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Utilities roadworks

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Utility companies

Utility companies (e.g. gas, water, electricity) have statutory rights under the [New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 \(NRSWA\)](#) to install and maintain their infrastructure on public highways. These rights are essential for maintaining vital services.

To help manage and coordinate the impact of these works, we operate a permit scheme under the [Traffic Management Act 2004](#). This means utility companies **must apply for a permit** before starting work on our roads (excluding some exemptions).

While we cannot refuse works that meet legal requirements, we can give directions relating to;

- Timing and duration
- Traffic management arrangements
- Conditions to reduce disruption and improve safety

We meet regularly with utility companies and where possible coordinate planned works and encourage collaboration to minimise disruption for residents and road users.

Although utility companies are not legally required to notify residents and businesses in advance, we strongly encourage them to do so, especially for major or disruptive works.

They are also legally responsible for ensuring safe and effective traffic management during their work. We review and, where necessary, challenge their traffic management plans and durations to ensure public safety and minimise disruption in line with our network management duty.

Emergency work

Emergency works, such as repairing gas leaks or restoring essential services like water, electricity, or telecommunications, are sometimes required on the highways. These works can begin without giving us advanced notice, however companies must notify us as soon as reasonably possible.

A permit is still required for the works but can't be refused. It can be a challenge to coordinate these unplanned works around other works already planned around the town.

We do everything possible to minimise disruption as a result of emergency work and monitor closely to ensure the work is completed safely and without delay. If delays, poor traffic management, or safety concerns arise, we will challenge this.

Telecom companies

Telecoms companies and providers are granted powers by the government to install their broadband infrastructure into and onto the highway network.

Although they require a permit from us to carry out work on the highway, we are not allowed to prevent the work from taking place. The permits we grant to them relate only to the coordination of works and do not indicate any type of planning approval regarding the installation of cables, cabinets, poles or masts.

The [Electronic Communications Code](#) sets out rights in Schedule 3A of the [Communications Act 2003](#) that are designed to facilitate the installation and maintenance of electronic communications networks on, under and over ground.

This work is often being carried out to fulfil the government's policy of improving the availability of superfast broadband to homes and businesses and tackle poor digital connectivity.

Siting of cabinets, poles and masts

Infrastructure placed on the highway, including telegraph poles and metal cabinets, do not normally require planning permission. The telecoms companies or providers can decide where they place them based on national guidance.

Most cabinets, poles and masts up to 30 metres do not require full planning approval, as they are deployed using Permitted Development rights under the [Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#).

The operators only need to notify the local planning authority about their plans prior to the infrastructure being installed. This means there is little or no opportunity for the local planning authority, residents and businesses to engage in this process.

When we become aware of this type of work happening we ask the companies to write to residents ahead of work starting, however we do not have the authority to force them to do so or ask them to stop the work if notice is not provided to residents.

[Find out more about the rules on telegraph poles for broadband networks](#)

Complaints

Telecoms companies are regulated by Ofcom.

If you have any concerns about their conduct or compliance, please [contact Ofcom](#) directly.

Contact

Contact details for utility and telecoms companies are listed in the table below:

Company	Telephone number
BT	0800 0232023
Cadent Gas	0800 111999
Cityfibre Metro Networks Ltd	0800 2986267
EE	0800 0798586
Electricity North West (ENW)	0800 1954141
Fibre & Wireless Networks	0808 1681616
Freedom Fibre Limited	0161 2224040
IX Wireless Limited	01772 921921
Lightning Fibre	01323 380260
National Grid	0800 6783105
United Utilities	03450 720829
Virgin Media	0333 0005925
Vodafone	0333 3040762

Blackpool Council

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