Telecoms and Pay TV Complaints
Q2 (April to June) 2015

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About this document

This document presents data for complaints recorded by Ofcom against the largest telecoms and pay TV providers in the quarter April 2015 to June 2015. This is Ofcom’s eighteenth quarterly report.

This document is intended to help consumers make better informed decisions, especially those who are thinking about changing provider or purchasing a new service. We also believe that publication of provider specific complaint volumes incentivises providers to improve their performance.

The next publication will include data for the period July to September 2015, and we expect to publish it in December 2015.
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Section 1

Executive summary

1.1 Ofcom’s principal duty is to further the interests of citizens and consumers, where appropriate by promoting competition. In doing so we must have regard to the interests of consumers in terms of price, quality of service and value for money. Consumer information plays a critical role in promoting effective competition and the absence of key information can lead to poor purchasing decisions and inhibit switching.

1.2 On average, Ofcom receives nearly 300 telecoms complaints a day from consumers.1 Such complaints are likely to be made where a consumer has been unable to resolve an issue with their provider to their satisfaction. We record these complaints by service and by provider, and believe that this information is useful for consumers; for example, this data may be relevant to those considering a new service or change of provider. We note that provider-specific information is also available to guide consumers in areas such as financial services.

1.3 This is the latest edition in a series of quarterly complaints publications that have presented data for each quarter between October 2010 and March 2015.2,3 This publication provides data for the quarter April 2015 to June 2015.

1.4 When considering the information in this report, readers should note a number of important limitations that apply to the complaints information we publish. In particular:

- The data only covers complaints that consumers have chosen to report to Ofcom, and does not represent complaints consumers may have made directly to their providers or to other agencies (e.g. Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes). As such it will only provide a partial picture of complaints relating to any provider.

- The complaints data in this report is calculated using subscriber figures provided by the operators in question, and when comparing operator performance it is important to note that there are some differences in the methodologies operators used to compile them.

- The complaints data reflects the views of consumers as reported to Ofcom. Ofcom has sought to ensure that its data is sound but has not checked the veracity of individual complaints.

- Contact with Ofcom may reflect the relative quality of complaints handling services, as well as the quality of service received. Given this, companies with

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1 Ofcom received over 70,000 calls from consumers in 2014/15 (source: Ofcom 2014/15 Annual Report, page 53: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/content/about/annual-reports-plans/1262041/annual-report-14-15/annual-report-14-15.pdf)

2 Previous editions can be found at: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/telecoms-research/complaints/?a=0

3 As a result of a number of checks, pay monthly mobile data is no longer presented in any publication prior to Q1 2014 (where it was restated); pay TV complaints were first published from October 2011 (i.e. from Q4 2011).

4 Ofcom has carried out checks on the data in the report to ensure that it is accurate enough to be of use to those seeking to compare providers. In instances where there is little difference between operator complaint levels, we do not distinguish between their performance.
poor complaints handling processes may feature more prominently than those with good complaints handling processes.

- Ofcom may see spikes in call volumes from customers of certain providers when we publicise certain types of enforcement action (e.g. investigations, fines).

1.5 Stakeholders may wish to consider both the monthly and quarterly data when comparing provider performance, and note that this publication only includes complaints data for providers who generally met the criteria implemented up to (and including) Q1 2014, and, from Q2 2014 onwards, generally those who meet the current criterion of having a market share of 1.5% or above.

1.6 As providers vary in size, we publish complaints as a proportion of residential subscribers. Presenting the complaint numbers in this manner ensures that meaningful comparisons can be made between the data for each provider.

1.7 The main findings for the reporting period covering April 2015 to June 2015 (Q2 2015) are as follows:

- **Overall complaints**: The total volume of complaints reduced slightly from to Q1 2015, with the broadband, pay monthly mobile and pay-as-you-go sectors generating less relative complaints. Broadband and fixed line services continue to generate the highest number of complaints, and Ofcom continues to receive the fewest complaints about PAYG mobile services and Pay TV compared to other services included in this report.

- **Fixed line telephony**: The providers covered here are BT, EE, Plusnet, Post Office HomePhone, Sky, TalkTalk Group and Virgin Media. EE generated the highest volume of complaints per 1000 subscribers in Q2 2015, and these complaints were mainly related to issues around changing provider; fault, service or provision issues; and complaints handling. Plusnet, Post Office HomePhone, and TalkTalk Group also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average, whilst BT's complaint volumes were equal to the average. Sky received the least complaints per 1000 subscribers compared to the other fixed line providers in the report.

- **Fixed broadband**: The providers covered here are BT, EE, Plusnet, Sky, TalkTalk Group and Virgin Media. EE generated the highest complaint volumes per 1000 subscribers in Q2 2015, and these were mainly related to fault, service or provision issues; issues to do with billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT, Plusnet, and TalkTalk Group also generated above industry average complaint levels. Sky received the lowest relative complaint volumes compared to the other fixed broadband providers that we report on.

- **Mobile pay-monthly telephony (excluding mobile broadband datacards and dongles)**: The providers covered here are EE, O2, Talk Mobile, Tesco Mobile,
Three, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone. Vodafone had the highest relative volume of complaints this quarter, and these mainly related to issues about billing, pricing and charges; complaints handling; and fault, service or provision issues. EE, Talk Mobile, and Virgin Mobile also generated above industry average complaint levels during this period. Tesco Mobile continued to receive the lowest relative volume of complaints compared to the other published providers.

- Pay TV services: The providers covered here are BT, TalkTalk, Sky and Virgin Media. TalkTalk generated the highest relative volume of complaints in Q2 2015. The main driver of TalkTalk’s complaints related to fault, service or provision issues; issues around billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT and Virgin Media also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average. Sky received the lowest relative complaint volumes compared to the other pay TV providers that we report on.

Ofcom is proposing to introduce a new presentational format for complaints data in future quarterly publications. This is explained at the end of Section 4 of this report, with the new formats we propose to include in this publication set out for consultation in Annex 1.
Section 2

Introduction

Background

2.1 Consumers’ overall level of satisfaction with communications services is around 90%.9 Where concerns arise, consumers typically raise their complaint with their provider in the first instance.10 If the provider is not able to resolve the complaint within eight weeks, or if earlier deadlock is reached, the consumer can make an application to an independent Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme. The ADR scheme can examine the complaint and reach a judgement on the issue.11

2.2 In addition, some consumers choose to contact Ofcom due to our role as regulator of communications services. While we do not resolve individual complaints, we offer advice on how best to resolve the issues that are raised. We also use the complaints data to inform policy, and enforcement and monitoring work. On average, we receive nearly 300 consumer complaints a day.

Why publish provider-specific complaints?

2.3 For some time now Ofcom has published telecoms complaints data by key issue in our Telecoms Complaints Bulletins12 and Consumer Experience reports.13 These publications show the monthly complaints that Ofcom receives in areas such as mis-selling, silent calls, and broadband speeds.

2.4 Since April 2011 we have published quarterly Ofcom complaints data by provider. Complementary to this report, we also regularly publish research on ‘customer service satisfaction’ on a provider-specific basis. This research is published annually, and the latest research report was published in December 2014.14

2.5 The publication of performance data like this is consistent with our statutory duty of transparency and our obligations as a public authority. Moreover, it is in line with our principal duty to further the interests of citizens and consumers, where appropriate by promoting competition. Consumer information plays a critical role in ensuring that competitive communications markets work for consumers. The absence of information can lead to poor purchasing decisions. Therefore, if information is not readily available or unclear there may be a case for Ofcom to intervene in the interests of consumers. Under section 26 of the Communications Act 2003, we have

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9 Ofcom, The Communications Market 2015 (August), page 35
http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cm/cmr15/CMR_UK_2015.pdf

10 This has been found in research, including, for example, that carried out for the 2008 Consumer Complaints Review available at
http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/alt_dis_res/research.pdf

11 Ofcom requires all CPs to be a member of an approved ADR scheme. Ofcom carried out a Review of Consumer Complaints Procedures - the statement is available at
http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/adr-review-12/statement

12 Available at http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/enforcement/telecoms-complaints-bulletin/

13 Available at http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/consumer-experience-reports/?a=0

a duty to arrange for the publication of such information and advice as appears to us to be appropriate to make available to consumers.\(^{15}\)

2.6 We recognise that there is no single source of information that can give consumers a full picture of the relative performance of different providers. In addition, different service features will matter more for some consumers than for others. Ofcom research suggests that, for many consumers, comparative price and network performance information is of primary importance. In light of this, we have ensured that consumers have improved information available in these areas. Examples include publication of broadband speeds research,\(^{16}\) mobile coverage maps,\(^{17}\) and our scheme for accrediting price comparison calculators.\(^{18}\)

2.7 Whilst this information provides benefit to consumers, Ofcom has in the past conducted research which suggested that at least a fifth of consumers in each market would be likely to use comparative information about complaints. Those consumers who are actively considering switching provider are most likely to say they would use such information.\(^{19}\)

2.8 In addition, the publication of provider-specific complaints data may act as an incentive for providers to improve their performance.\(^{20}\) Similar information is also available to guide consumers in a number of other sectors, including, for example, financial services.\(^{21}\)

2.9 While our complaints data has a number of limitations (see Section 3), we believe that this data, along with other information,\(^{22}\) can be informative for consumers seeking to compare providers.\(^{23}\) We also observe that this data is of interest to intermediaries such as consumer groups, journalists and price comparison services who advise consumers.

2.10 This transparent approach is consistent with the last Government’s consumer empowerment strategy\(^{24}\) which argued that publishing complaints data is “a good way of encouraging businesses to improve their performance without the need for heavy-handed legislation, as no company wants to be last in an indicator of performance or customer satisfaction”.

2.11 With the above taken in to consideration, we consider that the objectives of publishing this report are to:

\(^{15}\) Having regard to the need to exclude confidential information from publication. For the reasons set out here, Ofcom considers that, having had that regard, publication of the information in this report is appropriate.
\(^{16}\) Available at: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/telecoms-research/broadband-speeds/?a=0
\(^{17}\) http://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage
\(^{18}\) See: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/ocp/statement/pricescheme/?a=0
\(^{19}\) According to Ofcom research collected in 2008. See: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/qos08/statement/qos.pdf
\(^{20}\) See the responses of key consumer groups to Ofcom’s consultation on complaints handling procedures at: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/complaints_procedures/?showResponses=true
\(^{21}\) http://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/complaints-and-compensation/complaints-data
\(^{22}\) For example information on price, speed, coverage, contract terms and so on.
\(^{23}\) In the Statement for our Review of Complaints Procedures, we said that publishing complaints data would likely benefit consumers in respect of price, quality and value for money. We also noted that there are a number of ways for such information to be made public. See: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/complaints_procedures/statement/
\(^{24}\) Better Choices: Better Deals, Consumer Powering Growth, BIS & the Cabinet Office, 13 April 2011
• further the interests of citizens and consumers by providing them with information that will help them facilitate and take advantage of a competitive market;

• ensure transparency of data; and

• incentivise improved provider performance.

**Provider and service specific complaints data**

2.12 This is the eighteenth report to include Ofcom telecoms complaints data by provider, and the fourteenth to include complaints data about pay TV services. The methodology used here is set out in Section 3.
Section 3

Methodology

Introduction

3.1 Consumers, both residential and business, can contact Ofcom with complaints or enquiries over the phone, by letter or through one of the dedicated complaint submission forms on our website. All complaints are logged in the same database by Ofcom’s Consumer Contact Team (CCT), providing a record of the total complaints that Ofcom has received, as well as details on the services affected and the providers of those services.

3.2 In this section we outline the approach we have taken to the publication of our complaints data.

Scope of the data published

3.3 We collect complaints data across a wide range of services - broadcasting, spectrum, telecoms and post. Total complaints in each of these areas are published in our annual Consumer Experience reports.

3.4 The focus of this publication is complaints made by residential consumers in relation to fixed line telephony, fixed broadband, mobile telephony and pay TV.

3.5 Consumers complain to Ofcom about a wide range of issues so we have considered carefully what level of data would be useful and robust enough for publication. In view of the complexity, our current position is that we should only publish complaints data by service rather than by detailed category of complaint for each service.

3.6 The four services covered in this publication are:

- Fixed line telephony - includes complaints against companies that offer both line rental and calls as well as those that supply calls only services;
- Fixed broadband - includes copper based ADSL services, cable services and fibre services;

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25 Refer to: http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/tell-us/telecoms/
26 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made by a customer related to the communications provider’s services, or to the complaint-handling process itself. Where the complaint is made to Ofcom over the phone, the consumer is asked whether their call is about an enquiry or complaint.
27 We publish complaints about the content of programmes broadcast on television by provider in our Broadcasting Bulletins. Spectrum complaints cannot be reported in more detail as the majority of complaints are about interference and as such are not provider specific.
28 Refer to Ofcom’ annual Consumer Experience reports - http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/consumer-experience-reports/
29 Ofcom records business and residential telecoms complaints separately, based on how the individual identifies themselves when reporting the complaint.
30 We currently record over 159 different categories of telecoms complaints.
31 As detailed in our Q2 2014 publication, we have determined that the current complaint ratios for PAYG mobile services are so small that they are unable to provide meaningful comparisons. As a result we no longer provide basic commentary on this sector, but will continue to monitor it closely.
Pay-monthly mobile services, and

Pay TV - includes complaints relating to access to the service and does not include the content delivered over the pay TV service. This category includes services provided through cable, satellite, digital terrestrial television or over a dedicated broadband connection.

Complaints about bundled services

Today, many consumers choose to purchase a bundle of services from one provider (for example, fixed line telephony with a fixed broadband service). Any issues that subsequently arise may affect one or more of those services and this influences how a complaint may be reported to us.

The approach we have taken when recording complaints received from customers who take a bundle of services from a provider is as follows:

- If the complaint only relates to one of the services in the bundle, the complaint is recorded against that single service only. For example, if a customer has fixed line telephony and fixed broadband as part of a bundle and complains about slow broadband speeds, the complaint would be logged against the broadband service only as it is this aspect of the service that is causing the problem.

- If the complaint equally affects a number of services in a bundle, the complaint is recorded against each affected service for that provider. For example, if a consumer complains about being mis-sold a triple play service, the complaint will be counted as a fixed telephony, fixed broadband and as a pay TV complaint for that provider.

This approach enables us to have a record of all complaints received by provider and by service. Also, as we are publishing total complaints by provider for each service, but not across the services in aggregate, the complaints are not double counted.

Complaints about transfers to unknown providers

If a consumer is unexpectedly told by their existing provider that a request has been made to transfer their service to another provider, they may complain to Ofcom without knowing the name of the new provider. In these circumstances Ofcom refers the case to Openreach to find out recent activity on the line, including applications to transfer and completed transfers. If a request for a transfer has been made by another provider, the complaint is recorded against that other provider. If no request for a transfer has been made, then the complaint is recorded against the existing provider.

Focus on the largest providers

Ofcom records complaints received against any provider in the UK. The size of each individual provider varies greatly, as does the number of complaints received. As a result, to ensure that this report covers as many providers as reasonably practicable, we adopt a criterion that determines which providers are included in the report.

Mobile pay monthly services will include complaints about use of data through a mobile handset but do not include dongles or datacards.

Their existing provider may not have visibility of the new provider either, and may only be aware that a request has been made to take over the service.
3.12 Specifically, following a review, from Q2 2014 onwards this report now generally includes complaints data for those providers which, for the service being reported have a market share of 1.5% or more in the relevant market.

3.13 For periods up to Q1 2014, the previous publication criteria of having a 4% market share and regular generation of at least 30 complaints per month generally continue to apply.

3.14 In addition, a provider will generally be removed from the report if, from Q2 2014 onward, its market share has dropped below 1.5% for four consecutive quarters.

3.15 This encompasses the providers set out in Table 1 below. Together, these providers account for over 90% of each market covered.

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34 See our Q2 2014 report for further detail.
35 In the absence of exceptional circumstances, in which, should they apply, we may take a different approach.
36 In the absence of exceptional circumstances.
37 At least 94% of market for fixed lines, 97% for fixed broadband, 99% for pay monthly mobile telephony and 90% for pay TV.
Table 1: Providers included in this publication

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38 This includes Orange, T-Mobile and 4GEE.
Aggregating data

3.16 For pay monthly mobile we present data for Orange, T-Mobile and 4GEE in an aggregated form. The charts below refer to this data as “EE”.

Complaints as a proportion of subscribers

3.17 Other things being equal, the more customers a provider has the more complaints are likely to be made. Given the variation in size of provider, we publish complaints as a proportion of the relevant customer base to put complaints numbers into context and to help ensure the data is more meaningful for consumers.

3.18 To achieve this we have used the number of connections provided to Ofcom by the operators in question. We do not collect this data for pay TV providers and so, to calculate pay TV complaints per thousand customers, we use customer data from the providers’ own published investor reports. All of the pay TV providers that we report on publish subscription data on a quarterly basis as part of their updates to investors.

3.19 We understand from providers that quarterly connection data is more robust than monthly data and therefore we use quarterly data to calculate the complaints data.

3.20 While the subscriber figures provided to Ofcom are the most accurate ones available to each provider, it is important to note that there are differences in the methodologies which have been used to compile them. These differences mean that there may be instances where one provider has reported a customer as being a residential user when another would not have. Ofcom has carried out checks on the data in the report to ensure that it is accurate enough to be of use to those seeking to compare providers. In instances where there is little difference between operator complaint levels, we do not distinguish between their performance in our analysis.

3.21 For reference, fixed line telephony can be provided as a combined calls and line rental service or as a calls only service. As both services can generate fixed line complaints, Ofcom considers it is appropriate for them both to be included in the customer base used here.

The industry average line

3.22 As an additional data point against which to measure the performance of each provider, we include an industry average line. This shows the average of the number of complaints across those providers included in the published data for each service. It does not include smaller providers who generally have a market share lower than 1.5%.

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39 Note that it is possible for an individual to have more than one connection.
40 Particularly where the quarterly data is reported externally.
41 We are using a ‘weighted average’ that adjusts for comparative size of operator.
Section 4

Telecoms and Pay TV Complaints

Introduction

4.1 This section sets out our complaints data from June 2013 to June 2015. We believe that, used in conjunction with other available information, this data provides helpful and meaningful information for consumers. It also provides an incentive for providers to improve their performance.

4.2 As mentioned in Section 1, it is worth bearing the following limitations in mind when considering the data:

- The data only covers complaints that consumers have chosen to report to Ofcom and, therefore, it does not represent total complaints that consumers have made to their providers or to other agencies (e.g. Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes). As such it can only provide a partial picture of complaints relating to any provider.

- The complaints data in this report is calculated using subscriber figures provided by the operators in question, and when comparing operator performance it is important to note that there are some differences in the methodologies used to compile them.

- The complaints data reflects the views of consumers. Ofcom has sought to ensure that its data accurately reflects the complaint that has been made but we do not check the veracity of individual complaints.

- Contact with Ofcom may reflect the relative quality of complaints handling services, as well as the quality of service received. Given this, providers with poor complaints handling processes may feature more prominently than those with better complaints handling processes.

- Ofcom may receive increased complaints volumes from customers of certain providers when we publicise enforcement action (e.g. investigations, fines).

4.3 The data published here is presented on a quarterly basis (Q2 2013 to Q2 2015) and also monthly (June 2013 to June 2015). The charts in this publication present complaints data for these quarters. The next publication will contain data for Q3 2015 (July to September) and will be published in December 2015.

4.4 The charts in this publication only include complaints data from providers who met the criteria generally implemented up to (and including) Q1 2014, and, from Q2 2014 onwards, those who meet the current generally applied criterion of having a market share of 1.5% or more in the relevant market.

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42 For complaints data published since October 2010 see http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/telecoms-research/complaints/?a=0
43 Generally, a 4% market share and a regular generation of 30 complaints per month.
Relative complaints by service sector

4.5 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received across fixed line, broadband, PAYG mobile, pay monthly mobile and pay TV services between June 2013 and June 2015 inclusive.44 The information is presented per 1,000 customers/connections for the period covered, by month and by quarter.

4.6 Figure 1 shows that broadband and fixed line services generate the highest number of complaints and Ofcom continues to receive the fewest complaints about PAYG mobile services and Pay TV compared to the other services included in this report.

**Figure 1: Relative volume of complaints per sector per 1,000 customers/connections: Q4 2010 – Q2 2015, by quarter**

![Graph showing relative volume of complaints per sector per 1,000 customers/connections: Q4 2010 – Q2 2015, by quarter](source: Ofcom, CCT data)

Fixed line telephony complaints

4.7 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of fixed line telephony services between June 2013 and June 2015 inclusive. The information is presented per 1,000 customers/connections with both monthly and quarterly charts.

4.8 Figure 2 and Figure 3 show that EE continued to generate the highest relative volume of complaints in Q2 2015. These complaints were mainly related to issues around changing provider; faults, service, or provision issues; and complaints handling. Plusnet, Post Office HomePhone, and TalkTalk Group, also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average, whilst BT’s complaint

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44 Except for Figure 1 which shows complaint volumes dating further back to: Q4 (October – December) 2010 for broadband, fixed line, and mobile PAYG services; Q2 (April – June) 2011 for pay monthly mobile services; and Q4 (October – December) 2011 for pay TV services.
volumes were equal to the average. Sky received the least complaints per 1,000 subscribers compared to the other fixed line providers in the report.

**Figure 2:** Fixed line complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: Q2 2013 – Q2 2015, by quarter

*Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report*

*Source: Ofcom, CCT data*
Figure 3: Fixed line complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: June 2013 – June 2015, by month

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Fixed broadband complaints

4.9 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of fixed broadband services between June 2013 and June 2015. The information is presented per 1,000 customers/connections for the period covered, by month and by quarter.

4.10 Figures 4 and 5 show that EE continued to generate the highest relative complaint volumes in Q2 2015, and these were mainly related to faults, service or provision issues; issues with billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT, Plusnet, and TalkTalk Group also generated above industry average complaint levels. Sky received the lowest relative complaint volumes compared to the other fixed broadband providers that we report on.
Figure 4: Fixed broadband complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: Q2 2013 – Q2 2015, by quarter

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Figure 5: Fixed broadband complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: June 2013 - June 2015, by month

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data
Pay monthly mobile complaints

4.11 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of pay monthly mobile services\(^\text{45}\) between June 2013 and June 2015. The information is presented per 1000 customers/connections for the period covered, by month and by quarter.

4.12 Figures 6 and 7 show that Ofcom continued to receive the most complaints per 1,000 subscribers about Vodafone and these were mainly related to issues about billing, pricing and charges; complaints handling; and fault, service or provision issues. EE,\(^\text{46}\) Talk Mobile, and Virgin Mobile also generated above industry average complaint levels. Tesco Mobile generated the lowest relative volume of complaints compared to the other published providers.

**Figure 6: Pay monthly mobile telephony complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: Q2 2013 – Q2 2015, by quarter**

\(^{45}\) These exclude complaints about mobile broadband services (datacards and dongles).

\(^{46}\) “EE” is an aggregate of Orange, T-Mobile and 4GEE.
Figure 7: Pay monthly mobile telephony complaints per 1,000 customers/connections, June 2013 – June 2015, by month

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Pay TV Complaints

4.13 Figures 8 and 9 show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of pay TV services between June 2013 and June 2015. The information is presented per 1,000 customers/connections for the period covered, by month and by quarter.

4.14 The figures below show that TalkTalk generated the highest volume of complaints per 1,000 subscribers in Q2 2015. Complaints about TalkTalk mainly related to issues around fault, service, or provision issues; billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT and Virgin Media also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average, whilst Sky received the lowest volume of complaints per 1,000 subscribers.
Figure 8: Pay TV complaints per 1,000 customers/connections: Q2 2013 – Q2 2015, by quarter

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Figure 9: Pay TV complaints per 1,000 customers/connections, June 2013 – June 2015, by month

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data
Amending how we present results in future reports

4.15 From time to time Ofcom reviews the way we present data in this report, to make sure it continues to fulfil its purposes appropriately. In particular, whether it is presented clearly and enables those to whom it may be useful to make use of it.

4.16 We have carried out such a review during preparation of the data for publication in this report. Following this we believe there is scope for the presentation of some of the data to be made easier to read and interpret. An example is the monthly data in figures 3, 5 and 7 above, which contain a large number of data points in close proximity to one another.

4.17 Ofcom has therefore considered alternative forms of presentation. To make it easier for stakeholders to monitor and track provider performance, we propose to amend the way we present data for future reports. From Q3 2015 we propose to:

- no longer present monthly data in the report;\(^{47}\)
- present a snapshot of the most recent quarter’s results in the form of a table;\(^ {48}\)
- present rolling quarterly data in the form of a line chart instead of the current bar chart format;
- present data as "complaints per 100,000 subscribers" rather than “1,000 subscribers” as this will allow us to present complaint volumes as whole numbers,\(^{49}\) making the figures more relatable to individual consumers.

4.18 To further demonstrate these proposed changes, please see Annex 1 which represents this quarter’s results in our proposed new format.

4.19 If you would like to comment on our proposals, please email: thomas.cherry@ofcom.org.uk.

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\(^{47}\) We will continue to publish monthly data in the CSV files that accompany the report.

\(^{48}\) To further enhance the presentation of data, we may in future incorporate logos in to the table.

\(^{49}\) For the majority of providers.
Annex 1

Alternative presentation of performance

Introduction

A1.1 This section sets out our complaints data from Q3 (July – September) 2013 to Q2 (April – June) 2015. We believe that, used in conjunction with other available information, this data provides helpful and meaningful information for consumers. It also provides an incentive for providers to improve their performance.

A1.2 As mentioned in Section 1, it is worth bearing the following limitations in mind when considering the data:

- The data only covers complaints that consumers have chosen to report to Ofcom and, therefore, it does not represent total complaints that consumers have made to their providers or to other agencies (e.g. Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes). As such it can only provide a partial picture of complaints relating to any provider.

- The complaints data in this report is calculated using subscriber figures provided by the operators in question, and when comparing operator performance it is important to note that there are some differences in the methodologies used to compile them.

- The complaints data reflects the views of consumers. Ofcom has sought to ensure that its data accurately reflects the complaint that has been made but we do not check the veracity of individual complaints.

- Contact with Ofcom may reflect the relative quality of complaints handling services, as well as the quality of service received. Given this, providers with poor complaints handling processes may feature more prominently than those with better complaints handling processes.

- Ofcom may receive increased complaints volumes from customers of certain providers when we publicise enforcement action (e.g. investigations, fines).

A1.3 The data published here is presented on a quarterly basis (Q3 2013 to Q2 2015). The charts in this publication present complaints data for these quarters. The next publication will contain data for Q3 2015 (July to September) and will be published in December 2015.

A1.4 The charts in this publication only include complaints data from providers who met the criteria generally implemented up to (and including) Q1 2014, and, from Q2 2014 onwards, those who meet the current generally applied criterion of having a market share of 1.5% or more in the relevant market.

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50 For complaints data published since October 2010 see http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/telecoms-research/complaints/?a=0

51 Generally, a 4% market share and a regular generation of 30 complaints per month.
Relative complaints by service sector

A1.5 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received across fixed line, broadband, PAYG mobile, pay monthly mobile and Pay TV services between Q3 (July – September) 2013 and Q2 (April – June) 2015 inclusive.²² For each sector we also present a table noting performance over the most recent quarter only. The information is presented per 100,000 customers/connections for the period covered.

A1.6 Figure 1 shows that broadband and fixed line services generate the highest number of complaints and Ofcom continues to receive the fewest complaints about PAYG mobile services and Pay TV compared to the other services included in this report.

Annex figure 2: Relative volume of complaints per sector per 100,000 customers/connections: Q4 2010 – Q2 2015, by quarter

Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Fixed line telephony complaints

A1.7 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of fixed line telephony services between Q3 2013 and Q2 2015 inclusive. The information is presented per 100,000 customers/connections with both monthly and quarterly charts.

A1.8 Figure 2 and Figure 3 show that EE continued to generate the highest relative volume of complaints in Q2 2015. These complaints were mainly related to issues around changing provider; faults, service, or provision issues; and complaints

²² Except for Figure 1 which shows complaint volumes dating further back to: Q4 (October – December) 2010 for broadband, fixed line, and mobile PAYG services; Q2 (April – June) 2011 for pay monthly mobile services; and Q4 (October – December) 2011 for pay TV services.
handling. Plusnet, Post Office HomePhone, and TalkTalk Group, also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average, whilst BT’s complaint volumes were equal to the average. Sky received the least complaints per 100,000 subscribers compared to the other fixed line providers in the report.

Annex figure 2: Fixed line complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q2 2015: providers shown by lowest number of complaints per 100,000 customers

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sky</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Plusnet</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TalkTalk</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report  
**Source:** Ofcom, CCT data
Annex figure 3: Fixed line complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q3 2013 – Q2 2015

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Fixed broadband complaints

A1.9 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of fixed broadband services between Q3 2013 and Q2 2015. The information is presented per 100,000 customers/connections for the period covered.

A1.10 Figures 4 and 5 show that EE continued to generate the highest relative complaint volumes in Q2 2015, and these were mainly related to faults, service or provision issues; issues with billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT, Plusnet, and TalkTalk Group also generated above industry average complaint levels. Sky received the lowest relative complaint volumes compared to the other fixed broadband providers that we report on.
Annex figure 4: Fixed broadband complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q2 2015: providers shown by lowest number of complaints per 100,000 customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Complaints per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sky</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Plusnet</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BT</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TalkTalk</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

industry average = 16

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Annex figure 5: Fixed broadband complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q3 2013 – Q2 2015

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data
Pay monthly mobile complaints

A1.11 The following figures show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of pay monthly mobile services\(^{53}\) between Q3 2013 and Q2 2015. The information is presented per 100,000 customers/connections for the period covered.

A1.12 Figures 6 and 7 show that Ofcom continued to receive the most complaints per 100,000 subscribers about Vodafone and these were mainly related to issues about billing, pricing and charges; complaints handling; and fault, service or provision issues. EE,\(^{54}\) Talk Mobile, and Virgin Mobile also generated above industry average complaint levels. Tesco Mobile generated the lowest relative volume of complaints compared to the other published providers.

Annex figure 6: Pay monthly mobile telephony complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q2 2015: providers shown by lowest number of complaints per 100,000 customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Complaints per 100,000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>O2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Talk Mobile</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vodafone</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report

Source: Ofcom, CCT data

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\(^{53}\) These exclude complaints about mobile broadband services (datacards and dongles).

\(^{54}\) “EE” is an aggregate of Orange, T-Mobile and 4GEE.
Annex figure 7: Pay monthly mobile telephony complaints per 100,000 customers/connections, Q3 2013 – Q2 2015

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Pay TV Complaints

A1.13 Figures 8 and 9 show the residential consumer complaints that Ofcom received against the largest providers of pay TV services between Q3 2013 and Q2 2015. The information is presented per 100,000 customers/connections for the period covered.

A1.14 The figures below show that TalkTalk generated the highest volume of complaints per 100,000 subscribers in Q2 2015. Complaints about TalkTalk mainly related to issues around fault, service, or provision issues; billing, pricing and charges; and complaints handling. BT and Virgin Media also generated relative complaint volumes above the industry average, whilst Sky received the lowest volume of complaints per 100,000 subscribers.
Annex figure 8: Pay TV complaints per 100,000 customers/connections: Q2 2015: providers shown by lowest number of complaints per 100,000 customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Complaints per 100,000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Sky</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TalkTalk</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data

Annex figure 9: Pay TV complaints per 1000 customers/connections, June 2013 – June 2015, by month

Note: Industry average is limited to those providers included in the report
Source: Ofcom, CCT data