

Service update

29 April 2021

Update on our service position

Here's an update on the service position in Openreach, for our volume copper and fibre products.

The last financial year, 2020/21, was like no other, with some extraordinary challenges. We've faced regional and national lockdowns and of course, we had some really adverse weather conditions, including the named storms, Christoph and Darcy, with extensive flooding and heavy snowfall across much of the UK.

We also saw incredibly strong demand on our network with so many more people working from home and this looks set to continue for some time to come.

But throughout the year Openreach coped well, with service on a par with the previous year, and in some areas even better.

Fault intake was running at extremely high levels over the last quarter – over 10% higher than for the same period the previous year, with around 100k weekly intake continuing through March.

However, to meet the demand, we've delivered record levels of fault completions, including days where we hit over 20k fault completions, which is a remarkable achievement.

And, despite all the challenges, we saw a 4% uplift in repair performance through March, ending ended the year above 88% for on-time performance.

We've also driven down repair tails to 2.5k and our copper provision work stack is under 14k, which are the lowest levels since the first national lockdown in March last year.

We've delivered all the higher on-time provision QoS standards (previously known as MSLs), with every region above 94% in the year 2020/21.

We've also kept pace with the significant increase in provision demand on FTTP, with more of our CPs ordering the service, and we've been working hard to deal with those orders that were delayed due to Covid working practices.

As we closed out the year, we made sure we were in a good position to deal with the challenges to come, as restrictions change, and the country moves forward.

Our repair work stack is now in a strong position, going into the upcoming May Bank Holiday weekend at around 25k on a national basis, with every area at, or under, our preferred operating levels.

And we're continuing to invest in people, with more than 5,000 new UK-based engineering jobs, to be filled during 2021. That's more than 2,500 full-time jobs in our service and network build divisions, as well as an estimated 2,800 positions in our UK supply chain partners. The first group comes on-line in June 2021 and the next one after a further 3 months.

Service desk operations

Contact demand into our service desk remained stable through the end of the quarter, with volumes in line with forecasts. Repair contact has fallen in line with the work stack, and provision volumes remain healthy. PCA and ATTA both remain on target, with no long wait times seen on channels and cross skilled resource supporting interval delivery.

We're continuing to explore ways to reduce CP effort – though our rollout of self-serve functions and identifying drivers of repeat contact, which will be managed proactively to reduce the need for contact. We'll continue to review and address gaps in systems, skilling and processes, in order to make eChat and voice routes as effective as possible.

In our escalations channel we're maintaining our target level of 4 working hours response time. Volume is returning to expected levels, in line with work stack positions and gives us the confidence of maintaining the required service levels.

Our complaints teams have been seeing a slight but expected increase in contact following the return of our engineers to more activity inside end customer premises. This increase is mostly due to the location of NTE /ONT equipment within homes and businesses, as a result of engineers following Covid guidance and safe working practices.

Back to Green Covid working practices

Throughout the series of Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, the safety of our engineers and your customers has been of prime importance and we've updated our working practices appropriate to the changing situation.

You'll have seen in last week's briefing that, from today, 29 April, we're now able to move back to green working across the UK, for Service delivery (SD).

This means that, for appointed repair and provision work for all of our copper, superfast and ultrafast products, where work cannot be completed externally in the network, we'll enter the end customer premises.

We'll now be able to work beyond the NTE / ONT, for more than just provision and TLOS, including for NTE shifts, MI tasks, TRC and speed related issues.

Of course, in all cases, our engineers will continue to carry out a personal risk assessment and maintain the current safety guidelines, at all times. This includes asking the three screening questions. I'd like to remind you of the importance of continuing to screen your customers when booking appointments and to manage their expectations of what the engineering visit will entail.

Also, in order to minimise our engineers' time in end customer premises, the guidance, as always, is do the work and then step out for testing handover.

For non-appointed repair and provision, we'll continue working externally in the network and not entering the end customer premises. Any jobs that can't be completed in the network will need to go back for appointing.

There's no change to our Fibre and Network Delivery (FND) operations, as these are already working at green across the UK.

Further details of these working practices, together with the UK RAG status, can be found on the Covid-19 notifications pages [here](#)

During really exceptional conditions over the last year, we've continued to make sure that your customers stayed connected. I'd like to thank you all again for your continued support and understanding, as we've worked together through these challenges.

As always if you need any support or advice, please contact me or your customer experience lead.

Regards

Chris Herbert
Director, Customer Service – Service Delivery