

Tuesday 4 February 2025, House of Commons

The APPG's final evidence session heard that the digital switchover poses significant challenges, particularly for older individuals, due to the scale of the infrastructure change and the need for communication and support.

Witnesses reported a lack of communication from CPs, confusing information, and concerns about service outages and failed migrations. There is a need for a proactive strategy involving charities, family members, and neighbours to provide support and address concerns effectively.

It was discussed that the digital switchover poses significant challenges, particularly for vulnerable customers reliant on telecare services. While some progress has been made, concerns remain about the preparedness of individuals and the potential for. There is a need for greater government leadership and collaboration between organisations to ensure a smooth transition and protect vulnerable individuals.

Concerns were raised about the lack of safeguards and support for vulnerable consumers during the digital switchover, as well as the need for a clear strategy from CPs and government departments to ensure a smooth transition, including involving charities and providing accessible information.

Witnesses acknowledged that the PSTN switchover is a significant undertaking that requires government coordination and guidance for effective implementation. While efforts to communicate the switchover are underway, evidence suggested a more comprehensive and coordinated approach is needed to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities and receives the necessary support. A priority service register for vulnerable individuals, similar to the energy sector, was discussed.

The national telecare campaign, led by BT and VMO2, was discussed. It aims to inform people about the digital switchover. While the campaign is a positive step, concerns remain about its reach, funding, and potential for scams. A government-backed, multichannel campaign with clear communication and trusted resources is needed to ensure a smooth transition for all.

The PSTN switch-off raises concerns about broadband coverage, backup batteries, and the reliance on mobile phones, especially for vulnerable groups. Witnesses were worried about the impact on essential services like burglar alarms, CCTV, and lift lines, which may be dependent on the PSTN.

Digital champions were discussed during the session. It was suggested that they can play a key role in digital inclusion, but a more comprehensive national effort is needed to ensure everyone can access online services.