

Open letter to mobile providers

Consumer Protection Monitoring and
Compliance Team
Email: consumerprotection@ofcom.org.uk

11 July 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Roaming rules implementation

We are writing regarding the new roaming obligations on mobile providers¹ that will come into force from 1 October 2024.

In March 2024, Ofcom published its final decision on the changes to the General Conditions and new guidance relating to roaming and inadvertent roaming (when a customer's device connects to a network in a different country even though the customer isn't physically in that country).²

From 1 October 2024, mobile providers will need to notify customers when they start roaming and provide information about charges that apply. Mobile providers will be required to provide clear, free to access information to help customers understand the charges that apply when using their mobile abroad. This includes any fair use limits or time limits that apply, that they can set a spend cap to limit their spend, and where to find additional information about roaming.

Inadvertent roaming

Sometimes devices inadvertently roam to a network in a different country even though the customer is not physically in that country. This is a particular issue for people in Northern Ireland, with many thousands of people living near the border. It can also lead to some customers on the English coast inadvertently roaming on to French networks.

From 1 October 2024, mobile providers will also need to give customers clear, comprehensible and accurate information about how to avoid inadvertent roaming in and outside of the UK, particularly in border regions. This could include proactively alerting customers to the likelihood of inadvertent roaming in areas where this often happens. Mobile providers will also need to put measures in place to enable customers to reduce or limit their spend on roaming while in the UK. This could include treating mobile usage in Ireland the same as being in the UK.

Implementation

We note that some providers contract out the sending of roaming alerts. For example, via a wholesale arrangement with a mobile network operator or a contract with another third party. Providers and their partners will need to work together to deliver roaming alerts in line with the new

¹ As defined in the General Conditions as "a Communications Provider that provides a Mobile Communications Service".

² [Mobile Roaming: Strengthening customer protection \(ofcom.org.uk\)](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-roaming-strengthening-customer-protection)

rules. We expect both parties to engage constructively with each other and to take proactive steps to ensure compliance with our new rules.

Ofcom has published guidance on General Condition C3 – roaming requirements which can be found at Annex 3 of our decision document. This also includes examples of good practice which we encourage providers to adopt.

If you have any questions about implementing this obligation, please contact consumerprotection@ofcom.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Consumer Protection Monitoring and Compliance Team