

Consultation: Resilience guidance

May I make one very simple point, which seems to have been largely overlooked because it's mainly a rural issue:

When there is a power cut, the landline is literally the only means available of making emergency calls or communicating with the outside world. When the power goes down, the router ceases to work and there is no internet. Without the internet there is no means of making VoIP calls, and therefore no means of calling emergency services.

Mobile phones in rural areas are useless because the transmitters lose power as well and the mobile signal ceases as soon as the power goes off. So here, just 6 miles from Lincoln, for example, as soon as the power goes off we have no internet and no mobile signal - literally the only means of emergency contact left is the landline.

And if you think power cuts are a rarity, they're not outside towns and cities because overhead power lines are the norm, rather than underground cables. All it takes is a bird strike, a piece of farming equipment or some bad weather, and down come the power lines. It happens frequently, and every time it happens there's no internet, no VoIP and no mobile signal because the transmitters are also down.

One possible but partial solution is to require mobile companies to provide several hours of battery backup cover for the inevitable power cuts. This would have been advisable years ago, but if landlines are to disappear it's now absolutely critical.