

Special Newsroom Briefing (issue 2.0)

Cable damage incident in East London Issued at 08:00 hours, April 5th 2009

Reactive Statement

"BT can confirm that, following significant damage by a third party to cables in a deep underground tunnel, a large number of customers in parts of East London are currently experiencing a loss of service. BT's engineers are working around the clock to restore service as quickly as possible. BT would like to apologise to all impacted customers.

Service has restored to a number of customers using alternative methods of connection and BT is working to restore service to all customers.

BT will issue further updates as the situation changes."

Q and A

Q. What has happened? □

A. A third part contractor has caused serious damage to major telecommunications cables in one of BT's deep level tunnels, which has resulted in a loss of service to customers in parts of East London.

Q. Do BT's engineers currently have access to the tunnel to start fixing the damage? □

A. Not at the moment. Our engineers cannot access the tunnel until the site has been declared safe for them to enter. Health and safety and structural engineers are on site assessing the damage.

BT engineers are currently using alternative methods to restore service and have already successfully restored service to thousands of affected customers.

Q. How many customers are affected? □

A. This is still being assessed, but initial estimates are that tens of thousands customers are affected. Thousands have had their service restored and work is continuing around the clock to restore service to all customers. We will provide further detail as the situation develops.

Q. What services have been impacted? □

A. A range of services are affected, including telephony, broadband, ISDN and private circuits. A number of mobile 'cell sites' are also affected.

Q. When do you expect all repairs will be complete? □

A. This is still being assessed. Our engineers are working around the clock to restore services to customers as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the damage, which happened 32 meters below street level, it is not possible at this stage to provide an exact timeframe as to when services will to be restored but customers should be assured that everything that can be done is being done. We will provide further details as the situation develops.

Q. What should customers do if they have no telephone services and

they are infirm or vulnerable?

A. Affected customers needing to make calls to the emergency services are advised to do so by using their mobile phone, or alternatively by using a friend or neighbour's working phone.

Q: What number should customers' call if they have a problem or are concerned?

A: They should call their service provider in the first instance.

Q. Are any hospitals in the area affected by the outage?

A. We don't believe so.

Q. Can you provide a guarantee to any affected major business in the area that their services will be restored by Monday morning?

A. We recognise the critical importance of communications services to major businesses and are therefore working around the clock to restore service as quickly as possible. If necessary, we will prioritise the restoration of services to businesses and public sector organizations first.

Q. Has anyone been hurt?

A. There are currently no reports of any injuries at the site. The safety of the site is currently being assessed by a team of safety consultants and structural engineers. The London Fire Brigade is also on standby if required.

Q. Does the any structural damage to the tunnel pose any significant risk to people living in the surrounding area?

A. This is currently being assessed

Q. How many other communications providers are affected?

A. A number of other communications providers are affected. They are being kept informed of progress by BT

Q. Will BT pay compensation to customers affected by this?

A. Our priority is to focus on restoring service at this time.

ENDS/...