

# DANNY KRUGER MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Clive Selley  
Chief Executive Officer  
*By email*

Our Ref: DK15741 RH

12 January 2024

Dear Mr Selley

I am writing regarding an incident which occurred in my constituency last Summer, and the subsequent difficulty in getting a clear answer from Openreach.

On July 20th, 2023 a falling tree damaged the phone and broadband network in Little Cheverell, near Devizes. Many constituents were in touch with me after a week passed and no repairs were made, and I contacted Openreach to enquire about the delay on 4th August.

Openreach provided a statement on 9th August, explaining 95 customers were affected by the damage and that repairs had been delayed because permission for traffic management (applied for in early August) were unsuccessful, but that work was expected to be completed that week.

I updated the residents, and was in touch with them again when the works were completed, but they had further questions about what had caused the delays, so I again asked the question of Openreach. I was advised: "We had to work as a collective with the local highways to arrange for the support of a traffic management team so our engineers could complete the necessary repair works safely. We also have to complete a number of surveys to understand exactly what work and support was needed. We also had to gain the relevant permissions (permits) to allow us to have the traffic management put in place."

My communications with residents continued to raise questions, and as such I wrote to Openreach again on 13th October, asking for a precise timeline of what action was taken and when throughout the 22-day outage, for example when applications were made to Highways and when these were granted.

I did not receive a response and requested the timeline again on 27th November and 4th December, but the timeline was not mentioned in the reply I received: "As we've explained previously, there was substantial damage to our network caused by a falling tree. We needed to replace a pole, as well as the overhead cabling which was attached to the pole, to restore service to those affected. This was a complex repair which needed traffic management to allow our engineers to work safely. And also required several surveys to be carried out to make sure the different teams across our business were aligned and worked together each step of the way, with all the relevant permissions in place. This wasn't straightforward, and unfortunately took longer than we'd have hoped. I feel we've fully explained the reasons for the delay with this repair. I really am sorry your constituents were out of service for longer than we'd have liked. But there isn't any further information we can share with you about this matter."

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I'm now escalating this matter to you. To be clear, I understand that Openreach is not responsible for the original outage, and it may be that Openreach is not responsible for the long delay in restoring the service. Indeed this is implied by your colleague's correspondence, which suggests that responsibility lies with Highways. I am concerned to find out what happened because my view is that one or more agencies responsible for a public service let the public down. I am also, I am afraid, very unimpressed by the stonewalling answers I have received from your team, to whom I have repeatedly asked the same question: please provide a timeline of events during this outage. If Openreach is unable or unwilling to provide this I would like to know why.

This outage was a serious incident for my rural constituents, and led to one woman giving birth on her kitchen floor as she could not access medical help. Thankfully this situation went well, but you will appreciate the outcome could have been very different.

I look forward to receiving your timeline so I can properly update my constituents.

With best wishes,

Danny

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danny Kruger', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

**Danny Kruger**  
**MP for the Devizes Constituency**