Policy on allocating phones

Background

Each landline telephone line assigned to the Department costs £5 per month. In summer 2023 the UIS telecoms team contacted us to let us know that we had 367 lines assigned to us but that only 169 were used over the twelve months from June 2022 to May 2023. These unused phones cost us £11,800 per year.

Telephone options

There are several options available for people to have a University phone line assigned to them, aside from the standard existing Cisco handsets. Numbers can instead be routed directly to Microsoft Teams via Teams Telephony, removing the existing Cisco handset for now (with physical handsets available for Teams in the future) and allowing the assignee to receive calls no matter where they work. Although there is no direct cost saving to doing this, there are potentially small indirect savings through having fewer handsets to manage.

Alternatively people can obtain a University mobile phone line if they would still like a physical phone but with the flexibility of using it anywhere. Without obtaining a handset, this comes at a small cost to the individual involved — either a free SIM card (or eSIM) where calls and messages cost per use or a SIM for a small monthly fee with free unlimited UK minutes and texts — which we expect will be paid for through a suitable grant, with exceptions for Professional Services Staff with a clear need for a mobile phone. All University mobile phone contracts can be terminated with 30 days' notice.

Phone allocation

Allocation of phones is determined by a person's role within the Department.

PSS

All Professional Services Staff will be given a Cisco handset by default. Some may need a University mobile to aid in carrying out their job instead of or as well as the Cisco handset and these can be requested by their team lead.

UTOs, DoRs, PRAs and Emeritus Professors

Staff in this category can choose whether to have a Cisco handset (the default if no choice is made), Teams Telephony or a SIM card / eSIM with one of the University's voice-only mobile tariffs. In the latter case the staff member must provide a grant code to have a mobile tariff and will have to give up the contract if at any point there are not sufficient funds to continue paying for it. Alternatively they can choose not to have a phone at all.

Research Associates and Assistants and PhD students

By default, staff and students in this category do not get assigned a phone line of any description. However, if their PI would like them to have one (either a Cisco handset, Teams Telephony or a SIM card / eSIM with one of the University's voice-only mobile tariffs) then the PI can request this by contacting the Department's telephone liaison officer (telephone-liaison-officer@cl.cam.ac.uk) and providing a grant code in the case of requesting a SIM. As above, the member of staff or PhD student will have to give up the contract if at any point there are not sufficient funds to continue paying for it.

Visitors

Visitors will not be assigned a phone line of any description unless their sponsor requests it, in the same manner as for RAs and PhD students.

Transition

We will transition to the new system by implementing the policy above for all new starters after 1 March 2024. We will set up a form for existing staff and students for them to indicate their preference. If the form is not filled out then we will fall back to the default option according to the staff categories above, but phones will only be removed after several reminders direct to individuals.