

October 2023

Headline summary

- The Mac desktop version of the app was fully launched in December 2022
- The Relay UK mobile app has been regularly updated during the year to make sure it continues to perform well with recently released operating systems and devices, as well as delivering further usability improvements
- Work continues to develop and migrate the service on to a fully digital platform. This is planned for completion during 2024-25
- The proportion of calls made using the relay app continues to grow and in September 2023, nearly 85% of users favoured the app over traditional textphones
- There were periods during the year where standard call answering performance dropped below target and also where quality metrics were marginally below the required level – further details below:

Service performance:

- Call answering performance, primarily the standard PCA 15 and abandoned call rate metrics, were adrift of target in October and December 2022 and again in the mid-summer period in 2023. This was driven by several factors including:
 - the service experienced significant pressure at times in October and more extensively in December, where advisors were prioritised to support the exceptional demand for emergency ambulance voice calls. At busy times the number of repeat calls adversely impacted the abandonment rate.
 - The service was again heavily impacted from May 2023 by increased demand for emergency 999 calls (with volumes in excess of levels seen previously), necessitating the prioritisation of answering those calls ahead of standard Relay calls. Emergency Relay calls were similarly prioritised and answered to target across these months. The average time to answer standard Relay calls for all months impacted was less than 15 seconds
 - Call answering was further challenged by large spikes in call handling times at irregular intervals during these months, largely driven by long wait times for callers contacting businesses and organisations
- Quality performance metrics dipped marginally below target between November and January

BT has addressed these challenges by taking a series of recovery actions, including:

- Regular upskill training to the relay role for suitably qualified Advisors across our Centres
- Review of call patterns to try and better determine and resource for potential periods of peak demand
- Short and longer notice deployment of overtime to improve performance wherever possible
- Ongoing quality monitoring and coaching continues to focus on and address any issues found and a monthly quality forum has been started to engage all Centres handling Relay calls more closely in performance outcomes

Reported monthly Key Performance Indicators are presented in Annex 1

Ofcom's formal approval of BT's Relay UK (formerly NGT) Service is available

at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-2/text-relay-service/statement>

In accordance with our requirement to comply with full accountability and transparency regarding the performance of the Relay UK service, details of the Approval Criteria and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are included below.

Approval Criteria and KPIs	
Ability of the relay service to meet the requirements of General Conditions C5.8 & 5.9	Further details of formal approval of BT's Relay UK Service can be found at https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-2/text-relay-service/statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The relay service provider must provide a Relay UK service fulfilling the relevant requirements in General Conditions C5.8 & 5.9	BT confirms continued accessibility to Relay UK for textphone users, along with the confidentiality of caller communications, appropriate network resilience and priority access to the emergency services for relay calls within its network. ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider must ensure that in its Relay UK service calls to the emergency services are prioritised and provided by a resilient network and system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversations facilitated by the Relay Assistant should only be recorded, or parts of the conversation noted, where required for justifiable operational reasons e.g. an emergency call; cases of criminal activity, for quality measurement training	

¹ Extracted from Ofcom's 6th March 2014 statement: Next Generation Text Relay - Approval of a text relay service

<u>Approval Criteria and KPIs</u>	
Guarantees regarding the operational effectiveness of the relay service	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must ensure there are sufficient funds, facilities and staff to provide the relay service and enable it to perform properly the administrative and technical work associated with the tasks for which it has been appointed 	<p>Details of BT’s Relay UK performance is published on the Relay UK website. Financial information about BT is included in our published Annual Report². We plan resourcing of the BT Relay UK service to ensure there are sufficient skilled staff to meet the PCA target and the other relevant KPIs. BT also ensures there is sufficient physical infrastructure to accommodate staff, technical systems and expansion should this become necessary.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must ensure that staff are appropriately and adequately trained especially in the communications needs of deaf, hearing impaired, speech impaired and deafblind textphone users 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must ensure that the systems have sufficient technical resilience and back up resources to provide an uninterrupted service to the same extent as the voice telephony networks to which it is interconnected 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must ensure that users receive call progress announcements in voice for hearing users and in text for hearing impaired users 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must ensure that adequate measures are in place to ensure that the relay service is interoperable with other approved relay services (where applicable) such that end-users are able to use the service to communicate with users of other relay services 	

² <https://www.bt.com/about/investors/financial-reporting-and-news/annual-reports>

Approval Criteria and KPIs

KPIs	<i>Conclusions on approval criterion 3</i> <i>A2.17 BT has informed Ofcom that its proposed NGTR service will be capable of satisfying the KPIs set out in figure 2 on an ongoing basis (as it must). Having reviewed all of the information and undertakings provided, subject to consultation responses, we provisionally consider that this criterion is satisfied. We will work with BT as it develops the ways to monitor staff performance and will monitor BT to ensure the changes take place and are published. We will also monitor the performance of the service against the KPIs on an ongoing basis.³</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The provider must ensure that it and the relay service it provides, are capable of satisfying on an ongoing basis the required KPIs, including that it is adequately staffed at all times	See table 1 at Annex 1 of this document for monthly performance metrics.

³ Extracted from Ofcom’s 6th March 2014 statement: Next Generation Text Relay - Approval of a text relay service [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2014/ofcom-approves-bts-next-generation-text-relay-service]

Approval Criteria and KPIs	
<p>Accountability and transparency regarding the performance of the service</p>	<p><i>Conclusions on approval criterion 4</i></p> <p><i>A2.23 BT has confirmed that it will meet each of the requirements under this criterion. On that basis, subject to consultation responses, we provisionally consider that the requirement of accountability and transparency regarding the performance of BT’s proposed service is satisfied. Further, on the basis of the information and undertakings BT has provided to us, our provisional view is that the proposed NGTR service will be capable of meeting the approval criteria on an ongoing basis (as it must).⁴</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must publish and make available to Ofcom, every quarter, detailed and transparent reporting on its operation, based on the KPIs 	<p>Quarterly KPI reports for the latest four quarters along with the current Relay UK Annual Report are published on the Relay UK Website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must publish an annual report covering compliance with these approval criteria and any related issues directed by Ofcom 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must have a complaints handling procedure in place – to be agreed by Ofcom – and ensure complaints are handled in a fair and timely manner 	<p>The BT Relay UK complaint handling procedure is published on the Relay UK website under the Complaints section⁵</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must carry out customer satisfaction surveys at least every two years 	<p>The BT Relay UK service launched in October 2014 (when known as Next Generation Text / NGT). BT has carried out customer satisfaction research during September 2016, September 2018, September 2020 and September – October 2022.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider must satisfy all elements of the criteria set by Ofcom for approval on an ongoing basis. Failure to satisfy all elements, once approval has been given, may result in the withdrawal of approval by Ofcom 	<p>Ofcom confirmed BT’s compliance with General Conditions C5.8 & 5.9 (previously GC15.3ⁱ and 15.5ⁱⁱ) in March 2015.</p>

⁴ Extracted from Ofcom’s 6th March 2014 statement: Next Generation Text Relay - Approval of a text relay service [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2014/ofcom-approves-bts-next-generation-text-relay-service]

⁵ <https://www.relayuk.bt.com/help/complaints.html>

ANNEX 1: BT RELAY UK REPORTED KPIs

Table 1 - Key Performance Indicators: October 2022 to September 2023													
Measure	Target	Actual Achieved											
		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Standard relay calls answered within 15 seconds	90% on average	88.4%	93.7%	71.3%	93.6%	96.6%	92.4%	91.3%	83.3%	72.7%	87.4%	90.9%	92.5%
	85% per 15 minute interval ⁶	87.3%	92.6%	81.3%	92.3%	94.7%	88.7%	87.4%	80.3%	76.2%	86.6%	89.8%	89.6%
Emergency relay calls answered within 5 seconds. This aligns with the voice 999 service measure	95% ⁷	99.1%	99.9%	99.2%	99.2%	99.1%	99.0%	99.3%	98.8%	97.6%	97.4%	98.2%	99.1%
Customers surveyed expressing dissatisfaction with the relay service	<5% customers dissatisfied	The bi-annual Customer Satisfaction Survey was carried out in September / October 2022, with overall satisfaction at more than 92% and dissatisfaction at less than 3.5%. Results are published at https://www.relayuk.bt.com/communication-providers.html The next survey will be carried out during 2024.											
Standard relay calls abandoned ⁸	<3% Standard Calls Abandoned	6.1%	2.0%	14.4%	1.1%	0.6%	1.9%	1.6%	3.9%	13.7%	3.8%	1.9%	1.4%
Emergency calls abandoned. This is in line with the voice 999 service measure	<2% Emergency Calls Abandoned	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Relay Assistants to be monitored at least quarterly for speed of transcription, accuracy and process conformance	94% of calls handled correctly	98.5%	95.4%	95.8%	93.3%	96.2%	95.6%	96.7%	97.0%	95.2%	98.0%	95.5%	98.0%

⁶ This KPI demonstrates consistency of performance across each 24 hour period and limits the opportunity of long periods of poor performance being masked with one period of really good performance

⁷ Emergency relay calls are given priority over standard relay calls in the same way as voice emergency calls are prioritised over other voice calls

⁸ "Abandoned" means that the call is ended by the caller before the relay assistant is brought in

BT Relay UK Service: Year-end report- October 2023

Measure	Target	Actual Achieved											
		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
In conversation voice to text transcription speed for standard/emergency relay calls, per call ⁹	>40 words per minute (wpm) (when the user is able to receive 40wpm or faster)	99.8%	99.7%	99.6%	99.5%	99.1%	99.4%	99.6%	99.6%	99.6%	99.6%	99.6%	99.8%
In conversation voice to text transcription speed for standard/emergency relay calls	Average of at least 60 wpm averaged across calls	64.8	66.0	64.3	66.2	64.1	65.7	65.1	65.2	65.7	63.7	62.6	62.4
Average voice to text transcription accuracy	At least 98%	100%	97.1%	97.9%	96.7%	98.1%	98.4%	98.3%	98.1%	98.5%	98.0%	98.3%	99.3%
Complaints relating to the relay service	Less than one complaint per 1000 calls	0.28	0.27	0.31	0.18	0.13	0.20	0.18	0.25	0.35	0.32	0.31	0.16
Total calls to be subject to a Relay Assistant handover	No more than 2% of total calls ¹⁰	1.5%	1.2%	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%

⁹ Figures based on Relay Assistant sessions where the average WPM is 41 WPM or better, data not logged currently for individual calls.

All measures except for ">40 wpm" are averaged over a monthly period

¹⁰ This measure records the % of calls transferred automatically between Advisors across the relay platform

ⁱ C5.8 **Regulated Providers** must ensure that any **End-User** of the **Publicly Available Telephone Services** it provides who, because of his or her disabilities, needs to make or receive calls in which some or all of the call is made or received in text format, can access and use a **Relay Service** which has been approved by **Ofcom**.

ⁱⁱ C5.9 In providing access to **Relay Services** under **Condition C5.8**, **Regulated Providers** must comply with the following requirements:

(a) any charge for the conveyance of messages to which a **Relay Service** applies must not exceed the equivalent price as if that conveyance had been made directly between the caller and the called person without use of a **Relay Service**;

(b) in making the charges set out in **Condition C5.9(a)**, **Regulated Providers** must apply a special tariff scheme designed to compensate **Subscribers** for the additional time taken by **End-Users** with disabilities to make telephone calls using a **Relay Service** where, because of their disabilities, those **End-Users** need to make calls using a **Relay Service**;

(c) **Regulated Providers** must ensure measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of communications between **End-Users** of the **Relay Service**;

(d) subject to **Condition C3.11**, **Regulated Providers** must ensure that the **Relay Service** is available for lawful use by **End-Users** at all times;

(e) **Regulated Providers** must ensure **End-Users** are not prevented from communicating with other **End-Users** of other approved **Relay Services**; and

(f) **Regulated Providers** must comply with any directions in respect of the **Relay Services** which **Ofcom** may make from time to time.