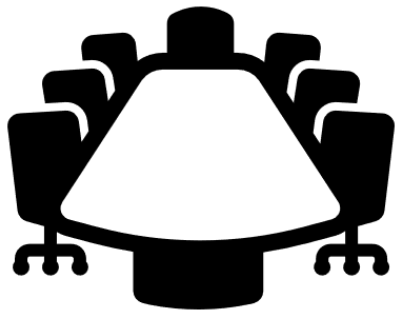




Gaining Provider Led Business Steering Group

Switching for Business - Principles

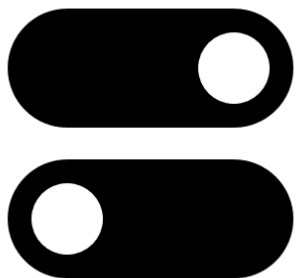


Version 6d 6 August 2025

Switching for Business Principles

- **Objective**

- To document the main principles associated to the Gaining Provider Led Business Switching process (identified as 'Switching for Business' from this point onwards) in order to create a guide for all process users and design teams



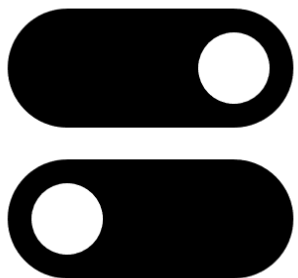
Switching for Business Principles

- **Only NBICS and IAS are in scope of the Ofcom General Conditions for GPL switching**

- NBICS: Number Based Interpersonal Communications Service, a UK number-based voice service e.g. '01' & '02' prefixed geographic numbers, excluding '07' mobile numbers, but including other 'non-geographic' numbers (e.g. '07' personal numbers, '08', '03' and '05')*

- IAS: Internet Access Service, provided over a fixed network connection, can be delivered via copper, fibre or wireless technologies

* UK numbers as part of the Ofcom National Telephone Numbering Plan– please see Process and Message specifications for Number formatting standards



Switching for Business Principles

- **The Switching for Business process scope excludes the following:**
 - the move of all or part of a Retailer's customer base between supply chains
 - Novation of a Retailer (through purchase/takeover/merger)
 - Basic purchases of new or additional services by a customer, where existing services are not being switched
 - Change to a customer's service where the retailer remains the same, but a change in the supply chain is required to deliver the service (e.g. upgrades/downgrades)
 - Recovery of numbers from quarantine (e.g. Right to Port)
 - Working Line Takeover (home mover, where supported)

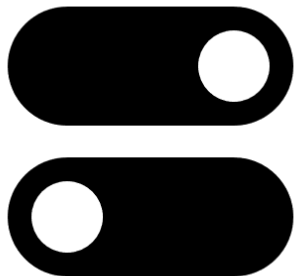
For clarity and the avoidance of doubt; the GPLB process is designed for when the (end) customer is switching an in-scope service(s), between Retailers



Switching for Business Principles

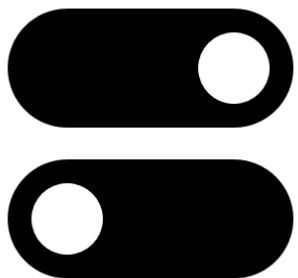
- **The Switching for Business process will be the primary process for switching Business customers**

- will be the process for business/business switching



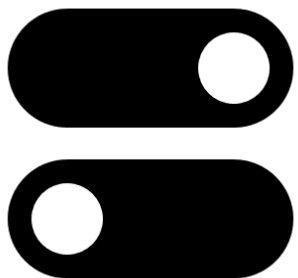
Switching for Business Principles

- **The primary function of the Switching for Business process is to enable Communications Provider (CP) users to discharge their regulatory obligations, when switching business customers**
 - Gaining (GRCP) and Losing (LRCP) Communications Providers will be able to use the Switching for Business process to satisfy specific elements of their switching obligations, as set out in Ofcom's General Conditions
 - GRCP and LRCP will ensure the (end) customer is kept informed throughout the process.



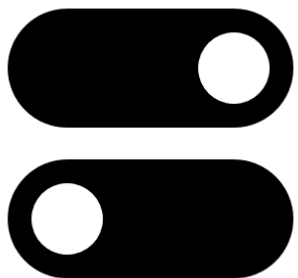
Switching for Business Principles

- **It is not a function of the Switching for Business process to enforce UK Law**
 - Gaining (GRCP) and Losing (LRCP) Communications Providers will still be obliged to discharge their legal obligations as exist under UK Law, however this is outside the scope of Switching for Business process functionality



Switching for Business Principles

- **All Business Retailers must support the ‘Losing’ process roles in GPL switching**
 - all Retailers (directly or via their agents) must be able to fully support the ‘Losing’ role in the Switching for Business process steps, even if they no longer intend to ‘Gain’ new business customers



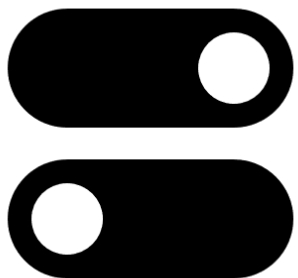
Switching for Business Principles

- **A business contract identifies a customer as a business**

- as detailed in the Ofcom statement '*Quick, easy and reliable switching*' published 3 February 2022*, a CP may use the contract type they have (or plan to have in place) with the (end) customer as the definition of if a customer is classed as residential or business
- business contracts = business customers

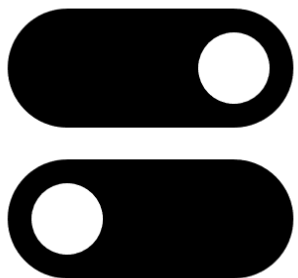
*Section 3.131 [Statement: Quick, easy and reliable switching \(ofcom.org.uk\)](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/consult/condocs/switching/switching_statement/switching_statement.pdf)

- 3.131 Therefore, determining whether someone is a residential or business customer depends not only on which product they take but also how they are using it. However, in practice, a provider may not always hold this information about a customer. Providers could therefore use the contract a customer is on (i.e. residential or business) as a proxy to determine whether they are a residential or business customer



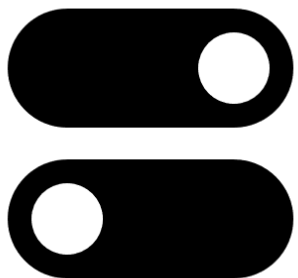
Switching for Business Principles

- **A CP must be able to offer a prospective customer a Gaining Provider Led ‘switching process’**
 - CPs are obliged under current Ofcom regulation to offer business customers a GPL (Gaining Provider Led) switching process for IAS and/or NBICS services
 - the customer is not obliged to follow a GPL switching process, if they expressly select not to



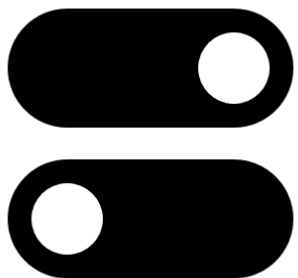
Switching for Business Principles

- **The Switching for Business process will support ‘split retail supplier’ and ‘split supply chain’ scenarios**
 - due to the complex nature of many businesses, the Switching for Business process will support any combination of NBICS (voice) and IAS (broadband) supply chain and losing retailer



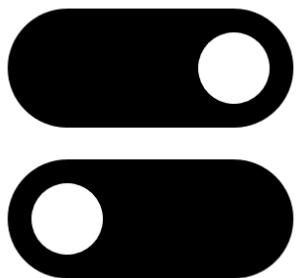
Switching for Business Principles

- **The Switching for Business process will recognise and support complex ‘supply chain’ scenarios**
 - it is recognised that business communication needs are often delivered via complex supply chains (wholesalers, resellers, dealers, etc), with many variations in those chains of which the party or parties may have active or passive roles in any switch
 - the Switching for Business process will work for all of these supply chain combinations and roles



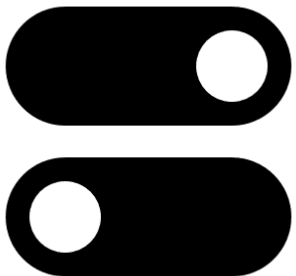
Switching for Business Principles

- **All RCP (Retail Communications Providers) must be identifiable by their brand**
 - to facilitate the Switching for Business process the 'brand on the bill' as understood by the (end) customer must be mappable to the owning RCP



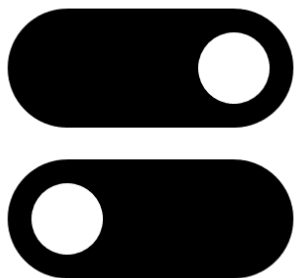
Switching for Business Principles

- **The Switching for Business process will ensure that the LRCP is always aware of an active and completed switch against services they sell to a customer**
 - the LRCP must be made aware, by the GRCP, of a switch being initiated that will result in the cessation of service(s)
 - these notification must be made as soon as is practicable to do so, include indicative and confirmed dates for switching and inform the LRCP of any changes to those dates
 - the LRCP must be made aware of a completed switch (i.e. the customers new service is active and the 'old' services are to be ceased)
 - the LRCP must be made aware of cancellations of switches



Switching for Business Principles

- **At the customer's request 'concurrent' services may be legitimately present in certain Switching for Business process scenarios**
 - it is recognised that unlike residential switching, there will be a number of scenarios where-in a customer may be billed for both their 'old' and 'new' services for a period of time, subject to the customer's agreement, technical feasibility or as defined by their contract with the LRCP
 - there will be a best practice maximum limit of 90 calendar days for any 'concurrent' billing of services, with scenarios planned to exceed that limit being excluded from GPLB switching process (as they shall be considered as an unlinked provision of new service and a later cessation of another service).
 - The above is in addition to and separate from billing for any contractual notice periods



Switching for Business Principles

- **At the time of a successful ‘Service Match’* between the GRCP and LRCP, it is recommended that the LRCP notifies their customer of any impacts on service(s) or contracts that are/or are not being switched**

- this includes, but is not restricted to:

Services that will be ceased/lost as a result of the proposed switch (e.g. voice recording, CCTV monitoring, Fixed IP, Licences)

Changes to contract(s) for remaining services

Outstanding payments for equipment (e.g. VoIP phones, Routers) or, where a date is known, early termination charges

Services that will continue to be charged for (e.g. Licences, EAD services)

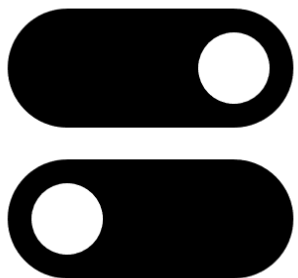
* Service Match is the process step where GRCP and LRCP confirm the services identified to be switched

Note: General Condition A1.3 still applies. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/256343/unofficial-consolidated-general-conditions-april-2023.pdf



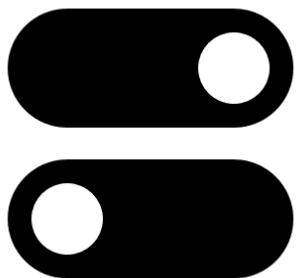
Switching for Business Principles

- **It will be the responsibility of the LRCP to inform their customer of service and contract implications, where these will not automatically be terminated when switching**
 - The LRCP will, using the information provided by the GRCP, determine what the implications of a switch will be and clearly inform their customer of this (e.g. licences, hardware, etc)
 - It is assumed that the customer is not required to confirm receipt of the switch implications



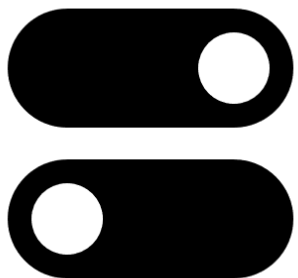
Switching for Business Principles

- **It will be the responsibility of the (end) customer to instruct their provider of changes to services they wish to make, where there are additional services and contracts, not automatically terminated when switching**
 - The GRCP should not instruct the LRCP to cease services that are not able to be switched (e.g. Licences, hardware, etc)
 - it is the customer's responsibility, aided by the 'switch impacts' sent by the LRCP, to manage any services, products or contracts not automatically terminated as a result of switching
 - Providers should make these responsibilities clear to (end) customer in their terms of business



Switching for Business Principles

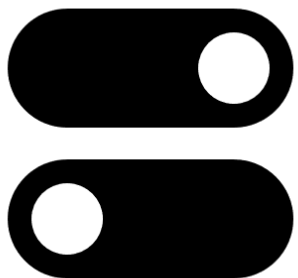
- **The LRCP will not frustrate, delay or abuse their customer's wish to switch, nor the actual switching process (1)**
 - the LRCP should act in good faith to assist the GRCP in matching a customer, services and ensure information provided is up-to-date and accurate
 - the LRCP will not frustrate the matching process by unnecessarily failing match requests through over sensitive validation (the principle should be 'reasons to succeed' not 'reasons to reject')
 - the LRCP should ensure their (end) customer is informed of any pending switches, including the identity of the GRCP involved and updated of any changes to dates, times or of any cancellations
 - these actions should be done in a timely manner and in accordance with any SLA and/or Ofcom General Conditions



Switching for Business Principles

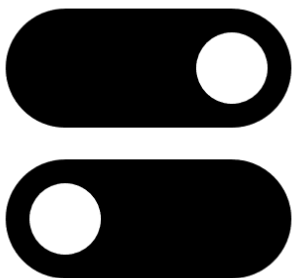
- **The LRCP will not frustrate, delay or abuse their customer's wish to switch, nor the actual switching process (2)**
 - switching must be supported, regardless of the process used (see Ofcom ref:C7.4 paragraph B)*
 - The Switching for Business process will be considered the authoritative process even when existing processes are invoked.
 - we intend to review this area alongside the Number Porting community and may implement improvements in the Number Porting process to complement the proposed GPL Business Switching process

* https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/256343/unofficial-consolidated-general-conditions-april-2023.pdf



Switching for Business Principles

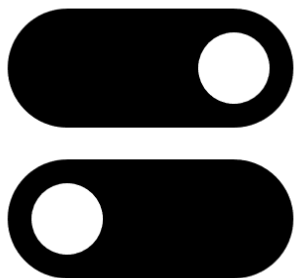
- **It is the responsibility of the GRCP to tell the LRCP when the switch is completed.**
 - The GRCP should confirm that the switch has completed, and services are ready to be ceased or cancelled by the LRCP as soon as practicable to do so.
 - This step may be preceded by a period of 'dual-running' (when agreed with the end customer) and the GRCP should only trigger cessation when they are confident that 'new' services are fully delivered and working.



Switching for Business Principles

- **Emergency Service Restoration**

- Should an (end) customer lose service as a result of a switch, the GRCP and if appropriate the LRCP will work to provide service to the (end) customer in a timely manner.
- Every provider will need to make sure that their contact details for Emergency Service Restoration are published and maintained.
- It is recognised that every switch will be unique and any resulting (end) customer service issues equally unique and therefore a one size fits all process is not practical. However, it is expected that every CP will be able to demonstrate how they would approach resolving any service issues as a result of a switch.



Switching for Business Principles

- **The Switching for Business process will include a robust procedure to facilitate CP to CP comms, to resolve any issues arising from a switch journey**

-The LRCP will not use this functionality to frustrate the process, any evidence of this may result in Ofcom investigation.

-The GRCP will need to update their relevant supply chains, specifically with respect to orders that may have been placed with them, until an issue is resolved, so that the risk of customer harm is mitigated.

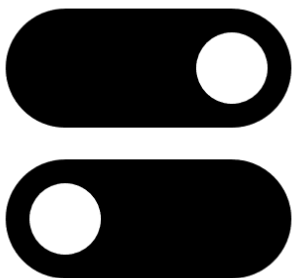
- Best Practice Guidance will be produced to support CPs, detailing scenarios and scope

- This procedure does not override regulatory or contractual obligations.

- The LRCP, GRCP and customer will collaborate to resolve issues

- This procedure will only be used in line with the published scope

- LRCPs and GRCPs will not use this procedure to frustrate, delay or abuse the switching process



Switching for Business Principles

- **In-life process management and dispute resolutions**

-It is not the role of the GPLB-SG to manage disputes between CPs regarding regulatory obligations or legal disputes.

-It is expected that the GRCP and the LRCP will work together to meet any compensation obligations. It is not the responsibility of the (end) customer to resolve any disputes



Thank You

