



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

2G/3G Switch-Off – DSIT update

Telecommunications Modernisation Team

Digital Infrastructure Directorate



Background: The 2G network needs to be switched off to increase market competition and release spectrum for 4G/5G. The Mobile Network Operators intend to do this by 2033 or sooner. Devices that use 2G will need to be upgraded.

- The UK's digital infrastructure is undergoing a significant upgrade, including the switch-off of the Public Switched Telephone Network and upgrade to Voice over Internet Protocol, switch-off of 2G & 3G to release spectrum for 4G & 5G, and exchange closure and digitalisation.
- 2G & 3G technology has been superseded by 4G & 5G which are faster, more energy efficient and secure, enable greater operator and equipment competition, and lower consumer prices.
- Mobile Network Operators agreed in December 2021 to switch-off 2G and 3G services by 2033 at the latest. In January 2025 EE announced its intention to switch-off 2G in 2029. Once closed the 2G and 3G spectrums can be reallocated.
- The switch-off will require devices relying on 2G to be upgraded, particularly devices supporting vulnerable customers and critical services. Many of these are internet of things devices, rather than mobiles using 2G for voice calls.
- EE and Vodafone have completed their 3G switch-off. Three and VMO2 will complete their 3G switch-offs by early 2026. Devices previously using 3G are now using 4G or 2G and the 3G spectrum is being reallocated to 4G/5G.
- In addition, 2G roaming services are being withdrawn by VMO2 on 1 October 2025.
- Ofcom published [guidance](#) in 2023 which outlines how this should be done safely. These are expectations of mobile network operators and includes





Benefits of 2G Switch-Off: Customers will benefit from fast, more reliable data speeds, there will be lower maintenance costs, increased energy efficiency, increased competition, and the UK's mobile networks will be more secure and resilient

UK Digital Infrastructure: The switch-off of 2G will benefit the UK by enabling greater digitalisation to support economic growth.

Benefit 1: Faster, More Reliable Data Speeds

Customers will experience faster, more reliable data speeds using 5G or 4G once the spectrum has been reallocated from 2G.

Benefit 2: Reduced Costs

Customers will benefit from reduced costs as MNOs will no longer need to maintain multiple networks with expensive ageing infrastructure.

Benefit 3: Improved Energy Efficiency

Improved energy efficiency as 4G and 5G are significantly more energy efficient than existing 2G and 3G networks.

Benefit 4: Security and Resilience

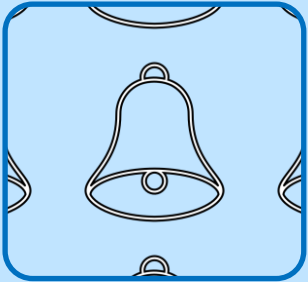
Networks will be more secure and resilient by using modern components sourced from secure and more diversified and competitive supply chains.

Benefit 5: Increased Competition

A less complex network will make it easier for new entrants to enter the market to the benefit of customers.

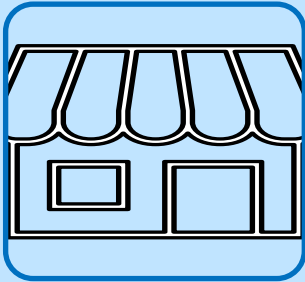


2G Use Cases: In addition to voice calls on mobile handsets, 2G is widely used in devices as part of an Internet Of Things (IoT) and/or Machine-Machine (M2M) technology solutions for a diverse and massive number of use cases



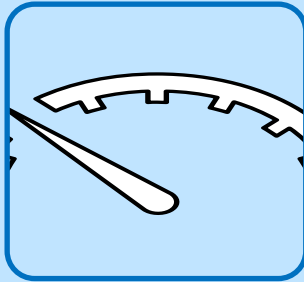
Alarms

Telecare, fire, security, lift



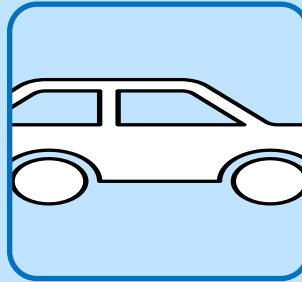
Retail

Point of sale terminals, electronic shelf labelling, vending machines



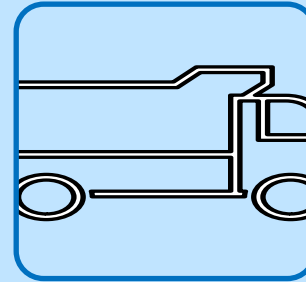
Utilities

Smart meters (domestic and business), solar panel installations, monitoring of utility networks (water, gas, electricity)



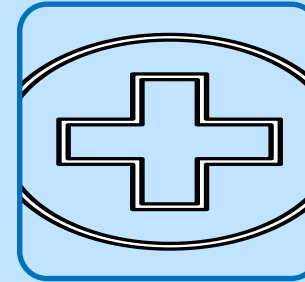
Vehicles

eCall emergency service, electric vehicle charging points, telemetry/tracker devices, parking meters, bus ticketing machines



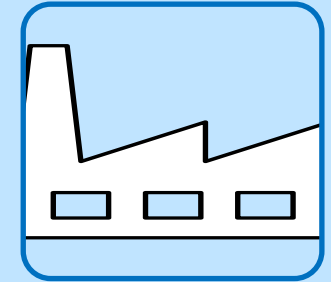
Logistics

Equipment rental monitoring, commercial vehicle telemetry, supply & cold chain monitoring, monitoring remote food and beverage, traffic safety & control



Healthcare:

Remote monitoring, clinic environment management, medication dispensing, healthcare asset tracking



Industrial

Predictive maintenance, remote diagnostics, building automation, smart grid automation, asset tracking



Government's role: DSIT is working with industry, Ofcom and other stakeholders to ensure the switch-off takes place safely, including VMO2 2G roaming switch-off in October 2025

- The Government has a key role to play in helping to ensure that the sectors that rely on 2G/3G connectivity for their services, including the health, energy and transport sectors, are aware of the change and prepare accordingly.
- DSIT is working with Ofcom and network operators to ensure a smooth transition that meets the needs of business users and consumers, including vulnerable groups.
- DSIT are currently working with VMO2, Ofcom and other stakeholders to ensure the safe withdrawal of VMO2 2G roaming services in October 2025. Affected organisations need to prioritise the upgrade of devices with international 2G SIMs reliant on the O2 network. Ofcom's [predicted 2G roaming not-spot datasets](#) supports identification of such devices.
- DSIT will be publishing more information on the 2G/3G switch-off in due course.



HM Government



Department
of Health &
Social Care



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology



Stakeholders



The voice of technology
enabled care