

Additional comments:

It is not a contract if parts of it can change without new agreement. If the Communications Providers are able to change their side of the deal, so should the customer.

Your questions are ambiguous and difficult to interpret. It would be very easy for someone to answer in the opposite way to the one they intended. Please use straight-forward, unambiguous questions in future, otherwise the data you receive will be flawed.

Question 1: Do you agree with the consumer harm identified from Communications Providers? ability to raise prices in fixed term contracts without the automatic right to terminate without penalty on the part of consumers?:

This absolutely causes customer harm, and shouldn't be allowed.

Question 2: Should consumers share the risk of Communications Providers? costs increasing or should Communications Providers bear that risk because they are better placed to assess the risks and take steps to mitigate them?:

Communications Providers should be able to foresee appropriately the prices required for contracts of no more than 24 months or so - after all, this is their job and they will have financial advisers to help them

Question 3: Do you agree with the consumer harm identified from Communications Providers? inconsistent application of the ?material detriment? test in GC9.6 and the uncertainties associated with the UTCCRs?:

I have no idea what this question means!

Question 4: Should Communications Providers be allowed (in the first instance) to unilaterally determine what constitutes material detriment or should Ofcom provide guidance?:

Ofcom, or at least some independent, professional, relevant body, should.

Question 5: What are your views on whether guidance would provide an adequate remedy for the consumer harm identified? Do you have a view as to how guidance could remedy the harm?:

Question 6: Do you agree with the consumer harm identified from the lack of transparency of price variation terms?:

I believe it is unethical for prices to be varied once a contract is agreed, without either a completely new agreement being drawn up and agreed and/or the option for the customer to end the contract without liability.

Question 7: Do you agree that transparency alone would not provide adequate protection for consumers against the harm caused by price rises in fixed term contracts?:

I don't know

Question 8: Do you agree that any regulatory intervention should protect consumers in respect of any increase in the price for services provided under a contract applicable at the time that contract is entered into by the consumer? :

Yes

Question 9: Do you agree that any regulatory intervention should apply to price increases in relation to all services or do you think that there are particular services which should be treated differently, for example, increases to the service charge for calls to non-geographical numbers?:

No it should apply to all price increases for all services

Question 10: Do you agree that the harm identified from price rises in fixed term contracts applies to small business customers (as well as residential customers) but not larger businesses?:

It applies to all, although the impact may be less for larger businesses

Question 11: Do you agree that any regulatory intervention that we may take to protect customers from price rises in fixed term contracts should apply to residential and small business customers alike?:

Yes

Question 12: Do you agree that our definition of small business customers in the context of this consultation and any subsequent regulatory intervention should be consistent with the definition in section 52(6) of the Communications Act and in other parts of the General Conditions?:

I have no idea, as I don't know that document. It should be something along the lines of businesses with less than 25 employees or £1m turnover.

Question 13: Do you agree that price rises due to the reasons referred to in paragraph 5.29 are outside a Communications Provider's control or ability to manage and therefore they should not be required to let consumers withdraw from the contract without penalty where price rises are as a result of one of these factors?:

Absolutely not. It is their job to set prices. I do not charge my customers more for something I'm providing them in the future just because other prices have gone up.

Question 14: Except for the reasons referred to in paragraph 5.29, are there any other reasons for price increases that you would consider to be fully outside the control of Communications Providers or their ability to manage and therefore should not trigger the obligation on providers to allow consumers to exit the contract without penalty?:

No

Question 15: Do you agree that Communications Providers are best placed to decide how they can communicate contract variations effectively with its consumers?:

No

Question 16: Do you agree with Ofcom's approach to liaise with providers informally at this stage, where appropriate, with suggestions for better practice where we identify that notifications could be improved?:

No. This issue is important and affects many people negatively. It should be dealt with immediately and forcefully. As things stand, it is only the customer who loses out and the provider who holds all the aces.

Question 17: What are your views on Ofcom's additional suggestions for best practice in relation to the notification of contractual variations as set out above? Do you have any further suggestions for best practice in relation to contract variation notifications to consumers?:

Question 18: What are your views on the length of time that consumers should be given to cancel a contract without penalty in order to avoid a price rise? For consistency, should there be a set timescale to apply to all Communications Providers? :

If the provider chooses to increase the price from the original contract the customer should be able to exit the contract without liability for a period of at least 3 months after that price rise.

Question 19: What are your views on whether there should be guidance which sets out the length of time that Communications Providers should allow consumers to exit the contract without penalty to avoid a price rise?:

See above

Question 20: Do you agree that this option to make no changes to the current regulatory framework is not a suitable option in light of the consumer harm identified in section 4 above?:

Yes

Question 21: Do you agree with Ofcom's analysis of option 2? If not, please explain your reasons.:

What does this question mean?

Question 22: Do you agree with Ofcom's analysis of option 3? If not, please explain your reasons.:

Ditto

Question 23: What are your views on option 4 to modify the General Condition to require Communications Providers to notify consumers of their ability to withdraw from the contract without penalty for any price increases?:

This should apply immediately

Question 24: Do you agree with Ofcom's assessment that option 4 is the most suitable option to address the consumer harm from price rises in fixed term contracts?:

Possibly, but I have no idea what the other options are. Where have you written them?

Question 25: Do you agree that Ofcom's proposed modifications of GC9.6 would give the intended effect to option 4?:

What does this mean?

Question 26: What are your views on the material detriment test in GC9.6 still applying to any non-price variations in the contract?:

Ditto

Question 27: For our preferred option 4, do you agree that a three month implementation period for Communications Providers would be appropriate to comply with any new arrangements?:

As long as we, the customers, have the option to leave our contracts if prices are raised from the original contract, without penalty, throughout that period

Question 28: What are your views on any new regulatory requirement only applying to new contracts?:

It should cover all contracts.