

Reseller Obligations With Ofcom

Unfortunately there isn't a straight forward definitive rule book from Ofcom. Their guidance can be located on their site [here](#). As a supplier of telecom and connectivity services there are a multitude of areas of compliance, and the aim of this help file is to bring to your attention a few you may or may not be aware of. Please note that ICUK's advice is just guidance, it is provided as a 'heads up' and is not to be considered as complete or definitive.

RID Code

A RID (Reseller Identification) code is supplied by Ofcom without charge. It is a 3 letter code supplied alongside broadband and telecom orders to highlight to Ofcom that your company is the source of the order, not ICUK.

Guidance on how to apply for a RID code can be found on the [Ofcom website](#).

Ombudsman Dispute Resolution Scheme Membership

"The condition also requires providers to appoint an alternate dispute resolution scheme (ADR) for dealing with unresolved disputes with domestic and small business customers. The ADR scheme must be approved by Ofcom and must form part of the provider's code of practice. Ofcom has so far recognised two such schemes; Ombudsman Services: Communications and CISAS. One of the first things which Ofcom does when approached by a dissatisfied customer is to check whether the provider has an approved code of practice and has nominated an approved ADR scheme."

Ofcom expect all communication providers to be a member of an Ombudsman service to provide independent handling of customer complaints. There are various options, but the most popular being <https://partners.ombudsman-services.org/join>. We do feel that the role of the Ombudsman is important, but mainly with larger organisations where you may feel that your complaint is not being heard. However, regardless of what we think, Ofcom consider it mandatory regardless of your company legal status or size. Like ICUK, you may never need to make use of their services, but at least you will be compliant.

03 Numbers

03 numbers were introduced as an alternative to confusion caused via a multitude of 08 variations and charges (eg 0845 / 0844 / 0870). The key to reducing confusion was in this ruling:

"Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone."

From a wholesale perspective, the charges associated to 03 numbers differs from 01 and 02 calls. We reflect this in our charges to you and are not required to present a flat price. To an end consumer, you must reflect a consistent price across 01, 02 and 03 numbers **even if this makes a loss**. To allow you to set your prices as you would like, we do have an exception in place allowing you to set 03 retail prices below cost if you need to in your tariff design.

Text Relay

Text Relay is a solution for people with hearing or speech impairments. Additional information about the service can be seen [here](#).

The key ruling with this service is:

"Relay calls are charged at the same rate as a standard telephone call. If you have a package with inclusive calls or a call allowance, relay calls should fall within this."

Much like 03 calls, the ruling means that you may need to charge your customers at a loss. To highlight how important this is, and why this ruling needs to be taken seriously, [here is an article](#) explaining what happened to the Post Office who failed to comply. As a wholesale provider, we are passing across the charges we receive at cost, however, to an end consumer you are simply not permitted to, it has to match what you would charge a customer without hearing difficulties.

It is a ruling which doesn't necessarily fit comfortably with us, as the losses to yourselves can be substantial, however, the prospect of large fines shouldn't be ignored.

Caller Display

Another Ofcom ruling from 2018 requires communication providers to supply caller display at no additional charge. Again, it's another contentious decision because there are costs applied to this service from Openreach which we pass on as a wholesale cost. In summary the ruling states:

"This condition requires communications providers to provide calling line identification facilities by default wherever technically feasible and economically viable, so that call recipients can identify the person calling them and choose whether or not to accept the call."

To assist with the identification of callers and reduce the incidence of nuisance calls, all communications providers should ensure that any telephone number associated with a call at the network level and/or presented to a call recipient is a valid, diallable number which enables the calling party to be identified, so that the call recipient can make a return call to that person."

Our interpretation of the rules is that this rule applies to Residential lines, and is not applicable to Businesses.

Itemised Call Charge Presentation

It is necessary to be able to show how call charges are made up. Just showing a price of x pence is no longer acceptable in Ofcom's eyes. For resellers who use our tariff management to share visibility of itemised calls to their customers, they are already fully compliant. This is because we show each leg including the access leg, service charge, connection cost and total amount for each call. If you are providing your own billing, you may like to ensure that this level of detail is shared and not solely summarised.

Code of Practice

A Code of Practice is something that Ofcom place considerable importance on.

"Condition 14 requires all providers of Public Electronic Communications Services to produce a basic code of practice for their domestic and small business customers which sets out where those customers can access certain specific information about the provider and his services. The information to which this condition refers is that which providers of Publicly Available Telephone Services must publish under condition 10. However, this condition 14 applies more widely to all providers of Public Electronic Communications Services and only requires that providers explain clearly how this information may be obtained."

It is a document that should be easily accessible from your website detailing:

- How to contact your company
- Detail what the customer can expect from you once signed up
- Details of your alternative dispute resolution (see step 3)

There isn't a set formula to how the code of practice should be laid out. Some telecom providers keep it very basic; others go into more detail. Essentially, we recommend that you keep this detailed and factual to cover all bases. To help you, we have supplied a Sample Code of Practice. Feel free to use this as a basis and guideline for your own documents and guides. Ensure that you read and accept what you are about to promote to your customers.

Further reading can be found on Ofcom's website:

- <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/telecoms/ga-scheme/general-conditions/customer-code-practice/>
- <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/telecoms/ga/complaints-handling-code.pdf>
- <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/telecoms/ga/complaints-handling-guidance.pdf>

Sample Code of Practice



[Sample Code of Practice](#)

[An example Code of Practice you can adapt](#)