

CISAS response

Question 9: Do you agree with our proposals set out above, including to set a timeframe of 12 months for the delivery of USO connections unless exceptional circumstances have arisen?

Yes, a period exceeding 12 months to deliver a connection would certainly be excessive, so CISAS would support this timeframe.

Question 10: Do you agree with our proposals on how exceptional circumstances should be defined and operate?

Yes, the limited categories of exceptional circumstances (being external factors beyond the Universal Service Provider's control) appear to be appropriate. Disputes are commonly referred to CISAS regarding delays to installation of non-USO connections where there are restrictions to street access and where customer or other private wayleave applies.

Question 13: Do you agree with our proposed approach to complaints handling and dispute resolution?

Yes, we agree with this proposal. Having the Universal Service Providers adhere to the same complaints handling and dispute resolution processes as already apply to communications providers will ensure that there is a uniformly consistent ADR landscape for all consumers.

Question 14: Do you agree with our proposal to approve the two Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes currently approved under the General Conditions (Ombudsman Services: Communications and the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme) for resolving disputes in relation to the USO?

Yes, we agree with this proposal. CISAS and OS:C have a proven track record of handling a wide range of disputes in the telecommunications sector, and are best placed to have the expertise and experience to deal with disputes which relate to the USO. The disputes which Ofcom expects to be raised most commonly, namely where a Universal Service Provider rejects a request for a connection and where a USO connection is delayed in its installation, are not dissimilar to disputes dealt with routinely by CISAS.