

Comparing customer service: mobile, home broadband and landline

Comparing Service Quality



Overview

This is Ofcom's fourth annual report on how service levels compare in telecoms. We publish it to help people make informed decisions about which provider is best for them as part of our work to ensure fairness for customers.

By shining a light on the performance of the UK's main mobile, broadband and home phone providers, this report allows people to look beyond the price and see what level of service they can expect from different providers. It also acts as an incentive for providers to improve their customer service.

This report covers customer experiences in 2019 and customer satisfaction levels in January 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic came to the UK. The pandemic is likely to have affected the levels of service received by telecoms customers (in areas such as new services and repair times) and this impact will be covered in our next annual report, to be published in 2021.

What we have found

- **Overall customer satisfaction with all three services (mobile, home broadband and landline) was in line with the previous year.**¹ However, there have been improvements in some areas. For example, complaints to us about telecoms companies continued to fall, as did the proportion of engineer appointments that were missed. New lines were being installed more quickly than in 2018, on average.
- **However, other aspects of customer service did not improve, and** average call waiting times increased. This is important, as phone calls remain the most common method of contacting providers.
- **There was little variation in customer satisfaction between providers for each service.** But Tesco Mobile customers had higher than average satisfaction for mobile and Plusnet had higher than average satisfaction for broadband, as did BT for landline.
- **Mobile users were happier overall with their service than broadband and landline customers.** They were more likely to recommend their provider to a friend, and less likely to have a reason to complain, than either landline or home broadband customers.²
- In 2019, **87% of new landline and broadband orders were delivered on the agreed date**, and it took an average of 11 days to get a new service installed (four days less than in 2018). Most providers took an average of two days to resolve faults where there was a total loss of service, and the majority were able to resolve nine out of ten of these faults within a week.

¹ Customer satisfaction measured in January 2020 and compared with January 2019.

² In 2019, landline customers were less likely to have a reason to complain than broadband customers.

- **The automatic compensation scheme has resulted in an increase in the amount of compensation paid to landline and broadband customers** when things go wrong. Five providers – BT, Sky, TalkTalk, Virgin Media and Zen Internet – signed up to the scheme when it launched. Together they paid over £20.7m in automatic compensation over the six months between July and December 2019.

The information in this report has been collected through our own research, directly from the larger telecoms providers, and from third parties. The high-level findings in this report are supported by an [interactive data tool](#), which provides detailed information on how providers compare across all the data sets we have collected.

Mobile phones³

Summary

| | Average mobile | BT | EE | giffgaff | i mobile | O ₂ | sky | TESCO mobile | 3 | Virgin | vodafone |
|--|----------------|------|------|----------|----------|----------------|------|--------------|------|--------|----------|
| Satisfaction with service overall | 93% | N/A | 93% | 95% | N/A | 93% | N/A | 97% ↑ | 89% | 93% | 90% |
| Customers with a reason to complain | 3% ↓ | 3% | 2% | 2% | N/A | 1% ↓ | N/A | 3% | 6% ↑ | 3% | 3% |
| Overall satisfaction with complaint handling | 58% | N/A | 59% | 65% | N/A | 59% | N/A | 59% | 60% | 51% | 52% |
| Average call waiting time (mm:ss) | 1:18 ↑ | 0:34 | 0:57 | N/A | 1:43 | 0:43 | 2:06 | 0:35 | 2:37 | 1:35 | 1:12 |
| Ofcom complaints per 100,000 subscribers | 13 ↓ | 21 | 7 | N/A | 10 | 9 | 11 | 3 | 15 | 27 | 26 |

↑ ↓ Significantly higher or lower than the previous year (2018) for all data sources with the exception of Customer Satisfaction tracker, for which the previous year was 2019.

XX Statistically significantly better than the sector average at the 95% confidence level for market research results / top performer for MI data.

XX Statistically significantly worse than the sector average at the 95% confidence level for market research results / bottom performers for MI data.

- As in 2018, **more than nine in ten mobile customers (93%) were satisfied with the overall service** provided. Compared to the previous year, **Tesco Mobile customers were more satisfied with their overall service.**⁴

³ For definitions and methodology, see relevant report section and Annexes 1 and 3. Giffgaff does not have a call centre and it does not meet the market share threshold to be included in Ofcom's published complaints data. Ofcom's market research includes UK communications providers with a market share of c.4% or more. There are exceptions; providers that do not meet this level have been reported on if the base sizes are sufficient.

⁴ Tesco Mobile and giffgaff use the O2 network and Virgin Mobile uses the EE network. Differences in satisfaction with network performance compared to these networks may be due to different geographic distribution of customers or, potentially, a halo effect.