

Why are we removing payphones?

Payphone use has declined by over 90% in the last decade, 20% of them have not been used to make a call in the last 12 months, whilst anti-social behaviour, theft and repeated vandalism increases. Vastly improved coverage and access to cheap mobile calls means that many public payphones within BT's national estate are no longer necessary for the community they were originally intended to benefit. Mobile take-up and coverage are both high - 98% of the UK has either 3G or 4G mobile coverage in their direct proximity. This is significant because, so long as there is network coverage from a mobile provider, it's also now possible to call the emergency services, even when there is no credit or no coverage from your own mobile provider.

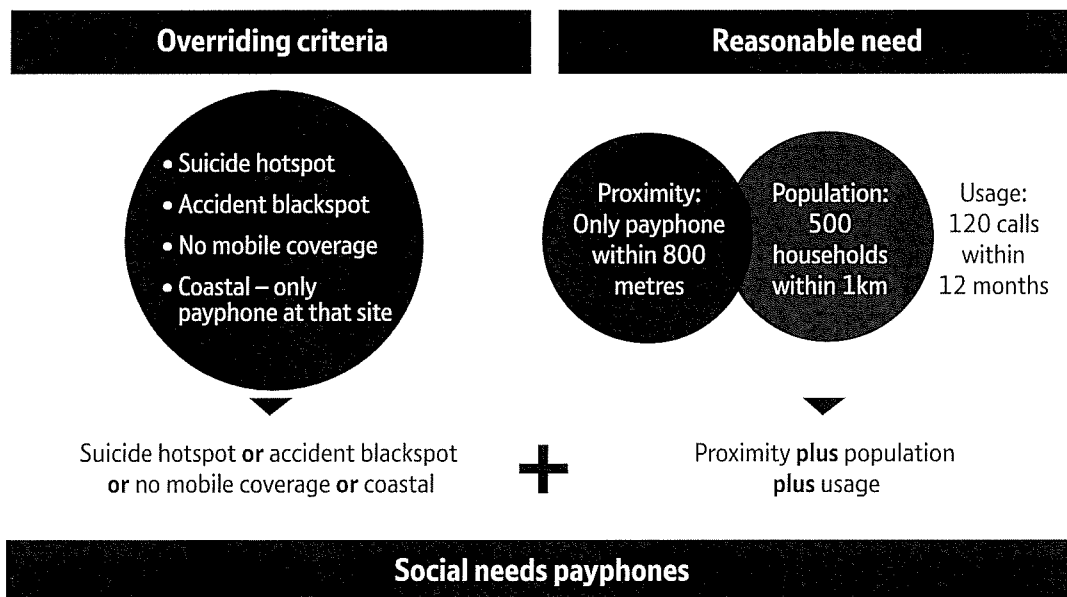
Which ones will be removed?

We've done our research and propose to remove those payphones that are not used enough for us to carry on running them.

Which ones will be kept?

We'll keep those payphones that are used enough and that we categorise as providing a social need.

This way we'll continue to meet the needs of communities and improve the quality of the payphone estate overall. Here's our criteria for social need:



As the model above shows, we're not consulting to remove any public payphones where there is a social need for retention.

These have been identified as being located:

- In suicide hotspots
- In accident blackspots
- In an area without any mobile coverage
- Where the payphone is situated within 400 meters of the coast and is the only one

In addition, we will not remove payphones where there's a reasonable need.

We have used the following criteria, retaining payphones for which all three apply:

- Is the only payphone within 800 metres
- Had at least 120 calls of any type within a 12 month period
- The local population is not fewer than 500 households within 1 kilometre of the payphone.

Our obligations

Under Universal Service obligations set by Ofcom, we must provide public payphones in order to meet the reasonable needs of end users.

We can remove a payphone if there is another one within 400 metres.

If we want to remove a payphone where there isn't another one within 400 metres, we must notify the local authority and give those 90 days to consult with their local community. The local authority can object to the removal if it has clear, objective and proportionate reasons related to the provision of the communications services^{1, 2}. If the local authority objects, in writing, we will retain the payphone.

What if the local community want to keep the kiosk?

Communities have the opportunity to adopt a kiosk for just £1 www.bt.com/adopt. The traditional red phone boxes are part of our heritage and by opening them up for adoption, your community can keep these iconic landmarks and put them to great use.

Uses made of phone boxes already adopted include a grocery shop, a wildlife information centre and the Community Heartbeat Trust charity has even installed defibrillators in some boxes.

1 <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/callboxdirection.pdf>

2 <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/uso/statement/removals.pdf>