

Your emergency alarm equipment is at risk: What to do about the digital switchover

The digital switchover poses an active operational risk for Almshouses.

You have a critical duty to protect vulnerable residents and prepare for this change by upgrading your equipment before the 31st January 2027 deadline.

This guide explains what the digital switchover means for your emergency alarm service and what action you need to take.

What is the digital switchover - and why does it matter to Almshouses?

The UK's telecoms network is changing from the analogue PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) to digital lines.

This impacts the safety and reliability of your emergency alarm equipment.

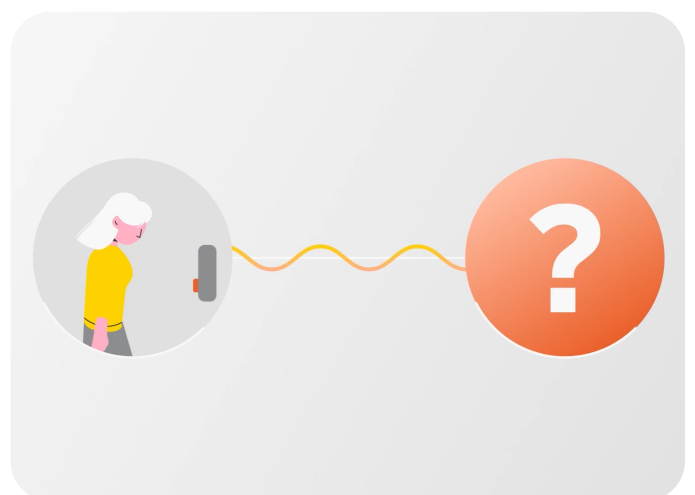
That's because this equipment was built for the analogue network and is not fully compatible with digital.

How is the digital switchover disrupting telecare?

Digital and analogue essentially communicate in different languages.

This means the digital network can misinterpret and scramble audible analogue signals, causing delays and distortion.

If a telecare emergency alarm fails to connect on the initial attempt, this is known as a First Time Call Failure. The device will then repeatedly try to reach the monitoring centre, which can lead to lengthy delays. This puts the person waiting for help at risk.



Nearly 1 in 3 calls fail on the first attempt.

Driven by the digital switchover, first time call failures average **28%**, and peak at **42%** on certain devices.

What does this mean for your residents?

Your tenants place a great deal of trust in their emergency telecare alarms. These enable them to live independently, knowing help's on hand if needed.

But when these alarms can't operate reliably over the digital network, they're left in a very vulnerable, unsafe position, with potentially serious consequences.

Dealing with the digital switchover - two key solutions

There are two main ways to protect your emergency telecare services:

1

Analogue to digital converter

- ☉ Translates analogue signals into a format recognised by the digital network.
- ☉ Lower upfront cost, easy installation, works with current infrastructure.
- ☉ Not a permanent fix but can be a useful stepping stone to the Jan 2027 deadline.

2

A full digital upgrade - your end goal

- ☉ Future-proof solution, eliminating the reliance on outdated technology.
- ☉ Faster, more reliable service with stronger security.
- ☉ Offers many service enhancements, such as video communication, as well as additional benefits for staff, such as greater insights.

Overcoming digital upgrade challenges

Your provider should guide you through the specific challenges facing Almshouses, minimising any disruption.

For example, they should:

- 🕒 **Plan for listed status:** a survey can assess what's needed, how to avoid structural changes and whether consent is necessary.
- 🕒 **Approach aesthetic needs sensitively:** such as avoiding unsightly cabling.
- 🕒 **Manage the process for you:** explaining each stage so you understand what's required and why.

Urgent action needed - what to do next

Digital upgrades take time to procure and install. Get started now to safeguard your emergency alarm services for your residents before the January 2027 deadline:

- ✓ Find out what equipment you have in your properties.
- ✓ Put the burden of a plan on your provider - confirm what they can do, timescales and budget.
- ✓ Brief your trustees and keep residents informed.

Simplify the digital switchover with appello

We'll help you build a clear action plan so you can meet the switchover deadline with confidence.

We have over 35 years' experience enabling safe, independent living. That's why 150+ UK housing providers trust us with their move to digital, including those managing historical and listed buildings.

Talk to our team to find out more:
appello.co.uk/free-consultation