



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

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For immediate release

ComReg Media Release

ComReg welcomes telecoms industry commitments to assist customers during COVID-19

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today welcomed the announcement by Telecommunications Industry Ireland, the IBEC group for the sector, that the main electronic communications providers have signed up to a common set of commitments to assist and help their customers in the use of electronic communications during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Service providers will introduce their own specific measures to meet these commitments and they may also go beyond this common set of commitments. Due to the imposition of necessary social distancing measures people are staying at home. As a result, we are now depending more heavily on electronic communications systems to keep in touch with family, friends and work colleagues.

The economic impact of COVID-19 has meant many people now find themselves in very difficult financial circumstances. Some consumers are worried about whether they will be able to use telecommunications to the extent they need during this pandemic.

ComReg Commissioner, Robert Mourik said: "In order to address consumer concerns, ComReg and Industry have identified a number of commitments that service providers are making to assist consumers during this difficult time. The commitments are designed to give consumers reassurance about communications usage while maintaining the overall stability of our electronic communications networks. These measures will also help to ensure that consumers who are financially vulnerable as a result of the COVID-19 crisis will get assistance from their service provider to agree an affordable solution for their voice and data service. Service providers may go beyond these common set of commitments and introduce additional measures for their customers."

To date, the commitments have been made by - BT Ireland, eir, Pure Telecom, Sky Ireland, Tesco Mobile Ireland, Three Ireland, Virgin Media Ireland and Vodafone.

The COVID-19 Consumer Commitments are as follows:

1. Any fixed broadband customers who do not have unlimited usage already as standard will be given the opportunity, if they require, to upgrade their package (which may be on a temporary basis), with their current service provider
2. Any customer who does not have fixed broadband and who relies solely on mobile access to the Internet will have the opportunity to avail of affordable unlimited mobile data access/package from their service provider
3. Fair usage policies will not be automatically applied to unlimited fixed and mobile data packages
4. Service providers may implement appropriate permitted traffic management measures to avoid network congestion
5. Access to healthcare and educational resource websites identified by the Government will be zero-rated for all customers where technically feasible.
6. So that customers can remain connected during the crisis, service providers will engage with any customer that contacts them who is in financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19 and has difficulty paying their bills to agree the best way of keeping them connected to voice and data
7. Service Providers will work with ComReg in the event of complaints raised to ComReg by consumers, who consider they are not being treated in accordance with these commitments.

These commitments will be implemented by operators as soon as practicable. Each service provider will provide details and implementation updates on their own website. The commitments will remain available to consumers until 30 June 2020 and will be reviewed in advance of that date if needed.

ENDS

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