



BT GROUP PLC

Q2 2013/14 RESULTS PRESENTATION TRANSCRIPT

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Company speakers:	Gavin Patterson	Chief Executive Officer
	Tony Chanmugam	Group Finance Director
	John Petter	CEO BT Consumer
	Luis Alvarez	CEO BT Global Services

Voiceover

Slide 1: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the BT Centre Auditorium and to BT's results presentation. Can you please make sure that you have all mobile devices switched off. There are no fire alarms planned for today. And in the event of an alarm sounding, would you please leave the auditorium by the two fire exits at the front of the room.

Slide 2: Before we start we need to draw your attention to the usual disclaimer on forward-looking statements. Please see this slide and our latest annual report and Form 20-F for examples of the factors that can cause actual results to differ from any forward-looking statements we may make.

Gavin Patterson

Slide 3: Good morning and welcome to our Q2 results. Now given this is my first set of results as CEO, I wanted to start by looking backwards and just give you a sense of the context that we are announcing these results today, and then before we talk about what's going to happen in the future.

Slide 4: So if you look back in history, there have been many, many chapters in the development of BT. If you go back to 2001 and the turn of the century, it was about rehabilitation. It was about restructuring the balance sheet, reducing debt and really getting the business back to its core.

Between 2003 and 2008 it was about the move into data. Yes, it was about defending the core, defending our traditional business, but it was also about growing new-wave products and particularly broadband.

In 2008 Ian took over and Tony was promoted to CFO. The real focus then had to be around cost transformation and in particular becoming a better business with a better future. It wasn't just about cost of course, Ian and Tony began to lay down investments, lay down those foundations for our future, which takes us to 2013 and today.

Today is about realising that vision, realising the future. Yes, we've got more to do on cost transformation and undoubtedly we've got more to do on customer service, but we've also got to deliver on those investments in order to deliver our long term financial objectives.

Slide 5: I want to spend a little bit of time talking about those growth engines, those investments now and there are five of them we've talked to you about in the past. So this is a slide you might recognise from our Q1 results. These are the foundations we've put in place for the exciting future that we see ahead of us.

First of all, fibre. It is our ambition to create the best super-fast broadband network across Europe and we're well on our way to delivering that. Today I announced that we've passed our 17 millionth premise in the UK and we're well on track to delivering two-thirds of the UK by spring 2014.

After that it's about delivering rural broadband and we've already started and I'll talk about that later. And ultimately we think we'll get well into the 90% coverage of premises across the UK. I think that's a very exciting vision and I'm very proud to be part of it. It's very early days still. You forget, we've only been in the fibre business three or four years and this, as you know, is a double-digit payback and even longer for those rural broadband contracts.

Secondly, TV and Sport. It's a very exciting period for us in the TV business and particularly Sport. Sport has made a confident start and I'll give you some detail on that later, but it's also about ensuring we have a competitive triple-play product for customers who don't necessarily like sport of course and we've had some exciting progress on that in the last quarter.

In the business market we've a great opportunity to grow in network IT services, both in our business-to-business arm, BT Business, and Global Services. We've got a relatively modest share. This is the way the market is moving. We've got a great opportunity to grow going forwards.

In mobility, again this is very much a greenfield opportunity for us. You won't have forgotten I hope that we bought some 4G spectrum in February. We've just recently announced in principle we've agreed a new MVNO with EE and of course we've got an extensive network of wi-fi hotspots across the UK. You put those altogether and you can create some really interesting propositions, both for consumers and businesses. We're not going to be talking much about that today; you'll more about it from us next year.

And then last but certainly not least, realising the full potential of the investments that we laid down a couple of years ago in LatAm and Asia Pac in the high growth regions of the world, and that's particularly pertinent for Global Services.

All in all I think you can say we've got some really interesting growth opportunities ahead of us. The real focus now is about delivering on them and that's where my focus lies

Slide 6: And if we do that we'll be able to deliver on our financial objectives. Our focus of course is about driving profitable revenue growth and if we combine that with continued cost transformation and remain disciplined about that we'll be able to grow our EBITDA and free cash flow over the long term. This is how we run our business in good times and in bad. It's a focus on free cash flow.

In terms of the use of that cash, we'll continue to invest in the business. We'll also reduce our net debt, we'll make sure the pension fund is appropriately funded and we'll continue to pay a progressive dividend.

Slide 7: Having the strategy is one thing; you've got to have the team to deliver it and I want to introduce a couple of new members to the operating committee today. When I took over one of my first decisions was to split BT Retail in two into a Consumer arm and a Business arm, a B2B arm. And the B2B arm will pick up BT Enterprises and BT Ireland. So two separate units, two new lines of business. We're going to continue to report on them together for the rest of the fiscal [year] rather than make another change, which I know won't be exactly welcome, but from next fiscal we'll be reporting on them separately.

John Petter is leading the Consumer business and he's in the front row today and will be available for questions later, and Graham Sutherland is running the Business unit and he's here too as well. I think the other characters on this chart you know very well and they're also available today for questions.

Okay. That's all I want to do as an introduction. I'm now going to pass over to Tony to go through the Group results and then I'll come back and talk about the line of business performance.

Tony Chanmugam

Slide 8: Thank you Gavin. Good morning everyone. We've delivered a good financial performance this year - this quarter, I should say. Our figures are ahead of market expectations and we've grown our earnings and our cash flow despite the large investment we've made in launching BT Sport.

Regulation remains the biggest headwind to our business but a combination of managing our business, a strong performance in cost transformation and the impact of our strategic investments, this has counteracted that. This quarter's results underpin our outlook for the year, which remains unchanged.

Slide 9: Let me start now with a brief overview of the main Group results. Our key measure of the Group's revenue trend, underlying revenue excluding transit, was down 0.5%. This is an improvement on last quarter, which was down 1%, and significantly better than Q2 last year, which was down 5.5%. EBITDA was down 4%. This decline is in line with our expectations and reflects our investment in BT Sport. We expect to grow our EBITDA and cash next year in line with our historic trends.

It's worth highlighting this is our 16th consecutive quarter of growth in earnings per share, which is up 2%. Normalised free cash flow was almost £300m higher than last year, but this reflects the timing around working capital which I've said before can bounce around from one quarter to another.

We continue to aim to reduce our net debt. It was down almost £1bn compared with last year, but this is up slightly on last quarter as our reported free cash flow was offset by the payment of last year's final dividend and our share buyback programme.

Slide 10: Now looking at the performance across the lines of business. On the revenue line a strong performance from Retail driven by growth in Consumer broadband and TV. This was more than offset by the impact of regulation on Openreach's revenue. As we flagged to you last quarter, Global Services was impacted by the timing of contract milestones while Wholesale's year-on-year trend was flattered by the negative impact of ladder pricing, the decision that had on revenue and its impact on revenue last year.

The decline in EBITDA reflected Retail's investment in BT Sport. This was partly offset by good growth in Global Services driven by its cost transformation programmes and an increase in Wholesale's EBITDA, largely due to the impact of ladder pricing.

On cash flow, the working capital improvements I mentioned earlier were largely in Global Services and Wholesale, with these offsetting the impact of Retail paying for the first instalment of the Premier League rights.

Slide 11: Taking a closer look at costs on slide 11, underlying operating costs excluding transit were up by 1%. However, excluding the impact of the investment of BT Sport of around £140m and the increase in the pension operating charge, the underlying operating costs have reduced by around 5%. This is actually a faster pace than we achieved in Q1.

We continue to focus on process reengineering, procurement efficiencies and generating savings from insourcing. We've made good progress on these in the quarter and continue to identify further opportunities.

Last quarter I talked to you about our call centre environment. We have 80 call centres with less than 100 people. That's obviously inefficient. Again if you look at that environment we have a large cost of failure because of the way the processes work.

If we work the right things in relation to our processes, get the right organisational infrastructure, consolidate our call centres, we can take out between 10% and 20% of our cost base. And we can use that cost savings to reengineer our processes and improve our cost performance but also, and just as importantly, improve the quality of customer service we offer our customers. And that's vitally important.

If you look at Global Services, we took out 8% of our cost base there, excluding the impact of transit, on an underlying basis in Q2. One of the enablers there was that we're using the same processes we work through in the UK in France, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Benelux. The net impact there is we'll get over £100m of annualised savings. It makes a material difference.

Now the benchmarking will show that we are probably in the top quartile in the sector. But what I'd say to you is every company has the opportunity to make cost savings; the good companies identify that opportunity. I think we're in the position of identifying that opportunity and it strikes every single day.

During the course of this week, simple things like you wouldn't believe, but we use our competitor's ethernet services to provide service for our customers. Not a large sum, £2m or £3m, but it's £2m or £3m that could be coming to BT.

We have a field force in France servicing our Global Services business. Our conferencing business chooses to use a third party. Why? No reason. It can easily be transferred across. There are numerous examples. That's just stuff that happened over the last two days that we will fix. But the key here is that we've got plenty of opportunities across the business, and I genuinely believe if we execute well we can make further material savings.

Slide 12: Let's turn to debt and liquidity on slide 12. At 30 September we had cash and investment balances of £1.2bn and available facilities of £1.5bn. These provide us with a very strong liquidity and funding position with £0.3bn of term debt and £0.5bn short-term borrowing repayable in the second half of this year.

Our debt maturities are fairly evenly spread over the next few years and we'll continue to reduce our debt level with a target of achieving a BBB+ rating or equivalent. We continue to review our funding options with a view to maintaining our liquidity while minimising our cost of carry. We will only refinance debt when there is a clear financial and commercial benefit to do so.

Slide 13: Turning now to what's obviously your most favourite subject, the pension. The IAS19 pension deficit was £5.4bn net of tax, up from £4bn at Q1. This may have been slightly higher than some of you were expecting but, as I've said previously, this number does fluctuate.

The increase in this deficit was principally due to a higher present value of the liabilities. There was an £800m impact from a reduction in the discount rate which reflects the tightening of corporate credit spreads during the quarter. In addition there was a £200m impact from future inflation expectations which moved slightly against us.

I know pension deficit is an ongoing topic of interest with a certain level of complexity around it so we'll be organising a pension teach-in towards the end of November in which we'll go through the moving parts and valuation methods in a lot more detail. I'm sure you all can't wait to attend.

Slide 14: But before that, a quick preview, slide 14. It's a quick reminder of the measures we often refer to. Firstly, IAS 19 is a prescribed accounting measure which we have to report each quarter whether we like it or not. It tends to be volatile as it uses a market yield curve for AA corporate bonds as a discount rate. It has no bearing on the cash we pay into the scheme.

Secondly, we have our median estimate, which is BT's best estimate of the funding position. This in essence compares what we expect to pay in future pensions against the scheme assets that we hold. This is more stable as it uses long-term asset returns expectations as the discount rate.

And thirdly, we have the actuarial funding valuation which forms the basis on which cash contributions to the scheme are agreed every three years. This is required by regulation and is a prudent view. The next triennial funding valuation will take place in June 2014.

Slide 15: I just want to show you how the IAS 19 and median estimate have moved over the last five years. IAS 19 is a spot measure and you can see that it has historically been quite volatile, mainly driven by movements in corporate bond yields and inflation. Our median estimate in pink has been much more stable and continues to show a surplus, which was £0.7bn at Q2.

Slide 16: On regulation on slide 16, I just want to remind you of what we've said previously on regulation. We expect an impact of about £120m on our EBITDA this year from the WLR, LLU and ISDN30 charge controls. Early next year we expect Ofcom to publish its final statement on the next charge control. This is due to come into effect on 1 April 2014.

The business connectivity market review will have an impact of around £50m to £100m on EBITDA this year and next.

And finally, the wholesale narrowband market review will lower our fixed call termination revenues from 1 January 2014, with this partly offset by higher call-origination prices. This will provide a noticeable headwind for Wholesale, particularly in the next financial year.

All these numbers are factored into our guidance which is set out in slide 17.

Slide 17: Our Group outlook for the year remains unchanged. We continue to expect an improved trend in underlying revenue, excluding transit, compared with last year. We expect adjusted EBITDA to be between £6.0bn and £6.1bn, and normalised free cash flow to be around £2.3bn, with these both growing in the next two years.

Slide 18: In line with our policy of 10% to 15% growth in dividend per share over the next two years we're announcing an interim dividend of 3.4p. This is up 13%. We'll also continue with our share buyback programme during the quarter. We bought a further 23m shares for £77m. Our shareholder returns remain well covered by our cash flow and we remain committed to paying progressive dividends, not just this year and next but in the years to come.

And with that I'll hand you back to Gavin.

Gavin Patterson

Slide 19: Thanks Tony. Okay. I want to spend some time now looking at the line of business performance and we'll start with Global Services.

Slide 20: So Global Services had a really solid quarter. Revenues were down 5%. That's a little bit worse than Q3, but there are some one off effects in there so, for example, we have contract milestone payments that would have been due in Q2; they're going to be in Q3 so we'll see the benefit there. Encouragingly we saw double-digit growth in our high growth regions. That was the thing I talked about earlier.

We've made good progress on cost transformation so costs are down 8% in the quarter and that compares with 4% in Q1. Some of that is down to the lower revenue base, yes, but we can also see the effect of cost transformation really making some real traction now in Global Services. And one example of this is that we've moved from three global packet networks to one in the last 18 months, saving opex and capex at the same time.

Operating cash flow is up almost £200m in the quarter. We had a net inflow of £74m within the quarter which is significant. As Tony mentioned, there were some working capital benefits that we saw in the base. But if you look at the 12-month rolling average you can see consistent progress quarter after quarter. And that's what we're focused on.

Slide 21: If you look at the operating side of things now, I'm really pleased to say the order book is up 19% at £1.5bn in the quarter. And if you look at what's happening in AsiaPac and Latin America, that growth rate is 25%.

We've had some great deals signed in the quarter. For example, Unilever have signed a deal for mobile, voice, data and video for all their 173,000 employees across over 100 countries, which is a great deal. With Visa, Visa have chosen us for a new payment platform in Europe. We've re-signed a deal with Fiat around outsourcing around the globe. And Wipro have chosen us to provide voice and WAN services as they go in and serve a UK major utility company. So I think it just gives you a taste of the sort of deals that we're seeing.

And if you look at the 12-month rolling average on the order book, it's now over £7bn for the first time in two years.

One other thing I wanted to mention on Global Services is that we launched BT MeetMe with Dolby Voice last week. One or two of you might have noticed this. It was something we talked about in the strategy presentation earlier this year. I think this is a really exciting initiative.

I think it's probably the biggest breakthrough in audio conferencing in the last 10 years and it's an exclusive between BT and Dolby. What it does is it removes all that background noise that you get in a conference call so you get a much better audio experience. And I think that's an area that we're going to see real growth in going forwards.

Slide 22: Moving on to Retail, Retail had a strong quarter, revenues up 2% driven by a really strong performance in Consumer. EBITDA was down £66m, and you can see the impact of BT Sport there, but that's broadly in line with what we were expecting when we talked about last quarter.

Overall we had some good operational progress to report. So the share of net adds on broadband in the quarter at 93% is particularly good. We had almost 200,000 fibre net adds. Interestingly the fibre net adds are increasingly moving towards new customers so a third of those are new to BT and that is getting higher as we move forwards, and we've now got a base of over 1.7m fibre customers in Retail.

Also worth mentioning our Wi-fi business, which continues to grow and is a real differentiator for us. So that doubled to 6.6bn minutes within the quarter and continues to be one of the areas that really helps us drive down churn.

So we've always said that our goal over the long term is to grow revenues and I think you can see that within the Retail chart here it's beginning to turn.

Slide 23: If you look at Consumer in more detail, Consumer had the best revenue performance for 10 years and it was revenue growth across all, improvement in revenue trend across the board. So in calls and lines revenues declined just 1% and that compares with 5% in Q1. Broadband and TV was up 17% and that compares with 9% in Q1.

Sport was a successful launch and I'll show you some of the operational metrics in a minute, but we've begun to see some of the revenues come through from Sport, particularly with stand alone channel sales, commercial revenues, the wholesale deals that we've put in place. But I think the most important thing to take away is we've always said judge the success of Sport based on whether or not it's driving our consumer business top and bottom line over the medium term. And while it's still very early days, I think you can see the trend is an encouraging sign in the right direction.

Slide 24: And if you look at the operational metrics in more detail I think you can see the impact it's having on the base business. So if you look at line losses, 65,000, that's two thirds lower than

this time last year. Active customers, the number of customers we've lost in the quarter at 34,000 is three quarters less than we had this time last year.

We talked about the broadband share being 93%. That's a very good number. I think it will be difficult keeping it at that level going forward, but you would expect to see a benefit from the advertising and the marketing in the first quarter. But nonetheless I think that's acknowledged as a decent number in itself. We've also seen the halo on our TV business where the net adds were up three times what they were this time last year.

It's also worth mentioning that half the customers of BT Sport are existing BT broadband customers, indeed much more than half are. And these are customers who've chosen to take a new contract with us which was part of the requirements for BT Sport. And so we'll see the benefit of that coming through in our churn in future quarters.

Slide 25: And if you look at the channel itself, I think it's made a really confident start. We've got over 2m retail customers direct; we passed that number a couple of weeks ago now. And if you include the customers we get through cable that's over 4m customers.

In terms of audience, we're making good progress on building a good audience for the channel. So, for example, in the Premier League we're getting 70% higher audience share than ESPN got last year. And on rugby, our rugby audience is more than Sky was getting last year and three times more than ESPN were getting last year.

And that's with our best games to come I think, because if you look across the Christmas period between 1 December and 1 January, we've got 10 Premier League games including three top six, where the top six play top six. We've also got, and it sticks in my throat this, Manchester City versus Liverpool, which of course used to be a top six game but isn't classified as one today. But certainly Liverpool bring in the second highest audiences across the Premier League so I think we'll see a real benefit from that.

So there's a lot more to come on Sport. We're going through a particularly strong period I think and of course we've still got eight more [top] picks to come in the rest of the year. So I know many of you in the room are BT Sport customers, but for those of you who aren't, here's a taste of what you're missing...

(Video playing)

Slide 26: It's not just about Sport of course. It's also about the broader TV proposition and we've made some significant changes to our TV proposition in the last quarter and they're having a real effect. So we've launched 18 more pay TV channels plus access to the four HD PSB channels in a new entertainment pack. You can supplement that as well with a kids' pack or an HD pack where you can get access to more channels. Of course there's BT Sport in SD and HD. We've also launched Sky Movies, all 11 Sky Movie channels are now available on our platform.

I think the takeaway from this is customers can now choose, pick and choose to create the right value for money, the right proposition for them. So they can get great entertainment at a good price without necessarily having to have a load of channels they don't necessarily want to watch. In particular now we've got a very strong offer in the market where you can get YouView, the entertainment pack and fibre for just £20, which is extremely competitive if you're on the look out before Christmas.

Slide 27: Right. I want to talk a little bit more about the other parts of Retail now and the real message here is all these parts of the business are on track and delivering. So on Business, similar trend to previous quarters, flat revenue where growth in IT services is just about compensating for declines in calls and lines. That's a good number when you look at what a number of our competitors are achieving at the moment.

In Enterprises, if you strip out acquisitions and foreign exchange we're down 1%. That's a deliberate choice we've made in Conferencing where we're focusing much more on services and away from low margin hardware. Encouragingly, the minutes on our audio conferencing business are up 10% year on year and that's ahead of the launch of BT MeetMe with Dolby Voice.

Ireland continues to make a significant contribution. The underlying revenues are up 2% ex transit and that's driven by particularly strong performance in the Republic of Ireland in our business division where the pipeline is up over 30% in the last six months.

Slide 28: Moving on to Wholesale and the message here is really steady progress again, very similar to what we were achieving in Q1. I think it's easier, as Tony mentioned earlier, to look at Wholesale [by] backing out the impact of ladder pricing, which somewhat flatters the numbers. But if you back out ladder pricing and look at the underlying revenue ex transit it's up 1%. And the key dynamic there that's changing, managed solutions revenues are up 18% and IP services revenues are up 23% in the quarter, so compensating for decline on the base business.

Costs are flat where our SG&A is coming down but we've got higher direct costs with the managed solutions contracts, and EBITDA up 3%.

I'm really pleased about the progress we're making on IP exchange, this is one of the things we highlighted in our strategy presentation in May, where the minutes are up 60% year on year.

The order intake is very good at over £400m, up 33% year on year. We need to look at this in the context of the regulatory headwinds that Tony talked about earlier, but nonetheless that is an encouraging number.

Two thirds of it is renewals, particularly with our big customers, but I'd really like to highlight the performance of Nigel and the team at broadening the customer base within BT Wholesale and really introducing new deals with clients such as Spitfire, Timico and Nine Telecom. I think that demonstrates actually there's great growth if we open up the potential of our Wholesale business. We also signed a very interesting IP exchange contract with EE which will begin to migrate their voice traffic internationally.

Slide 29: Moving on to Openreach. A solid performance clearly impacted by regulation. So revenue down 1%. That would have been up 4% if it hadn't been for the £70m regulation effect in the quarter. Within the mix there, fibre doing very well, with revenues up over 100% year on year, our volume on Ethernet increasing over 10% as well. Operating costs are up 2%. Reflects the investments we're making on service and BDUK and the higher volumes that we saw across the summer.

In terms of the physical line base, it declined 8,000. There's some seasonality in our Openreach business, but that 8,000 compares with 38,000 decline this time last year, and if you look at the 12-month rolling average, it's up over 140,000, so I think we're seeing progress. Net-net, EBITDA down 3%, a solid performance on Openreach.

Slide 31: And if you look on fibre in more detail, as I said earlier, really pleased that we passed the milestone of 17m premises passed. We connected over 2m premises now, be that consumers and businesses, making real progress.

Increasingly, other service providers are getting behind fibre. It's not just BT Retail that are driving this now. So we added over 300,000 net connections in the quarter. That's up 70% year on year, and the share that BT [Retail] is getting is now nearer 60% whereas a couple of quarters ago that was nearer 85%. So we're seeing that all service providers are investing in fibre and really buying fibre from Openreach.

It's worth just giving a little bit of colour of what's happening at an exchange level. There are 250 exchanges now where we've got penetration and adoption at over 20%, which is really good,

some that are as high as 40%, particularly in the areas where we're most developed and where we have the widest overall coverage, places like Cornwall and Northern Ireland.

So I think that gives you a sense of the potential of our investment. Indeed, there was one exchange that has gone from 0% to 20% penetration in just 12 months, Woburn Sands in Bedfordshire, if [it's] somewhere you might know. I've just learnt about it.

We're increasingly beginning to roll out our regional contracts now, so we've signed 44 regional contacts, 42 through BDUK, plus Northern Ireland and Cornwall. And we're already adding premises, so we passed another 100,000 regional premises on the rural broadband contracts within the quarter. So that will increasingly become part of our focus going forwards.

And it's also about innovation. So we've started a vectoring trial in Barnet and Braintree, and what vectoring does is it removes the crosstalk. It's like noise cancelling headphones, if you want to think about it that way, that you sometimes get in a cabinet, particularly when you get to high penetration within the cabinet. What it means for the customer is you get higher speeds across the board.

So on fibre, I think the takeaway from all of this is we're continuing to deliver, we're well on the way to delivering our ambitions around the commercial roll-out, and we've still got the ambition that within three to four years' time, we'll have a network that is the best super-fast broadband network in Europe, with 90% coverage, supplying all service providers across the UK.

Slide 32: So, in summary, these are a good set of financials with growth in earnings and cash. It's been our best ever fibre quarter. We've made a confident start on BT Sport and you can see that amongst other things in our record share on broadband. And we've delivered strong order books in Global Services and Wholesale.

We're building on the strong foundations. There's clearly an awful lot of potential in this business. It is a very exciting time in BT and it's a great time to be taking over as CEO. We've got a very clear strategy. Our focus is on delivering that strategy and the financial benefits will follow.

Slide 33: Thank you very much and we are open for questions.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Carl Murdock-Smith: JPMorgan Cazenove

On the strong consumer performance, and broadband and TV within that being up 17% in the quarter versus 9% in Q1, I was just wondering within that, what's the performance this quarter if you strip out the Virgin Media wholesale deal and also pubs and clubs, so on a very core consumer performance what would the growth be this quarter?

Gavin Patterson

You know I'm not going to tell you that. We've been really, really clear on this. Judge the consumer business based on whether or not it is growing top and bottom line over the medium term.

So the revenues in consumer grew 4%. I gave you some colour I think on actually the impact we're having on the calls and lines business and broadband, and you can see that in the metrics. There's clearly going to be some revenues from standalone sales of the channel and the commercial revenues are beginning to build, as well. We didn't give details of the wholesale deal with Virgin and I'm not going to change that now.

Tony Chanmugam

Carl, if you look at Retail you'd say that there's an underlying - if you look, there's 13% down on EBITDA, yes? We've told you the Sport investment's about £140m. We've told you that roughly the EBITDA impact is in the region broadly of £100m. You play that number back and you'll see that if you look at the traditional underlying growth in Retail was running at about 5%, if you play those numbers back what you'll see in the quarter is the underlying excluding Sport is materially above the base of 5%.

Wilton Fry: BoAML

The trustees have got a £6bn to £7bn prudence discount on their pension scheme, on their valuation. That's about 85p a share. Given obviously the Crown guaranteed backstops, the worst case scenario, do you think there's a chance they could start to reduce that prudence discount once we have the next triennial valuation in June?

Gavin Patterson

I'll let Tony answer that because he's our pension expert now that Ian's gone.

Tony Chanmugam

I'm just trying to think how Ian would answer this. The key point here, your facts are spot on. The way I would look at it is we will represent to the trustees that this business is in better materially better shape that it was in the last triennial, and materially better than the previous triennial. Given that it's materially better positioned both in terms of EBITDA and cash generation, the level of prudence that should be used should be less. Whether they accept that, whether we can get that agreed, is another matter. But logic dictates that it should be in a better position.

John Karidis: Oriel

I haven't had enough time to look at as much details as I'd like to on working capital movements in the past this morning, but it feels a little bit overly conservative not to be changing your free cash flow guidance given the beat in the quarter. Is it possible to give us a little bit more colour on this please?

Gavin Patterson

There are many things that might change in the second half of the year, particularly the timing of the contracts around BDUK in terms of receiving the money for them. So it would be prudent not to make any changes at this point. I don't know whether you want to add any specifics, Tony?

Tony Chanmugam

The working capital is getting bounced around primarily because of the timing of supplier payments and how that works through. When it's worked against us, I've said it's worked against us. It's worked for us here. There's no reason for us to change our outlook at the moment.

Nick Lyall: UBS

Can I ask, on BT Sport, do you think you need more content now for the BT Sport channel, given the 2m subs, and do you have the scale to compete in upcoming auctions like for the Champions League, for example?

And if possible, I know it's taking the mickey, but if possible could you give us a bit more detail on underlying churn from particularly broadband and maybe line losses as well, not just the gross adds, if possible?

Gavin Patterson

We always set out not to be number one in sport but to be number two. Sky have a very, very strong position, but we felt there was room for another player and we felt that it had a strategic value to us. And, as I said, I think we're very pleased with the start we've achieved. This channel is only 13 weeks old and we've got over 4m customers. That's not shabby in anybody's definition.

In terms of the amount of live sport, which is one of the key metrics, it compares extremely well with the numbers that Sky deliver in terms of live sports on their channels. In fact, I think we've got a higher percentage of live sports on our channels than Sky are delivering.

That said, as with any rights, we look at the market and we take a view whether or not they can be something that has a positive effect on the value of the company. We're going to remain very financially disciplined about this. It's not chasing rights for the sake of it, but we evaluate things all the time. What I will say is, I don't think we need necessarily to gain any more rights to deliver what we need to achieve with the channel.

You had another question about underlying impact on churn. Churn is down. As you know, we don't give any specifics on that. So it's down year on year, and so we are beginning to see the beginnings of the impact at BT Sport. But, as I mentioned earlier, the key to BT Sport was recontracting if you're a BT Broadband customer. And well over half of the customers that are taking Sport are recontracting with us so we'll see that feed through in the churn line in future quarters, I think.

Maurice Patrick: Barclays

So on fibre you've talked in the past I think about 15%, 20% long term penetration. Clearly, quite a few exchanges are now at the level, some obviously a bit higher than that. Wondered if you had any updated thoughts as to where long term fibre penetration will end up, given the strong progress you've seen, not just in Retail, but also some of your wholesale partners.

Gavin Patterson

The investment is still relatively new. As you know, this is a double-digit payback and the rural contracts are a lot longer. So I think it is too early to be making too many assertions about how big it can be.

What I will say is with 12% adoption now across the country as a whole and evidence that in many places it's a lot higher than that, there's clearly the potential to go over 20%. And we're certainly a lot more confident that 20% is achievable and that was key to the business case. So we will continue to evaluate whether or not there is the potential to go higher, but at this stage I think making sure we get to that 20% number is our focus.

Paul Sidney: Credit Suisse

What is more important to BT Retail? Is it line loss reduction or price increases, or as your line loss reduces over time does it become more of a balancing act between the two?

Gavin Patterson

Yes. The way I would characterise it is we need to build a sustainable business. The cost transformation in Retail and particularly in Consumer, since we're talking about that, has been going on for a long time. And it's not that it's run out of road, but we recognise that it needs to grow the top line at some point and otherwise it is going to run out of road I think. So pricing is one way of doing that. Adding RGUs (Revenue Generating Units) by customer is another way of doing that. Reducing customer loss is another. And I think what you'll see is the mix change over time.

And with respect to pricing, this is a market where people talk about pricing a lot, but actually the product in terms of its capabilities and product performance changes dramatically as well. And if you look at actually how pricing tends to be deployed, customers tend to get more for less if you look at it in the whole. So it's the upgrade, for example, we did last year on fibre - we doubled the speed from 40 to 80Mbps and if you look at our fibre pricing, certainly the bundled pricing has come down over that time.

Stephen Howard: HSBC

I just had a question about competitor response. Obviously your broadband net adds figures are very strong and they display the strength of the proposition. Is there any worrying signs you see of competitors perhaps with an inferior proposition or one that is now relatively less strong having to respond with more aggressive pricing? Thanks

Gavin Patterson

Well, I'll say a few comments, and then I'll ask John just to chip in if he's got anything to add here, but when we launched BT Sport, and indeed the weeks and months running up to it, we saw an awful lot of competitive activity.

Sky were offering Sky Sports for free for a year, for example. They put some very keen prices into the market for the fibre product that they're buying from Openreach and then they invested an awful lot on marketing. So we saw an awful lot of competitive activity during that period. They also chose many of the best picks at the beginning of the season so we didn't have the strongest set of fixtures in those first 13 weeks.

So I think we've seen a lot of competitive activity. I think we'll see more going forwards as we all fight for market share. But, as I say, I think the start we've made demonstrates that actually there's a pretty resilient proposition here. We're not complacent. There's a long way to go on it, but it looks as though it's got some legs.

On TalkTalk, TalkTalk are clearly looking at it from a group perspective. They're selling a lot more fibre now. They have said that Sport hasn't impacted their business. I know they haven't reported yet and undoubtedly I'm sure they'll have a comment about that in two weeks.

They've been putting some very aggressive price points into the market on copper. They've been marketing YouView very strongly as well. I think there is competitive activity out there, but as I say, I think the results we're gaining on Sport and its impact particularly on the broadband business I think demonstrates that actually it's got some strength. Is there anything you want to add, John?

John Petter

Just a couple of thoughts, and the key point that Gavin made is right, so if the competition are doing free broadband, as in fact Sky were for Sky Sports customers, there isn't very much further they can go actually. And during the quarter in fact we saw some surprising tactics from Sky. They were pushing customers towards BT's website to take BT Sports in fact as a kind of defensive maneuver of some kind.

For TalkTalk in particular, their price for broadband is £2.49 at the moment. That's been the case for a while. I was going back through my files from a few years ago a couple of days ago. I saw TalkTalk's best deal in 2007 was free broadband forever, and forever turned out not to be for very long. This market stays very competitive and that hasn't really changed, but the strength of our proposition gives us a really good sale to customers in that context.

Simon Weeden: Citi

My question is on your various regulatory and court efforts to get access to Sky Sport carriage rights. Could you just update us on where you are in the various actions, what your pitch is to Ofcom and how it's going court wise with regard to the last Ofcom decision on the same sort of subject?

Gavin Patterson

I think it's important to say we continue to have commercial discussions with Sky. At the moment on sport, we're not talking, but as you see, we've signed a deal on movies this quarter, which I think is good for them, and it's good for our customers, as well. But in terms of sports, there are probably two things in particular.

The original Wholesale-must-offer Ofcom decision, we won the right to challenge the CAT appeal in the Court of Appeal, and I think that gets heard, well, just before Christmas in December. And until then the WMO still stands and so we're able to show Sky Sports on our Vision box.

We can't show Sky Sports on YouView, which we think we're being discriminated against given that there was never any challenge around the dominant position that Sky had in the pay TV market in sports and, as I say, they provide Sky Sports on YouView for other players in the marketplace. So we've asked Ofcom to look at that. We've made a complaint and they're considering that at the moment and we expect to hear something in the new year on whether or not they're going to take that complaint.

James Britton: Nomura

Can you just give us a sense of how quickly you expect the halo effect from BT Sport to start wearing off or do you actually expect the line loss level to be sustainable or could even improve from here?

And then perhaps just a quick follow on. Why were you unable to accelerate the retail fibre adds this quarter? I thought Sport was partly about that up sell

Gavin Patterson

On line losses clearly we've seen a benefit in the first quarter and you'd expect with the marketing we've put and the newsworthiness, you'd expect the first quarter to be strong. I think that will wear off a little bit, but I expect there to be a noticeable improvement, still, when you look at any year-on-year comparators going forwards.

Fibre adds in the quarter, we were a little disappointed with that to be perfectly honest with you, but there's a couple of things to call out in it. I say disappointed, it was around about the same amount we did last quarter. On Sport we always said fundamentally it was about driving broadband first, then fibre. So free BT Sport is available for all broadband customers.

We chose in the quarter to focus our outbound telemarketing resources, our telesales resource, on taking incoming calls on BT Sport. Normally much of the upgrade process on fibre is done through outbound calling and you can see that in some of the other metrics that I mentioned earlier. So, for example, if you look at the mix in those fibre adds of new to BT, completely new to BT, it increased significantly in the quarter. Historically, it had been about a fifth. It was about a third in the quarter and I think that's a data point that supports that.

Andrew Lee: Goldman Sachs

James asked the basis of my question, which is basically the sustainability of this impact from BT Sport given it was a big marketing quarter. Could you just give a bit more data on some of the other KPIs that improved? For example, the TV up-selling, which more than trebled, how sustained was that kind of uplift?

And then, I'll ask a semi-follow up, which is on mobile. You said you weren't going to talk much about it and we'd hear more about it next year, but does that mean you'll launch a consumer proposition next year or you'll just tell us what you're going to do next year?

Gavin Patterson

Let me answer the question on mobile and then I'll turn over to John to talk about the impact on KPIs of TV. On mobile and mobility in general, we see that as a really exciting opportunity for us. Certainly with 4G and fibre we're increasingly seeing the markets come together and potentially they'll completely merge I think when 4G and fibre really take off. And I think we're really well placed to benefit from it.

Everybody wants to talk about what we're going to do in the consumer and business market, but it is worth noting that actually helping the MNOs roll out 4G is a great business opportunity in the wholesale business as well and Nigel's getting busy signing contracts in that area. And it also offers small sale opportunities for us in that wholesale market as well.

But in the consumer and business space, I think we've got a lot of the components now, indeed all of the components we need, to do some quite interesting things in mobile, if you combine wi-fi, if you combine 4G, if you combine the MVNO deal that we've done with EE.

So we're not going to tell you what we're going to do. One of the things we've benefited from I think in the last 12 months is keeping our powder dry and taking the market by surprise, and we will try to do the same on this, but you should expect some news from us in the new year. Well, let me say 2014. Let me put it that way.

John Petter

In terms of the TV adds at 70,000, they were roughly three times the size of the same quarter in the previous year so that was quite encouraging. There was this spike by including BT Sport plus also the fact of the launch of pay channels on YouView, so there was a new proposition out there that caused this spike of interest.

But it's worth qualifying the results by saying that in terms of our focus in the quarter, in speaking to Sky customers our call centre agents were actually briefed not to sell against Sky TV because crucially the way the switching processes work, Sky get a save opportunity if you switch the TV and they don't get a save opportunity if you switch the broadband. And that says therefore that there is quite a big base of customers that have switched their broadband but not switched their TV, and there's a future opportunity for us to sell into.

Having said that, we're certainly not complacent and there's clearly more to do to improve the TV proposition, and that's what you've seen today.

Robert Grindle: Espirito Santo

On the BT Global Services order book, is there any particular industry segment or product category which is leading to the up-tick in demand?

Gavin Patterson

I'll just give a little bit of commentary and then for a bit of colour I'll ask Luis to talk. But the order book is I think very strong, up 19%, and the rolling order book up to £7bn in the quarter for the first time for two years. And what I'm pleased about is the steady progress quarter on quarter. There's a real visibility and stability through our GS business now and I think you can see that.

In terms of the orders, we're seeing our investments in AsiaPac and Latin America begin or continue to grow very well so the order book's up 25% there. F&BM, so financial services, has started the year very strong in particular. Retail isn't bad as well.

But, Luis, do you want to add any more?

Luis Alvarez

Yes. I think in terms of areas of growth I would say that clearly the network part on global MPLS services and Ethernet remains the strongest part of the proposition, but now we are extending services around security. This is a major driver from our customers and we have signed very good deals on that.

On contact centres we have signed a couple of deals, one in the US and another one in Australia, that are also showing the strength of that. They're complementary to the network of additional services around and we are very pleased on the development of new opportunities and collaboration, and clearly the BT MeetMe with Dolby Voice shows the opportunity to help companies to have an integrated approach in the world. So I think that is quite a good balanced set of portfolio.

James Ratzert: New Street Research

Two questions please. You disclosed £140m of Sport cost in the quarter. I'm assuming that was influenced to an extent by launch costs, but probably not the whole quarter had Premier League accrued in it, so just trying to get some guidance on how that cost will develop in the next couple of quarters please.

And second question was just regarding Global Services EBITDA. Clearly you've had a very strong quarter. Tony, you singled out more cost initiatives in that division. What's your confidence in EBITDA in that division continuing to accelerate from here?

Tony Chanmugam

Yes, in terms of the EBITDA position in Global Services, cost transformation will drive further growth in EBITDA. Remain confident in that.

Gavin Patterson

Yes, and in the £140m on Sport.

Tony Chanmugam

Sure. Look, that's got some higher marketing costs in there, but primarily the bulk of this will be inherently in our cost base. What we'll find is though that the EBITDA impact will become much more muted as we have better churn and we get more revenues in terms of the revenue fee bearing elements of the subscription as well as from the commercial side.

Steve Malcolm: Arete

I was going to ask one, but the answer to the question before last I'm afraid's prompted another one. The first one is back to pricing, just your answer to Paul's question. I take the point on added value, but I guess when you look at line rental, it's a price that everyone seems to put up roughly these same amount every year despite the input costs going down.

And when you think about what's going on with energy companies at the moment, their rising wholesale costs and the political intervention on that that's happening at the moment, is that something that worries you at all? How much further do you think you've got to go on line rental,

which is a product that customers probably don't get that much extra value from compared to sports and the broadband?

And then secondly, just on the point John made on Sky's save opportunity, it seems like triple-play switching is quite a big issue for Ofcom at the moment, and as they sort of go into their DCMS new legislation for the whole sector, is the save opportunity in Sky something that's particularly interesting and unwinding that, and how do you think Ofcom and potentially DCMS may try and change the rules around triple-play switching to make it easier for all operators to move customers around?

Gavin Patterson

First of all on pricing and the value for money in telecoms, what I note looking at ONS data, Office of National Statistics, is that the prices in telecoms have come down by 5% since 2007, and that contrasts obviously with increases in any of the energy companies, any of the water sectors etc. So I don't think you can compare them. There's a very, very competitive market and I think the data, the independent data, would demonstrate very much that it is the case.

You'll always get the headlines when prices go up. We put our line rental up from January 2014 by 3.5%. Others have put it up a lot more, but it's also worth noting many of our prices came down in the last 12 months. So when we launched BT Sport we announced our leading fibre price coming down to £15 and our leading copper price down to £10. So there are puts and takes here and I'm confident that actually because the market is so competitive and so dynamic, and you can see independently that the prices have come down over time, I'm confident that government and others will see that.

In terms of switching, John, do you want to add some comments on the fairness of switching in this marketplace?

John Petter

Sure. Just a word on the pricing too, on the line rental price, if I may first actually, the pricing change that takes effect from 1 January that we've announced is 3.5% on line rental and that compares versus Sky's figure from the first of December of 6% and Virgin Media increased their price per line rental by about 8% at the start of the year. So in that context our price increases look quite conservative.

In terms of switching, and the outcome of the Ofcom consultation is to change the switching processes and to maybe getting provider led. The positive in that is it's going to create a better customer experience. The more traction we make in the taking back of broadband market share, that's clearly a good thing for us, qualified by the fact that cable is still outside the regime and that feels like a missed opportunity for customers actually, and for the market and for fair competition, and so is pay TV.

And the DCMS strategy paper that came out in July I think is going to be good for the market actually because it talks very heavily in terms of triple-play switching and a combined triple-play process, and that will be a good thing I think for us and for the market as a whole.

Steve Malcolm: Arete

Is that something you'd see happening in the next 12 months?

John Petter

One couldn't put a clear timescale against regulatory changes of this sort because to get this far on the switching process with the latest announcement has taken several years in fact actually. So I'm not going to put a timescale against it. I think the results show that in the context of the current

regime, we're actually doing very well, the key thing that we're trying to do, and that's take back broadband market share, going to 93% in the quarter.

Jerry Dellis: Jefferies

I have a question on cost transformation, cost reduction please. In the last three years you took about £2.2bn out of the cost base ex-transit. If I look at consensus forecasts, and consensus EBITDA is at the midpoint of your guidance range, essentially assumes £800m coming out of the next three years. Now given Tony's comments in particular about all the stuff that lies ahead, would you think that consensus' view on cost reduction is perhaps a bit conservative this point?

Gavin Patterson

Do you want to talk about it?

Tony Chanmugam

Sure. I won't comment on the consensus view. What I would say is, just to reiterate, we have plenty of opportunities to continue to reduce the cost base. How we choose to use those cost savings is another matter. I already mentioned earlier that we have to reinvest in terms of our customer service to improve the quality of what we do. We have other opportunities, other options and investments, but the key is we have plenty of oxygen that allows us to invest.

Gavin Patterson

Okay. I think we're done. Thank you very much.