

Feedback from organisations regarding poor mobile network coverage for Grange Villa

Following on from the public meeting arranged in Grange Villa Community Enterprise on 16.10.24 this is the feedback received as at 30.10.24 from the organisations contacted who were asked if the poor mobile network coverage affects them. Permission has been received from each responder to share their organisation, name and the response.

- **Durham Constabulary, Erin Humes, Police Constable- email received on 22.10.24**

In relation to the network coverage in Grange Villa, it has been an ongoing issue for a while. Police officers/PCSOs struggle to get signal on their radios whilst in the village which is a safety issue if an officer was to require assistance etc. I have had victims of crime who reside in Grange Villa who I have been unable to contact via mobile phone due to having no signal therefore I was only able to contact the via visiting their home address which some victims of crime don't feel comfortable with as draws attention to their property.

This issue was brought up in the local PACT meeting where a lot of residents felt unsafe due to not having use of their mobile phone most of the time whilst in the village. I hope this issue is able to be resolved as it is having a huge impact on the community as well as the Police as an organisation.

- **Roseberry Primary School, Emma Dunn, Headteacher- email received on 22.10.24**

I completely agree with your comments about poor mobile network coverage in Grange Villa. This has been a longstanding issue for our school when trying to contact parents who live in the village. We often can't get in touch with parents easily due to them not having any reception. Sometimes, when we can get through, the phone calls to people who are in Grange Villa are very crackly and it is difficult to hear what they are saying as the service cuts in and out. Parents struggle to contact school to provide a reason if their child is going to be absent. We also find that some parents from Grange Villa have to communicate with the school via our school app online as they can't ring due to poor reception.

This situation is far from ideal and causes issues around safeguarding, attendance and medical needs and also hinders effective communication. It is frustrating for us as a school and I know the parents share our frustrations.

We would welcome any improvements that could be made to the mobile phone service in the area.

- **Pelton & Fellrose Medical Group, Jemma Atkinson, Practice Manager**

I confirm the phone connection for our Grange Villa Patients has been an issue for as long as I have been here (coming up 10 years) this makes it difficult for patients needing a call from a Clinician. Due to these difficulties we would require the patient to get to the surgery or if too poorly to leave the house we would need to schedule a home visit which impacts on both the Patients needs and Practice time when in fact the patients needs could have been met over the phone.

I hope this helps answer your question. If you need anything more. please feel free to contact me.

- **The Village Medical Group- Lavender Centre and Pelton Fell Surgeries, Linsey Herring, Deputy Practice Manager**

Yes we do have an issue getting in touch with patients who live in the Grange Villa area, we have for a long time.

The patients will either come to the practice (if they can) or if they have a landline they prefer to contact us that way and vice versa.

- **West Pelton School, Victoria Hewison, Headteacher**

Yes it does.

It creates a barrier to communication with parents ranging from informing the school about absences to school contacting parents if a child is poorly (which are both safeguarding issues) and communication in general.

We have tried to overcome this with other methods such as WhatsApp and Dojo via home internet, but this is not a reasonable solution as parents are out and about.

- **Durham County Council, Leigh Edwards, Team Manager, Learning Disability Access Team, Adult & Health Service**

Thank you for contacting us.

I just wanted to add to the feedback being provided to the mobile companies and OFCOM about mobile coverage in the Grange Villa area. This has been a longstanding issue that has affected many residents we have supported over the years. Vulnerable adults are unable to make contact with services such as social workers, support workers, carers, benefits departments, GP and this can exasperate their already unsafe situations. Workers visiting people in the area to provide support are hindered as when they are at the persons homes they are unable to support them to make contact with the other services they need, such as hospitals, utilities companies, benefit agencies and emergency services. It also increases risks to our staff as they are unable to log into our Lone Worker systems or make contact with colleagues if needed. Recent examples have been that people in mental health crisis have been unable to make contact with crisis services, people have been left without utilities and finances as they have been unable to contact services and people experiencing domestic violence have been unable to contact DV agencies for support. I feel the lack of mobile coverage increases risks to the vulnerable people who reside there and would welcome any work to resolve the issue.

- **Durham Fire Brigade, Kevin Bell, District Manager for High Handenhold, Seaham and Durham**

We have always had an issue with mobile phone network coverage around the station at High Handenhold and the surrounding area. Luckily for us at least we have free GOV Wi-Fi in that area so at least we can connect to that. Once off station mobile phone signal is very poor and could do with being improved on but I'm not sure where the nearest mast is in conjunction with the terrain in the area which may have an impact.

Responses from Telecommunication Companies and other Partners as at 30.10.24

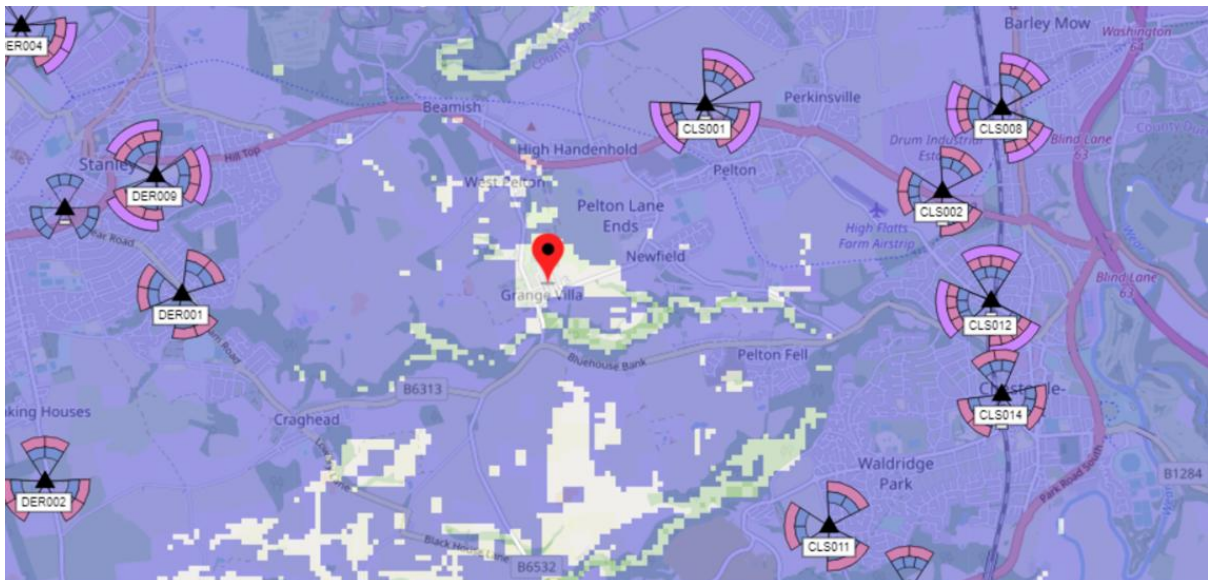
- **02-** Clerk has an O2 account and had to log the problems through my personal mobile number. Awaiting their response which can take up to 14 days.

- **Three UK**

Dear Joanne,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd October on behalf of Pelton Parish Council and the local community regarding Three network coverage in the Grange Villa area.

Please find below a map showing the locations of existing Three sites that are providing coverage in the area around Grange Villa:



The purple areas on the map are those where coverage is being delivered and the non-shaded areas show the locations where network coverage is poor or non-existent.

The topography of the area affects the signal from existing sites reaching customers in Grange Villa.

We do not currently have plans for any additional sites in Grange Villa. The network plan is kept under constant review, and this may change in the future.

You may be aware of proposed merger with Vodafone. The key rationale for this joint venture is to address the current scale issues that are limiting our long-term ability to invest in the network in areas like this. Bringing our networks together will hugely improve the network from day one. In the longer term, the merger will also unlock £11bn network investment over 10 years that will allow us to deliver advanced standalone 5G to every populated area in the UK by 2030 and 99% of the population by 2034.

The proposed merger is currently being examined by the Competition and Markets Authority and a decision is expected in early December.



Kind regards,
Nicola Davies, Community Affairs Manager

- **EE**

Hi Joanne, Thanks for your email. I'm sorry to hear you are not happy with the network in your area. I'd like to help. Before I do, I just need you to confirm some information for security, so I know I'm in touch with the right person. As I couldn't find an account for you from the details you provided. If you do not have an account, and your question is based more around coverage in the area, I can see we do already operate numerous masts in the postcode locations you provided.

We are always looking at ways to improve the network connectivity, but unfortunately at this moment in time there isn't any further information I could share. If however your query is based around a personal account please answer the below questions.

What to do now

Please call me on 08009563072

We're open Monday to Friday 08.00 to 20.00, 8.00 to 18.00 Saturday and 9.00 to 18.00 Sunday.

I can run through the security questions with you quickly and easily over the phone. It would also be great to be able to speak to you directly about the problems you've had.

Or email me with a few details

If you can't call me, please email me to confirm the

- name on the account
- 1st and 4th characters of the account password.

If you're not sure of the password, please confirm the following things instead:

- Name on the account
- Full address of your account
- Last 4 digits only of your bank account used to pay monthly Direct Debits

What happens next?

I look forward to hearing from you soon so I can start looking into the details and give you a full response.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Robinson
Executive Complaints

ACTION REQUIRED- Contact from an EE customer is required for a specific response

- **Shared Rural Network**

Dear Joanne. Thank you for sharing the letter.

The starting point for improvements delivered by the Shared Rural Network is the coverage data published in [Ofcom's Connected Nations Reports](#) and used in their [checker tool](#).

These coverage predictions are generated using computer programs that simulate the way mobile signals travel from mobile masts. These signals can vary if blocked by any obstructions

such as hills, trees and buildings; or how the signal is picked up, depending on the handset being used. Ofcom's measurements of mobile signals in different parts of the UK have shown that the predictions from computer models are generally accurate but cannot guarantee coverage is present in a certain area.

Whilst I appreciate the checker's reported coverage may not be reflective of your personal experiences, it is this data that is used as the starting point for the Shared Rural Network, and unfortunately we are not able to influence it.

The Mobile Coverage Checker has been in use prior to the development of the Shared Rural Network, with Ofcom publishing a report towards the end of 2022 which stated that they...“would continue working with industry to improve the accuracy and consistency of coverage information that Ofcom and the industry currently provide, and explore how real world-data can best provide customers with more information about the mobile performance they can expect to receive.” Full details here '[Conclusions: Ofcom's future approach to mobile markets](#)', which contains some information (pages 31/32) on how they will publish better information on network quality to inform consumer decisions, which may be of interest to you.

I would encourage you to complete the [Ofcom Mobile Coverage Checker Survey](#) they currently have live to express your views on the data shown in the checker.