



## VoIP replaces ISDN – what exactly is VoIP?

### KEY POINTS



- Existing ISDN telephone system turned off in 2025
- VoIP is a cloud-based telephony system that uses the internet to make calls
- VoIP only requires a stable broadband connection and a VoIP enable device e.g. computer, VoIP phone
- VoIP is much easier to scale as your MAT grows and expands
- Must consider the quality of your broadband connection as this is vital for reliability of calls

The existing ISDN telephone system will be turned off and no longer supported in 2025. ISDN is an old technology that uses the existing copper lines, and this is getting increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain.

Over the past decade, BT and other telephony providers have been working on alternatives. The solution that has proved to be most popular is Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Essentially, it is a phone service that is delivered over the internet.

It is a technology that transforms your voice into a digital signal which means that you can make a 'call' directly from a computer, VoIP phone or other VoIP enabled devices, it doesn't require a traditional handset.

VoIP has interchangeable names, so you may have heard it also referred to as IP telephony, internet telephony, broadband telephony, or broadband phone service.

### How VoIP works

VoIP services converts your analog voice into a digital signal, puts this into IP packets, transfers it over the internet, and then converts it back into your voice at the receiver's device. If you are calling a regular phone number on the ISDN system, your voice is converted back to a regular telephone signal so that they can hear and speak with you.

All of this happens very quickly and assuming there is no problem with your internet connection, you will not notice any delay during the call.

### What is needed to use VoIP?

To use VoIP, you need a:

- high-speed broadband connection
- VoIP enable device:
  - computer
  - VoIP phone
  - mobile phone
  - an existing phone with a VoIP adapter.
- If using a computer to make the call, you will also need:
  - appropriate VoIP software
  - a microphone and speakers – either as a headset or using the computer's built-in hardware.

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### Benefits of VoIP

Switching from a traditional telephony service to a VoIP system offers many benefits:

#### Portability

Cloud based telephony is not location dependent. So long as your device is configured to the school system, you can use your VoIP device wherever you are. This is great for listening to voicemails, replying to urgent matters that will have an impact on student safety and educational experience as well as still being connected for events such as unexpected school closures.

#### Scalability

Whether you are recruiting more staff or expanding the number of schools to your MAT, VoIP can easily accommodate this kind of growth.

#### Sound quality

If you have a dependable and stable internet connection, then the sound quality will be good if not better than what you experience with an

traditional system using ISDN. Essentially, the better the internet connection the better the sound quality.

### Access to well-known features

Many traditional systems have features that you doubtless use on a daily basis such as:

- Call forwarding
- Call recording
- Call queuing
- Call transfer

For a MAT, these types of features are necessary for the smooth operation of the schools. You can be reassured that with a VoIP system you will still have access to these features.



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#### Aspects of VoIP to consider

Although VoIP is an advanced technology, it can come with some aspects that you should think through:

#### Stable internet connection required

VoIP is fully reliant on the internet. Therefore, it is imperative that you have a reliable, high-quality internet connection with ample bandwidth. Carrying out a review of your current situation will help identify any potential issues with internet quality.

#### Power cuts affects service

Since your broadband requires power to run, if your schools have a power cut, you will also lose your VoIP functionality. So, you might consider having all or some of the VoIP service supported by an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS).

#### Comparable costs

VoIP can offer a cost-effective alternative to the traditional approach of buying a new phone system (from capital) and the revenue cost of on-going call charges. Most VoIP providers charge monthly with a single cost that covers the handsets, the VoIP service itself and inclusive call time. It is therefore important that when comparing costs between traditional systems and VoIP solutions that all relevant costs are considered. .

#### Requires staff training

As with any new system, you will need to allocate time to train your staff on the new system. The good news is that most VoIP solutions are intuitive to use and so training should be straight forward.

#### Conclusion

Many schools and MAT's have started the migration to a VoIP telephony system, and we can understand why. It is cost comparable to and often a more flexible solution than traditional telephony systems. Considering that ISDN will end in 2025 now is the right time to start considering joining those that have already made the change and move your telephony system for your MAT.

Key benefits for a MAT in moving to a VoIP system are the ease of scalability as well as the convenience of not needing to be fixed to a location such as your desk. As your MAT grows, VoIP will offer you the flexibility that you need.

#### FIND OUT MORE

**If you are ready to explore new telephony systems, then please get in touch. Our expert team of ICT Consultants can take you through the steps you should take to start the process.**

**We're independent, objective, and knowledgeable about what ICT in MATs and schools should look like, and experts in creating and delivering ICT infrastructures that work for your MAT or School.**

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