



GUERNSEY  
COMPETITION &  
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# Fibre to the Premises – the Future of Emergency Calls in Guernsey

Call for Information

August 2021

# Emergency calls during a power outage – what is changing?

Currently landline phone services in Guernsey are delivered to homes and premises by copper wires connected to, and powered by, local telephone exchanges. In the event of a power failure, these services will still work.

The world is moving towards a different type of phone network, using fibre optic cables to carry both voice and data. These services rely on power drawn from the user's premises, so if there

is a power cut the landline cannot be used and the user would need to have a mobile phone to make a call (unless a special battery back-up unit has been installed to power the landline).

Sure is currently trialling such a system in Guernsey and the question arises: in the future if you don't have a mobile phone how would you contact the emergency services on 112 or 999 during a power cut?

## What do we want to know?

**Change to telecommunications services or to the quality or availability of telecommunication services in Guernsey need to be agreed by us given, among other considerations, our role to protect consumers.**

We want to make sure we have taken into account all views that can inform us about this area and we would especially benefit from the knowledge of those who have close experience of the circumstances of vulnerable people, so that we can

work with the licensed operators to develop a new set of rules to ensure access to emergency services for all is not materially affected by the above changes.

We need to understand what effect such a change may have, and what measures could be introduced to mitigate any negative impact, particularly in regard to those who are most likely to require emergency services and/or are reliant on landlines to access these services (so-called vulnerable groups).

## Some of the issues we are exploring are:

- Designing practical and technological solutions which ensure emergency and other important calls can continue to be made during power outages;
- Deciding which consumers are considered vulnerable and might be entitled to alternative solutions to be able to make emergency calls;
- Ensuring any solution adopted for vulnerable consumers can be sustained well into the future and clearly allocates replacement and maintenance responsibilities between providers and such consumers;
- Providing consumers who are not categorised as vulnerable with an affordable option to pay for the installation of a battery back-up solution for their landline, where they do not wish to rely only on their mobile phones for emergency calls;
- Implementing precautionary measures to ensure the potential for market power is not open to exploitation, for example in relation to the battery back up installation market;
- Ensuring consumers are supplied in good time with information that will allow them to best exercise their rights and any options available to them;
- Creating a transparent and effective mechanism for settlement of disputes between providers and consumers and for the enforcement of consumer rights and obligations;
- Requiring providers to document key aspects of their compliance with the above systems of control and allowing for control and monitoring.

The switch from copper to fibre is not unique to Guernsey: it is happening all over the world, and we can draw from experience in those jurisdictions, so a number of solutions already exist and have been tested. But we are keen to create a solution for Guernsey that strikes a proportionate balance between cost, progress and the protection of life and health.

# How can you help?

**The GCRA is seeking views and information to better inform its regulatory response.**

Interested parties are invited to submit responses to those questions in our consultation document to which they are able to respond and to provide any wider comment on matters or issues raised more generally by the topic of this consultation.

Our consultation document is to be found on our website ([www.gcra.gg](http://www.gcra.gg)), under Matter T1557G and at the following link: <https://www.gcra.gg/media/598354/t1557g-telecom-network-licensees-emergency-calls-call-for-information.pdf>

Responses can be emailed to [info@gcra.gg](mailto:info@gcra.gg) or in writing and delivered by hand to the following address:

**Suite 4, 1st Floor**

**La Plaiderie Chambers La Plaiderie**

**St Peter Port Guernsey GY1 1WG**

All comments should be clearly marked "Call for Information – Fibre to the premises: Future approach to emergency calls" and should arrive by 5pm on 24 September 2021.

In line with GCRA's consultation policy, it intends to make responses to the consultation available on the GCRA website. Any material that is confidential should be put in a separate annex and clearly marked as such, in order that it may be kept confidential. The Authority regrets that it is not in a position to respond individually to the responses to this consultation.



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