

Steps in the Option Y GPL Switching Process

Customer journey

Step	Description
Customer order with Gaining Provider (Retailer)	
1.	<p>Consumer contacts the gaining provider (GP) to switch their current services and discuss available offers from the GP. Note that the GP will be a Retailer who sells services to consumer customers.</p> <p>The consumer can use online, telesales and retail channels. In the retail channel it is assumed that communications providers would re-use either the telesales or online systems.</p>
2.	<p>The GP confirms with the customer that they want to switch their services from another provider.</p>
3.	<p>GP validates customer details. The GP ensures that they have all necessary details to set up a new contract (e.g. credit check) and completes the internal checks (including with their upstream infrastructure provider) on whether services are available and whether an engineer visit is required.</p>
4.	<p>The GP obtains the following mandatory information from the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name (and name of account holder name with losing provider if different) • Address, including postcode • Current CP (losing provider – LP) name – this is the name of the retailer, i.e. the “name on the bill” • Service types that the customer want to switch (e.g. broadband, telephony, etc.) <p>The GP may also obtain the following optional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer’s account number (or reference) with LP • Telephone number associated with the services the customers wishes to switch • Possible other service identifiers available to a customer, such as the serial number of an FTTP ONT <p>The customer may proactively provide their account number or telephone number, or only after a failure to achieve a “full match” (see below).</p>

Annex A: Gaining Provider Led Switching – Option Y Customer Journey

5.	Consumer provides GP with consent to validate with their losing CP, including the name recorded on their LP account.
6.	<p>Lookup of UPRN reference. The GP converts the address details provided by the customer into a valid UPRN. This can be done in real-time whilst the GP is speaking to the customer, or the customer is interacting with the GP sales website.</p> <p>The Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) is the unique identifier for every addressable location in the UK. It is generated by local authorities who have the authority to name and number every street and property. It provides an inclusive and consistent identifier throughout a property's life cycle – from planning permission or street naming through to demolition.</p> <p>UPRN is increasingly used across multiple industries throughout the UK, including telecoms, and is already used in many interfaces between retailers and their infrastructure providers. Thus it is now a natural way to share a reference to a unique address between retailers, removing the need for debates about address structure and format.</p>

Service validation via the Retailer Service Switching Hub (RSSH)	
7.	<p>The GP performs the service validation in real time with the losing provider (LP) via the Retailer Service Switching Hub (RSSH).</p> <p>The GP provides to the RSSH the information captured from the consumer at step 4 above, plus the UPRN.</p>
8.	The RSSH forwards the request to the relevant LP.
9.	<p>The LP makes the relevant checks on their internal systems to identify service types provided at the UPRN with a matching customer name (and account reference or telephone number or other service reference if supplied).</p> <p>When matching customer name, the match is likely to be based on surname only, case insensitive, and omitting any non-alphabetic characters (so that e.g. “O’sullivan” matches with “OSULLIVAN”).</p>
10.	<p>The LP notifies the RSSH and confirms whether or not they currently provide the relevant working service types at the specified UPRN.</p> <p>The answers provided by the LP can vary from “full match” (name, location and service match), “partial match” (e.g. naming issues) or “no match”. The GP can proceed with order if “full match” but needs to confirm further with customer if “partial match” or “no match” (e.g. by obtaining the customer’s account number or telephone number with the LP).</p> <p>For partial match and no match, the GP may ask the customer to provide some of the optional information defined at step 4 above and make another attempt to achieve a full match.</p> <p>We may also require the LP to include more detailed service information, such as type of BB (e.g. FTTC or FTTP), upstream infrastructure provider (e.g. Openreach or Virgin) and their references (e.g. ALID or ONT reference). Requiring the LP to return such information would eliminate the need for processes such as the current email based process for determining the correct ALID at a UPRN with multiple MPF lines.</p>
11.	The RSSH creates a record of the request, together with a unique switch order reference (created only for a “full match”). A record will be created irrespective of LP response to support ongoing compliance and quality monitoring.

Annex A: Gaining Provider Led Switching – Option Y Customer Journey

	<p>The switch order reference acts as an “authority to proceed with a switch”.</p> <p>“Partial match” and “no match” would not return a switch order reference, making it obvious that there is no authority to proceed.</p>
12.	<p>The RSSH forwards the LP’s response together with the switch order reference (if generated).</p>
13.	<p>Completion of service validation. The GP receives the response to their service validation request and understands the services and offers to be provided to the customer. This can be done in real-time whilst the GP is speaking to the customer or the customer is interacting with the GP sales website.</p> <p>The GP can use the data returned from the RSSH to qualify the sale, informing the customer should any changes be necessary as a result of learning the existing service and asset data held against the supplied account/service data. E.g. return of a reference such as ALID may uniquely identify a target line and remove the need for an engineering visit. Note that this information only relates to the services supplied by the GP and does not include LP implications of switching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone – GP agent advises customer that this stage of the call is being recorded and that consent to proceed will be noted, recorded and the order confirmed and contract(s) will be issued.• Web – Consent validation “checkbox” must be ticked to confirm consent to switch is being given. Order will be confirmed and contract(s) will be issued.

GP switch order placement via the RSSH	
14.	<p>The customer instructs the GP to proceed with the switch on the phone or on the web.</p> <p><u>Record of Consent to Switch:</u> The GP records the customer consent to the switch, storing it in durable form. The intention is to allow resolution of disputes involving claims of unsolicited switch activity being made by the GP. The call recording must be stored in an easily retrievable format, identified by a customer/service identifier or LP account details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone – verbal consent provided and contract(s) created • Web – Consent validation “checkbox” ticked prior to submitting order and contract(s) created. <p>The GP is responsible for holding and storing this record for 12 months (or longer as required).</p>
15.	The GP completes order entry in their own systems. This populates the GP systems with the customer data required to activate the GP services.
16.	The GP systems transmits the relevant order data to the RSSH with an instruction to the LP to expect to cease the services concerned on the specified date.
17.	The RSSH passes on the relevant data to the LP.
18.	The RSSH updates their record to confirm that the GP has placed the order with the customer requested transfer date.

Order transfer window	
19.	<p>Service transfer period can begin. GPs can decide whether to start certain tasks earlier (line of sight visit, cable pull, etc.). The consumer can decide to cancel within the transfer window and will need to contact the GP to confirm their decision to cancel.</p> <p><u>Transfer period</u> A standard transfer period is built in the switching process to give the consumer the necessary time to receive, review and potentially act on any notifications sent by the CPs. This helps the consumer avoid slamming and also enables them to reflect on the implications and costs of switching communicated to them. It is proposed that the transfer period is 7 working days, to allow time for delivery of a letter from the LP to their account holder and for them to respond.</p> <p>The customer can, however, provide their explicit consent to implement the service transfer more quickly (if network installation processes allow) – see step 24 below.</p>
20.	<p>Back end activity including order entry in GP internal systems begins. The GP will typically transmit relevant order data to their upstream infrastructure provider, using BAU processes, but including the switch order reference (as at least an order note), for audit purposes. The switch order reference should be carried throughout the supply chain regardless of number of supply chain partners</p>
21.	<p>On receipt of the RSSH notification, the LP determines the impacts of switching and calculates any early termination charges (ETCs) and disconnection charges.</p>
22.	<p>GP and LP send out the communications to the consumer, without delay.</p> <p>Communications are to be sent in a durable format such as letter and/or email. CPs may also provide updates by SMS although this is optional and is not required for the impact assessment.</p> <p>Any GP or LP communications with registered vulnerable customers will comply with any required alternative formats.</p> <p>Send GP and LP letters with information on the implications of switching. The switch request triggers both CPs to send letters to the consumer: a notice of transfer from the GP informing the customer that the switching process is in progress and another one from the LP that lists the implications of switching, including any ETCs and disconnection charges, and any implications on other service types which the customer has not</p>

Annex A: Gaining Provider Led Switching – Option Y Customer Journey

	<p>requested to switch. These letters follow a standard format similar to the one used in the GPL NoT+ process to improve readability and understanding to the consumer. Both letters will include the switching date.</p> <p>The LP letter must balance the need to ensure the customer is informed, versus overwhelming the customer with too much detail.</p> <p><u>Align the notice period to the switch period</u> A standard minimum switch period for all products across all platforms will apply. The customer’s notice period will align with the agreed switch date. This is consistent to the current arrangements for switching in the Openreach platform for voice and broadband (GPL NoT+).</p>
23.	<p>Consumer receives GP and LP correspondence. The consumer has a standard transfer period to review and respond.</p> <p>The LP will be able to use a “Cancel Other” process (similar to GPL NoT+), e.g. for alleged slamming, or failure by the GP to cancel at customer request.</p>
24.	<p><u>Possible expedite process.</u></p> <p>It is desirable to allow consumers to switch in a timescale shorter than the proposed default 7 days, where there is evidence that the LP’s account holder understands the implications of switching.</p> <p>One possible way to achieve this would be to require the LP to include an “expedite reference” in their notification of the switch and the implications, which they send to their account holder. The customer can then use this reference to request their GP to expedite the switch – this can only apply where the GP has no lead time for network provision or engineering visit, typically where the transfer is reusing the same infrastructure provider asset or line, or where an existing unused asset or line is available.</p> <p>This will be more beneficial to consumers who have opted in to receive notifications from their LP via email.</p>
25.	<p>GP (or their infrastructure provider) completes any agreed engineering visit to install new service in the customer premises.</p>
26.	<p>The back end switching process continues through to installation and customer service switching to GP network. Note that processes such as managed cease by Openreach will continue, and may implement the actual service switch (e.g. where GP and LP use the same infrastructure</p>

	<p>provider and the transfer is using the same asset or line, or where a number port has ceased the previous service hosting that number).</p> <p>For cross-platform switching (e.g. between Openreach and Virgin), the LP cease will only be triggered via the RSSH as described in the next step (although the LP services could also have been at least partially ceased by number port).</p>
<p>27.</p>	<p>Having confirmed the service is working as expected by the Customer, GP sends confirmation of completed service provision (including any number port) to LP via RSSH. This process will ensure minimal loss of service should problems arise with the GP service delivery on the switch date.</p> <p><u>Proactively rescheduling the switch date</u></p> <p>If delays occur during the GP service provision (e.g. the infrastructure provider returns a committed data later than requested date) then the GP is able to update the switch date, as long as this is before the point of no return (PONR – typically day before switch date). The switch date may also be postponed by the GP in response to a customer request (or expedited using an expedite reference). The switch date refers to all components of the services being switched.</p> <p>The process will also incorporate a concept similar to “auto-postpone” currently used in number porting – the LP will only cease their services on receipt of notification via the RSSH that the GP has provisioned their services: “break shortly after make”. This will ensure that the customer is less affected by such delays. (Note that processes such as Openreach managed cease are “break just before make” and give a similar consumer protection.)</p>

Order completion and update of billing records	
28.	LP ceases services when notified via RSSH that the GP services have been activated (on or after the original expected switch date) and updates the relevant billing systems to ensure no billing to the customer beyond that date.
29.	LP confirms that it has stopped the billing for its services via the RSSH which updates the switching record accordingly.
30.	The RSSH stores the switch details for a period of 12 months (or longer if required) to support any monitoring or audit purposes.
31.	Customer returns any customer equipment to the LP as per process agreed with the LP.