



Industry Best Practice Guide Consumer Switching (Fixed Line Voice & Broadband Services)



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To assist users of the consumer switching process across all Communication Provider organisations, this guide will identify the basic features of the consumer switching process for fixed line services and where necessary will signpost links to detailed information held elsewhere. The intention is to maintain this consumer switching guide and directory of the most up to date links to useful information, to assist all users of the process in providing the best switching experience to their customers. The guide was developed by the Consumer Switching Industry Forum (CSIF) and will be maintained under the auspices of the OTA (<http://www.offta.org.uk/best-practice-guide>)

For completeness, the guide also summarises the specific Ofcom Regulations which relate to Consumer Switching & Home Moves as the principles & obligations therein have a great bearing on the way the processes have been designed & how CPs are required to enact those processes in practice.

Important Notice

This guide will be completely revised following the introduction of a new pan-infrastructure consumer switching process which is being deployed to meet new EECC requirements. It is currently envisaged that the new switching process will be launched in Dec. 2022

Coincident with the introduction of a new switching process, Ofcom will publish a significant revision to the General Conditions which deal specifically with Switching & Porting.

4 Scope

This guide seeks to explain the similarities & differences between the Consumer Switching & Home Move processes & how both are critically reliant on an effective Number Port process to deliver a seamless customer experience.

Ofcom's GC-C7 (Switching & Number Portability), defines CP obligations applicable when Consumers are either switching suppliers or moving home, although this regulation is currently limited to fixed line voice & broadband services provided via the Openreach Network only. (i.e. does not apply to consumers switching between an Openreach-based service & a Virgin Media cable-based service).

As all three processes are so closely linked from a regulatory & practical standpoint, the guide will seek to describe which processes CPs should use to deliver the best possible consumer experience whilst fulfilling their regulatory obligations.

5 Ofcom

Appendix A refers - Ofcom General conditions

5.1 General Conditions

In the interests of

- Maintaining a competitive marketplace, and
- Ensuring the best possible consumer experience
- Ensuring consumers are protected from miss-selling practices

Ofcom publish specific 'General Conditions' which are designed to help Communications Providers and Consumers understand their obligations & rights in the way services should be provided.

The relevant General Conditions are

- GC-C7 (Switching & Number Portability)
- **Appendix B Refers – Ofcom GC-C7**
- GC-B3 – Number Portability
- CPs must ensure they fully comply with all elements contained in these GCs.

6 Process Design, CP adoption & Supply chains

6.1 Equivalence Management Platform (EMP)

The core process functionality which enables CPs to deliver a seamless switch or home move for their Consumers, is developed & deployed by Openreach onto the EMP trading platform.

Once Openreach have deployed the latest process functionality onto EMP, CPs are expected to develop their resp. EMP trading interfaces (B2B/Portal) in order to consume the latest EMP functionality, and in doing so, be able to offer their End Users (or downstream supply chain partners) the best possible service delivery experience.

- Delivered on time, every time.
- Minimal service interruption
- Acceptable lead-times

6.2 Supply Chains

A growing number of new entrants to the fixed line communications market typically sit at the end of a supply chain involving other parties or, in the case 'bundled' services, at the end of several supply chains. The more established CP participants will usually have a direct trading interface with Openreach.

Where a Consumer is served by a Retailer who sits on the end of a supply chain (including intermediate Wholesalers/Resellers), with trading interfaces between each other, it is incumbent on the lead wholesaler in the chain to adapt their own trading interfaces so that their downstream trading partners can also consume the latest process functionality & be able to offer their consumers the best possible service delivery experience.

7 Consumer Switching – The Ofcom Position As-Is

The following is a list of the key items currently contained in General Condition GC-C7 which apply to Service Migrations

7.1 Miss-selling Prohibition

7.2 Information at point of sale

7.3 Customer's termination rights

7.4 Records Retention

7.5 Record of Consent

7.6 Notice of Transfer (NoT)

The GCP must place a NoT 'migration' order pursuant to a consumer request to switch their services away from their current supplier (the LCP)

7.7 Notification Letters

Both GCP & LCP must each send a notification letter to the Consumer confirming the details/impact of their intention to switch suppliers

7.8 The GCP Letter

- shall set out in clear and intelligible terms:
- the date of the letter.
- that the Customer is transferring their Communications Service.
- all Communications Services that will be transferred.
- where relevant, the Calling Line Identification of all Communications Services that will be transferred.
- a reasonable estimate of the Migration Date.
- the right of the Customer to terminate the contract, the means by which the right to terminate can be exercised and the date by which the right to terminate must be exercised; and
- relevant contact details.

7.9 The LCP Letter

Shall set out in clear and intelligible & neutral terms:

- the date of the letter.
- that the End-User is transferring their Communications Service.
- all Communications Services that will be transferred.

- where relevant, the Calling Line Identification of all Communications Services that will be transferred.
- all Communications Services or other types of services provided by the Losing Provider that the Losing Provider reasonably expects to be directly or indirectly affected by the transfer.
- all Communications Services provided by the Losing Provider that the Losing Provider reasonably expects to remain unaffected by the transfer.
- a reasonable estimate of the Migration Date.
- relevant contact details.
- Where a contract is entered into with a Customer for the provision of Communications Services within Openreach's Access Network, the letter sent by the Losing Provider shall, in addition to the information listed therein, set out in clear, intelligible and neutral terms:
 - a) an explanation that the transfer will automatically take effect on the Migration Date and that no contact is required with the Losing Provider to cancel their existing service.
 - b) an explanation that after the transfer, the Customer will receive a final bill including any Early Termination Charge that is due.
 - c) an explanation of the applicable Early Termination Charge as set out in the contract.
 - d) the means by which the Early Termination Charge must be paid.
 - e) the amount of the Early Termination Charge due at the estimated Migration Date.
 - f) where applicable, the impact of the transfer on the prices of all continuing Communications Services; and
- The letters must be sent in paper or another Durable Medium. The letter must be sent by normal post, unless the Customer has explicitly agreed to receive correspondence electronically, such as through verbal consent in a call or through electronic confirmation when ordering online.

7.10 Simultaneous Provision

Where a consumer elects to switch both Voice & Broadband Services, the GCP shall ensure that an order is submitted to Openreach for the simultaneous transfer of both Services with minimal loss of service, to seek the best possible consumer outcome.

7.11 Reactive save

Where the Losing Provider communicates with the Consumer, it must not make any marketing statements or representations in the communication which may induce the Customer to terminate their contract with the Gaining Provider and/or remain in a contract with the Losing Provider.

7.12 Cancel Other

The Losing Provider shall only be permitted to use Cancel Other in the following circumstances:

- where Slamming has occurred
- at the Customer's request, where the Gaining Provider has failed to cancel the Transfer Order after being directed by the Customer to do so ("Failure to Cancel");
- where the telephone line is or will be, ceased during the Transfer Period ("Line Cease");

- for other specified reasons not related to a Customer's request to cancel a transfer, as agreed by the relevant industry forum and approved by Ofcom; and
- in such other circumstances as defined by Ofcom.

Slamming is a form of miss-selling as opposed to Erroneous Transfers which are genuine errors in switching the wrong landline. Further background on slamming is held on the following Ofcom guidance:

Appendix C – Ofcom Guidance on Slamming

Before using Cancel Other in cases of Slamming and/or Failure to Cancel, the Losing Provider shall take reasonable steps to establish that Slamming and/or Failure to Cancel has actually taken place.

After using Cancel Other, the Losing Provider shall confirm the cancellation of the order by Durable Medium to the Customer, unless this is not possible or appropriate, including where the Customer is deceased.

The Losing Provider shall record its reasons for using Cancel Other in each case, selecting the appropriate reason code from a list corresponding to permitted use of Cancel Other and consistent with GC-C7-Annex 1, as agreed by the industry and approved by Ofcom.

Appendix D refers – Industry Guide to Cancel Other

8 Consumer Switching – The Process

Consumer Switching is the term used to describe the scenario where an End User decides to switch part or all of their existing fixed line services to a new CP Retailer whilst remaining at the same premises. The terms 'transfer' & 'migration' are also occasionally used to describe the same 'switching' scenario.

It is crucially important for the Gaining CP to establish at point of sale if it is a migration the customer wants and if so, to submit the appropriate migration order type to Openreach.

With any fixed line service migration, the guiding principle is that the existing copper line should be re-used as opposed to unnecessary (and expensive) provision of a 2nd or new line to serve the same premises. By submitting the appropriate Migration order type, the Gaining CP will ensure that the same line is re-used & that the appropriate consumer protection mechanisms will be applied in line with Ofcom GC-C7



8.1 Notice of Transfer (NoT) Migration Process

8.1.1 *Gaining Provider-Led (GPL)*

The NoT process is a Gaining Provider-Led ('GPL') process where the consumer need only contact their Gaining Provider ('GP') to initiate their request to switch providers. The Gaining Provider-led process is the de-facto process which consumers use when switching other essential household services, (e.g. gas, electricity and banking) and in most cases the customer expects to only deal with their chosen provider when entering into new arrangements.

The Consumer has no need to approach their current Provider at all.

If a Consumer intending to switch suppliers, initially approaches their current Service Provider to cease their service, the current Provider should explain to the Consumer that they do not need to cancel their service if they intend to switch to another CP as their current service/contract will be automatically cancelled when their service migrates to their new provider (GP-led process).

8.1.2 NoT Process Description

Appendix G refers – NoT Process Description (swim lanes)

Appendix G provides a detailed description of the GPL- NoT Process and how the GP's NoT order is carefully orchestrated by Openreach's EMP system to co-ordinate the Gaining & Losing Parties to deliver a seamless migration for the consumer.

There are specific components incorporated into the NoT process which provide a level of in-built protection for the consumer: -

8.1.3 10-day consumer protection window

A key 'safety-net' mechanism is built into the process whereby a 10-day 'cooling-off' period is allowed to elapse before the transfer is actually executed.

This window is the standard minimum lead-time for any NoT order placed by the GP. The 10 day period is considered to be an adequate period of time for Notification letters to be sent (by post) to the Consumer, confirming the switch request details before it happens, whilst also allowing sufficient time for the Consumer to notify either party (i.e. GP or LP) that they wish to 'cancel' their order.

8.1.4 Cancel Other

Appendix D – Industry Guide to Cancel Other

8.1.4.1 Cancel Other/Own

In the event that the Consumer decides to cancel their order, and the 'point of no return' has not been reached (CDD-1), they can register their decision to 'cancel' with either the Gaining CP (i.e. Cancel Own) or, if the GCP refuses to do so, the Consumer can alternatively notify their current CP (i.e. the LCP) who can cancel the transfer order, on behalf of the consumer, from their end (i.e. Cancel Other). The expectation is that in these circumstances, the End User would normally approach the new service provider (i.e. the GP) to cancel their order in the first instance. (i.e. Cancel Own)

8.1.4.2 Cancel Other – The Process

The Cancel Other BPG provides detailed guidance to CPs and retailers on the appropriate use of the 'Cancel Other' facility in order to help minimise the risk of erroneous cancellation of valid customer switching orders.

The 'Cancel Other' facility enables incumbent providers to cancel orders placed by other CPs and/or retailers but must only be used in limited circumstances and must not be used to frustrate the customer switching process.

General Condition C7 (Switching & Number Portability) clearly defines these circumstances.

8.1.4.3 Cancel Other Reason Codes

The definitive list of 'valid' Cancel Other Reason Codes to be used by Losing CPs is included in the Cancel Other process description. Losing CPs must choose the most appropriate reason code to use before submitting a Cancel Other order, as this information will feature in any subsequent Ofcom investigation arising as a result of a complaint.

Appendix D refers – Industry Guide to Cancel Other

8.1.4.4 Cancel Other Expedite

Appendix E – Cancel Other Expedite Process Steps

If the LP repeatedly cancels a customer's order to transfer to another provider, against the customer wishes, the GP should follow the process detailed in the Cancel Other Expedite Process to enable the customer to transfer to the provider of their choice.

The expedite process for Openreach managed migrations can be found, together with this document at <http://www.offta.org.uk/best.htm>. This expedites process only supports those parties supplied by Openreach and all retailers should engage via their wholesale provider when seeking to utilise the process.



8.1.5 Retailer IDs (RIDs)

Appendix F – RID Best Practice Guide

Any Retailer who has a direct billing relationship with a consumer, will require a Retailer ID (RID) in order to: -

- i. submit a valid NoT-based switching order to their immediate upstream supply chain *partner*. (i.e. as a Gaining CP)
- ii. submit a valid cancel other order (i.e. as a Losing CP)

A RID will be considered valid if it matches any one of the RIDs included in the latest Ofcom-published RID list.

If the GP submits a NoT order with an invalid RID, it will be rejected by their Wholesaler.

CPs should always ensure they use their own RID, as allocated to them by Ofcom.

RIDs are an integral part of the NoT process as both parties (GP & LP) can readily identify each other from the RID detail which accompanies each order (i.e. Transfer, Cancel Other, Cancel Own) enabling bilateral dialogue to resolve issues when necessary.

RID data is also collected by Ofcom from the major Wholesalers on a regular basis so they can track the level of migration activity across the industry & investigate occasional complaints of non-compliance on an ad-hoc basis.

Where a Retailer has multiple brands, Ofcom requires each brand to have its own RID

8.1.6 Retailers & their Supply chain partners

Both CP Retailers (Gaining & Losing) & their resp. supply chain partners are wholly accountable for ensuring the Consumer Protection elements of the 'service migration' process are fully enacted throughout the supply chain

By way of illustration, on receipt of a migration order from the Gaining CP, EMP will generate an electronic 'Advice of Transfer' notification which is immediately sent to the CP within the supply chain who is directly facing the Losing Retailer.

On receipt of this notification the Losing Retailer must immediately send a Sorry to See You Go (STSYG) letter, in accordance with the LCP letter obligations under GC-C7, to the Consumer.

Clearly, the Losing Retailer is wholly dependent on their supply chain to ensure such 'losing' notifications are passed through to them in a timely manner.

CP Retailers need to ensure their chosen supply chain partners can deliver the full seamless experience & consumer protection measures provided by the Industry EMP trading platform.

8.1.7 Wholesaler Responsibilities

CP Wholesalers (and any intermediate aggregators/resellers involved in a given Retailer's supply chain) have an obligation to ensure the following: -

The RID supplied by the Retailer CP with either the initial NoT order (i.e. GCP) or a subsequent Cancel Other order (i.e. LCP), is a valid RID

The RID supplied by the Retailing CP with either the initial NoT order (i.e. GCP) or a subsequent Cancel Other order (i.e. LCP), is faithfully conveyed along the supply chain so that it reaches the opposite retailer involved in the transaction.

Where both the Gaining & Losing Retailers reside entirely within a wholesaler's footprint (sometimes referred to as intra-wholesaler), the wholesaler must ensure that they are processing such migrations, in strict accordance with the GP-Led NoT process (e.g. insert 10WD consumer protection window, initiate LCP notification, etc)

Wholesalers must have the ability to provide retrospective transaction details to Ofcom in support of any investigations which may arise.

8.1.8 Service disruption during Switching process

As a rule, the switching process is designed such that service disruption for End Users is kept to an absolute minimum. This principle applies to both elements of the service (i.e. Voice & Broadband).

The switching process usually requires a number of 'soft' and 'hard' provisioning activities (e.g. server activation vs frames jumpering resp.) to be orchestrated by EMP software which has been specifically designed to ensure the tasks are carefully orchestrated to complete the switch on the 'customer required date' with minimal downtime.

The same EMP 'switching' software also provides comprehensive messaging to the Gaining CP throughout the Openreach provisioning process so the GCP can keep their End User informed on progress whilst making sure they complete any final tasks needed to 'turn-on' the End User's new service(s).

To that extent, the amount of downtime experienced by the End User can be influenced by a number of factors.



Whether the switch involves physical engineering activity or not, the aim is that service downtime (for both services) would be limited to a matter of minutes whilst more complex service migrations would be no more than 2-3 hours.

For End Users switching both their voice & broadband services, the Simultaneous Provide process is designed to facilitate coincident delivery of both services with minimal downtime.

Where the switch (from 1 CP to another) involves a number port, the port activation trigger is only applied once all other installation activities have been successfully completed. This ensures the End User's telephone service incurs the minimum of downtime.

8.1.9 Bundled vs Split Service delivery

If an End User (who has a bundled Voice & Broadband service with 1 CP) chooses to migrate their Broadband service (but not the voice) to another CP, the pre-existing WLR service should remain intact with the pre-existing CP.....so the EU ends up with a 'split' service delivery.....i.e. 2 separate CPs.

9 Home Moves – The Ofcom Position

Appendix B Refers – Ofcom GC-C7 (Switching & Number Portability)

The following is a list of the key items currently contained in GC-C7 which apply to Home Moves: -

9.1 Miss-selling Prohibition

9.2 Information at point of sale

9.3 Customer's termination rights

9.4 Records Retention

9.5 Record of Consent

9.6 Working Line Takeover

The GCP must place a 'Working Line Takeover' order pursuant to a Home Move Request from a Consumer

9.7 Incumbent CP - Notification Letter

After being notified of the Working Line Takeover Order, the Incumbent CP shall send the Incumbent End-User a letter, in accordance with the industry agreed process, in paper or another Durable Medium, which clearly sets out:



- the date of the letter.
- a notification that an Inbound Customer or End-User wants to take over the Target Line.
- all Communications Services directly affected by the Working Line Takeover.
- where relevant, the Calling Line Identification of all Communications Services that are directly affected.
- the expected 'Takeover' date.
- that the Incumbent End-User should notify the Incumbent Communications Provider if that Incumbent End-User is not moving out of the Target Address or expects to move at a later date than the expected Takeover Date.
- the relevant contact details.

The letter must be sent by post, unless the Customer has explicitly agreed to receive correspondence electronically, such as through verbal consent in a call or through electronic confirmation when ordering online.

9.8 Asset identification

Before a Working Line Takeover Order is placed, a Gaining Provider shall take reasonable steps, having regard to industry best practice, to identify the Target Line.

A Gaining Provider may only place a Working Line Takeover Order if it has identified an exact match for the Target Line.

10 Home Moves – The Process

10.1 Working Line Takeover

As specified in GC-C7 Gaining CPs are required to place a 'Working Line Takeover Order' pursuant to a Home Move Request from a Consumer

The Home Move Process is described in detail in a separate Best Practice Guide

Appendix H Refers – Best Practice Guide – WLTs & Migrations - ELT Avoidance

10.2 Erroneous Landline Transfers (ELTs) Avoidance

This guide also explains the practices to be followed by CPs in order to minimise the risk of an ELT (Erroneous Landline Transfer) occurring.

An ELT arises when the wrong working line is accidentally targeted for 'takeover', causing major disruption to somebody else's service (usually a neighbour), necessitating significant re-work to restore service.

The wrong line can be chosen if the wrong target address has been recorded at point of sale or where there are multiple working lines at the correct target address, and the wrong line has been selected.

The Ofcom position (stated above) is that Gaining CPs must do all in their power to ensure the correct line is targeted for takeover.

The following 2 Guides have been produced to help CPs in this respect.

- **Appendix J - MPF Access Line ID – Help Line Process**
- **Appendix K - Address Management**

11 Number Porting & Service Migrations

When Consumers decide to switch suppliers, they will invariably insist that they retain their Tel, No., which they are legally entitled to do so.

Ofcom GC-B3 (Number Portability) places a regulatory obligation on all CP Retailers to fulfil such requests by enabling the number to be ‘exported’ to the consumer’s new supplier.

Generally speaking, the larger ‘mass’ volume CPs have pre-established ‘porting arrangements’ in place (e.g. Interconnect agreements) with other mainstream CPs & such requests can be readily fulfilled.

Smaller CPs (e.g. Resellers) who have limited (or no) capability of their own, would be expected (under GC-B3) to either ‘establish’ their own porting arrangements or, as would happen normally, to use an established N/W partner to fulfil such porting requests on their behalf.

Either way, it is not an option..... any Losing CP must be able to facilitate the export of a number on receipt of a port request to do so from a Gaining CP (acting on behalf of the consumer)

11.1 *Service Migrations inc. Number Port*

Where a Consumer asks to switch their services, the consumer’s expectation is that the experience will be seamless with minimal downtime involved. It is therefore paramount that once the existing services have been disconnected, their new services are activated as soon as possible thereafter.

Whilst the consumer may have dial-tone & be able to make outbound voice calls, they will have no inbound service until the number port activation process has been successfully completed.

11.1.1 *Integrated Number Port Transactions*

For consumers switching between Retailers who are both using the Openreach Copper/Fibre network, the number port activity is normally managed as an integral part of the overall ‘service migration’ transaction & the execution of these 2 activities is automatically orchestrated by the EMP trading platform, to deliver a seamless experience.



11.1.2 Standalone Number Port Transactions

The Gaining CP also has the option to manage the number port transaction as a separate (but parallel) 'standalone' activity.

This scenario arises where consumers are switching between Retailers who are using different access platforms (e.g. Virgin Media Cable vs Openreach Copper/Fibre),

Although this 'cross-platform' scenario is not currently in scope of GC-C7, the number port element is still subject to GC-B3.

In these circumstances, the Gaining CP needs to orchestrate the 'service migration' to happen in 2 stages: -

- Stage 1 – Firstly, to deliver the new access facility & associated bearer services (e.g. Voice &/or Broadband)

And then.....

- Stage 2 – Manually trigger the number port activation needed to enable inbound telephony service.

In this scenario, it is incumbent on the Gaining CP to 'orchestrate' the 2-stages to deliver an overall seamless experience. Clearly, the number port activation must take place as soon as the new access service is in place

12 Number Porting – The Ofcom Position

The following is a list of the key items currently contained in GC-B3 which apply to Fixed Line Number Porting in the UK.

Appendix A refers - Ofcom General conditions

12.1 Lead times

The LCP shall provide Number Portability within the shortest possible time, including subsequent activation, on reasonable terms and conditions, including charges, to any of its Subscribers who so request.

The CP shall ensure:

- porting of these numbers and their subsequent activation shall be completed within one business day once
 - all necessary validation processes have been completed,
 - the network connection is ready for use by the Subscriber,
 - the Donor Provider has received a request to activate the porting of these numbers from the Recipient Provider.



12.2 CP record of Ported Numbers

The CP shall, on the written request from Ofcom, provide a record of each Tel. No. in relation to which it is providing Portability, specifying the relevant Recipient Provider in each case.

12.3 Compensation for delayed ports

- Where Communications Providers delay the porting of a Telephone Number for more than one business day or where there is an abuse of porting by them or on their behalf, they shall provide reasonable compensation as soon as is reasonably practicable to the Subscriber for such delay and/or abuse.
- The Communications Provider shall set out in a clear, comprehensive and easily accessible form for each Subscriber how Subscribers can access any compensation due, and how any compensation will be paid to the Subscriber.

13 Number Port Process

13.1 The Fundamentals

CPs obtain their number range allocations, on direct request, from Ofcom. Once allocated, the CP, thereafter, becomes the designated Range Holder of that number range.

CPs (e.g. Switch-less Resellers) who have been allocated a number range (by Ofcom), & are thereafter the designated Range Holder, may choose to 'Host' their number range with another CP (who has a Switch Network including established interconnect routes). Such CPs are referred to as the 'Host' CP.

Additionally, CPs (e.g. Switch-less Resellers) may be sub-allocated numbers, on request, from Range Holders, who remain responsible (to Ofcom) thereafter, for any numbers/ranges they choose to re-allocate.

Ofcom's GC-B3 places obligations on all CP Retailers to facilitate the 'export' of a number from them (as the Losing CP) to another CP (i.e. the Gaining CP) so the consumer may retain their existing Tel No.

Number porting is concerned with the "porting" of a telephone number from one telephone network to an alternative telephone network to allow the consumer to 'retain' their Tel No. as part of a 'service migration' or 'home move' scenario, involving 2 CP Retailers (Gaining & Losing) and their resp. wholesale supply chain partners.

The standalone number port process is also set-up as a 'Gaining Provider-Led' process & incorporates a similar (but not identical) Cancel Own/Other mechanism to the one used in the broader GC-C7-mandated 'service migration' process.



13.2 Industry Governance & Process documentation

CP compliance with the industry-agreed number porting processes is overseen by the Industry Number Port Executive Steering Group (NPESG) & its subordinate Forum - the Number Port Process & Commercial Group (NPP&CG).

Both of these Industry Fora are chaired by the OTA.

The NPP&CG is directly responsible for the on-going development & improvement of the Number porting processes.

The process documentation is being continuously updated to reflect these changes & the latest versions are published on the following 2 web-sites: -

http://www2.magrathea-telecom.co.uk/industry_porting/.

<http://www.offta.org.uk/best-practice-guide>

Ofcom Porting information can be accessed via the following link:

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/telecoms/numbering/guidance-tele-no/number-portability-info/>

13.3 Number Transfers (No change of Retailer)

With the widespread deployment of IP technology, there is a growing demand from CPs to 'upgrade' their existing consumers from Traditional to IP-based voice services. This invariably requires the CP to 'transfer' the consumer's Tel No. onto their IP platform. This number 'transfer' process is not subject to any Ofcom regulation as there is no change of Retailer, but still requires careful management to ensure a seamless consumer experience.

14 Consumer Switching – Next Generation Products

14.1 Consumer Switching Principles

The introduction of 'Next Generation Services' has served to further stimulate competition in the market which, in turn, is driving Consumers to look for the best deals prompting an increased demand from consumers to switch suppliers.

Whilst the technology which enables these 'Next Gen' services may be very different to what went before, the fundamental principles which underpin the consumer switching process remain exactly the same & these principles have been factored into the EMP switching functionality which orchestrates the provisioning activities involved: -

- Gaining Provider-led NoT process
- Notification letters from GP & LP to End User



- 10-day Consumer Protection Window
- Cancel Own/Other mechanism
- Retailer IDs (i.e. RIDs)

As End Users move from 'old-world' services to 'next gen' services, the need to execute the move in the most seamless fashion is of increasing importance to End Users.

Increasingly, End Users' Telephone services will be delivered as a VOIP-based service via their new Broadband service when switching between providers & highlights the critical importance of ensuring minimum downtime.

Regardless of which product (of bundle of products) the End User is moving from & to, the switching process is designed to minimise any 'loss of service', as End Users are critically reliant on both their Telephone and Broadband services.

14.2 Next Gen Products – what are they?

14.2.1 FTTC

(extract from Openreach Product spec.)

GEA-FTTC is delivered on a single Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN), via a 1Gbit/s connection from a Layer 2 Ethernet switch at the Point of Handover (PoH), through a DSLAM located near the local cabinet, to your end customer's premises. Within their premises, you can take advantage of an Ethernet interface to deliver services to the end customer.

The product's fibre infrastructure is an overlay to the existing copper network between the exchange and the Primary Cross-connection Point (PCP) at which Very high bit Digital Subscriber Line (VDSL2) protocol is used to provide data services over the copper network to end customers' premises.

As an overlay product, end customers must have an existing copper Wholesale Line Rental (WLR) or Metallic Path Facility (MPF) access product on which the GEA-FTTC service may be provisioned. Simultaneous provision or migration of a base WLR or MPF service at the same time as a GEA-FTTC provision or migration is fully supported. In the event that WLR is the underlying copper access product, GEA-FTTC may be provided by a second CP, different from the CP who provides the WLR product.

If MPF is the underlying copper access product, the provider of the MPF and GEA-FTTC products must be the same and must submit orders on the copper bearer using the Dunn & Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) under the same Customer User Group (CUG).



14.2.2 FTTC PCP-Only (i.e. Self-Instal)

(extract from Openreach Product spec.)

When PCP-Only is selected, our engineer will only be tasked to perform the jumpering work at the local street cabinet, and then to close the GEA-FTTC job as complete, leaving your engineer, or the end customer themselves to complete the device installation and service set-up at the premises.

Our engineer will not undertake any work beyond the PCP cabinet and nor will they have any interaction with the end customer. The end customer will be aware that the work is underway as they will lose ADSL broadband connection (typically for 30 minutes) and their ADSL modem (if it is not compatible with VDSL) will lose connection.

For Self-Install upgrade orders, it is recommended that you advise your end customer to fit their new integrated device as soon as they receive it. The device needs to be ADSL/VDSL compatible so that it will operate on ADSL prior to the switch to VDSL. Having the integrated device fitted early enables the Openreach engineer to provide the PCP only jumper to a working device.

14.2.3 SOGEA & SOGFast

(extract from Openreach Product spec.)

Single Order Generic Ethernet Access (SOGEA) will ultimately provide superfast data connectivity nationally & forms part of Openreach's developing Future Voice product portfolio. SOGEA offers similar connectivity to Fibre to the Cabinet (GEA-FTTC), but without the need for an underlying Copper Voice Access product to initiate the GEA circuit provision. The underlying Copper Bearer Service will be handled internally by Openreach and will be used for remote test& diagnostics.

Single Order GFast (SOGFast) employs a new technology that can deliver Ultra-fast rates by using higher frequencies over the access infrastructure than previously available.

14.2.4 FTTP

Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) forms part of the Openreach Ultrafast product portfolio and is aligned to the GFast product in terms of delivery speeds & service wrap.

14.3 Migrations to next Gen products

14.3.1 Migrations from SMPF to FTTC

For End Users migrating to GEA-FTTC, the pre-existing ADSL service will stop working on the installation day (CRD) the moment the engineer performs the jumpering task at the PCP cabinet to connect the D-side copper cable to the new VDSL service located on the local DSLAM.

A migration of the Fibre service should be undertaken simultaneously with the migration of the underlying copper service using the SIM2 order journey method.

14.3.2 Migrations from FTTC to FTTC

FTTC transfers between CPs do not require any physical jumpering activity at the local street cabinet. A migration of the Fibre service should be undertaken simultaneously with the migration of the underlying copper service using the SIM2 order journey method.

14.3.3 Migrations from WLR/MPF+FTTC to SOGEA

The Gaining CP will be required to tick the 'Change of Retailer' box on the SOGEA order as this will ensure the SOGEA provide journey (and any associated Number Port) will follow the normal consumer switching process (i.e. 10-day consumer protection window, cancel other, etc)

Where End Users choose to upgrade to a VOIP-based telephone service but remain with their current provider, the incumbent CP will be able to do the following: -

- Place a 'Same Retailer Marker' on the existing line using dialogue services.
- Submit a SOGEA order ensuring the 'Change of Retailer' box is set as 'No'

By doing this, the SOGEA order (and any associated Number Transfer) will not be subject to the normal 10-day consumer protection window & a much shorter lead-time can be applied.

14.3.4 FTTC - Working Line Take Overs

(extract from Openreach Product spec.)

When an end customer is moving home and taking over a working GEA-FTTC service, it is completed as a cease and re-provide of the GEA-FTTC asset within Openreach's systems. This will normally be done as a simultaneous transfer with the underlying copper order which manages the managed cease and re-provide activity.

We suppress the engineering activity associated with such orders and do not visit either the local street cabinet or the end customer's premises.



When this happens, you should provide your own integrated modem/router device by post.

15 Glossary

(extract from Openreach Product specs.)

Term	Definition
ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line – the broadband technology used to deliver standard copper broadband products. It is designed to be able to run over long copper cable lengths, sacrificing speed for distance, allowing wider data coverage with fewer DSLAMs across the network.
CP	Communications Provider – the name for service providers who purchase Openreach products for resale to other service providers or directly to end customers.
CRD	Customer Required by Date – the date you specify as your preferred installation date for an order; this date must be at least the minimum lead time for the type of order you are placing. We do our level best to meet this date, but we only commit to do so after we've validated the order and sent back the KCI2.
CCD / CDD	Customer Committed Date / Contractual Delivery Date – the date we commit to delivering your order, we do our best to align the CCD with your CRD, but this is not always possible.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management – the common name for the set of systems a company uses to manage the lines/products/services purchased by their customers. In Openreach, we call our CRM system the Equivalence Management Platform (EMP).
CSC	Customer Service Centre – another name for Openreach's service management centre, the phone-based support teams who help to manage orders, exceptions and faults.
DP	Distribution Point – this is point where the copper cables from the PCP separate out to individual premises. This is sometimes called the final

Term	Definition
	drop. There are usually between 10 and 30 lines that connect to one DP.
DS	Dialogue Service – the applications, such as the appointment reservation tool and enhanced line characteristics tool and order and fault trackers which are available via XML or through the Openreach portal to provide information for ordering and supporting Openreach products.
DSLAM	Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer, a mechanism positioned in a central location that links many end customers' lines to a single high-speed line.
eMLC	Enhanced Managed Line Checker – sometimes called the Line Checker, or the Availability Checker, eMLC is a dialogue service which allows you to input a search parameter, like an end customer's directory (phone) number to obtain relevant details about the services available on that line/bearer. eMLC can be accessed through the Openreach portal, or via a raw XML data feed which can be integrated into a CP's own management platforms.
EMP	Equivalence Management Platform – the systems, servers and software applications that Openreach use to manage most aspects of its business with CPs.
FVA	Fibre Voice Access – the next generation voice service, enabling telephone calls to be run over fibre optic cable, rather than copper wires, between the end customer's premises and the local exchange. This product is available over GEA-FTTP lines only.
GEA	Generic Ethernet Access – the term given for physical, base connectivity through the Openreach network over which a Communications Provider can deliver IP layer services, such as access to the Internet.
GEA-FTTC	Fibre to the Cabinet – the term for the supply of data services over a fibre optic cable running between the local exchange and the local street cabinet, then using existing copper cable to deliver the data to the end customer's premises. In GEA-FTTC, the device which translates the data into a signal that can be carried over copper wire, the DSLAM, sits in a

Term	Definition
	local street cabinet, rather than in the local exchange.
GEA-FTTP	Fibre to the Premises – the term for the supply of data services over a fibre optic cable running between the local exchange and the end customer’s premises. This technology completely replaces the need for copper cabling within the Openreach network.
KCI	Keeping Customer Informed – Messages sent to CPs during the order and fault processes to update on the progress of the transaction.
LLU	Local Loop Unbundling – providing control of the characteristics of the copper to a Communications Provider. MPF is the product that is purchased from Openreach to identify an unbundled line.
LoRN	Linked Order Reference Number – a text string which you input into all orders that you wish to have delivered on the same day. When we receive an order with a LoRN, we perform a lookup of all other orders on our system to determine if we can find a matching order and, if we can, we notify you that your orders have been matched within our systems and we’ll do our best to deliver them on the same day.
MPF	Metallic Path Facility – the name for Openreach’s unbundled copper access product, purchased by Communication Providers who wish to have more control over the copper bearer over which services are provided to an end customer.
NoT	Notification of Transfer Replaces AoT as the harmonised migration process for WLR, MPF, SMPF and FTTC – a letter generated by the gaining and losing CPs to notify the end customer that a change is happening to the service. This is a consumer protection mechanism so that Communication Providers do not place migration orders without the end customer’s consent.
NGA	Next Generation Access – the term used to describe the portfolio of products and services sold by Openreach to exploit its investment in fibre optic technology including but not limited to, GEA-FTTC, GEA-FTTP, FVA, Multicast for GEA and GEA Cablelink

Term	Definition
NTE5	Network Termination Equipment version 5 – also commonly known as the master socket, this is the copper termination point within the end customer’s premises and the place where the GEA-FTTC SSFP is installed. The master socket marks the demarcation point between the Openreach network and the end customer’s home network with respect to voice wiring.
PCP	Primary Cross-connection Point – this is the local street cabinet in which cables extending out to local distribution points are aggregated and connected to larger copper and fibre optic cables to move the voice and data signals to and from the local exchange. The number of connections managed in a PCP depends on the number of end customer premises in an area, but is usually several hundred (200-400) lines.
PoH	Point of Handover – this is the place in the local exchange where responsibility for the end customer’s data is transferred between Openreach and the Communication Provider’s network.
PoNR	Point of No Return – This is the point within an order or fault where the work has been assigned and amendments or cancellations will not be able to be progressed to affect the transaction. The timing of the PoNR can be different for different transaction; for most orders, it is 18:00 on the day before the order is due to complete (CCD-1).
QoS	Quality of Service – a term used in reference to upstream and downstream traffic marking to make sure that certain network applications like voice, video or live streaming take priority over less important traffic like general web browsing or peer to peer downloads. Since discarded packets can disrupt voice, video or streamed content and are more noticeable, using QoS traffic marking helps to avoid this situation when there is congestion in the network.
SFFA	Superfast Fibre Access – the marketing term used to describe Openreach’s fibre optic access products
SIM	Simultaneous (as in Simultaneous Provision) – we do our best to link orders at the same address so that they are delivered together to

Term	Definition
	minimise disruption to your end customer.
SMC	Service Management Centre – this is the name of our Openreach CP technical helpdesk.
SMPF	Shared Metallic Path Facility – the name for Openreach’s standard ADSL copper broadband service, enabling an Openreach data service to be provided over a copper bearer which has been provided on WLR product terms. The Communications Provider (CP) responsible for the WLR service may or may not be the same CP responsible for the SMPF service on the copper bearer.
SSFP	Service Specific Front Plate – a component connected to an end customer’s master socket to filter the data and voice traffic so that the noise they generate on the line does not impact the other services on the line.
VDSL	Very high bit rate Digital Subscriber Line – the broadband technology used to deliver the higher speeds associated with GEA-FTTC compared to standard copper broadband products which are delivered over ADSL. VDSL is designed to work on shorter lengths of copper cable.
VLAN	Virtual Local Area Network – a subdivision of the capacity within the network representing the “pipe” provided for a single end customer’s data traffic through the Openreach network.
WLR	Wholesale Line Rental – the name for Openreach’s copper access product, predominantly used for delivering voice services.
XML	Extensible Mark-up Language – the software coding language used to electronically communicate between Openreach’s EMP and CP’s management platforms.



16 Appendices

16.1 Appendix A – Ofcom General Conditions

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/information-for-industry/telecoms-competition-regulation/general-conditions-of-entitlement>

16.2 Appendix B – Ofcom GC-C7

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/129197/General-Condition-C7-Switching.pdf

16.3 Appendix C – Ofcom Guidance on Slamming

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/problems/how-to-avoid-being-slammed>

16.4 Appendix D – Industry Guide to Cancel Other

http://www.offta.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/145689/Industry-Guide-to-Cancel-Other.pdf

16.5 Appendix E – Cancel Other Expedite Process Steps

http://www.offta.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/145692/openreach-cancel-other-expedite-process-steps.pdf

16.6 Appendix F – RID Best Practice Guide

http://www.offta.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/145686/RID-Industry-Best-Practice-Guide.pdf

16.7 Appendix G – NoT Process Description (swim lanes)

Under development

16.8 Appendix H – BPG-Working Line Takeovers - Migrations ELT Avoidance

http://www.offta.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/145677/BPG-WLTs-Mgtns-ELT-Avoidance.pdf

16.9 Appendix J - MPF Access Line ID – Help Line Process

http://www.offta.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/145695/MPFALIDHelpLineTactical-Process.pdf



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16.10 Appendix K - Address Management

Openreach Portal - Help & Support / How-to guides