

Title:

[✂]

Forename:

[✂]

Surname:

[✂]

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

Email:

[✂]

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Additional comments:

As a consumer providing this input, I think there are a number of associated problems that must be taken into account before any changes to the current processes:

1. Actual speeds for broadband are not clear and many users are unaware how to check their speeds (and that these checks can often depend upon the servers used).
2. Providers are misleading customers about the potentials speeds available and this "competition" makes it difficult for customers to make a clear choice even where

such a choice is available.

3. It is far from clear that some providers require a BT landline (this information is usually in the "small print" of any advertising and that broadband speed will depend upon distance to nearest switching system or source.

4. It is far from clear to customers of fibre-optic systems (e.g. Virgin Media) that local speeds vary significantly depending upon the number of local users - providers should be obliged to detail how many connections are on any supply line (when asked) and how this might degrade speeds.

5. Every provider should be obliged to make readily available a speed test that is both rapid and clear, which is independent of the provider's control.

Question 1: Do you think hassle is a key issue we should tackle in this review? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

YES:

It is very far from clear that switching broadband is even possible; although, I am aware that some companies are providing "mixed supplier" packages. However, this appears to be a complete change rather than a response to dissatisfaction with a supplier.

Question 2: Do you agree there is a lack of clarity about the switching processes that consumers need to go through to switch and this may create a barrier to switching? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

YES:

My supplier (Virgin Media) does not make any statement about the possibility of swapping supplier for broadband. I would have expected them to make a comparison of speed provided with a clear statement of how supplier change could be carried out.

Question 3: Do you think clarity is a key issue we should tackle in this review? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

YES:

I assume clarity means that a clear process is made available by every provider, that this process should be the same for each provider and that any problems (e.g. the need for a BT landline) should be made very clear - this is very important for users of fibre-optic lines such as Virgin Media.

Question 4: Do you think continuity of service (including unwanted breaks and double billing) is a key issue we should tackle in this review? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

YES:

There have been many stories about this happening with the process of swapping electricity supplier and I have been the subject of illegal selling in that area. There must be a clear swap date and a clear statement provided by both suppliers, to the customer, that the swap has occurred.

Question 5: Do you think the ability of providers to frustrate the switching process is a key issue we should tackle in this review? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

Unsure:

I have no direct evidence that this is a problem, but it is clear that providers may well use this tactic. However, this also relates to the problem of actual speed of connection and I am aware that Virgin Media explain that BT speeds are much lower than their own, who suggest that this tactic may be occurring; although, in this case they are correct.

Question 6: Do you think consumers' experience of save activity is a key issue we should tackle in this review? Please provide an explanation for your answer and any supporting evidence.:

YES:

As mentioned above I have been the subject of mis-selling of electricity and I am aware that such a process would be possible for broadband providers. The problem, once again, is linked strongly to the need for accurate speed information for an individual connection and such information should be made available by all providers - this should include the opportunity to compare speeds on proposed connections (this might not always be possible, but should be an option in some situations).

Question 7: Are there issues specific to either residential or business consumers' experiences of the switching processes that you think we should tackle in this review? Please provide any evidence you have to support your views.:

There is no clear mechanism available for directly comparing actual speeds (not the speeds used in advertising literature from the providers) in a way that is informative and accurate. There is a real need for providers to provide better speeds and the use of fibre optics seems to be a low priority - maybe part of the process should be a requirement to actually improve speeds by greater investment in the infrastructure.

Question 8: Do you agree with our analysis of switching costs? Please provide any evidence you have to support your views.:

I have not looked at the costs so cannot comment directly. However, I have looked at swapping provider for my entire package - TV, phone and broadband:

It is clear that there are too many variables, which are far from clear when reading or researching available packages. Some of these include:

1. Actual broadband speeds.
2. Variation in reduced-cost phone packages between providers makes a direct comparison difficult.
3. Variation in available TV channels (especially High definition TV) makes a direct comparison of packages very difficult.
4. Cost of calls to mobile phones varies significantly between the providers and the mobile provider used, which makes comparisons between providers very difficult.
5. It is not clear that "splitting" parts of a package is possible.

Question 9: Do you agree with our analysis of save activity? Please provide any evidence you have to support your views.:

I am not sure what is meant by the "save activity" in terms of a customer and can only comment as such:

I am aware that new customers are often provided with a "better deal" by providers and that this reduces the opportunity to "improve2 the service for an existing customer who does not want to leave the provider (e.g. with Virgin Media, where a fibre optic broadband service is far better than anything possible with a BT landline, it is clear that the TV and phone package could be swapped to a new provider and what the costs of such a mixed package might be. In addition, this complicated by the fact that Sky insist on an available BT landline.

Question 10: Do you agree with our analysis around the multiplicity of switching processes? Please provide any evidence you have to support your views.:

I have covered much of this already, but I believe a major problem lies with identifying a clear set of parameters for any single package, which makes it difficult for a customer to identify which provider would make available the most suitable package.

I also believe mixed packages must be available even if this costs more for the provider to implement.

Question 11: Do you agree with the general switching principles we have identified? Please provide an explanation for your answer.:

YES:

But I would emphasise a need to allow "mixed provider" packages, which should be easy to implement.

There must be automatic compensation for any loss of service.

Question 12: Do you agree with our proposed tier structure for the general switching principles? Please provide an explanation for your answer.:

UNSURE.

I think this is difficult for a customer to judge.

Question 13: Do you agree with our proposal that the preferred switching approach assuming a ?greenfield? basis is GPL?:

UNSURE

Question 14: Which of the identified GPL switching options do you support? Please provide an explanation for your answer.:

Unsure

Question 15: Do you have any information or views on the costs of the switching options outlined above? Please provide any supporting evidence.:

No

Question 16: Do you agree with our proposals and implementation priorities for taking forward our work in relation to existing switching processes?:

Somewhat:

I believe there is a lack of clear support for the customer in the proposals and it is not clear that the customer will have MORE information following implementation of these proposals. What is needed for the customer is readily available information that allows a clear decision about how to put together a reasonably priced package of TV, phone and broadband, which fits to the customers requirements.