

Industry Comms Bulletin No1

Gaining Provider Led Business switching (of fixed Voice & Broadband services)

April 2023

What's Changing?

You might already have heard of One Touch Switch – a new process for switching of residential customers' fixed voice and/or broadband services between providers, which Ofcom requires industry to implement. It is important to be aware that in addition, Ofcom confirmed a requirement for industry to put in place Gaining Provider Led (GPL) switching of end customers' business voice and broadband services, across all networks.

Details of the Ofcom statement, issued on 3rd February 2022 can be viewed here.

[Statement: Quick, easy and reliable switching - Ofcom](#)

Recognising the need for coordination to deliver this requirement, the Gaining Provider Led Business Steering Group (GPLB-SG), was formed specifically to put in place an industry agreed Business switching process. The group is made up of a wide representation of participating providers, facilitated by OTA2. Our aim is to help you meet your regulatory obligations in the most efficient and effective way possible, and to optimise the switching experience for all our business customers.

How are we doing this?

The GPLB-SG has drafted a set of business switching principles which underpin the process and has engaged with Ofcom to introduce the work this group is doing and to inform them of our continued progress.

More recently, a process design sub-group was established (known as the DDG – Design Drafting Group) with the sole purpose of creating a business switching process at a level of detail adequate for industry to assess and feedback on. As a result, an initial draft set of documents have been created, these include:

- Business Switching Principles for Industry V4.0
- Gaining Provider Led Business switching industry design process V1.0
- Business Switching Process design V1.5 (flow diagrams – Visio and PDF versions)
- GPLB Process Steps Rationale v0.2
- FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

All can be found on our new webpage (hosted on the FCS website), here:

<https://www.fcs.org.uk/gaining-provider-led-business-switching/>

- you do not need to register to view these published documents.

Key points on the new Regulatory changes are:

1. New Gaining Provider Led (GPL) switching rules are aimed at quick, easy and reliable switching of fixed voice and broadband business services, across all network providers.
2. The current Notification of Transfer (NoT+) process, including 'cancel other' rules, for all Openreach-based business fixed voice and broadband service switches, will be removed.
3. Ofcom have not defined a switching process for Business customers but have stated that providers initiating Business switches must follow a Gaining Provider Led process.

4. The new switching regulatory obligation falls upon the Retailer, i.e. the company that contracts with the End Customer.
5. There are some additional new regulatory changes (aside from the new switching process rules), which come into force on 3rd April 2023. These include compensation requirements for delayed or failed switches, a customer's right to port their number up to one month after switching, and general information requirements.

What's in scope

All Business focussed Communication Providers, providing either NBICS* or IAS**, will have a regulatory obligation to operate a Gaining Provider Led (GPL) process solution when switching end customers' business fixed voice and broadband services.

The process we are developing works for all providers in all areas of the business market and aims to be the right process for Business providers, their customers and the whole industry. Our industry steering group believes that one standard agreed business switching process will be of benefit to all providers.

When are the changes happening?

The regulatory changes came into force on 3rd April 2023. Ofcom is aware that our industry process solution was not ready for this date but that we are working as hard as we can to make it available as soon as possible. Earlier this week Ofcom sent out the following communications to industry.

[Ofcom investigates broadband providers for failing to implement simpler switching - Ofcom](#)

Provider questions

If you have a question about the new business switching process (covering business fixed voice and broadband services), please send it to us via OTA2 John.Abbotts@offta.org.uk

Please note that we cannot give regulatory advice, and providers must satisfy themselves that they are compliant, but we will do our best to point you in the right direction. We particularly welcome comments or questions about the process we are developing, or the principles and technical developers' guide underpinning it.

We will be following this initial Business switching bulletin with further details over the course of the coming weeks and will be keeping you fully informed on our progress.

*NBICS (Number Based Interpersonal Communications Services - generally, any service that uses a geographic / non-geographic number that is not a mobile service).

**IAS (Internet Access Service)