APPG on deafness | AGM 1 April 2014

Present

Sir Malcolm Bruce MP	Liberal Democrats
Stephen Lloyd MP	Liberal Democrats
Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP	Scottish Nationalist Party
Alison Seabeck MP	Labour
Sir Peter Bottomley MP	Conservative

In attendance

Jim Edwards	Signature
Joff McGill	Sense
Dr Andrew Alexander	SignHealth
Alex Hernandez	Office of Sir Malcolm Bruce MP
Dan Sumners	Signature

1. Sir Malcolm Bruce MP nominated Stephen Lloyd MP to be the new chair of the group. Alison Seabeck MP seconded. Stephen Lloyd MP was elected chair.

2. Sir Malcolm Bruce MP and Stephen Lloyd MP thanked Alex Hernandez for her support for the group.

3. Stephen Lloyd MP thanked Sir Malcolm Bruce MP for his leadership of the group.

4. The vice chairs of the group were:

    a. Sir Malcolm Bruce MP (LD)
    b. Rosie Cooper MP (Lab)
    c. Baroness Wilkins (Lab)
    d. Stephen Phillips (Con)
    e. Sir Peter Bottomley (Con)
    f. Dr Eilidh Whiteford (SNP)

5. The secretariat with the chair would identify potential new members of the group.

6. The chair suggested items for the group to address:

    a. the hearing screening campaign, on which the chair would provide an update at a later meeting;
    b. Access to Work and interpreters; and
    c. the need for better DWP data about deaf people.

7. The group would follow the progress of the BSL Bill in Scotland with interest.

8. The group was reminded the UK Council on Deafness (UKCoD) was holding a reception in Portcullis House from 6.30-8pm on Wednesday 14 May.

9. Joff McGill told members about BT's Next Generation Text Relay (NGTR) service. A set of frequently asked questions was to be circulated to members.

    a. Alison Seabeck MP suggested inviting BT to demonstrate the technology in the Houses.
    b. BT would be present at the UKCoD reception on 14 May.
    c. Video relay service (VRS) was another technology vital for access for deaf people. Government uptake of VRS would help to lower the cost and make it attractive to the private sector service industry.

10. Dr Andrew Alexander told members about SignHealth's Sick Of It report on the health of deaf people. An executive summary could be found at http://www.signhealth.org.uk/sick-of-it-report-professionals.

    a. SignHealth, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and NHS England were developing standards of information access.
    b. Deaf awareness training needed to be a part of medical education. Training had to be separate to disability awareness training in general. It was legitimate to make unreasonable demands as deafness could have such a profound impact in health settings.

11. Malcolm Bruce MP hoped the Private Members' Bill on communication support would become the basis for a deaf rights campaign.

Action points

12. The secretariat would

    a. arrange a meeting with the chair's office to discuss the group membership and programme;
    b. provide a briefing on Access to Work and interpreters, including details of discussions with the Minister for Disabled People; and
    c. provide a briefing on the progress of the BSL Bill in Scotland.

13. Dr Andrew Alexander would provide a proposal on solutions to the decision not to include psychological therapies in BSL for Deaf people on the list of prescribed therapies.

Appendix 1 | BT Next Generation Text Relay service | Frequently asked questions

What/which end-user equipment will work with the NGT service?

Will I be able use the NGT with my PC or laptop?

If you use your computer and modem with Text Relay you can continue to use them in the same way with the NGT service.

NGT also enables you to make and receive text calls using your ordinary home phone or mobile and a computer that's connected to the internet. The connection to the internet can be Wi-Fi, broadband, or a 3G dongle.

To use the NGT app you need to check that you have Java 1.7 installed on the computer, then install the NGT app and follow the on screen instructions. The NGT app will work on personal computers running Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, and Intel based Mac running OS X (the latest version of the Mac operating system).

What do I need to download on my PC or laptop to be able to use the NGT and where will I get it from?

Before downloading the NGT app you need to make sure you have Java 1.7 installed on your computer. You can check and update Java by going to www.java.com/verify/ and following the instructions. The NGT app and full instructions will be on the website www.ngts.org.uk.

Will I be able use the NGT with my Android mobile phone?

Your mobile phone needs to be running the Android 4 operating system known as "Ice Cream Sandwich" or later versions known as Jelly Bean and KitKat. Although each mobile phone is different, you can usually find out which version of the Android operating system you are using on your mobile phone by opening Settings, About, Software information.

Some mobile phones, like the Samsung Galaxy S3 and S4, can connect to the internet over 3G/4G and make calls at the same time. If your phone can do this you will be able to run the NGT app and make the phone call using the same mobile phone. Please check with your mobile phone provider to make sure they support connecting to the internet while also making a phone call.

If your mobile phone can't connect to the internet over 3G/4G whilst making a phone call can you still use the NGT app by either connecting to the internet using Wi-Fi or by using another phone to make the call.

Will I be able use the NGTNGT with my iPhone/iPad?

Not at day-1 launch in April 2014. We hope that Apple will approve the iPhone app by the end-June so that iPhones running iOS7 can use the NGT. (Dates are dependent upon Apple.)

Will I be able use the NGT with my Blackberry?

We are looking at how devices like Blackberry could be used with NGT and hope to have more detail later in the Autumn.

Will I be able use the NGT with my tablet/surface?

The NGT app will work on devices running the Android 4 operating system and devices that can run Java 1.7 apps. Once the NGT app is installed the tablet can be used with your phone to make and receive call through the NGT service.

Will I be able use the NGT with my textphone?

Yes, you can use a textphone as you do now when using Text Relay.

Will I be able use the NGT with my Braille reader?

If you can use your Braille reader with Text Relay you will be able to use it with NGT.

We are looking to work with the manufactures of devices like Braille reader so that they can improve the way their devices make and receive text phone calls.

What is meant by 'internet connected device'?

An 'internet connected device' is a personal computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone that has a connection to the internet. This can be through your home or office broadband using an Ethernet cable, using Wi-Fi, or the 3G/4G mobile networks.

General questions about the NGT

Will the NGT work with my textphone?

Yes, if you want to use a textphone, you can use the NGT service as you do now using the 18001 prefix, Assist, and 18000. People will still be able to call you using the 18002 prefix and the new NGT TextNumbers, there's more information about TextNumbers below.

Will I see any difference to the Text Relay?

Yes, there are some small changes to the call progress announcements, e.g. NGT ring ring, and the new TextNumbers can be used with both textphones and the new NGT app. To fully benefit from the new service you will need to use the NGT app on a compatible internet connected device.

Will people who call me see any difference to the Text Relay?

If they use the 18002 prefix the NGT service works in the same way as Text Relay. However if you link your phone number to a NGT TextNumbers businesses will be able to call you using the TextNumber. Also if you used VCO (voice carry over)with Text Relay and are using the NGT app you will be able speak direct to the other person without waiting for them to finish what they are saying. This could be simply agreeing or showing you understand by saying "yes" or "okay", or you could interrupt them if there's been a misunderstanding, and they can do the same while you're speaking.

Will I need to pay extra for this service?

As an end user, you will pay no more to use the NGT service than you do for Text Relay. Please contact your telephone service provider for more information about their call charges and rebates when making calls through the NGT service.

Who do I contact if I have a problem with my bill?

You need to contact your telephone service provider who sends your bill to you and they will be able to help you with any questions about your bill.

Will people calling me have to pay extra or is it just a standard call charge?

People calling you should pay the same charge they would pay for any other geographic or mobile telephone call. They need to contact their telephone service provider for details of their charges.

What happens if I have free weekend calls or a similar package?

Calls made via the NGT should be charged in the same way as any other geographic or mobile call but you may want to check with your telephone service provider; if you are a BT customer, calls are included in your calls package.

Do I still get a rebate for using the service?

All telephone service providers must offer a rebate scheme to people who use a relay service because they are hearing or speech impaired. This will not change using the NGT. You need to contact your telephone service provider for details of the rebate scheme they provide.

Do I have to get my phone service from BT?

No, you can get your phone service from any UK fixed and mobile provider. All telephone service providers must provide access to NGT as currently it's the only Ofcom approved text relay service**.**

Will it make the conversation faster?

While the relay assistant typing speed will be unchanged if you use the NGT app and speak to the other person the call will be quicker and flow more freely because you don't need to wait for them to finish what they're saying. Also if the other person has not understood what you're saying they can tell while you're saying it rather than having to wait for you to finish.

Where do I download the app from, is it free?

The app is free of charge and available at www.ngts.org.uk and from the Play store. Once Apple has approved the app for iPhone and iPad it will be available from the App Store

I don't always have the best broadband connection, will that affect my text connection? Do I need to operate at a particular speed for this to work successfully?

The NGT app has been designed to use very little bandwidth so it will work over 3G and over a standard (non-superfast) broadband or Wi-Fi connection. As it's your phone that controls the call the NGT app can cope with short breaks in the internet connection without the call being released.

Can I make the phone call and use the NGT app at the same time on my mobile phone?

If your mobile phone can run the NGT app and it has a Wi-Fi connection you will be able to make a call and type & read, speak & read, or type & hear the conversation. If your mobile phone and mobile network support an internet connection while making a phone call you will be able to make a call without needing a Wi-Fi connection.   From our tests we have found that the Samsung Galaxy S3 and S4 can do this. We will share people's experiences with mobile phones and networks on the NGT website.

Will this make it easier for me to speak to friends who also have a textphone?

We have improved the way that text-to-text conversations work so that you can make a 18001 call and if another text-user answers you'll be able to have completely private text-to-text conversations without the need for a relay assistant in the call. This will work if you're both using textphones, both using the NGT app, or you're using a textphone and they're using the NGT app.

Do I still have to use GA?

When using the NGT app the voice telephone part of the call is always open making the flow of the conversation easier and more natural so the use of GA won't be necessary, although you can still use it if you prefer. If you are using your textphone as you do now you may prefer to continue to use GA. (GA means 'go ahead' and is used with text relay to indicate that you have finished saying what you want to say and the other person can now talk/type.)

Will I be able to interrupt the person I am speaking to?

Yes, if you're using the NGT app.

Will VoIP providers have to provide access to the NGT?

VoIP lets you use an internet connected computer or tablet to make calls without having a telephone line. There are basically two types of VoIP service:

- the first only lets you talk to people who are using the same VoIP system, and doesn't let you make or receive phone calls,
- with the second type you are given a phone number that other phone users can dial and you can make phone calls to any phone number.

The NGT is compatible with the second type of VoIP service however the providers of these services might not be covered by the UK regulations that apply to telephone services so there is no guarantee that they will allow access to NGT.

Can I use the NGT with Skype?

No. Skype isn't covered by the UK regulations so it is unlikely they will allow their customers to make calls using the NGT. However you can call a Skype user through NGT if they have a Skype Number.

Will NGTS improve the availability of relay assistants?

We will continue to manage the text relay service to meet the targets set by Ofcom. We hope that system improvements and the use of the NGT app will mean that businesses and others will use the NGT to talk direct to their customers removing the dependency on relay, freeing up relay assistants from long calls to call centres which will help availability.

Why do I still need a phone line, I thought Next Generation Text Relay would allow me to use it directly from the internet?

The NGT uses your phone to make and receive calls. NGT is part of your phone service which means that you don't need to sign an additional contract with a separate relay provider. By using standard phone services your telephone service provider can offer you the same calls packages as other phone users e.g. free weekend calls, free anytime, and bundled offerings like broadband with calls and Wi-Fi when you're out.

Will I be able to use the NGT from another person's phone e.g. a phone in a family member's house?

Yes, as long as it's a standard telephone line it will be covered by the UK regulations.

Is a call using NGT confidential?

The relay assistants are bound by the same strict confidentiality rules as they are for Text Relay. They will be able to hear both sides of the conversation in order to help the call progress. If the person you are calling also has a textphone or is using the NGT app, you can have the

conversation without the need for a relay assistant in the call. Also the internet connections used by the NGT app will use the same SSL security that's used by websites when you buy things on-line, and NGT will meet the strict Payment Card Industry Data System Security standards.

How will the NGT app affect my internet usage limit? Will it mean I use up my download limits?

As the NGT app is only used for the text part of a conversation the data usage will be very low compared with the data allowances given with broadband and mobile phones.

How does NGT compare to the caption telephony services?

Both caption telephony and NGT:

- support a free flowing conversation by enabling the deaf person to speak direct to the other person at any time during the call
- are not dependent on the text-user having a textphone

However caption telephony only works when you're deaf and when the other person can understand your voice. For some people this will be fine but most can't rely solely on caption telephony because some people are unfamiliar with their voice and can't understand it, or because their voice quality varies from day to day. NGT is a service that you can adapt to your communications needs for instance:

- If other people can understand your voice you can speak directly to them, however if you're talking to someone who is not familiar with your voice you can simply type the conversation or important parts of the conversation e.g. address, phone numbers, etc.
- If you have no voice or it can't be understood by other people you can type to them via the text relay and hear their reply.

Questions about TextNumbers

What is a TextNumber?

A TextNumber is a range of unique 11 digit NGT access codes that can be linked to text-users' phone numbers and used as an alternative to the 18002 prefix. TextNumbers are designed so that text-users can give them to businesses or enter them on web forms as contact numbers. When a business calls the TextNumber the call automatically connects through the NGT service and rings the text-user's phone, just like an 18002 call. TextNumbers will work with fixed and mobile phone numbers, and with the NGT app or textphones.

How do I get a Text Number?

We don't need any personal details, simply use your textphone or NGT app to make a call, from the phone you want to link to the TextNumber, to the NGT helpdesk on 0800 500 888 and select the TextNumber option. The system will link the phone number you're using to the next free TextNumber and then display the TextNumber on your textphone or app screen. If you're calling from your home phone number the TextNumber will start 0330670, if you're using a mobile phone the TextNumber will star 0777789. If you call the NGT helpdesk again the system will repeat the TextNumber you were previously given.

As long as you keep making or receiving call through NGT you can use the TextNumber. If you don't make or receive a call through NGT for one year the link between the TextNumber and your phone number will be removed.

Why can't I have a Text Number that mirrors my geographic location?

Ofcom allocates numbers in minimum number blocks of 10,000. Using geographic numbers for the NGT TextNumber service would mean many would never be used and might cause a shortage of numbers in areas where there isn't much availability. Using 03 numbers ensures the caller will be billed for a call to a geographic number, the call will be free if their telephone service provider includes these calls in their package.

What happens if someone sends an SMS text to my 07 TextNumber, will I still receive the text?

Yes, the NGT will forward the SMS message to your mobile phone.

When I call people will they see my TextNumber or my standard telephone number if they have caller display on their phone?

If they have a Caller Display or the use 1471 they will receive the TextNumber . They can simply return your call and will automatically connect through NGT with relay if needed.

Can I redirect my TextNumber to my standard telephone line?

The TextNumber is already linked to your phone number you don't need to do anything else.

Can people calling me still use 18002 and my standard number if they want to or will they have to use my TextNumber if I have one?

Yes, the 18002 prefix will continue to work as it does for Text Relay. The person calling you might decide to continue using the 18002 prefix because they will get the text rebate on the call charge.

Will my TextNumber appear in the phone book?

TextNumbers will not automatically appear in the Phone Book.   BT Phonebooks can add the TextNumber to your entry. If you don't currently have an entry in the Phone Book you need to contact your telephone service provider.

Can I still withhold my TextNumber if I don't want people to see it?

Yes, if you withhold your phone number the TextNumber is withheld as well.

If someone rings me using my TextNumber, can a hearing member of my family answer the call?

Yes, TextNumbers work in the same way as calls made using 18002 prefix.

For business users

How can I access NGT through our company's firewall?

The internet connection between the NGT app and service is encrypted using SSL. If your company uses Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) the fire wall will need to be configured. Details of the protocol and NGT hostnames will be published on www.ngts.org.uk.

What does the NGT app mean for organisations employing deaf people?

The NGT app is designed for individual phone users to use with standard phones. Organisations that use business switches need to talk to their switch provider about supporting the needs of their employees.