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To: Consumer Switching
Subject: a method for switching

The simplest method MUST show that the customer consented to the change.

The best way to do this would be to have ALL customers either select or be provided with a password by their current provider.

The Change over would then run as follows:

1. Customer contacts new provider and gives them the access password to change services.
2. New provider enters customers details into their own system and have to CONFIRM the order by entering that customers password into an OFCOM-controlled password box.
3. If the password is correct, the change can go ahead, otherwise after several guesses (to compensate for spelling errors) the OFCOM system sends a letter to the customer telling them someone is trying to guess their details and change them over.
4. If password is correct, customer is then changed to new provider
5. Customer is provided or selects a NEW password (to prevent the old password falling into the wrong hands)

What OFCOM would need to do is have a central database for customers, where the new provider enters the customers details and the password, and if they try to "guess" the password more than a few times in a row, this is flagged up by the system and auto-generates a letter to the customer informing them that a company is attempting to take over their service and doesn't appear to know the password to do this.

This would mean easier transfers for customers, unscrupulous companies would quickly be identified (multiple guesses at lots of different customers passwords) so action could be taken much quicker.

Rogue companies can then easily be suspended or permanently banned from logging into OFCOMs database, therefore they cannot slam anyone.

This system could also be used for water / electricity / gas etc as the same password-system would flag attempts at slamming but also allow customers the freedom to change quickly and effortlessly.

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