

Mobile Communications in the Upper Deverills

General

Irrespective of where you live in the Deverills the most reliable way to get a mobile signal indoors is to use wifi calling. As far as I am aware this is now offered by all providers (giffgaff were one of the exceptions but this has changed). All modern mobile phones will provide this capability but it may not be available on some older phones.

This works, until of course we get a power cut, no power, no internet so no wifi calling. Then you have to resort to your landline. But the likelihood is you now have a “digital” landline¹ so that doesn’t work either.

OFCOM’s view on this is:

If you are dependent on your landline phone – for example, if you don’t have a mobile phone or don’t have mobile signal at your home – your provider must offer you a solution to make sure you can contact the emergency services when a power cut occurs. For example, a mobile phone (if you have signal), or a battery back-up unit for your landline phone.

This solution should be provided free of charge to people who are dependent on their landline. If you are not eligible for a free resilience solution, you may be able to purchase one from your provider or another retailer – talk to your provider about options.

If you don’t have one, ask your internet/landline provider for a UPS (uninterruptible power supply – it’s a battery). The picture shows one supplied by Vodafone. You plug one end into the mains and the other into the back of your router.

OFCOM’s requirement is that the UPS last for one hour. In practice it should last for several hours. Not as good as the old PSTN landlines, this is called “progress”.



How do I know if I have a digital landline? If your phone plugs direct into the socket on the wall then you have an “old fashioned” phone. If it plugs into the back of your router it is a digital landline.

¹ Landline phone calls were delivered over the public switched telephone network (PSTN). It is old, expensive to maintain and is being replaced. BT has taken the decision to retire its PSTN by January 2027. Landline calls will be delivered over digital technology, called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). You might also see this referred to as ‘digital phone’ or ‘digital voice’.

Kingston Deverill

The “best” provider is EE/BT, you should get a strong signal from the mast at the gliding club. In addition to EE/BT there are a number of “virtual” operators that use the EE network. These include

- 1p Mobile (rated Great Value by Which)
- BT mobile
- LycaMobile
- Utility Warehouse
- Ecotalk
- Talkhome
- Plusnet (merged into EE, no longer trading as a separate entity)

Monkton Deverill

The “best” provider is Vodafone with a strong signal from the “community mast” on the Hindon Road. This is low power (5W) with a range of about ¼ mile. About 100 yards from the mast I can get a full four bars signal strength outside with three bars indoors. By the post box in the Street, outside two bars. Virtual operators using the vodafone network:

- Asda Mobile (rated great value by Which)
- Lebara (Which recommended provider)
- Talkmobile (Which recommended provider)
- Voxi (Which recommended provider)

In addition, with the merger of Vodafone and Three, Three customers have automatic access to the Vodafone network. The virtual operators that use the Three network should also have access to the Vodafone network:

- SMARTY (Which recommended provider)
- iD Mobile (rated great value by Which)
- Superdrug Mobile
- Honest Mobile

EE is an option in Monkton Deverill, with the potential for a signal outdoors from the mast at the gliding club.



Brixton Deverill

Brixton Deverill is the poor relation in the Upper Deverills and all attempts by the Parish Council and others to improve mobile reception have failed. These include:

- Bringing in a third party to assess sites and “sell” the idea to the major operators. None were interested – too expensive and issues with some landowners and provision of power supplies.
- Approaching SRN (Shared Rural Network). An organisation set up by government with membership and funding from government and the major operators. Their remit – to improve coverage in “partial not spots²” (funded by operators) and “total not spots³” (funded by the Home Office⁴). The response was “all funds are allocated or spent” and “we have no plans”.
- Asking EE to consider increasing the transmitter power for the mast at the gliding club – didn’t happen.
- Requesting Vodafone⁴ consider a community mast in Brixton Deverill similar to the one in Monkton Deverill. Their response is on the following page.

Points to note about Vodafone’s response:

- There is a solution on the horizon with direct-to-smartphone satellite, but at an undisclosed but almost certainly higher cost than your current mobile contract. Here is a recent BBC article on the subject:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c993m88jer9o>
- Battery backup – if your internet service provider refuses to supply a UPS and you have to purchase one, there are options available at a lower price than suggested by Vodafone.

In the meantime, if any Brixton Deverill residents have a mobile signal, I’d like to know where, which operator and how good. I’ll update this guidance note.

Andy Hardwick
cllrhardwick@upperdeverills.co.uk
20 January 2026

² Partial not spot – where a signal is available from only one provider.

³ Total not spot – no signal from any provider.

⁴ Our local MP approached the Home Office and Vodafone on my behalf. Neither organisation was interested in talking to a Parish Councillor or ordinary member of the public. My thanks to Andrew & Jenny Murrison for their efforts on this.

From: VodafoneThree <VodafoneThree@vodafone.com>
Sent: 29 October 2025 14:12
To: MURRISON, Jennifer <jennifer.murrison@parliament.uk>
Subject: RE: Brixton Deverill mobile coverage

Dear Jenny,

Thank you again for your email and for your patience whilst the team have been investigating.

The team have informed me that we are no longer rolling out the OpenRan equipment which Mr Hardwick alludes to. So, deploying a solution like the one already deployed would not be possible.

We do have plans to upgrade many of our sites in the surrounding area, but these are unlikely to add new coverage to Kingston, Monkton and Brixton Deverill.

Regarding resilience in the event of a power cut. Our primary resilience option is our [battery backup unit](#). If residents are vulnerable customers, then this can be provided free of charge by contacting our customer service team on 191 from a Vodafone mobile or 0333 304 0191. If not, there is a fee of £150. This unit will power most routers for up to seven hours in the event of an outage and can be turned on / off to conserve power.

In the medium term (late 2026 / early 2027), Vodafone is planning to launch direct-to-smartphone satellite service, developed in partnership with AST SpaceMobile. This service will allow standard mobile devices to connect directly to Low Earth Orbit satellites, without needing satellite dishes, terminals, or special phones. It mimics the experience of terrestrial mobile networks, enabling voice and video calls, internet access and messaging services. This will eliminate the majority of remaining mobile not spots across the UK, including in the most rural and hard to reach areas.

Please do not hesitate to get back in touch if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind regards,