



Complaints Handling and Alternative Dispute Resolution Code of Practice Introduction

SME Communications Provider is an independent telecommunication service provider that offers business solution packages which include, but are not limited to, line rental, network features, calls and broadband services.

Purpose of this Document

This document is designed to clarify Ofcom regulations with regards to General Conditions 14 and 24, for the benefit of SME Communications Provider's customers. SME Communications is fully compliant with the provisions applied by Ofcom under the guidelines and regulations of these codes.

Important Information on your Order Form

The SME Communications Provider order form is designed to provide an overview of the contract and general terms of supply. The tariff details and breakdown of packages and prices are clearly set out on the front of the form.

The information below appears clearly on the back of the form:

- Summary of key points of the contract for Telecoms & Broadband • Payment Terms • Cancellation Procedure Policy
- Termination Fee breakdown
- Contact Information for Customer Services, email and Head Office postal address

All customers are provided with a copy of the order form at the point of sale. Following this, SME Communications Provider offers all customers with 10 or fewer employees, a consolidation period. All customers are made aware of this period and no cost will be applied for cancellations made during this period.

All customers are provided with key pricing information and the appropriate package terms and conditions at the point of sale. These are also available to view on our website www.SMEcp.co.uk.

Customers who wish to request cancellation should do so by:

- using the contact form on our website at www.SMEcp.co.uk
- Calling the Customer Services Team on 0161 446 2772
- Emailing info@SMEcp.co.uk
- Writing to: SME Communications Provider, First Floor, Building 5, Crossford Court, Dane Road, Sale, M33 7BZ

Cancellation requests outside of the consolidation period will be referred to the terms and conditions of the customer's contract. A copy of the terms and conditions will be sent by email or post to the customer and are also available on our website www.SMEcp.co.uk.

Customer Complaints Code of Practice

At SME Communications Provider we aim to get it right first time. In the event that this doesn't happen, our Customer Complaints Code of Practice provides clear and concise information about how we will deal with your complaint.

The Code of Practice covers:

- How to make a complaint
 - What we will do to investigate, and when
 - The next steps you should take if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint
- Customers who are not happy with any aspect of the service should contact us by:
- Calling the Customer Services Team on 0161 446 2772
 - Emailing info@SMEcp.co.uk
 - Writing to: SME Communications Provider, First Floor, Building 5, Crossford Court, Dane Road, Sale, M33 7BZ

Please include your account reference details and telephone number as well as an email address so we can acknowledge receipt and provide a quick response. All correspondence should be marked for the attention of the Compliance Department and should contain as much detail as possible to help us thoroughly investigate your complaint. If you are not able to complain yourself, you may ask someone to register a complaint and act on your behalf but we will need your written permission for this.

What We Will Do & When:

Calling the Customer Services Team

SME Communications will always aim to solve your problem, to your satisfaction, as quickly as possible, through our First Call Resolution process but if this is not possible we will ask one of our Customer Service Team Managers to take the call or ring you back within 6 business hours if unavailable. If this does not resolve the matter it will be escalated to our Compliance Team for further investigation and we will aim to send you a full response by email within 10 working days. If we are not able to provide a full response within 10 working days we will email you to advise why this is the case and let you know when we expect to provide you with a full response.

Email

SME Communications will always aim to solve your problem, to your satisfaction, as quickly as possible. When we receive your email we will send you an acknowledgement, by email, within 5 working days. A member of our Compliance Team will fully investigate your complaint and we will aim to send you a full response by email within 10 working days. If SME Communications is not able to provide a full response within 10 working days an email will be sent, to advise why this is the case and to let you know when we expect to be able to provide a full response.

Letter

SME Communications Provider will always aim to solve your problem, to your satisfaction, as quickly as possible. When we receive your letter we will send you an acknowledgement by email within 5 working days, if SME Communications Provider doesn't have your email address a member of our team will contact you by telephone to confirm receipt of your complaint and establish if you have an email address so that we can keep you updated more quickly in future. A member of our Compliance Team will fully investigate your complaint and will aim to send you a full response by email or post within 10 working days. If we are not able to provide a full response within 10 working days we will email or write to you to advise why this is the case and let you know when we expect to be able to provide a full response.

A complaint investigation may include, but is not limited to:

- The customer's views of events
- SME Communications staff members' views of events
- Any documents or evidence submitted by the complainant or SME Communications Provider staff members

Following an investigation, where appropriate, disciplinary action or staff re-training may be considered to minimise future problems which may lead to similar complaints. This action may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Termination of employment

Following investigation, if our Compliance Team staff member has been unable to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction SME Communications Provider will escalate your complaint to the Head of Complaints in the Compliance Team, who will review the complaint and may contact you for further information. If at this stage SME Communications has been unable to settle the complaint we will write to you to explain our final position. This may mean that we send you a 'deadlock' letter, which means there is nothing more we are able to do.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedure

If SME Communications Provider has not resolved the complaint to the customer's satisfaction after 8 weeks or has issued a 'deadlock' letter, the complaint may be referred to The Ombudsman Services: Communications.

The Ombudsman Services: Communications

Ombudsman Services: Communications provide a free, independent, dispute resolution service for customers who are dissatisfied with the final outcome of their complaints. They can't deal with complaints about prices or broadband availability for example or with complaints from businesses who have more than ten employees.

If you complain to Ombudsman Services: Communications you must do this within six months of a 'deadlock' letter being issued to you. If you have not been sent a 'deadlock' letter you must contact Ombudsman Services: Communications within nine months of making your complaint to us.

Contact details for Ombudsman Services: Communications are:

Ombudsman Services Wilderspool Park Greenall's Avenue Warrington WA4 6HL

Telephone: 0330 4401614 or 01925 430049 Email: enquiries@ombudsman-services.org

