

Reference: 01698568

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

24 October 2023

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and network operators. This request was received on 16 October 2023 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request & our response

‘What is the different between a ISP and a network operator?’

We categorise companies for our regulatory purposes – for example in the Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26, there are a range of publicly available sources that will provide further information on companies involved in providing telecoms services.

In the Glossary to the Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26¹, we said:

- An ISP (Internet Service Provider) is a company that provides end-users with access to the internet and other related services such as data storage, email, and other cloud services.
- A CP (Communications Provider) is an organisation that provides electronic communications services. We often refer to them as telecoms providers or network operators.

‘Do they have specific licenses or certification requirements in the UK?’

The [General Conditions of Entitlement](#) are the regulatory conditions that all providers of electronic communications networks and services must comply with if they want to provide services in the UK.

They replaced the former licensing regime which applied under the Telecommunications Act 1984 until 25 July 2003, when the EU communications regulatory framework was implemented in the UK through the Communications Act 2003.

The General Conditions are conditions which are of general application. We can impose them on all communications providers or on all providers of networks or services of a particular description. Unlike universal service conditions, “SMP” conditions (which are imposed as a result of a finding of significant market power) and access-related conditions, General Conditions cannot be imposed on specific individual providers.

¹ Ofcom, 2021. [Statement: Promoting investment and competition in fibre networks – Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021-26](#), page 366.

For more information about the regime see [our website](#).

'Is there a register of ISPs or broadband operators in the UK? - if so I kindly request a copy.'

As noted above, there isn't a licensing regime in the telecommunications sector. We do not hold a register of all ISP's or broadband operators in the United Kingdom. However, we publish a [list](#) of fixed and mobile phone and broadband providers that are signed up to one of the approved Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes.

You may also find it helpful to visit the [Internet Services Providers' Association's](#) website and look at its membership list.

If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Requests

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF