



29 August 2024

For the attention of the Director of Adult Social Services

Dear colleague,

The digital telephone switchover – the role of local authorities in supporting identification of telecare service users through data sharing

Further to the letter sent to you in January by officials from the Department of Health and Social Care, we are writing to you about progress in sharing data to support the identification of telecare service users during the digital telephone switchover and to share practical resources to support you to share data with telecommunication providers.

Local authorities play a critical role in supporting the telecommunication sector to safeguard telecare users during the digital switchover. We would like to thank you for your continuing efforts in this area.

We understand that, since January, there has been an increase in the number of data sharing agreements in place between local authorities and telecommunication providers. However, we also understand that telecommunication providers have been unable to engage with some local authorities, and further data sharing processes are needed to ensure they can identify telecare users.

Government continues to expect local authorities to take necessary action, including data sharing to help telecommunications providers to identify telecare service users in your communities within their customer base so that they can implement appropriate safeguarding measures.

We encourage you to reach out to your Directors of Housing, where relevant, and to work together to promote the identification of people who use telecare services to support data sharing with telecommunication providers.

Our respective departments have worked with key stakeholders, such as the Local Government Association and the London Office of Technology and Innovation to produce practical guidance and support for local authorities. We are grateful to these stakeholders for their work to produce the following resources:

- A data sharing agreement template; [Data Sharing Agreement V1.0 REMEDIATED - Updated NEW.docx \(live.com\)](#)
- A DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) template; [Data Protection Impact Assessment V1.0 REMEDIATED - With Risk Assessment.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Further detail on the data sharing agreement, including a Q&A, can be found at the LGA's digital switchover hub: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/digital-switchover/digital-switchover-telecare-data>



Department
of Health &
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Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

You may be aware that some telecommunication providers, including BT, have extended the deadline for completing the switchover to January 2027. This does not reduce the urgency of ensuring that telecommunication providers are able to identify telecare users.

We appreciate that data sharing is often not straightforward, and we recognise that you might want to take your own legal advice before entering in such agreements. Use of the data sharing agreement is not mandatory, but we encourage you to use these resources as data sharing is a vital part of our collective and continued efforts to safeguard telecare users. If there are reasons why you will not make use of this data sharing agreement, please feed those back to us.

In addition to encouraging data sharing, there has been sustained effort at a national level to raise awareness of the key risks to telecare users. The Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology are continuing to work proactively, in association with stakeholder groups, on short and long-term plans to ensure that telecare users and vulnerable groups are protected during the migration to digital lines.

Thank you for all the work you continue to do support the sector through the switchover. We welcome your support on this matter and look forward to continuing to work closely with you to safeguard telecare users.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Kinnock, Minister of State for Care

Chris Bryant, Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecomms