



Service update

14 August 2020

Openreach service position

Here's the latest of our briefings to make sure you're kept up to date on the service position in Openreach for our volume copper and fibre products.

I thought it would be useful to start with a quick overview of how we performed on service last month – July 2020.

- Overall on-time provision performance was strong at 94.9%
- For repair, our overall on-time performance was at 82.7%
- Fault intake reached a record high level at the beginning of July and has remained high throughout the month, with many hotspots across the country
- Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) delivery to brownfield sites was significantly impacted by COVID-19 at the start of the year and demand has increased since the easing of restrictions. We have completed an unprecedented volume of orders at 87.3% on time, an improvement of 4 pp on the previous month
- Openreach missed appointment level was at 2.0%. Increasing capacity to address repair hotspots and high provision demand has been challenging
- On the Ofcom Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) we have delivered 39/42 so far this year, and we remain on track to deliver 42/42 for the full year
- On our service priorities we continue to focus on Early Life Failures (ELFs) and Repeats.
 - ELFs were at 7.6% which is flat year on year
 - Repeats were at 13.9% which is 1.5% up on the 12.4% last year, with impact from COVID-19 restrictions

General picture

We are facing challenges for both provision and repair. Since the easing of restrictions, we've seen unprecedented repair intake, receiving the highest faults ever over a four-week period which has put a great deal of strain on our operations. This has come at a time of high provision activity, dealing with the orders that we were not able to complete during restricted period, combined with buoyant new demand. This high demand is compounded by the continuing impact of COVID-19.

Also, as we moved into August, we've been seeing the first summer electrical storms across many parts of the UK. The start of this week has experienced particularly severe conditions, with lightning strikes and extreme rainfall which has caused extensive flooding.

With the thunderstorms continuing, we expect fault volumes to remain high over the coming days and weeks.

How are we doing?

As you can see from our July performance data above, provision delivery has been maintained at a good level throughout the period, despite the challenges we've faced.

We continue to use our resources to the best effect, moving engineers to the worst affected areas with lodge loans, overtime and daily travels as well as using teams from other areas of the business.

Our engineers are working extremely hard, in some particularly difficult conditions to bring the work stacks down and to get your customers back in service as soon as possible.

I'm sure you will have seen our communications earlier this week on how our engineers as well as other teams from the wider BT Group, tackled the severe flooding of our Edinburgh Donaldson exchange, to bring all affected services back on-line within the day.

Focus on our Customer Service Management (CSM) teams

Our CSM teams have seen exceptionally high levels of contact from customers across a number of our key contact channels. This, unfortunately, has resulted in occasional extended wait times. We've also faced challenges with agent experience, some early eChat platform bugs and some severe weather impacts affecting our offshore teams.

On our agent team member experience, this is a key focus area for us. We are seeing improvements as our agents gain 'in the moment' coaching and support and they're naturally becoming more understanding, knowledgeable and experienced from the contact they receive.

In terms of our eChat platform, we've had some recent performance issues that required the platform to be reset this week. Repair queues were re-enabled immediately followed by all other services as per normal opening hours. Following further work the system appears to be working normally and we continue to monitor. These performance issues are a personal disappointment and we will undertake a full and thorough post-incident review.

Finally, we've suffered severe power outages in India linked to seasonal weather conditions. As our agents remain working from home due to government advice, we've seen isolated pockets of unexpected disconnections from our chats. In normal circumstances working from our normal sites, our continuity would kick in such as back-up power but, with people working from home, this fall-back isn't available. We're working hard to mitigate this with technology such as battery back-up supplies to our agents at home and we're also exploring and testing how we can create a resource on core contact channels working from a safe site in line with local Indian government guidelines.

As ever, we really appreciate your support during these extremely challenging times and we'd ask you and your teams to continue to help. Utilising our self-service tools before contacting the Openreach CSM team, and using the correct dropdowns on EiVA where necessary, will make a real difference.

I know how important our service performance is for you and your customers and I'll continue to issue these service updates on a regular basis, over the coming weeks and months, as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 across the country.

I'm having some time off with the family and leaving you in the more than capable hands of my team. I hope you've already been able to or are planning to have some time off to recharge your own batteries, after what have been the most unusual five months many of us can remember.

Meanwhile, as always, we'd really like to hear from you with any thoughts you may have on these reports or service in general.

Regards

Chris Herbert
Director, Customer Service – Service Delivery