

Complaining to your provider

- Complain to your provider
- Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes are the next step

The quickest way to resolve any problem is to follow your provider's complaints procedure. All communications providers are required to have a Code of Practice outlining how they will deal with customer complaints. This code is sometimes available on the provider's website, on the back of a bill or you can get it directly from customer services. But if you reach the end of this complaints process and you are still unhappy, you can raise the matter with the relevant Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme – ask your provider about how to do this.

An ADR decision is binding on the provider but not the customer who makes the complaint. If you are still unhappy you can seek independent legal advice and consider legal action. ADR only applies to residential customers and small businesses so if you are a business customer of over 10 employees then you will need to seek your own independent legal advice.

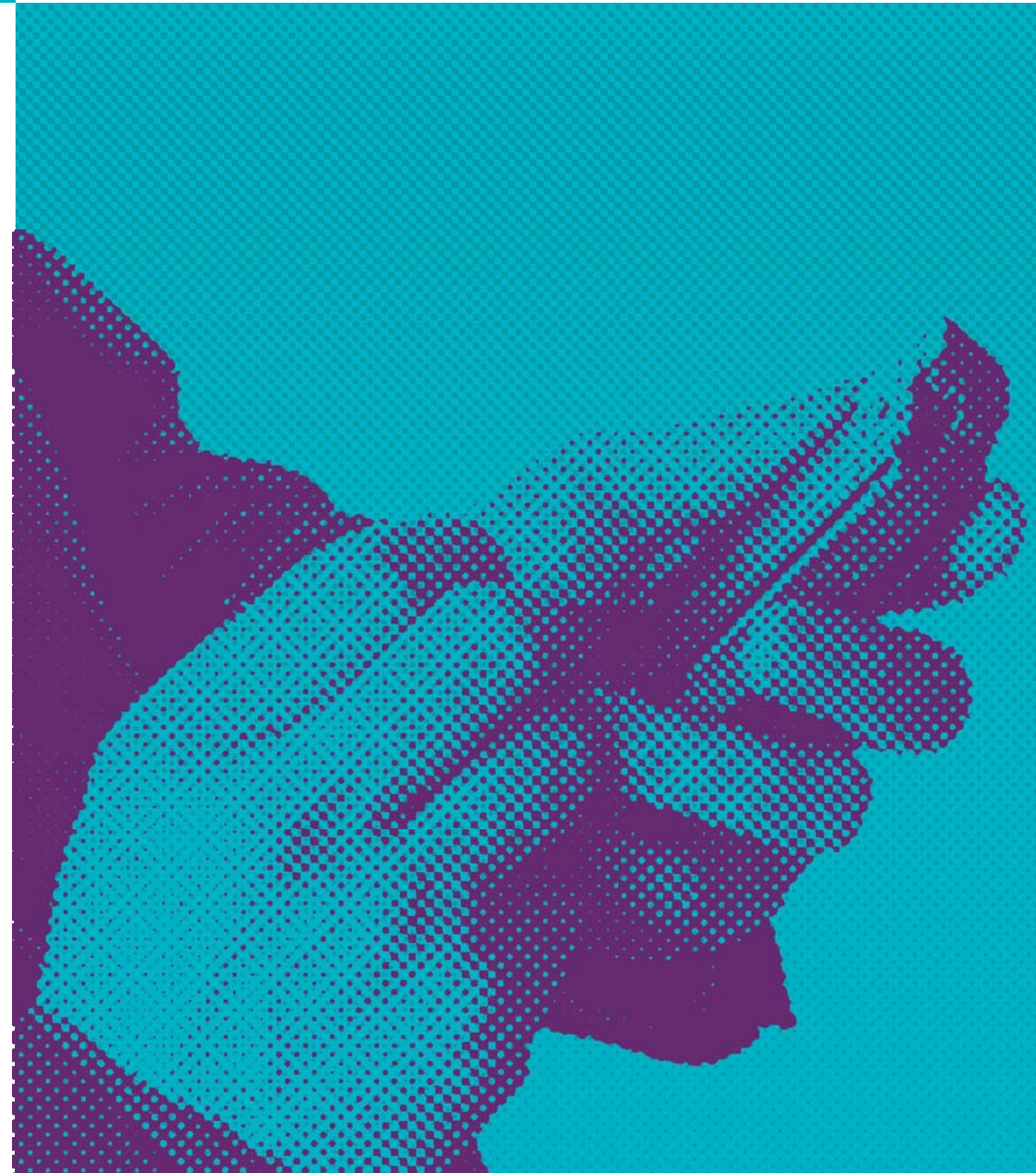
For further information look at: www.ofcom.org.uk/files/2009/09/complain.pdf



Ofcom Advisory Team

Phone: +44 (0)300 123 3333
Facsimile: +44 (0)300 123 0811
Textphone: +44 (0)300 123 2024
Welsh Line: +44 (0)300 123 2023

www.ofcom.org.uk



Telecoms services are vital for a successful business.

Ofcom is the UK's independent communications regulator. The aim of this guide is to help small businesses get the best deal for mobile, telephone and internet services.

Choosing a provider

Price is just one of a number of important factors that you should consider when looking for the best deal from a communications provider. There are many price comparison sites that give information on the prices of landlines, mobile and broadband. So far Ofcom has accredited three advice websites for residential packages:

- BillMonitor www.billmonitor.com
- Broadband Choices www.broadbandchoices.co.uk
- Simplify Digital www.simplifydigital.co.uk

Getting the most out of telecoms

- Ask your provider
- Seek advice from www.businesslink.gov.uk

New telecoms technologies frequently come onto the market. But how can you find out how to make the most of them? Your current telecoms provider may be able to give you advice on how telecoms technologies could help your business. Business Link also gives independent advice on a range of business areas, including communications and information technology at: www.businesslink.gov.uk

Cutting your costs and shopping around

- Consider switching
- Ask for a better deal from your current provider

Switching providers may give you a better deal. If you've been with the same supplier for a while then you may get a better deal by switching as new, cheaper offers are coming out all the time. Make sure you check how long your current contract is as you may have to pay a fee to leave your current provider during the contract period.

It should be easy to swap your existing landline, mobile or internet provider. In most cases, your old supplier and your new one will sort out the switch between them once you tell them. And you can usually keep your old landline or mobile phone number.

If you switch, you'll need to sign a new contract, so check how long it is and make sure you are happy to sign-up for this period. Also check whether the contract is automatically renewed and whether you'll get a chance to opt out.

Another way of cutting costs may be to call your current provider and ask them to give you a better deal - some providers may be prepared to offer lower prices and/or add-on benefits if you do so. But remember you may need to sign a new contract.

Avoiding mis-selling by providers

- Know what you are signing up to
- Check before you buy

A few telecoms providers may try to gain customers through dishonest activities such as mis-selling. There are various forms of mis-selling, one of which is known as 'slamming'; this is where customers are switched from one provider to another without their consent or knowledge.

The best way of preventing mis-selling and slamming is to avoid signing up for anything unless you're absolutely sure what you're signing up for. In particular, only agree to something over the phone if you're sure you know who you are talking to and what you're signing up for. If you're unsure about anything then ask for information to be posted to you before signing up.

For further advice look at: www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/guides/slamming.pdf