

## C5 Measures to meet the needs of vulnerable consumers and end-users with disabilities

This condition aims to ensure that communications providers give sufficient consideration to the particular needs of people with disabilities and people whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. It also aims to ensure that people with disabilities can obtain comparable access to public electronic communications services to that of non-disabled people and that their access to these services when they have a genuine need is protected.

### Scope

C5.1 The provisions of this **Condition** apply as follows:

- (a) **Conditions** C5.2 to C5.10 and C5.13 to C5.18 apply to providers of **Public Electronic Communications Services**; and
- (b) **Conditions** C5.11 and C5.12 apply to any person who provides:
  - (i) **Internet Access Services to End-Users**; or
  - (ii) **Number-based Interpersonal Communications Services**, where it is technically feasible to provide an **Emergency Video Relay Service to End-Users**;

each person to whom a provision applies is a '**Regulated Provider**' for the purposes of that provision.

### Policy for consumers whose circumstances may make them vulnerable

- C5.2 **Regulated Providers** must establish, publish and comply with clear and effective policies and procedures for the fair and appropriate treatment of **Consumers** whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- C5.3 Such policies and procedures must include, as a minimum:
- (a) practices for ensuring the fair and appropriate treatment of **Consumers** who the **Regulated Provider** has been informed or should otherwise reasonably be aware may be vulnerable due to circumstances such as age, physical or learning disability, physical or mental illness, low literacy, communications difficulties or changes in circumstances such as bereavement;
  - (b) how information about the needs of **Consumers** who the **Regulated Provider** has been informed or should otherwise reasonably be aware may be vulnerable will be recorded and the different channels by which these **Consumers** will be able to make contact with, and receive information from, the **Regulated Provider**; and
  - (c) how the impact and effectiveness of the policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated.
- C5.4 **Regulated Providers** must provide to **Ofcom**, on request, any information considered by **Ofcom** to be necessary to demonstrate compliance with this **Condition**.
- C5.5 **Regulated Providers** must ensure that all staff are made aware of the policies and procedures and appropriately trained, including (if applicable) on how to refer **Consumers** to specialist teams or members of staff who have received additional training.

## Measures for end-users with disabilities

- C5.6 **Regulated Providers** must take the measures needed to meet the needs of **End-Users** with disabilities set out in **Conditions** C5.7 to C5.16 and take all reasonable steps to ensure that such measures are widely publicised, taking into consideration the need to disseminate information in appropriate formats through appropriate channels for **End-Users** with disabilities.<sup>14</sup>

## Access to directory information

- C5.7 **Regulated Providers** must ensure that any **End-User** of the **Number-based Interpersonal Communications Services** it provides who is unable to easily use a printed **Directory** due to visual impairment or other disabilities, can access, free of charge, **Directory Information** and **Directory Enquiry Facilities** in a form which is appropriate to meet their needs. **Regulated Providers** must ensure that such **Directory Enquiry Facilities** are capable of connecting such an **End-User** to a requested **Telephone Number** at the request of that **End-User**.

## Relay service

- C5.8 **Regulated Providers** must ensure that any **End-User** of the **Voice Communications Services** it provides who, because of his or her disabilities, needs to make or receive calls in which some or all of the call is made or received in text format, can access and use a **Relay Service** which has been approved by **Ofcom**.
- C5.9 In providing access to **Relay Services** under **Condition** C5.8, **Regulated Providers** must comply with the following requirements:
- (a) any charge for the conveyance of messages to which a **Relay Service** applies must not exceed the equivalent price as if that conveyance had been made directly between the caller and the called person without use of a **Relay Service**;
  - (b) in making the charges set out in **Condition** C5.9(a), **Regulated Providers** must apply a special tariff scheme designed to compensate **Subscribers** for the additional time taken by **End-Users** with disabilities to make telephone calls using a **Relay Service** where, because of their disabilities, those **End-Users** need to make calls using a **Relay Service**;
  - (c) **Regulated Providers** must ensure measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of communications between **End-Users** of the **Relay Service**;
  - (d) subject to **Condition** C3.11, **Regulated Providers** must ensure that the **Relay Service** is available for lawful use by **End-Users** at all times;
  - (e) **Regulated Providers** must ensure **End-Users** are not prevented from communicating with other **End-Users** of other approved **Relay Services**; and
  - (f) **Regulated Providers** must comply with any directions in respect of the **Relay Services** which **Ofcom** may make from time to time.

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<sup>14</sup> See [Ofcom's guide to publicising services available to disabled people](#)

## Mobile SMS access to emergency organisations

C5.10 **Regulated Providers** who are **Mobile Service Providers** must provide any **End-User** of their **Mobile Communications Services** who has hearing or speech impairments with **Mobile SMS Access to Emergency Organisations** by using the emergency call numbers “112” and “999” at no charge.

## Emergency video relay access to emergency organisations

C5.11 **Regulated Providers** must:

- (a) provide or contract to provide an **Emergency Video Relay Service** which has been approved by **Ofcom**; and
- (b) ensure that any **End-User** of **Internet Access Services** or **Number-based Interpersonal Communications Services** they provide, who communicates in British Sign Language because of their disabilities, can access and use the **Emergency Video Relay Service**.

C5.12 In providing access to and facilitating use of **Emergency Video Relay Services** under **Condition C5.11**, **Regulated Providers** must:

- (a) provide the **Emergency Video Relay Service** free of charge to the **End-User**;
- (b) where technically feasible, apply an incremental price of zero to any data traffic associated with the use of the **Emergency Video Relay Service**;
- (c) ensure measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of communications between **End-User** of the **Emergency Video Relay Service** and the **Emergency Organisations**;
- (d) subject to **Condition C3.11**, ensure that the **Emergency Video Relay Service** is available for lawful use by **End-Users** at all times; and
- (e) comply with any directions in respect of the **Emergency Video Relay Service** which **Ofcom** may make from time to time.

## Priority fault repair

C5.13 **Regulated Providers** must provide a priority **Fault Repair Service** as swiftly as practicable to any **End-User** of their **Fixed-line Telecommunications Service** with a disability who has a genuine need for an urgent repair. Charges for a priority **Fault Repair Service** must not exceed the **Regulated Provider’s** standard charge for a **Fault Repair Service**.

## Third party bill management<sup>15</sup>

C5.14 **Regulated Providers** must make the following special measures available to any of their **Subscribers** with a disability who needs assistance in managing his or her **Bills** for any **Public Electronic Communications Service**, at no cost to such a **Subscriber**:

- (a) enable such **Subscriber** to give prior notification to the **Regulated Provider** of a nominee to whom:
  - (i) that **Subscriber's Bill** shall initially be sent; or
  - (ii) any enquiry to establish why a **Bill** has not been paid shall be made;
- (b) permit the nominee to pay that **Subscriber's Bill** on their behalf;

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<sup>15</sup> See also [Ofcom’s guide setting out the difference between third party bill management and power of attorney](#)

- (c) require the nominee to give prior consent to the **Regulated Provider** to act in such capacity; and
- (d) not require the nominee to accept liability to pay the **Bills** of that **Subscriber**.

## Communications in an accessible format

C5.15 **Regulated Providers**, upon request, must make available free of charge to any **Subscriber** who requires it because of their disabilities, all communications with them in a reasonably acceptable format, including the following information:

- (a) any contract (or any subsequent variation) with that **Subscriber** for the provision of **Public Electronic Communications Services**, including any publicly available terms or conditions referred to in that contract or variation;
- (b) any **End-of-Contract Notification**;
- (c) any **Annual Best Tariff Notification**;
- (d) any **Bill** rendered or made available in respect of those services; and
- (e) any other communications (other than marketing communications) which relate to their services.

An acceptable format, for these purposes, includes for example: print large enough for such **Subscriber** to read, print on coloured paper, Braille or an electronic format appropriate to the reasonable needs of the **Subscriber**.

C5.16 **Regulated Providers**, upon request, must make available free of charge to any **Customer** who requires it because of their disabilities, any **Contract Information** or **Contract Summary** in accordance with **Conditions** C1.3 to C1.7, in a reasonably acceptable format.

An acceptable format, for these purposes, includes for example: print large enough for such **Customer** to read, print on coloured paper, Braille or an electronic format appropriate to the reasonable needs of the **Customer**.

## Consultation with the Consumer Panel

C5.17 **Regulated Providers** must consult the **Consumer Panel** on request to ensure that the requirements and interests of **End-Users** with disabilities and **Consumers** whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are fully taken into account in the development and provision of their services.

## Data protection

C5.18 This **Condition** applies subject to the requirements of **Relevant Data Protection Legislation**.