



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology



Home Office

For the attention of Alarm Receiving Centres

Sent via the British Security Industry Association, the National Security Inspectorate and the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board.

Dear all,

The UK telecoms industry is in the process of retiring the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), concluding by January 2027. Industry made this decision because the PSTN is increasingly unreliable and costly to repair. Many fire and security alarms alert alarm receiving centres (ARCs), such as yours, via the PSTN and may lose connectivity if they are not upgraded ahead of time.

The Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms Sir Chris Bryant, and the Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention Dame Diana Johnson wish to understand the risk of fire and security alarms failing to connect to ARCs as the PSTN is progressively retired. The critical role that alarms play in preventing fatalities and damage to buildings and infrastructure makes this project one of the Government's key priorities in the PSTN migration.

The Fire and Security Advisory Board (FSAB), made up of communication providers, the Home Office, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and representatives of the alarm industry, is working to identify the number of fire and security alarms at risk and is developing mitigation plans. The FSAB and ministers need to understand this risk in order to identify appropriate mitigation plans. While FSAB members can produce broad estimates, they vary considerably (from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands) and do not provide an accurate picture of the scale of the risk, or allow for the tracking of this over time. Only ARCs can collectively provide this information.

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) is leading the FSAB project to identify the total number of alarms that rely on the PSTN. Noting the safety risks associated with connectivity losses, we strongly encourage you to email David Wilkinson (david.wilkinson@bsia.co.uk) of the BSIA by 31 January 2025 with (1) the number of your PSTN customer migrations completed and number of customers yet to be migrated, and (2) your Receiver number. This will help the FSAB ensure that people in need of emergency services can continue to receive it promptly when their alarms alert your centres.

Kind regards,

Jenna Marsh

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Thomas Eland

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