

Government consults on legal direction to restrict Huawei in UK telecoms networks

A consultation has been launched with telecoms firms on proposed legal instruments to control the use of Huawei in UK networks.

UK telecoms providers have already begun to remove Huawei from the UK's 5G networks following the [government's announcement in July 2020](#). As the next step in this process, the government is now required by the new [Telecommunications \(Security\) Act](#) to consult with industry on the proposed measures which would bring these controls on Huawei onto a legal footing.

In November the Act became law – giving the government the legal mechanism to restrict the use of high risk vendor equipment in public networks where deemed necessary and proportionate in the interests of national security. The new powers will ensure UK mobile networks remain safe and secure as 5G becomes progressively more embedded in our national infrastructure, industries and daily lives.

The legal instruments the government is consulting on are known as a 'designated vendor direction', which contains requirements that public telecoms providers would need to follow regarding use of Huawei equipment and services; and a 'designation notice' which categorises Huawei as a high-risk vendor.

The consultation will last for four weeks and is only open to public communications providers which would receive the direction, and Huawei, as the proposed designated vendor.

The direction, subject to the [consultation](#), legally requires telecoms operators to:

- Remove all Huawei equipment from 5G networks by the end of 2027.
- Not install Huawei equipment in 5G networks, effective immediately upon the issuing of the final direction.
- Remove all Huawei equipment from the core of telecoms networks by 28 January 2023.
- Not install sanctions-affected Huawei equipment in full fibre networks, effective immediately upon the issuing of the direction. This includes any equipment for which the supply chain or manufacturing process has been altered due to the impact of US sanctions.
- Reduce the share of Huawei equipment to 35 per cent of the full fibre and 5G access (i.e. non-core) networks by 31 July 2023, six months later than previously announced due to the difficulties providers have faced during the pandemic.
- Remove Huawei high data rate intra-core and inter-operator transmission equipment – hardware which sends data across a network without

processing it – from all networks by 31 December 2025.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

The government is committed to ensuring the security and resilience of our phone and internet networks. Last year we brought in new laws to protect UK infrastructure from high-risk vendors and issue tough sanctions on providers which fall short of our high security standards. This consultation marks the next step in removing the risks posed by Huawei.

In July 2020 the government announced it would hold a technical consultation with full fibre operators regarding their use of Huawei equipment.

Following the conclusion of that technical consultation, the government worked with the National Cyber Security Centre to analyse responses. As a result, the proposed direction includes a ban on the installation of sanctions-affected equipment in full fibre networks, effective from the issuing of the designated vendor direction for Huawei.

The government considers that preventing any future installation of this equipment addresses the national security risk posed by Huawei in full fibre networks, but it will consider views from consultees before reaching a final decision.

This is not expected to impact the roll out of faster broadband. The telecoms industry remains committed to the government's target of bringing gigabit broadband to at least 85 per cent of the UK by 2025.

The NCSC has been consulted throughout the drafting of the consultation documents and the government has given due consideration to the NCSC's advice.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The targeted consultations are being conducted in accordance with sections 105Z3 and 105Z9 of the Communications Act 2003, as amended by the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021, for the Secretary of State to consult public communications providers which would be subject to a proposed designated vendor direction, relating to the use of Huawei equipment and services in the UK's public telecoms networks, and Huawei as the proposed designated vendor.
- Responses to these consultations will be taken into account in decisions by the Secretary of State regarding any designated vendor direction or designation notice relating to Huawei. The government must work with providers and vendors to ensure that public networks are as secure as they can possibly be.