

Abthorpe Broadband Association Ltd.

Bringing Broadband to the community since 2003.

BT are changing the way their telephone service is provided over the next two years by installing Internet phones. If you only use your mobile phone or use your TVB connection to provide your phone service, you can ignore the rest of this document. But if you use BT or any of the other services that use BT lines to provide a landline telephone – TalkTalk, PlusNet, etc. – now is the time to make plans.

This change means that your telephone will not operate if there is a power failure. It may also affect other services using the telephone line, such as emergency call buttons and security cameras. The providers of these services will be aware of the change and should tell you what you need to do.

BT will retain the telephone line itself but will install a conversion box which provides an Internet connection. Your telephone will not change and will plug into this box in the same way as it is connected to the master socket at present.

ABbA/Tove Valley Broadband, of course, provide the same connection to the Internet and you can take advantage of that to dramatically reduce the cost of your telephone service. Many members have already made this change.

Several companies provide these alternative services, often referred to as VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). You can retain your current landline number (eg 01327....) and benefit from several additional features. You will make and receive calls exactly as you do at present.

To move from BT to one of the VOIP service providers you need to think about how much you use your landline and who you call. Do you call mobile numbers or make international calls. Is the landline only used to receive calls? There are pay-as-you-go services as well as all-inclusive ones with different prices depending on whether calls to mobiles and international calls are available.

You will need an adapter box.

The choices:

- Pay-as-you-go VOIP provider and purchase a pre-programmed adapter from them. This is the lowest cost system. It will cost you about £50 to set up and you will have to keep your account in credit. This would be an obvious choice if you rarely use your landline to make calls. Seriously consider a pay-as-you-go package initially and then decide if a monthly tariff is more suitable.
- VOIP provider with a “package” that will include an adapter and charge a monthly fee. Many people prefer this method but be sure you are getting a package suitable for the normal use of your phone.

You can “port” your existing land-line number to your VOIP service in most cases but there may be charges for this. If you want to do that, sign up and get the VOIP service installed first, even if you are given a different telephone number. **DO NOT CANCEL YOUR EXISTING CONTRACT** – the VOIP service provider will do that for you when the number is transferred.

From now on, the information in this document is for guidance only. It contains suggestions, not recommendations! Although we pride ourselves in being able to give advice, help and support to our Members, ABbA is in no way responsible for anything in your home beyond the device directly connected to our broadband service.

Choose a UK-based service. if you choose a Germany based company for example, the receiver of your calls in this country may be told there is an international call coming in and many people bar these calls.

If you want to do your own search, Look at www.moneysupermarket.com/broadband/voip or do a Google or similar search on “domestic voip providers”.

The VOIP providers which we know about are:

1. Voipfone – very good service and very low cost. Have got PAYG and packages. Can port your existing number. Can supply adapter. Excellent customer service.
2. Voipcheap – very cheap but a more DIY solution for those willing. No existing number porting as far as we can tell. Good on-line help.
3. Vonage – packages but beware of relatively expensive calls outside your package provision. Will provide an adapter, which is included in your package. Can port your existing number. Some people experience not so good customer service.
4. bOnline – several market reviews rate this service. No experience in TVB
5. xinix - several market reviews rate this service. No experience in TVB. Can port your existing number. More information to follow.
6. YAY – good for businesses with multiple phone numbers or extensions.

Based on using a pay-as-you-go service, our **current suggestion** (April 2023) is VoipFone™.

VoipFone™ is a VOIP provider who we have suggested to many members and their service continues to be excellent. We suggest you go for their “Flex” account – you can easily change later when you have more idea if a monthly package is more suited to your operation.

Sign up for a Voipfone account and load your account with (say) £20 credit.

Buy a Grandstream HT-801 ATA pre-programmed for your service through Voipfone’s website.

When the ATA comes, plug it into your local network (wired, not WiFi), disconnect your BT type telephone and plug it into the ATA (you will have to consider plug types and maybe use a converter)

If required, now download “existing number porting” documents, complete and return.

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