

# **Southern Communications Code of Practice**

**Including our Basic Code of Practice and our Code of Practice for Premium Rate Services and NTS calls**

## ***Part 1 – Southern Communications Basic Code of Practice for Small Business Customers.***

### ***Introduction to our company and services:***

Southern Communications are an independent telecommunications company that delivers communications services to business customers throughout the UK. While we may not provide all the component parts of our services ourselves we will liaise with our suppliers to ensure that any problems with their services are resolved promptly.

### ***Purpose of this Code of Practice:***

This code informs you about our products, services, customer-care policies and where to find information about our charges and terms and conditions.

### ***How to contact us:***

Please contact our Customer Service Team:

By phone: 01256 391110 including Weekday Evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

By email: [customerservices@southern-comms.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@southern-comms.co.uk)

By fax: 01256 391111

By letter: Southern Communications Ltd, Glebe Farm, Down Street, Dummer, Hampshire, RG25 2AD.

Website: [www.southern-comms.co.uk](http://www.southern-comms.co.uk)

### ***Our commitment to you:***

We are committed to giving you the highest quality of customer service. When we purchase our services from wholesale providers, we choose those providers carefully to ensure that you get a high-quality service. We make every reasonable effort to supply services that satisfy your requirements. We work to all relevant laws and regulations.

### ***Our products and services:***

- Landline calls
- CPS – Carrier Pre-Selection
- WLR – Wholesale Line Rental
- ISDN – Digital telephone lines
- Data Connectivity Services
- VoIP & IP telephony services
- Hosted Desktop & Hosted Telephony services
- Non-Geographic numbers
- Intelligent Call Routing
- Mobile telephone and data services

- Equipment and maintenance service
- Audio conferencing
- Merchant Services

For more details on any of our products and services, or to place an order immediately, please contact us on 01256 391046

***Terms and conditions:***

When you subscribe to a service from Southern Communications we will ask you to sign a contract and refer you the terms and conditions detailed on our website. If you have any questions concerning services please phone our Customer Relations Team on 01256 931046 or queries concerning contract or pricing should also be addressed to our Customer Relations Team on 01256 391046. We may carry out a credit check as part of our assessment procedures.

Where applicable, the standard minimum contract term for our services is 12 months, however, longer or shorter term contracts may also be offered. We aim to provide services promptly subject to the availability and installation of any equipment and, where appropriate, lines to your premises. If we need to carry out a survey of your premises or lay additional cabling, we will inform you of the revised timescales as soon as we can.

***Cancellation:***

If you decide to cancel your new order or agreement with ourselves, you may do so without charge within 10 working days from the date of order, the exception to this will be if the service has already provided or has reach the point of no return and we are unable to cancel. This is not applicable to renewed agreements where service is already provided. If you wish to terminate your contract within your agreed minimum term, please call our Customer Relations Team on 01256 391046. We will charge you a fee as set out in our terms and conditions. After the minimum term you can cancel your service by e-mailing our Customer Relations Team at [customerrelations@southern-comms.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@southern-comms.co.uk), giving us 30 days' notice to expire on the contract anniversary date or at end of the renewed agreement or that in subsequent term (*please refer to our terms and conditions for definition of these terms*). If your business has less than 10 employees, after the expiry of the minimum term the agreement can terminated by serving 30 days written notice.

***Faults and repair:***

Please call our Fault Service Team on 01256 391110 if you experience a fault with any of our services. We aim to have this investigated and repaired within the parameters set to us by OPENREACH or other service providers, or as agreed in your maintenance contract. This time frame will vary dependant on severity of fault, type of service and level of care in place on the line.

***Compensation and refund policy:***

Our policy is to assess each claim on a case by case basis. We aim to investigate any claims and respond within five working days for an internal matter, or following closure of an external issue. We will confirm to you whether the case can be dealt with internally or will need to be presented to our suppliers. Any refunds that are due will be credited to you, if dealt with internally, on the next invoice, or, if external influences are involved, following reimbursement to us.

**Price lists:**

Our pricing structure is compiled on a case by case basis where further information can be obtained from our Customer Relations Team on 01256 391046. We will write to you in advance giving a minimum of 30 days' notice if we change the pricing structure effecting products and services on your account. This notification could be by e-mail or on n invoice up to four weeks in advance.

**Billing:**

We will send you invoices on a monthly basis via email notification or post as agreed. You can choose to pay us via a range of options including Direct Debit, BACS, Cheque or Credit Card. These are agreed at the start of your contract. If you wish to change your method of payment at any time, please call our Billing Team on 01256 391071. If you have difficulty paying your bill, please contact us on 01256 391054 or [payments@southern-comms.co.uk](mailto:payments@southern-comms.co.uk) and we will try to arrange a payment plan for you. We will do all we can to help our business customers to manage their bills and avoid disconnection.

**If you are moving home or office:**

Please call our Customer Relations Team on 01256 391046 no later than 45 days before your move date. We will amend your account and billing requirements as necessary. We will endeavour to offer you the same telephone number to minimise disruption.

**Number porting:**

Southern Communications recognise that keeping your existing telephone numbers may be important to you. If you move your business to us and wish to keep your number we will arrange it wherever possible. We will work with you to ensure that the services are switched over at a convenient and appropriate time. For more information, please call our Customer Relations Team on 01256 391046.

**Directory Entries:**

You are entitled to a Directory Enquiry listing (including an entry in the Phone Book) for both your fixed and mobile telephone numbers. If you do want your details included, please contact our Customer Service Team on 01256 391110.

**Fraud Protection:**

At Southern Communications we take fraud protection very seriously and apply international call barring and premium rate barring as requested at no cost. For further peace of mind we also supply our fraud protection service Voice Safe to provide financial protection of up to £10,000.00 in the event of a fraudulent call incident (terms and conditions apply as per our website).

**Complaints:**

We make every effort to ensure that our customers are happy with the level of service provided along with the products and service they receive from us. Despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. We take every customer complaint very seriously and aim to resolve them quickly and efficiently. Our Code of Practice on Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution explains how customers can complain. The code also provides information on how we deal with complaints.

**Nuisance calls:**

We take the problem of nuisance calls and malicious communications very seriously. We tackle it by working closely with the police and others in the communications industry. If you have been a victim of this activity, please call the Customer Service Team on 01256 391110 to report the incident and for information on how to deal with it.

Copies of this Code are available in larger print and other formats on request,

**Data protection:**

We comply fully with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Part 2 –Southern Communications Code of Practice for Premium Rate Services and NTS Calls****Purpose of this Code of Practice:**

This code informs you about our policies on providing information about Premium Rate Service (PRS) calls and on our charging policy for calls to NTS and PRS numbers.

**Premium rate services:**

Premium rate services (PRS) are telephone numbers that offer some form of information or entertainment that is charged to your phone bill. UK-based PRS numbers are normally prefixed by "09". The prefix 0871 is now also designated as a Premium rate number and subject to PRS regulation. The typical service for these types of numbers include TV vote lines, mobile ringtone downloads, technical helplines, charity fund-raising and adult entertainment.

The charges for these services are added to your telephone bill. It is also typical for calls to these services from, for example, mobile phones, cable networks or public payphones will generally cost more than the advertised rate. Our charges for calling these services are available on request from our Customer Relations Team.

If you have a problem with PRS, we can help. We can provide advice on checking the telephone number of any PRS charges that appear on your bill and will try to help you identify the premium rate service provider. We can use call barring to restrict access to "09" numbers. Please call our Customer Service Team on 01256 391110 for advice in this area. You can also ask for help from PhonepayPlus (formerly ICSTIS), which is the industry-funded regulatory body for Premium Rate Services. Phone Pay Plus operates a code of practice that sets out standards for the operation of PRS. You can use the Phone Pay Plus website at [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk) to check PRS numbers direct or to download a complaint form. Phone Pay Plus has legal powers to require a provider of PRS to amend its service or promotional material (or both) and can also impose penalties on content service providers. For other ways to contact PhonepayPlus, see the "Useful addresses" section below.

**Number translation services:**

Number translation services (NTS) are based on numbers that are normally pre-fixed either "03" or "08". For example, 0800 and 0808 are used to provide freephone services (some freephone services are also provided on 0500 numbers). 03, 0844, 0845 and 0870 numbers are used for many purposes including dial-up pay-as-you-go Internet access, sales/customer service lines, information services, technical helplines and telephone banking. These types of numbers are also used by organisations to help them provide call-management features such as intelligent call routing and fax-to-email services.

Charges for calling services on NTS numbers are added to your telephone bill. Calling these services from, for example, mobile phones, cable networks or public payphones will generally cost more than

the advertised rate but communications providers must publish prices for calls to these types of numbers where these are higher than for calls to geographic numbers. Our charges for calling these services are available on request from our Customer Relations Team.

If you are unhappy with the help you have received from us on a problem with PRS or NTS, please contact the Customer Services Manager on 01256 391110 or email [customerservices@southern-comms.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@southern-comms.co.uk) who have the responsibility for compliance with our code of practice for PRS and NTS. You may also complain using the complaints procedure set out in our complaints code.

#### ***Internet diallers:***

If you use the Internet, it is possible for software to be placed on your computer without you knowing - using the same methods as for computer viruses. This type of software (known as Internet or rogue diallers) can then make calls to PRS and NTS numbers without your knowledge. Phone Pay Plus has been given responsibility for policing this type of activity and you can contact them via [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk) to ask for help or to report examples of this type of abuse. For other ways to contact PhonepayPlus, see the "Useful addresses" section below. We can also help by barring calls to 09 numbers.

#### ***The Telephone Preference Service:***

If you don't want to get sales and marketing calls you have not requested, you can add your details to a list run by the Telephone Preference Service (TPS). If your number is on the list, it is illegal for a company to call you for marketing purposes. You can contact the Telephone Preference Service via [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk) or by telephoning 0345 0700707.

#### **Useful addresses:**

**tSOL**– PO Box 730, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 6WU. Tel: 01925 430049 or 03304401614  
email: [enquiries@otelo.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@otelo.org.uk) Website: [www.otelo.org.uk](http://www.otelo.org.uk)

**Ofcom** - Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA. Tel: 020 7981 3040 or 0300 123 3333 email: [contact@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:contact@ofcom.org.uk) Website: [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

**PhonepayPlus (formerly Icstis)**- Clove Building, 4 Maguire Street, London, SE1 2NQ. Tel: 0300 3030 020 or 020 7940 7474 Website: [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk) email [info@phonepayplus.org.uk](mailto:info@phonepayplus.org.uk)

**Telephone Preference Service** - DMA House, 70 Margaret Street, London W1W 8SS Tel: 0345 070 0707 Website: [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)

**Federation of Communication Services (FCS)** - Burnhill Business Centre, Provident House, Burrell Row, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT. Tel: 020 8249 6363 email: [fcs@fcs.org.uk](mailto:fcs@fcs.org.uk) Website: [www.fcs.org.uk](http://www.fcs.org.uk)

## **Southern Communications**

### **Code of Practice on Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution**

Southern Communications is an independent telecommunications company that delivers communications services to business customers throughout the UK. While we may not provide all the component parts of our services ourselves we will liaise with our suppliers to ensure that any problems with their services are resolved promptly.

We make every effort to ensure that our customers are happy with the level of service, and the products and service they receive from us. However, despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. We take customer complaints very seriously and aim to resolve them quickly and efficiently.

If you have a complaint about any part of our service, please contact our Customer Relations Team using one of the following:

By phone: 01256 391046

By email: [customerrelations@southern-comms.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@southern-comms.co.uk)

If you telephone, our advisors will ask you about your complaint and seek to resolve the problem while you are on the line. During any discussions we will protect the privacy of the information that we hold on you. To do this we may have to ask you questions to confirm that we are speaking to the right person.

If you make your complaint by email or in writing, we will acknowledge receipt, advise how and when we will next respond and provide you with a contact point for checking progress on the resolution of your complaint.

We will try to resolve your complaint quickly and efficiently, and to keep you informed at all times. We normally aim to resolve complaints within 10 working days but, depending on the nature of the complaint, this is not always possible. However, if you are not happy with progress in resolving your complaint you can ask the person to whom you are speaking to escalate the matter to their manager or to the Operations Director David Phillips or Managing Director Alex Moody or failing that the Chief Executive Paul Bradford. If we cannot resolve the problem, we will write to you to say so. If it has been more than 8 weeks from the date you first contacted us to complain or you have received a letter from us saying that your complaint has reached "deadlock", then you may ask for help from:.

**The Ombudsman Services LTD (tOSL), 3300 Daresbury Park, Daresbury, Warrington WA4 4HS  
Tel: 01925 430049 or 03304401614 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm**