most respondents (90 per cent) were confident about their council's ability to manage the digital shift with minimal impact on their telecare service and service users.
- A fifth of respondents (22 per cent) have a digital-ready solution in place for telecare and a third (32 per cent) are in the process of putting one in place. A further 15 per cent have a plan which they have not yet implemented, 20 per cent have completed their early stage planning while just three per cent do not currently have a plan in place.
- 27 per cent of respondents are replacing/upgrading all of their analogue alarm units with digital devices as soon as possible and half (49 per cent) only plan to continue using them in the short-term (1-2 years).
- Just over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) understand the costs and have obtained the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare, 25 per cent understand the costs but have not yet obtained the funding, and a further 27 per cent do not yet understand the funding required.

- 39 per cent of respondents do not yet know how they will fund the move to digital telecare while a third intend to fund it from council budgets. A further eight per cent will use a combination of council funding and increases to service user charges and three per cent will fund the move to digital telecare solely through increased service user charges.
- There were high levels of awareness of the impact the digital switch will have on respondent organisations more widely, 41 per cent were fully aware, 47 per cent had some awareness, eight per cent had heard about it, but did not know the detail while just three per cent were not aware of it.
- Progress in relation to planning and readiness for the impact of the digital shift more widely across respondent councils was varied. Just seven per cent had already put the necessary digital-ready solution(s) in place, 31 per cent were currently putting these in place, 20 per cent had developed a plan which was not yet implemented, 24 per cent had completed their early stage planning and a further seven per cent did not have a plan
- A quarter of respondents (25 per cent) have digital-ready solutions and the capacity to put them in place while 24 per cent have digital-ready solutions planned but need further support/capacity. A further 15 per cent do not have a plan but do not need support/capacity while 17 per cent need further support /capacity to help develop their plans.

### **Key messages**

- Councils are aware of the switchover and most have plans in place to manage it. A number have already started to implement these plans. Most councils are confident they will be able to manage the switchover with minimal disruption to their telecare services.
- While some councils understand the costs and funding requirement, scoping work is still ongoing in others. A number of councils are yet to identify how they will fund the move and some are considering increasing their charges to service users.
- Councils are concerned that there is a lack of information in relation to the switchover, particularly from service providers. They have also flagged up the potential for technology failure and supply chain issues.

## Introduction

The national telephony network is undergoing a change process known as the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) switchover which will see the 1.7 million people, who access technology enabled care and support, at risk of being left without a connection. Whilst this work is a communications industry led process, the potential impacts beyond telephony and broadband services are significant and possibly impactful on the services that local authorities commission, deliver and refer to. The LGA and PCH's Digital Switchover Working Group has therefore conducted the readiness survey to gather data from councils to support work with the impact assessment and ensuring continuity of services.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted using an online survey form which councils were invited to take using a link that was circulated via an email bulletin, it launched at the end of August and ran until 26th September 2022. Of the 59 responses received, two were joint responses from district councils working in partnership, giving a response rate of 18 per cent. A copy of the survey questionnaire is shown in Annex B of this report.

**Table 1: Response rate by type of authority**

Type of authority	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate (%)
County	24	9	38%
District	*179	20	11%
London borough	33	10	30%
Metropolitan district	36	7	19%
Unitary	59	13	22%
Total	*331	59	18%

\*This figure has been adjusted to reflect councils with shared services

This level of response rate means that these results should not be taken to be more widely representative of the views of all councils. Rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents.

Where the sample size is low, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore throughout this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

## Survey findings

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

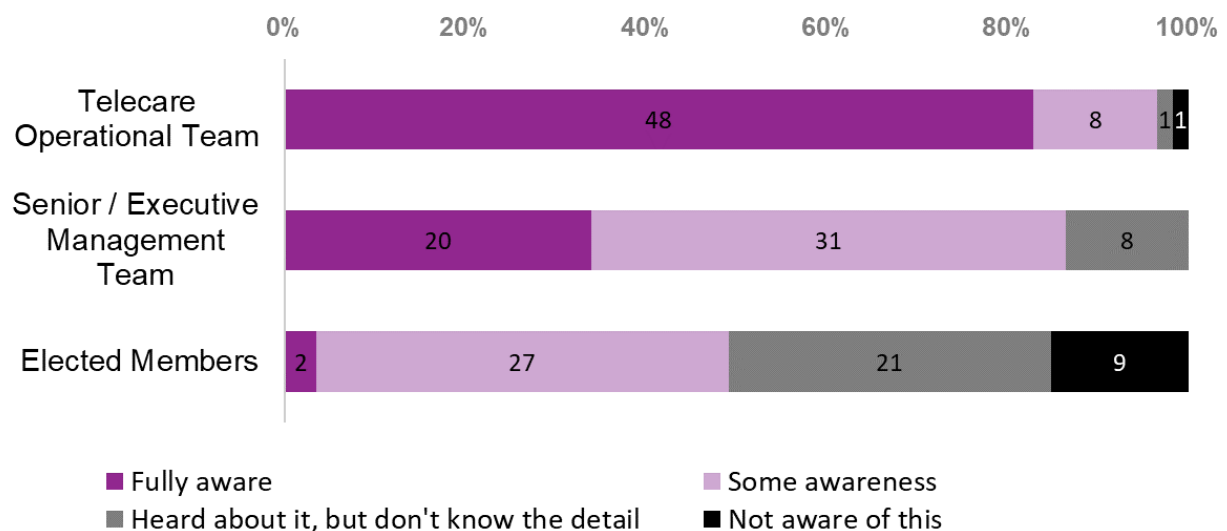
Three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) said that their organisation was fully aware of the impact of the digital shift on telecare services and the remaining 24 per cent reported that they had some awareness. However, the levels of awareness across organisations differed markedly between different groups with almost all (97 per cent) Telecare Operational Teams having full or some awareness compared to less than half (49 per cent) of elected members.

**Table 2: Is your organisation aware of the impact of the digital shift on telecare services?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
Fully aware	45	76
Some awareness	14	24
Heard about it, but don't know the detail	0	0
Not aware of this	0	0

Base: All respondents (59)

**Figure 1: Is this level of awareness consistent across your organisation?**



Base: All respondents (59, except for Telecare Operational Team which is 58) \*Please note: The data labels refer to the number of respondents while the percentage is denoted by the bar along the top.

Most respondents (90 per cent) were very or fairly confident about their council’s ability to manage the digital shift with minimal impact on their telecare service and service users. The reasons they provided for their answer included that they had a plan in place or were working on a plan, that they had started implementing their plan, or that they were already replacing their old kit gradually. A list of the reasons given by respondents for their confidence levels is provided in Table A1 in Annex A.

**Table 3: How confident do you feel about your council’s ability to manage the digital shift with minimal impact on your telecare service and service users?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
Very confident	20	34
Fairly confident	33	56
Not very confident	6	10
Not at all confident	0	0

Base: All respondents (59)

In relation to telecare, a fifth of respondents (22 per cent) reported that they already have a digital-ready solution in place for telecare and a third (32 per cent) are in the process of putting one in place. A further 15 per cent have a plan which they have not yet implemented and 20 per cent have completed their early stage planning, while just three per cent do not currently have a plan in place. Among the councils who stated they were doing something other than the options provided in the survey, two were not upper tier councils so did not cover this service and the other two were focusing on other areas first. These answers can be seen in Table A2 in Annex A.

**Table 4: How would you describe your planning and readiness for having a digital-ready telecare solution?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We have a digital-ready solution in place	13	22
We are currently putting a digital-ready solution in place	19	32
Plan for a solution developed, but not yet implemented	9	15
Early stage planning has been completed	12	20
We do not currently have a plan	2	3
Other	4	7

Base: All respondents (59)



Three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) do not expect their telecare service to continue using analogue alarm devices for more than two more years with over a quarter (27 per cent) replacing/upgrading all of their analogue alarm units with digital devices as soon as possible and half (49 per cent) only planning to continue using them in the short-term (1-2 years). Only 12 per cent reported that they will continue using them in the long-term. The answers provided by respondents who selected 'other' included that they had already replaced these units, or were in the process of doing so, or that they did not have any. Table A3 in Annex A lists all the answers provided.

A number of respondents elaborated on their answers to the questions in relation to telecare. The main themes to emerge were that they were already in the process of replacing old units gradually, or were just about to start doing so, or that supplier / service provider technology issues were the reason units were not being replaced yet. A small number also mentioned budgetary considerations. All of the answers provided are shown in Table A4 in Annex A.

**Table 5: For how long do you expect your telecare service to continue using analogue alarm devices?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We are replacing/upgrading all our analogue alarm units with digital devices as soon as possible	16	27
We will continue to use analogue alarm units in the short-term (1-2 years)	29	49
We will continue to use analogue alarm units in the long-term (2+ years)	7	12
Other	7	12

Base: All respondents (59)

Just over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) said that they understood the costs and have obtained the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare. A similar proportion (25 per cent) understood the costs but have not yet obtained the funding required to complete the move, while a further 27 per cent reported that they do not yet understand the funding required. The respondents who answered 'other' for this question comprised of those who were still scoping the costs, those who had obtained partial funding and first tier councils who would not be responsible for the move. Their answers are shown in Table A5 in Annex A.

**Table 6: Do you understand the costs your organisation will incur to move to digital telecare?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We understand and have obtained the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare	16	27
We understand, but have not yet obtained, the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare	15	25
We do not yet understand the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare	16	27
Other	12	20

Base: All respondents (59)

When asked how they intended to fund the move to digital telecare 39 per cent of respondents said that they do not yet know while a third (34 per cent) said they will fund it from council budgets. A further eight per cent said that they are using a combination of council funding and increases to service user charges and three per cent reported that they are increasing telecare service user charges to fund the move to digital telecare. The answers provided by those who selected 'other' included that they had not yet decided. A full list of all the answers given is shown in Table A6 in Annex A.

Further information provided by respondents on their answers in relation to costs and funding for digital telecare centred around their ongoing work in this area and their charging policies. Table A7 in Annex A shows all of the answers provided.

**Table 7: How are you intending to fund the move to digital telecare?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We are funding the move to digital telecare from council budgets	20	34
We are increasing telecare service user charges to fund the move to digital telecare	2	3
We are using a combination of council funding and increases to service user charges	5	8
We do not yet know how we will fund the move to digital telecare	23	39
Other	9	15

Base: All respondents (59)

There were high levels of awareness of the impact the digital switch will have on respondent organisations more widely with 41 per cent saying they were fully aware of this and 47 per cent reporting they have some awareness. A further eight per cent had heard about it, but did not know the detail while there were just three per cent who were not aware of it.

**Table 8: Is your organisation aware of the impact the digital shift of telephone services will have on your organisation more widely - i.e. other than telecare, for example on alarm systems, traffic controls, lifts, etc?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
Fully aware	24	41
Some awareness	28	47
Heard about it, but don't know the detail	5	8
Not aware of this	2	3

Base: All respondents (59)

Progress in relation to planning and readiness for the impact of the digital shift more widely across respondent councils was varied with just seven per cent reporting that they had put the necessary digital-ready solution(s) in place, 31 per cent saying they were currently putting these in place, 20 per cent saying they had developed a plan which was not yet implemented, 24 per cent reporting they had completed their early stage planning and a further seven per cent stating they did not have a plan. Among those who answered 'other' to this question were respondents still in the early stages of planning and those who did know whether they had a plan for this work. All of the answers provided are shown in Table A8 in Annex A.

**Table 9: How would you describe your planning and readiness to the impact the digital shift will have on your organisation more widely?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We have put the necessary digital-ready solution(s) in place	4	7
We are currently putting the digital-ready solution(s) in place	18	31
Plan for solution(s) developed, but not yet implemented	12	20
Early stage planning has been completed	14	24
We do not currently have a plan	4	7
Other	7	12

Base: All respondents (59)

A quarter of respondents (25 per cent) have digital-ready solutions and the capacity to put them in place while 24 per cent have digital-ready solutions planned but need further support/capacity. A further 15 per cent do not currently have a plan but do not need support/capacity and 17 per cent need further support/capacity to help develop their plans. Most of the respondents who answered 'other' to this question were not clear about the councils' overall capacity to deliver on their planning and readiness. A list of the answers provided is shown in Table A9 in Annex A.

**Table 10: What is your capacity to deliver on your planning and readiness?**

Answer	Number	Per cent
We have digital-ready solutions and the capacity to put them in place	15	25
We have digital-ready solutions planned but need further support/capacity	14	24
We do not currently have a plan but do not need support/capacity	9	15
We need further support/capacity to help develop plans	10	17
Other	11	19

Base: All respondents (59)

Further information provided by respondents about their answers in relation to their readiness and capacity to deliver the digital switch for their organisation more widely included further details about their progress and the issues they had encountered. All of the answers given are shown in Table A10 in Annex A.

Respondents were invited to make further comments at the end of the survey, those who did highlighted issues with technology and suppliers, a lack of information particularly from service providers, and a lack of support. The answers provided are shown in Table A11 in Annex A.

## Annex A: Answers provided to open text questions

**Table A1: Based on your given answer, please can you give the reasons for the confidence level you gave.**

<b>Have started implementing plan – Very confident</b>
Already converted number of lines and main ISDN lines for call due to be cancelled in the coming months due to new phone system
<Council Name> telecare is provided by <Council Name> who are currently providing digital ready devices, managed list of non-digital devices, working alongside <Service Provider>. Part of digital switchover working group
Currently providing digital ready devices, managed list of non-digital devices, working alongside <Service Provider>. Part of digital switchover working group
Enterprise IT systems have already been migrated to internet VOIP services.
Planning and budgeting for the switch over for last two years. Already converted 2/3rds of residents to a digital service
Process already in progress so impact is manageable and achievable
We are already most of the way there with regards to a digital shift and have a plan for remaining PSTN services.
We are fully aware of the implications of the switchover. We have identified it as a corporate risk and have begun work to mitigate any risks.
We have already begun to issue digital ready kit to new clients with a transition plan in place for existing clients.
Working with the supplier this process is already underway and will be completed on time.
<b>Have started implementing plan – Fairly confident</b>
Council has been using IP ready units for the past 3 years and is slowly replacing older devices. Existing control room is in the process of upgrading software.
Current lifelines use the STMF protocol and advice following testing at the <Service Provider> Test Lab is that connections into <Supplier> software are working successfully over digital test networks. There have been negligible handshake failures with the <Supplier> to date as the digital network is being rolled out. We have identified a small number of lifelines that are not using the STMF protocol which are being replaced.
Dec 2019 the council's telecare services upgraded from analogue to digital alarm receiving service. Lift alarms are all digitally ready and running off GSM SIM cards, and in process of finalising new contracts and switching to new provider. Work on

other analogue lines is in progress with the third party provider. We have an active project in Digital Services which is monitoring our council's readiness.

For social care customers - old units are being gradually changed to IP ready units/ New lifelines issued are IP ready and compatible.

Funded device programme underway. There is a programme of committed work to complete for Adults, Housing, IT, Property services, Procurement and Suppliers. Active programme to decommission PSTN. Digital connectivity across council. For consideration: Additional comms for end users / service managers / Residents /elected members. Other private housing providers may not have awareness?

Our core telephony platform is already digital, previously through <Supplier> and during 2022 through a move to <Platform>. We are working with <Service Provider> to migrate analogue lines before the end of 2025. Our telecare system, <Supplier>, is already a digital platform. We have some remaining analogue alarms linked to this system and will look to replace them by 2025.

There is the double impact of the impending 3g switch off - lowering confidence levels in work already undertaken with digital lifeline provision - digital ready solution are already being used, however we may need to switch these out to 4g enabled lifelines. Analogue solutions have been phased out over the last couple of years, and will continue to do so. There are also some concerns around the rurality of <Council Name> and connectivity. From a corporate perspective our level of awareness and preparedness is relatively high - we have plans in place for lines that we use for alarms and lifts. There is some additional work to do on telephony systems.

We are already part way through the upgrade across our customers and our system has already been upgraded in our control centre.

We have secured funding for replacement digital kit. New users are provided with digital kit. We have commenced a programme to provide digital kit to existing users which is due to complete 31/03/24. Existing service users have been sent a communication about switch over and impacts, what they need to do and how to test connections in the interim prior to installation of digital kit

We have undertaken an audit and rationalisation of our 'analogue lines'. Whilst a number of analogue lines are still in situ, 2 projects are in place to replace these requirements (replacement of the analogue <Supplier> careline system) and (LLFN project). We have also undertaken an in depth project with our telecom supplier to understand the impact. We have also already transferred to <Platform> for all calls

### **Working on a plan - Very confident**

I have been in discussion with our telecoms supplier for the last year or so and we are working with 3rd party supplier to implement the necessary changes.

Impact is restricted to the circuits going in / out of the telecare system. This can be controlled and managed within the IT service and as such can be resolved with limited impact once the new communication method is identified.

Our Telecare Team are in advanced planning, and have been in discussions with our suppliers to ensure converters are available to manage the switch.

We are procuring a provider to change our telecare equipment to digital equipment, we have a project group discussing the implications, and making plans to switch over sheltered housing telecare machines, including rewiring.

Risk is being tracked and managed by the Councils Corporate Resilience Board. Departments owning contracts with providers that rely on legacy PSTN services, and specifically telecare services (but also include other departments that manage Lift emergency phones or building alarm systems or manage sheltered housing) are actively engaging with these providers to ensure plans are in place to migrate them ahead of the 2025 switch-off.

#### **Working on a plan - Fairly confident**

Have identified areas of concern for residents and within the council, including report commissioned from <Service Provider> regarding effects of switchover for us.

Open dialogue with current provider. Commissioning TEC contract planning underway. PIN and market testing underway. Comms planned with individual clients and wider <council type> wide comms planned.

Upgrades are required to the councils' sheltered housing scheme telecare/warden call and fire alarm systems, a project group is formed and progress being made to implement digital systems/upgrades prior to the 2025 deadline.

We are working with leading suppliers in the market to find out about digital capabilities and what replacement devices look like. We have decided to first upgrade our current call handling platform to bring it in line with the digital switchover as our current platform is analogue. Once we have a digital call handling platform, we will be leaning on the call handling platform provider to guide us through which digital devices should be explored and deployed to clients.

We have had discussions with suppliers, other councils and are monitoring <Service Provider> plans as they have indicated they are reconsidering plans after the issues with power outages during the storms this year

We have in the region of 700 PSTN lines across various services and functions, alarms, lifts, CCTV, traffic lights, broadband. we have reviewed them and have started ceasing those that are no longer required, but we have a lot of work to do to get all required continuing services migrated and not a clear picture of the new service to migrate to.

**Have a plan in place – Very confident**

Already approached our PSTN provider, have done a data cleanse before renewing contract, and contract includes moving all our standalone PSTN circuits and PSTN circuits supporting broadband, to the new digital services provided by our PSTN provider, and already have costs for the changeover to digital services for all our PSTN circuits.

We have in place the technology and small team to undertake the necessary changes and to raise awareness within our communities

**Have a plan in place – Fairly confident**

The only unknown is when <area name> will be switch over between now and 2025, as regional migration dates have not been released. We do have a programme of activity to ensure telecare lines and building lines are replaced for internet or GSM by 2025.

The council has developed a programme to manage the transition in partnership with our provider. New clients will be prescribed digital equipment and planned maintenance visits will be utilised to transfer existing clients to a digital service, avoiding multiple visits. If clients advise us their phone line has been transferred before their equipment is replaced, mechanisms are in place to prioritise them, minimising time without lifeline coverage

We are currently awaiting an update to our systems which will allow us to roll out the tech that we need in order to move forward with the digital switch over. We know what tech we want to be able to trial.

We have been working with our contracted provider of telecare and have a plan for the transition. There have been some delays in implementation due to the quality of data needed to inform the plan. The data quality on legacy equipment in the community is the main reason we are not fully confident at the moment but we are working this through. Communications to residents will be the next stage prior to implementation.

We have identified all the connections, and have a resourced plan to make the switch over ahead of the deadline.

We have tested and are taking a risk based approach to switching telecare services which we feel will enable us to best manage the switch. For broader infrastructure changes these are being project managed corporately and we have very robust processes in place.

Working with <Service Provider> to ensure services are migrated

Working with supplier and piloting a number of options before full migration

**Supplier/technological issues/questions – Fairly confident**

There are still some significant questions about how the new technology should be deployed. We have received mixed messages from manufacturers and the



telecare industry, e.g. about the relative security of connection via SIM card and broadband router.

There are still significant unknowns, like the availability of replacement devices and the exact timing of the switch taking place (i.e. different comms providers having own timetables). In addition, there remains significant questions about how robust new digital devices will actually perform and the stability of digital networks.

There are still unknowns regarding how this will work in practice, for instance, what alternative will be offered by telecommunication companies to vulnerable users if a power cut takes place; there are also uncertainties over how certain analogue equipment will function with digital adapters; and how rapidly the switchover will take place and thus the cost implications

We have the stop sell target date in 2023 and the switch over date in 2025. However the many individual telecoms companies are not communicating when they will switch etc. There are also supply chain issues from some suppliers such as <Supplier> who provide social care monitoring alarms. This is slowing us down and adding more risk.

#### **Supplier/technological issues/questions – Not very confident**

Our current telecare offer predominantly consists of analogue alarm units, whilst our existing <Supplier> platform is not digitally ready. As such, we have 2 large areas of work to manage in order to mitigate the risk to telecare customers. This is further compounded by the sporadic nature of communication providers switching customers to digital, the lack of clear nationwide communication to customers of the impact and the wide variety of routers being installed. Furthermore, the lack of battery back up to both routers & telecare devices is extremely concerning. Digital telecare alarms are in short supply due to global shortages. The whole shift is then sat upon a national picture of LA's with tightening budgets, increasing demand and a need to react or risk people's safety

The alternative technology available in the market place does not meet operational requirements currently in place which are met by existing infrastructure. Therefore requirements need to be reviewed and the risks are fully understood. An example of this is a lifeline service currently provided over PSTN where the line power is handled by the exchange with battery and generator backup and therefore has high availability. The current replacement for this service in the market place is a broadband connection where the equipment is powered from the customer premise with additional points of failure where there is no backup power available.

Very little communication on switching, we only find out after a local switch, not coordinated across the <Council name> area, not involved in helping the inform of vulnerability.

#### **Additional resources needed – Very confident**

The key risks relate to funding.

**Additional resources needed – Fairly confident**

The biggest challenge will be financial and timescale for delivery. There are areas within the council that may require additional support and resources to achieve a transition to digital (Council/HA tenant lifeline services)

There's some older kit that needs to be replaced and will require significant funding to do so.

This is subject to commitment to investment in new equipment over a 3 year period to replace existing analogue equipment. Otherwise I would say very confident

**Additional resources needed – Not very confident**

1. Residents use their own telephone lines to connect telecare boxes issued by the local authorities to enable them to remain at home with the ability to summon help. The devices used alert us to life critical incidents. e.g. Falls, Fire, seizures, episodes of cognitive decline etc. We do not manage those lines and so are unaware of the upgrade schedule.

2. There is no duty on the telecoms providers to ensure that there is a working device post upgrade if they are aware that such a device exists on the premises.

3. There is a lack of testing and certification of devices so that we can be sure that they will work post upgrade, even though we know the network providers have provided test sites to the manufacturers for such a purpose.

There hasn't been much involvement from the other section of the organisation. Additional Resources (people & money) needs to be allocated to this project.

**System already in place – Very confident**

<Council name> has a completely digital infrastructure for care technology. We have a limited number of spot purchases through other telecare providers, most of which are also digital. We can migrate spot telecare analogue solutions to digital where appropriate.

**Other reasons – Very confident**

The suppliers are providing assurance

**Other reasons – Fairly confident**

All of our ICT resources/staff are extremely busy with our LGR/unitary processes which have the highest priority. We become a unitary authority in April of next year and at this point have no idea what the former districts will bring across with them as regards PSTN. There's a lot to do and resources are limited, and new services still being identified

We are proactively working on this

We are hosting a presentation and Q&A session with <Service Provider> and all heads of departments late sept to discuss the impacts this will cause and offer advice to staff on solutions to put in place to mitigate risk. Once this takes place

this info would have been disseminated across the council and the answer to this question will be very confident.
We only have a small scheme to manage
<b>Other reasons – Not very confident</b>
At present, internal corporate Digital Services are not responsible for the Home Alarms service as it is contracted out to a third party provision, however it will be moving back to a Local Authority Trading Company in July 2023, when we will become responsible for it and it's switch to digital.
Telecare serves were relocated from one building to another, during that time a discussion took place of moving to digital services.

**Table A2: Answers provided by those who selected 'other' for Q4 - How would you describe your planning and readiness for having a digital-ready telecare solution?**

<b>First tier council</b>
District council, we do not run Social Services, however we are engaging in our community that are going through fibre upgrades and have residents that have life line circuits and also <Supplier> alarm systems that won't work on the fibre connection as they are copper driven. This has been for all suppliers an issue how to overcome this problem trialling VOIP connection but as far as I am aware no working final solution as yet
<b>Focusing on other areas</b>
Plan in place but not all areas
We are updating our call handling platform first, before we look to replace pendant alarms and telecare solutions

**Table A3: Answers provided by those who selected 'other' for Q5 - For how long do you expect your telecare service to continue using analogue alarm devices?**

<b>Do not have these units</b>
<Council name> will advise in their survey response.
District council, we do not run Social Services, however we are engaging in our community that are going through fibre upgrades and have residents that have life line circuits and also <Supplier> alarm systems that won't work on the fibre connection as they are copper driven. This has been for all suppliers an issue how to overcome this problem trialling VOIP connection but as far as I am aware no working final solution as yet
We have none.

<b>Already replaced units</b>
Replaced.
<b>In process of replacing units</b>
As previously stated, new clients are being issued with digital ready kit with a transition plan in place for existing clients to move over from analogue devices. This will be a gradual process.
<b>Other</b>
We plan on removing all analogue lines by 2025
We have undertaken testing of equipment and our existing <Supplier> platform. This has given us the confidence to determine that we can spread the change over the next two to three years, therefore a medium term change approach.

**Table A4: Further details about answers provided in relation to telecare**

<b>In the process of replacing analogue units/system</b>
All new connections are digital lifelines, unless it a 'NOT SPOT' - Currently phasing out analogue lifelines, however we accept that there will be some overlap with current analogue solutions. Although <Council name> commissioned service is providing digital solutions, we are aware that the local <Council types> lifeline services are providing to the private paying market, which <Council name> have no involvement with, are still using analogue solutions only. We are aware that one of the monitoring platforms they use is not digitally ready.
Any remaining analogue devices will be replaced by 2025.
Combination of replacing/upgrading all and continue to use analogue units in short-term. We believe that if a commitment is made it will be to replace existing stock over a period of 3 years (we stopped purchasing analogue units last year or the end of 2020).
From April 2022 - Already providing new digital ready devices since Oct 2020, non-digital devices being converted when technology available
Remaining analogue services will be replaced over the next 12 months, as previously main ISDN lines won't be required after end of 2022 and number of alarm / <Supplier> lines have already been replaced
Telecare are actively replacing end of life analogue units with digital devices and will continue to do so until the 2025 switch-off.
The backbone of the telecare service is already digitally-enabled. Remaining work involves upgrading PSTN lines to residents, which is in progress and being delivered largely by third party telecoms companies. <Council name> monitoring rate of conversion to ensure no residents left behind.

We are actively replacing older technology with digital devices where feasible and are investigating options where digital solutions are currently not available e.g. areas of poor mobile coverage and no FTTP or FTTC provision available.

We are already in the process of replacing our analogue solutions with digital solutions as well installing all new digital kit.

We are in the process of planning the implementation of a digitally ready <Supplier> software, likely implementation early 2024. We are assessing our current alarm estate and developing businesses cases to refresh and replace with digital. In the short term, it is likely we will continue to utilise analogue alarms. Our existing <Supplier> software is not interoperable with a large range of alarms, therefore, we are limited in the options we have.

We have been providing new kit to new customers since April 2022. We have a replacement programme in place for existing users which will take 18 months to complete, finishing 31/03/24.

### **Getting ready to start replacing analogue units/system**

As noted the STMF protocol is demonstrating in test conditions that it will work over a digital network.

Senior management, elected officials and operational teams have been briefed on the implications of the digital shift and plans for managing these changes. Senior management and the Lead Member for Adult Social Care have endorsed the plan to transfer all existing clients to digital equipment provision.

There are lots of other options now using other tech and this is part of our ongoing smart tech work

We have identified alarms and clients that fit the criteria for testing digital alarms and we will be testing in the next few months.

We hope to have a Digital Call Handling Platform in place by December 2022 with a view to lean on them to guide us in procuring digital devices to clients and anticipate a couple of years to work on this whilst we pilot/ test devices prior to purchasing

We will have a rolling programme to replace once the pilot is complete

### **Supplier/Service Provider technological issues/questions**

The devices we currently use have not been tested on the new network by the manufactures and we are unable to reliably confirm they will deliver the service they are intended to provide.

The telephone network providers have provided test sites for manufacturer to retest the devices; however, we have had confirmation that very few if any have tested their devices to enable us to have sufficient confidence in their reliability.

New devices are being developed however only a handful of the new devices have been tested and test reports have not been made available to the <Supplier> telecare services authority or to local authority commissioners.

We are capable of taking digital calls now, but this model uses both digital and analogue as the full solution is not fully digitally enabled and resilient

We are currently waiting for an upgrade to our <Supplier> system in order for us to trial more equipment for the digital switch over.

We are dependent upon the current service supplier making available and installing the relevant new systems. Some of our installations are already 'digital ready' but the supplier doesn't currently have a back end system available to plug these into

We are replacing many different things - social care alarms, traffic lights, CCTV and building alarms such as lifts etc. We are having difficulty receiving replacement alarms from our long-standing supplier <Supplier Name>, they have supply chain issues. This is slowing us down. They also do not have a functioning digital alarm monitoring solution so we are having to look elsewhere and see if compatible with the alarms we have. We are also pursuing the supply of alarms from elsewhere and these will also need to be compatible for monitoring moving forward.

### **Budgetary considerations**

Although I have raised the issue to Leadership team they have not provided budget to facilitate digital switch want to leave it till <Council name> Local Government Reorganisation after 1/4/23

Replacing legacy analogue equipment with digital devices will require capital investment. Our current position is to only do this when necessary due to the financial implications of this switch and due to the fact much of this equipment still has useful lifespan. As such, the speed of the move to digital will be determined by how the digital switchover takes place locally in our area plus reliability of existing equipment. The business case around this is subject to review as further evidence is gathered.

We are already buying digital units from current budget but more funds would need to be made available to put a short term renewal program in place.

We will use analogue devices, existing ones, for as long as possible due to the financial costs implication of replacing them.

### **Other answers**

Timescales may change there are a number of determinant factors, e.g. cost, staff resources, technology.

The current status is for residents applying to our telecare provider for telecare services in their own home. Residents living in schemes where the scheme

provides the service may have a different status depending on the readiness of the particular scheme.

**Table A5: Answers provided by those who selected 'other' for Q7 - Do you understand the costs your organisation will incur to move to digital telecare?**

<b>Still scoping the costs</b>
The costs for core services have already been acquired and the investment made. The costs for replacing any analogue alarms are still being clarified.
We have an indicative idea of costs and will go to tender for a suitable system / provider
It may be that some costs are associated with migrating alarms but have not costings at this point in time.
Currently scoping costs for social care customers
<b>Partial funding in place</b>
Some funding is in place for device replacement. Additional funding required to cover additional devices and costs of moving to cloud care phone solution not captured
We understand but have not yet obtained sufficient funding to complete the move to digital telecare. Any move would have to be phased over approximately 3 years.
We understand and have obtained some of the funding required.
<b>Would not be responsible for the move</b>
The County Council are dealing with all telecare users in the District.
The County Council are responsible for telecare services
<b>Other</b>
Funding from internal budgets at present
No migrations costs due to digital infrastructure
We will require £250k to replace existing kit

**Table A6: Answers provided by those who selected 'other' for Q8 - How are you intending to fund the move to digital telecare?**

<b>Not yet decided/finalised</b>
It is likely that we will use council budgets to fund the change but a final decision on this has not yet been taken.
Key elements already funded from council budget. Some work remaining for resident PSTN lines. Presume the digital switchover of those lines being funded by telecoms providers, but to be confirmed.

The core service changes have been funded from council budgets. We have yet to determine where costs for alarm replacements will be funded from.
We are funding but may seek to recoup over time
We would be funding the move to digital from council budgets, subject to commitment, but the cost of the digital unit to the service user is higher.
<b>Will not be responsible for the move</b>
County Council are dealing with telecare users.
County Council are responsible for telecare services
<b>Other</b>
No migration costs, but the digital infrastructure is funded through council budgets
The cost of the new digital service is less than we already spend on PSTN services.

**Table A7: Further information about answers provided in relation to costs and funding for digital telecare**

<b>Scoping work still ongoing</b>
A range of funding options will be explored including opportunities to jointly fund kit and the associated service offer across the wider health and care system.
Explore additional funding opportunities i.e. health / possible increase in costs per unit. Scoping options.
The technical solution is not yet available and as such we do not have an understanding of what the market costs will be.
The two projects are being managed by 2 separate service areas, not totally sure where the funding has come from but understand that they are aware of the budget needs to deliver the projects
Timescales and funding are dependent on customer turnover and growth.
Undertaking impact assessment and engagement
<b>Charging considerations</b>
Likely a combination of increasing charges to self-funders and eligible customers and exploring funding opportunities with partners i.e. health.
We're currently reviewing our charging policy, hence the lack of clarity on plans, but budget holders are aware of the requirement.
We may need to revisit our charging model to citizens also, that decision has not been made yet.
We will need to consider the % funding split between council and resident going forward.



<b>Sources of funding</b>
Currently joint funded, working with current ICS to increase health funding in line with digital switch costs
Funding via BCF
Seeking a corporate approach to funding.
<b>Other</b>
Is funding available to help if required?
Response as noted in Q3a - we now have to provide alternative lifelines to take into account 3g turnoff
The increase in cost of replacing existing analogue devices with digital is significant. Prices currently look like being double existing costs. We also anticipate that there will be additional cost in terms of training for installers/assessors and for trouble shooting digital services which are more complex and prone to errors (largely due to the early development stage of the technology and little or no standardisation within the TEC/telecare devices manufacturing sector).
We submit that additional funding should be provided by central government to cover the cost of this externally mandated change. Failures in this area are likely to result in a reduction in independent living and increased costs to the NHS and national purse. It would be sensible for the UK to ensure that this was adequately funded.

**Table A8: Answers provided by those who selected ‘other’ for Q11 - How would you describe your planning and readiness to the impact the digital shift will have on your organisation more widely?**

<b>Not all areas are covered by plans/work</b>
The plan for a solution is developed in certain areas (telecare, alarms monitoring) but not in all at present. A project team is in place to pull this together.
Work is underway to ensure that all council telephone lines have been migrated to digital by the end of this year. Meetings have also commenced with schools regarding this with the same business solution made available. Work is ongoing to assess wider implications and to ensure suitable plans are in place to manage the switchover.
<b>Still in early stage planning</b>
Early stage planning / scoping is being undertaken by <Council name> to consider options and risks
Considering building monitoring and remote monitoring

<b>Other</b>
Currently unaware of a plan that takes into account all of the above.
Don't know
Not our area of responsibility.

**Table A9: Answers provided by those who selected 'other' for Q12 - What is your capacity to deliver on your planning and readiness?**

<b>Capacity not known</b>
As per previous answer we are already deploying digital ready telecare units. I have no insight on what other teams such as Highways are doing.
Certain areas have resource in place but those areas not yet engaged in the planning haven't considered capacity at this stage.
Don't know
I am answering this survey on behalf of my service area (adult social care). I am not aware of capacity/readiness in other directorates
We have a high-level strategy but need to do further work to define resourcing. If we plan it correctly, we will have the capacity to deliver.
Work is underway to ensure that all council telephone lines have been migrated to digital by the end of this year. Meetings have also commenced with schools regarding this with the same business solution made available. Work is ongoing to assess wider implications and to ensure suitable plans are in place to manage the switchover.
<b>Other</b>
Combination of line 2 and 4: We have digital-ready solutions planned but need further support / capacity and We need further support / capacity to help develop plans
Minimal capacity impact
Not our area of responsibility.
The projects are being prioritised by existing staff

**Table A10: Further information about answers provided in relation to readiness and capacity to deliver the digital switch more widely**

<b>Progress</b>
Contracts and infrastructure are already in place and migration is 80%+ complete
In discussions with 3rd parties around impact and solutions. Internal project initiated but still need clarity and guidance to develop digital ready solution

LGR commitments - mobiles and teams telephony merger across the <affected> councils into the unitary org. Work will ramp up on PSTN migration, across that wider estate, from March 2023 onwards.

My answers are in relation to the digital switch over and its impact on adult social care, in particular lifeline monitoring services. Work has been undertaken already by our assistive technology team to commence this work and we are in the process of scoping out what resources (staffing/financially) to ensure <Council name> are ready.

Our infrastructure changes are being managed corporately with actions detailed for specific departments. It is a structured and well managed approach but is in process now so not complete.

Our main buildings the Council use and business offices need converting over to the Internet of GSM. A review of these officers and buildings is being conducted and suppliers are being contacted to seek available options to replace.

Some areas, like alarms to Pay and Display machines, not evaluated yet and these may require additional resource. We have prioritised life and limb services and alarms to lifts etc.

We are seeking external consultancy to assist with the move over outside of the telecare arena.

We have put in core platforms that are digital enabled and planned any further network work required with <Service Provider>. As mentioned, there are some legacy telecare alarm devices we are yet to replace but plan to do so.

There are two further areas we are following up with:

- i) There could be sites (e.g. community centres, children's home, etc) where the premise managers have bought local telephony connections independently from our IT Department and we are not aware of these, and similarly
- ii) Services could have bought devices locally that are analogue (e.g. CCTV, door control systems, etc).

To address this we have been and will continue to engage with Building Owners and Heads of Service to ensure they consider any local connections and/or devices they may be using.

Whilst some services (such as telephony) have been migrated the wider council is currently assessing with its suppliers where analogue lines may still exist (i.e. lifts, alarms, highways infrastructure etc), therefore the costs and impacts are not fully understood yet. The activity is being tracked at a corporate level by the Corporate Resilience Board and reported on regularly.

## Issues

We are unable to identify all the phonelines in lifts and alarm systems, and have real difficulty in trying to get all these lines identified with telephone numbers.

We have challenges with the remaining numbers not being released by the current provider
Whilst we are aware of the need from an IT service the diverse nature of services and service-owned contracts means a comprehensive understanding of the work required and scale of the problem is difficult.
<b>Awareness</b>
Fully aware of what is happening/going to happen.
I am not aware of how far this will affect us; its implications may be quite limited.
In response to question 10, some departments have a greater awareness than others. We are increasing awareness through communications on the topic which are led by the local authorities IT department.
<b>Resourcing</b>
May require some additional funding to our delivery partner if required i.e. resource capacity to complete the replacement of analogue lifelines.
The need to adopt and change for Digital at speed is increasing and we can implement fantastic solutions for our community within the current budget constraints, if we had a additional digital fund we would be able to implement broader change faster and deliver better outcomes for communities
<b>Other</b>
Resourcing and management and install from teams inc IT, PR&P. their programmes. Consideration around CCTV and UTM
We are linking to other works such as lift refurbishments

**Table A11: Further comments**

<b>Supplier/Service Provider technological issues</b>
As the Assistive Technology Team we have been preparing for the digital switchover for over 3 years and have been using IP ready units for the most part. The biggest challenge remains funding to replacing existing stock and the ability of providers to meet the demand often leading to delays in orders. This demand is likely going to increase in the next 2 years which is a risk to all providers
At the current time there are no viable options for meeting some operational service requirements in the same way as the current technology provides and worst case there is a proven risk to life through the new technology failing.
One of our key challenges has been getting adequate granular information on our analogue lines from our third party supplier, <Name>. Are you checking level of readiness with the key providers too? They are the ones who are primarily responsible for the successful switchover.

The assistive technology team has been preparing for the digital switch over since 2019. The biggest concern is the financial cost / staffing resources and supply chain / stock issues

We are currently relying on test info from the <Service Provider> testing lab re telecare, but this is being filtered by suppliers. Having access to independent testing information would be helpful as currently information is mainly coming from suppliers and it appears that some of this information may not be wholly reliable.

Whilst we have seen improvements in the way that communications providers are managing vulnerable adults digital shift, we still feel that too much onus is placed on those adults to resolve any issues that arise with their lifeline service, whether its commissioned by the local authority or not. Many adults do not have the capacity or support available to them to resolve these issues themselves and consequently are left without lifeline cover or the ability to raise an alert when required.

#### **Lack of information**

Any assistance in this area would be gratefully received. One big area of time constraints is getting useful information from telco providers. The standard response tends to be based around account codes/references with very limited information on the addresses/services involved and if there were any pressure to provide better information this would help a lot.

Communications providers need to establish mechanisms to proactively inform telecare providers and local authorities of the areas being transitioned to enable equipment to be transferred from analogue to digital in advance, mitigating the risk of loss of coverage.

I personally feel that there has been a lack of communication from telephony providers on this change or awareness provided on impact to organisations and vulnerable residents. I also feel that the government should try to assist to fund replacement of telecare system to reduce the impact on residents having to brunt the costs.

There is a lack of clarity across the assistive technology and telecoms industry which is of some concern. I'm also conscious that commercial considerations may be critical and that the business interests of manufacturers may not be those of local authorities.

#### **Requests for support**

It would be really helpful if the government made all telecoms providers switch over at the same time or at least in the same year if that is physically possible. We understand the need to do it but the supply chain issues are slowing down our progress.

It would have been helpful to have further support from Central Government, including a national communication strategy to support better public understanding and readiness.

We would be grateful for any guidance or support and welcome to join working groups

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

Concerns around our District & Borough Council awareness and readiness - we have passed a copy of this survey on to them, to fill in from their perspective. There are some differences in the position of other authorities that will form part of the new <Council Name> from 2023 (LGR)

In <Council Name> Local Government Reorganisation has significantly muddied the water potentially delaying the production of a fully costed plan for a year or 2, 2025 will be a stretch for implementation to be complete across all areas.

### **Other**

Organisationally there is a view that a lot of the IT lines / issues have been tackled but there are a number of more property related lines (Lift / Fire / Access Alarms) that rely on these connections and this is where the bigger issue may lie.

We have a whole council workshop on 26th Sept to disseminate the information regarding the switchover to improve readiness across the organisation

We started looking at this switchover around 12 months ago, and now ready to start implementing the change to the digital services.

## Annex B: Questionnaire

### Public Switch Telephone Network Switchover Readiness Survey

The national telephony network is undergoing a change process known as the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) switchover which will see the 1.7 million people, who access technology enabled care and support, at risk of being left without a connection. Whilst this work is a communications industry led process, the potential impacts beyond telephony and broadband services are significant and possibly impactful on the services that local authorities commission, deliver and refer to.

We are asking Local Authorities to complete a readiness survey to share their current position on awareness, planning, and implementation. This survey has been sent to all Chief Executives of local authorities as well as copied to Directors of Adult Social Care. We would be grateful for all local authorities to provide a response.

For further information please contact us on [socialcaredigital@local.gov.uk](mailto:socialcaredigital@local.gov.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

Please complete this survey in one go - if you exit before submitting the survey your answers may be lost. If you would like to see an overview of the questions before completing the survey online, you can access a PDF here: [<link to the PDF>](#)

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our [privacy statement](#). We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

**Please enter your details below.**

If you are responding on behalf of more than one authority please note this in the 'authority' box below, but please check with us first whether a separate return is needed for each authority.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Q1 - Is your organisation aware of the impact of the digital shift on telecare services?

- Fully aware
- Some awareness
- Heard about it, but don't know the detail
- Not aware of this

Q2 - Is this level of awareness consistent across your organisation?

What is level of awareness amongst...	Fully aware	Some awareness	Heard about it, but don't know the detail	Not aware of this	Not applicable
Senior / Executive Management Team:					
Elected Members:					
Telecare Operational Team:					





Q3 - How confident do you feel about your council's ability to manage the digital shift with minimal impact on your telecare service and service users?

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

Q3a - Based on your given answer, please can you give the reasons for the confidence level you gave.

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Q4 - How would you describe your planning and readiness for having a digital-ready telecare solution?

- We have a digital-ready solution in place
  - We are currently putting a digital-ready solution in place
  - Plan for a solution developed, but not yet implemented
  - Early stage planning has been completed
  - We do not currently have a plan
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q5 - For how long do you expect your telecare service to continue using analogue alarm devices?

- We are replacing/upgrading all our analogue alarm units with digital devices as soon as possible
  - We will continue to use analogue alarm units in the short-term (1-2 years)
  - We will continue to use analogue alarm units in the long-term (2+ years)
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q6 - If you wish to provide further details about your answers to these questions, you may do so here.

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Q7 - Do you understand the costs your organisation will incur to move to digital telecare?

- We understand and have obtained the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare
  - We understand, but have not yet obtained, the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare
  - We do not yet understand the funding required to complete the move to digital telecare
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q8 - How are you intending to fund the move to digital telecare?

- We are funding the move to digital telecare from council budgets
  - We are increasing telecare service user charges to fund the move to digital telecare
  - We are using a combination of council funding and increases to service user charges
  - We do not yet know how we will fund the move to digital telecare
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q9 - If you wish to provide further details about your answers to these questions, you may do so here.

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Q10 - Is your organisation aware of the impact the digital shift of telephone services will have on your organisation more widely – ie other than telecare, for example on alarm systems, traffic controls, lifts, etc?

- Fully Aware
- Some Awareness
- Heard about it, but don't know the detail
- Not aware of this

Q11 - How would you describe your planning and readiness to the impact the digital shift will have on your organisation more widely?

- We have put the necessary digital-ready solution(s) in place
  - We are currently putting the digital-ready solution(s) in place
  - Plan for solution(s) developed, but not yet implemented
  - Early stage planning has been completed
  - We do not currently have a plan
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q12 - What is your capacity to deliver on your planning and readiness?

- We have digital-ready solutions and the capacity to put them in place
  - We have digital-ready solutions planned but need further support/capacity
  - We do not currently have a plan but do not need support/capacity
  - We need further support/capacity to help develop plans
  - Other (please specify below)
- 

Q13 - If you wish to provide further details about your answers to these questions, you may do so here.

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Q14 - Finally, if you have any further comments, you may provide these here.

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Once you press the 'Submit' button below, you will have completed the survey.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. You are in control of any personal data that you have provided to us in your response. You can contact us at all times to have your information changed or deleted. You can find our full privacy policy here: [click here to see our privacy policy](#)

