

talk

Our phone service code of practice

Introduction

This is our code of practice, which explains the services we offer, provides some general information and tells you what to do if you have any problems.

talk with SWALEC is a calls and line rental product. Your phone number will remain the same on transfer to us, you don't need any additional equipment and there is no need to dial any extra numbers. To take up this service you must be connected to a BT telephone exchange.

Please note that compliance with this code does not guarantee compliance with any legal requirement.

Non-compliance with this code does not affect the validity of any contract between SWALEC and the consumer, unless otherwise provided by law.

Copies of this code are available on our website: www.swalec.co.uk. We will also send a copy free of charge in response to a request. Our website also has a copy of our terms and conditions.

Itret Latif, our Telecoms Business Manager, is responsible for making sure that we keep to this code. If you would like to comment on the code, or any compliance matters relating to it, please e-mail Itret at:

Email: customerservice@swalec.co.uk

Post: Or you can write to Itret at:
talk with SWALEC
PO Box 360
Portsmouth
PO6 2YJ

Your bill

Payment is by Direct Debit.

We will send you a statement every three months or monthly depending on your choice of billing option. If you register to receive your bills online then you can also view your last statement details on our secure website: www.swalec.co.uk.

Your package charge includes payment for the line rental of your line which allows you to make and receive phone calls via national and international services and provides access to emergency services, directory enquiries, non geographical and premium rate numbers.

We maintain a list of our prices on our website. This includes information on charges that apply to calls to any Premium Rate Service number, to Personal Numbers and clear information on what charges apply for calls to non-geographic numbers such as those beginning 0845 or 0870. If you have any queries on pricing information, please phone us on **0845 678 0053**.

We may apply a credit threshold to your account and if your usage approaches this threshold then we will try to contact you about this. If your usage means that the credit threshold is exceeded then we may restrict your telephone service, as discussed in the section below. This service is for your protection to help to keep you aware of your spending and to prevent large, unexpected bills.

Restricting your phone service

There are a number of circumstances where we may restrict your phone service - for example, if we notice significantly increased use of your phone. For your protection, we would restrict the service as discussed below and we would try to get in touch with you to discuss the matter before we did this.

Restricting your phone service means:

- you will not be able to make calls (except to emergency numbers such as 999 and 112) and any call you try to make may be diverted through to us;
- incoming calls will not initially be affected, but we may prevent these calls if we still had not received payment you are due to make to us.

If we have to disconnect your phone service, you will not be able to make or receive any calls.

What happens if a bill is not paid?

If your direct debit payment is not received, an extra charge per month will be made which is set out in our price list. This is available on our website at www.swalec.co.uk or by calling us on **0845 678 0053**.

If full payment is not received:

- we will send you a reminder.
- we may phone you to discuss payment.
- we may charge you for any additional costs we incur in obtaining payment of the sum of money you owe us.
- we will give you notice in writing before we restrict or disconnect your phone service. The notice you receive will also give you details of any charges that you are due to pay.
- we may disconnect your service with prior notice and you will have to pay more charges.
- we may charge you to resume your service once you have been restricted or disconnected.
- we may use a national debt collection agency to help us collect payment.

A list of the administrative charges that may be applied can be found in our price list.

Special Services

We can help you if you find it difficult to read your bill and offer a range of special services.

Talking summary bills

If you are blind or have trouble seeing or reading, our talking summary bill service may help. One of our advisors will phone you, read a summary of your phone bill to you and answer any questions you may have. Then we will post it to you in the usual way.

Easy-to-read bills

If you have problems reading the normal print on your bill, we can send you a bill that is easier to read because the print is larger.

Help from others

If a friend or relative usually helps you when you get your phone bill, we can send it to them direct. This makes it easier for you and for them to deal with the bill. If you would like a copy too, please make sure you ask us.

Braille bills

If you would like to receive your bills in Braille, we can arrange this for you.

Textline

Phone Textline on **0800 622 839**, if you suffer from hearing loss or impaired speech and you are a text telephone user. Open between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and between 8am and 2pm on Saturdays.

Please do not phone Textline unless you are using a text telephone to send typed messages.

Relay Service

This is a nationally available service, which allows you to make and receive calls in text format. If you choose to use this service, we will ensure that you will be charged at no more than the equivalent price for your standard calls as if you were dialling directly. Further information can be found on our price list.

Directory Enquiries

If you are visually impaired or otherwise disabled which means that you are unable to use a printed directory we can help you register for a directory to suit your needs which will be free of charge.

Priority Fault Repair Service

If you have a fault with your telephone service and your personal situation leaves you vulnerable without your telephone then we will do all we can to prioritise repairing the fault which will be at no extra charge above normal repair charges.

Languages

If your first language is not English, please let us know when calling us. Please say in English which language you want to use and we will try to provide a translator. This may involve a short wait.

What happens when you move property

When you move house we can usually arrange for your existing telephone number to move with you. This may be arranged if you are moving to a house within the same local exchange area. We can also offer to redirect your calls to another telephone number of your choice whilst your telephone transfer is being completed. We can also ensure that your existing line features remain the same.

To help with the smooth transfer of your telephone service, we may need to ask you a few questions about your new property. We may need to know if the property is newly built, if there are any sockets already and the date of your move. Should you require a new line at your new address we will be able to arrange to provide one for you.

Please tell us at least 10 working days before you move out of a property so we can arrange to close your account. If you move without telling us, or tell us less than 10 working days beforehand, you may be billed for calls made by the next occupier. Please call us on **0845 678 0053**.

Transferring or porting your telephone number

If you have your telephone service provided by another company over a BT line, then we will usually be able to transfer your existing phone number to your talk with SWALEC account when you start to take our service. You will not be charged for this transfer and if for any reason we are unable to transfer your number, we will give you a new phone number free of charge.

If you transfer your service to us from a non-BT network, then line provision or line conversion charges are likely to apply and there will also be a charge for transferring your existing phone number to our talk service. These charges are set out in our price list, available on our website or by calling **0845 678 0053**.

To transfer your number in this case, you will need to tell us:

- What company you are using;
- Your home address; and
- Your existing phone number.

If you move away from talk with SWALEC, your new provider will have information on any costs involved in transferring to their network. Where your telephone service will continue to be provided over a BT line, we would not expect any difficulties in transferring your telephone number but you should check with your new provider.

What to do if you have a fault

Faults can be reported to our Customer Service Team by calling **0800 294 4721** at the following times:

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 2pm
Excludes Sundays and bank holidays.

We aim to diagnose faults as quickly as possible and establish the cause of the problem. We will suggest you carry out some simple tests to check if the fault is in the wiring of your own equipment. Details of these are outlined in our Telephone Faults Guidance Document, which is available on our website at www.swalec.co.uk/RegulatoryInformation/Default.aspx

Repairing faults on the network is part of the maintenance covered within your package charge. Repair of faulty wiring or equipment that is not owned by or rented from BT Openreach is excluded. If a fault proves to be in your own equipment or wiring then you may be charged for the engineer's visit. The charges for this service are detailed in our price list.

If an engineer needs to visit your property, we will try to arrange a day and time that is convenient for you. However, unless you have one of our advance maintenance schemes, engineers can only repair faults in normal working hours.

Useful Information on certain types of telephone number

In order to make sure that users of telephone services are provided with readily accessible and accurate information about Premium Rate Services and about the charges made for calls to number translation services, 0870 numbers and Personal Numbers, all telephone companies who provide access to these services and numbers are required to set out relevant information and commitments in their codes of practice. We set these out below.

Our Customer Service staff training and monitoring covers Number Translation Services, 0870 numbers, Personal Numbers and Premium Rate Services so that we can respond to customer queries about calls to these types of number.

Number Translation Services (NTS)

Number Translation Services (NTS) numbers are those beginning with 08 and are typically used by businesses and organisations to provide a single number for customers to call regardless of the actual location of where the call is received. In the list of prices on our website at www.swalec.co.uk, we clearly show the charges that apply for calls to these numbers. We also explain the maximum charges that apply for calls to these numbers to new customers and in any advertising and promotional material that contains information on call charges.

0870 Numbers

Numbers beginning 0870 are country-wide NTS numbers, often used as contact numbers by service departments of large companies and by public service bodies. Calls to these numbers are included in some of our packages. For non-inclusive calls to 0870 numbers, our charges are different from those for calls to geographic numbers and these are shown clearly in the list of prices on our website at www.swalec.co.uk.

We also explain the maximum charges that apply for calls to these numbers to new customers and in any advertising and promotional material that contains information on call charges. Where the price of call packages is stated in this type of material, we set out clearly whether calls to 0870 numbers are included.

Personal Numbers

Personal Numbers are usually those beginning with 070. These enable the end user to be called using a personal telephone number and reached at almost any underlying number. These services are sometimes referred to as 'find me anywhere' services. Charges for making calls to these numbers can be significantly higher than the cost of calling mobile numbers and they are clearly set out in the list of prices on our website at www.swalec.co.uk.

We also explain the maximum charges that apply for calls to these numbers to new customers and in any advertising and promotional material that contains information on call charges. Where the price of call packages is stated in this type of material, we set out clearly whether calls to Personal Numbers are included.

Premium Rate Services (PRS)

Examples of Premium Rate numbers are listed below:

- Numbers starting with 090 or 091
- Reverse billed SMS (short message service) with content using short codes. Short codes use 4 or 5 numbers usually starting with 2, 6 or 8.
- Directory enquiry numbers (DQ) or numbers beginning with 118.

PRS calls are usually more expensive than calls to other telephone numbers. Information on the charges you will receive for dialling PRS numbers is available on our website at www.swalec.co.uk.

The majority of the cost to the customer from these calls is received by the service provider who is responsible for the content of the call. These service providers are responsible for complying with most of the obligations required in the PhoneyPayPlus code of practice. The rest of the cost of these calls is shared by the consumer's telephone company, i.e. talk with SWALEC, who receive a small fee for these calls, and the telephone company that contracts with the service provider by providing network facilities.

Reverse Charge Calls

Reverse charge calls enable a caller, via operator services or specific reverse call charge providers, to connect to a telephone number where the receiving party pays the call charges. If the customer who receives the call accepts it, they will pay all the charges applicable for making and receiving the call.

Charges for receiving this type of call can be significantly higher than standard call rates and care should be taken to ensure that you are aware of the cost of the call connection charge and subsequent pence per minute charge before accepting the call. These charges can be confirmed verbally by the operator or provider before the charges are accepted and the reverse call connected. For further information and advice on this topic, please refer to the document on our website called Operator Service Guide or call our Customer Service team on **0845 678 0053**.

PhonepayPlus

PhonepayPlus is an industry funded regulatory body for all premium rate charged telecommunications services. The PhonepayPlus code of practice covers the content, promotion and overall operation of Premium Rate Services. The code of practice is available on the PhonepayPlus website (www.phonepayplus.org.uk). Consumers can use this free and independent service to gain information and help settle disputes over Premium Rate Services.

PhonepayPlus investigates complaints about the promotion and operation of services that involve the use of a telephone connection via a premium rate number. This includes services available through various mediums such as voice (telephone), fax, Internet, mobile phone, Short Message Services (SMS) and interactive TV.

PhonepayPlus regulates any service/promotion that is operating on one of the following number ranges:

- Numbers beginning with 090 or 091;
- Directory enquiry (DQ) services operating on numbers beginning with 118
- Numbers beginning with 0871, 0872 or 0873 which are listed in our price list as Special Services; and
- Reverse-billed SMS (you are charged for the receipt of messages) containing content operating on shortcodes. Shortcodes have 4 or 5 digits and start with 8, 6 or 2.

How to complain

If you have a complaint about any of these services then we recommend that you check the number in question using the number checking facility, available on the PhonepayPlus website at www.phonepayplus.org.uk. This will provide you with information about the number and the company providing the service.

After checking the number in question on the PhonepayPlus website, please use one of the following methods to further your complaint:

- If you have a hard copy of the promotion in question (i.e. a leaflet from a newspaper), send this in along with your complaint in writing to: **PhonepayPlus, FREEPOST WC5468, London, SE1 2BR**;
- Use their on-line complaint form on their website www.phonepayplus.org.uk; or
- Call their free helpline number on **0800 500 212** from 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

Otelo, of which we are a member, can investigate if you have a complaint that we cannot resolve about calls to PRS numbers appearing on your phone bill.

Internet Scams

There are currently scams that use software transmitted through the Internet to alter a computer's dial-up Internet connection without your knowledge or consent. These scams appear in your computer system after downloading harmful material from the Internet. The scam works by charging you a premium rate number every time you dial up to connect to the Internet after the scam is operational. Installing the latest anti-virus and firewall software will help protect your computer and prevent this from happening. We recommend you speak to your PC supplier for further guidance on computer security if you are concerned about or have suffered from these scams already. You may also wish to consider barring access to some PRS numbers.

How to bar access to PRS numbers

We offer a call barring service to block calls to all 0900-0909 numbers. If you want to use this service then please call our Customer Service Team on **0845 678 0053**.

Preference Services

These are statutory registers where you can set up details of your telephone and/or fax number to register your preference not to receive unsolicited sales and marketing telephone or fax numbers. It is a legal requirement that all organisations do not try to contact numbers registered on the relevant preference service unless they have your consent to do so.

Telephone Preference Service

If you do not wish to receive unsolicited telemarketing calls, register online at www.tpsonline.org.uk or call **0845 070 0707**.

Fax Preference Service

If you do not wish to receive unsolicited telemarketing faxes, register online at www.fpsonline.org.uk or call **0845 070 0702**.

Getting in touch

If you have a question about your bill or service please phone us on **0845 678 0053**. We are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 2pm Saturday.

We prefer you to phone rather than write because it is quicker, more direct and easier for us to answer your questions straight away. But if you want to write, our address is:

talk with SWALEC

PO Box 360
Portsmouth
PO6 2YJ

You can also contact us through our website at www.swalec.co.uk

If you have any queries about the information or commitments set out in this code of practice, you can contact us as set out above or alternatively e-mail our Customer Service Team at:

customerservice@swalec.co.uk

If you need to cancel your contract, please phone us. We will cancel straight away if your transfer has not been completed. Otherwise, you will have to give us notice and it could take up to 4 weeks for a transfer to your chosen service provider to complete.

What to do if you are unhappy

Information about our complaint handling processes is set out in our customer complaints code, which is available on our website and which we can also send to you if you contact us as discussed above.

Other information

The Office of Communications (Ofcom) is the regulator for the UK telecommunications industry. They make sure phone companies meet their obligations under telecoms and competition laws and regulations. Their contact details are:

Post: Office of Communications
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

Phone: 0300 123 3333 or 020 7981 3040

Textphone: 020 7981 3043

Fax: 020 7981 3333

Website: www.ofcom.org.uk

This is based on a code of practice that Ofcom approved in March 2004.



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