

Openreach FTTP Install

Questions & Answers

Written up by Matthew Fowler (Chair, Park Gate Holyrood Owners Association), based on answers provided by Stewart Deakin of Openreach.

Why does anything need to be done?

Residents in Park Gate either have very poor internet speeds through the available traditional broadband connection type (ADSL, running over the existing BT/Openreach copper telephone lines), or are using 4G-based connections which are complicated and difficult to arrange and provide inconsistent connection speeds.

What is being proposed?

Openreach proposes to install their modern fibre-to-the-premises (“FTTP”) ultrafast full fibre broadband network in all three blocks of Park Gate, to enable individual flats to then subscribe to fibre-broadband services if they desire. For this to happen, our Factor (Charlie Leask) needs to sign a Wayleave Agreement on our behalf, to grant permission.

What will it cost us?

The proposed network install will have no cost to the Owners of Park Gate.

Then who pays for it?

Openreach pays for their own expenses to install and maintain their network. When any given flat chooses to subscribe to a fibre-broadband service, their chosen service provider (such as TalkTalk, Vodafone, etc.) ultimately pays Openreach for the use of their network.

Will this require anything to be done inside my flat?

No. The fibre network will be brought to the outside of your flat, but no access to residences is required at the time of this initial installation. If you choose to have fibre broadband installed, a separate engineer visit will occur to drill the necessary hole and fit the additional inside-your-flat equipment.

Do I have to subscribe to fibre broadband? What happens to my normal phone line?

There will be no immediate changes to the existing copper “normal telephone lines” caused by this installation. **However...**

Openreach have stated that they ultimately intend to retire **all** traditional analogue copper telephone line service, nation-wide, by the end of 2025. So “just not doing it” is not a viable long-term option. See: <https://openreach.com/upgrading-the-UK-to-digital-phone-lines>

What visible changes will this bring to the development when complete?

Very few and very minimal. The new fibre-optic cabling will be brought in through the same paths that the existing legacy copper telephone lines take. For 3 and 7 Gentle's Entry, this is a pipe coming up into the bin stores. For 65 Holyrood Road, this is an entry next to the lower garage door (the one nearer Holyrood Road), then up and along the garage wall and entering 65HR's electrical cupboard through the wall.

No cabling will be run up the public-facing external walls. Within the car park, some new exterior cabling (as described above) will run alongside the existing telephone cables that service 65 Holyrood Road, with the potential of requiring a short run of external conduit to assist in accessing a ceiling void (only if required). This will not add cabling to any "unspoiled" external areas, merely add a bit more to things that already exist.

Internally, the fibre-optic cables will be run through the bin stores and electrical cupboards using surface-mounted conduit (as it runs through some new wall-mounted equipment boxes), then will be hidden within ceiling voids and service risers (with appropriate attention paid to maintaining relevant fire-proofing as necessary).

The initial plans that Openreach provided showed some use of surface-mounted conduit in a couple of common areas (first floor landing in 3GE, stairwell in 65HR) where aesthetics and appearance are more important. This was not deemed satisfactory by the Committee, so an on-site meeting happened between Matthew Fowler (Chair), Stewart Deakin (Openreach) and Openreach's engineering contractor. Subsequently, the plans were improved and refined to remove the need for visible surface-mount conduit in those areas.

A small ceiling-access hatch will be required in the ground-floor lobby of 65 Holyrood Road (white plastic, approximately 8-9 inches square) to enable cabling to be passed up into the service riser for that block. A similar hatch may potentially be required in the ceiling of the first floor landing of 3 Gentle's Entry, although efforts will be made to avoid this.

For most residences, the "point of entry" (where the initial fibre network installation is terminated, ready for final connection in the future) will be installed within the service riser outside the flat. The "middle flats" in 7 Gentle's Entry (on the floors which have three residences) will have the Point Of Entry installed above their front door.

How soon can it start?

We won't know the exact start-date for the works until the Wayleave Agreement is signed, but it is estimated to be in the region of 1-3 months from that point.

How long will the work take?

If all goes smoothly, Openreach is estimating 2-3 days per block for the main install works.

There will be a final check and snagging for any lingering issues at the end of the process. It may take some time after these works are complete before residents are able to order fibre broadband service and arrange the final install in their residence.

What sort of disruption will there be during the works?

There will be engineers working in the common areas, service riser panels will be opened, ladders in use, etc. Access to residences will not be blocked at any point, and the engineers will clean up after themselves before leaving each day.

Arrangements *may* need to be made to free-up some of the car parking spaces between the garage roller door (the one nearer Holyrood Road) and the back-door into 65 Holyrood Road. This is most-likely to be needed for the space right next to the garage door.