

ComReg.ie



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

All about switching mobile and broadband providers

Information and advice on switching your mobile, broadband & home phone services



Who is ComReg?

ComReg stands for the Commission for Communications Regulation.



We are an independent public body with powers under the law



We protect consumers and provide impartial, fair advice and information

At ComReg, we regulate:

- The electronic communications sector which includes phone and broadband, and;
- Postal services like An Post.

For further information visit [comreg.ie](https://www.comreg.ie)



Switching mobile providers

For bill pay customers, when you are considering switching your mobile provider, first you should find out if you are still in contract.

What do I do if I am still in contract?

If you are still in your minimum term contract with your service provider, you should check your contract for information on:

- » The duration of your contract
- » Any charges for ending the contract early
- » Whether there is a charge for unlocking the mobile phone

For example, most contracts for bill-pay customers are between 12 and 24 months. If you are still in contract, see our contracts section on comreg.ie for information.

What if I have a pre-pay or sim-only plan?

If you have a pre-pay or sim-only mobile plan you are free to switch providers and keep the same number, if the phone is unlocked, without incurring any fees.



Can I cancel my contract immediately?

If you sign up for a contract and you change your mind, you may have a right to cancel it during the cooling-off period. The cooling-off period rules differ depending on how you signed up for the contract. You should check your contract terms for more information.

What if my current contract is coming to an end?

Your service provider must make you aware that your contract is coming to an end and that you may cancel your current plan. Your provider should also send you **Best Tariff Advice** highlighting the best tariff, price plan or bundle, from your current service provider that suits your needs. This must be provided before the end of your contract, while **Best Tariff Information** must be provided at least once annually.

Many contracts will continue to operate on a month-by-month basis once the minimum term has ended but they have not been cancelled. Where following the end of your minimum term contract you negotiate a new contract with your provider, this may result in a new contract minimum term.

How to switch mobile phone provider?

Once you have checked your current contract and noted any important details, you can contact a new provider who will oversee most of the work.

When contacting the new mobile operator, be sure to provide any relevant information such as:

- » Your current contract
- » Your current plan or bundle
- » Your Best Tariff Advice or a good understanding of what plan suits your needs
- » Bank or payment details
- » Address or Eircode

Your new and old providers must operate in good faith and coordinate a switching process that provides a continuity of service.

Can I keep my old number?

Yes, you can transfer your current number to a new service provider. You must, however, be sure to make this clear during the switching process as this will not automatically be done. It is free to keep your existing number.

When it comes to keeping your old number (or number portability), this must also be coordinated by the two mobile operators. If any issues in this process lead to you losing service, **this must not exceed one working day.**

If there are issues, your old operator should continue providing service while the new operator works to resolve the issue.

How long will switching take?

The date of your switch and number transfer will be agreed upon between you, and your new operator. Switching should be within the shortest possible period and happen on a date to which you have agreed.

This means the process should not be unnecessarily drawn out, and you should receive clear communications on an agreed-upon switching date. Once your new service starts your old contract should be officially cancelled and your old service no longer active. This means there should not be any overlap between the two contracts, and thus, you should not be double-billed for any period.

Will it cost me to switch?

No. The switching process itself is free. However, it is important to carefully read your contract to see if there is anything that mentions fees or charges for early termination of a contract. If so, this will be reflected in your final bill from your old provider.

Can I get my credit back?

Yes, you are entitled to a refund if you have any unused credit for prepaid services.

You must specifically request this but be aware that this refund may come with an administration fee if specified in your contract. This fee must be proportionate with the cost incurred by the provider in offering the refund.

If you have a bill pay service and there is credit on your account, you are also entitled to receive this back. The refunding of this credit may come with an administration fee.

Can I use the same phone?

If your contract includes a phone, then the phone may be locked to that mobile network. Typically, once the minimum contract term is up, your phone will become available, unlocked free of charge once you request a mobile unlock code. This is because you have been paying off the cost of the phone throughout the minimum contract term.

Be aware that it may take a few days to obtain this code so best ask for it in advance of your switching date.

If your minimum term is not up and you want to switch or terminate your service, you may be required to pay back a residual value for your phone. How this is calculated must be set out in your contract. You can contact your service provider to find out more about this.

Switching bundles

For those looking to switch their broadband and home phone line or looking to switch a bundle package to a new provider, we have more information on this topic on our broadband switching section of this booklet.

Further information

Check the mobile coverage in your area before switching, as coverage can vary depending on where you are in the country.

Check out ComReg's Mobile Coverage Map [comreg.ie/coveragemap](https://www.comreg.ie/coveragemap)

Visit [comreg.ie/compare](https://www.comreg.ie/compare) to help compare the cost of phone, broadband and TV price plans.

Switching broadband & home phone providers

When considering switching broadband or home phone provider, the first thing you should do is find out if you are still in contract.

What do I do if I am still in contract?

If you are still in contract with your service provider, you should check your contract for information on:

- » The duration of your contract
- » Any charges for ending the contract early

You can speak to your service provider to see if there are any options available to you other than to pay an early termination fee. For example, if you are moving house and still in contract for your broadband service, you might be able to transfer the service to your new address and continue using it until the end of the contract.

Most contracts for broadband and phone are between 12 and 24 months.



Can I cancel my contract immediately?

When you sign up for a contract and you change your mind, you may have a right to cancel it during the cooling-off period. The rules around the cooling-off period are different depending on how you signed up for the contract. You should check your contract terms for more information.

What if my current contract is coming to an end?

Your service provider must make you aware that your contract is coming to an end and that you may cancel your current plan. Your provider should also send you **Best Tariff Advice** highlighting the best tariff, price plan or bundle that suits your needs. **Best Tariff Information** must also be provided at least annually.

Many contracts will continue to operate on a month-by-month basis once the minimum term has ended but they have not been cancelled. Where following the end of your minimum term contract you negotiate a new contract with your provider, this may result in a new contract minimum term.

How to change broadband provider

Once you have checked your current contract and noted any important details, you can contact a new provider who will oversee most of the switching process.

After choosing a new provider, be sure to provide any relevant information about your current contract as well as your UAN (Universal Account Number). This will appear on any of your recent broadband or home phone bills.

Between them, your new and old providers must arrange a switching process that takes the least possible time (you must agree upon a date for the switch to take place) and keep you informed both before and during the process. This means any delays or issues that may be encountered must be communicated to you in a clear and timely manner.

Some important pieces of information to have before you call a new internet provider are:

- » Information on your current contract
- » Information on your current internet plan or bundle
- » Information on your 'best-tariff advice' or a good understanding of what plan suits your needs
- » Bank or payment details
- » UAN (Universal Account Number)
- » Address or Eircode



What do I do with my old router?

Many broadband providers will require you to return equipment at the end of your contract. Details of the return of routers and other equipment must be arranged directly with the provider in question. Failure to do so may result in an additional charge.

If you do keep your old router, the fee charged for doing so must reflect its age and usage. You cannot be charged more than the depreciated value of the equipment (which should be noted in the contract) or the remaining service fee till the contract ends. In this instance, you should be charged the lesser of these two figures.

How long will switching take?

Switching should be within the shortest possible period and happen on a date to which you have agreed. This means the process should not be unnecessarily drawn out, and you should receive clear communications on a switching date to which you can agree.

The switching process should provide you with a continuity of service, meaning that you should not be without an internet or home phone connection and any installation work should take place before the date agreed for the switch.

You should not be without service for more than one working day.

If there happens to be a delay, then you must be informed.

Your old contract should be officially cancelled once your new service starts. This means there should not be any overlap between the two, and thus, you should not be billed for any overlapping period.

Will it cost me to switch?

No. The switching process is free. However, as mentioned, it is important to carefully read your contract to see if there is anything that mentions fees or charges for early termination of a contract. If so, this will be reflected in your final bill from your old provider.

Will I need any installation work?

As broadband technology upgrades over time, so too does the technology within our home. This means that if you are switching to a new broadband plan that features upgraded technology (such as fibre optic cables) or a new bundle package, you may require installation work before your switching date.

Any installation work will need to be arranged with your new broadband provider as well as dates and times.

Switching home phone providers

When switching home phone providers, it is important to note what technology you are currently using. For those switching from a PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) line to a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) connection, you will need to consult with your new provider about potential disruptions to connected devices like home security and telecare alarms.

Can I keep my old home phone number?

Yes, you can transfer your current home phone number. You must, however, be sure to make this clear during the switching process as this will not automatically be done. It is free to keep your existing number.

When it comes to keeping your old number (or number portability), this must also be coordinated between the two operators.

If there are issues, your old operator should continue providing service while they work to resolve the issue.

Switching bundle packages

Many providers offer package deals on phone (both mobile and landline), broadband, and television. It is possible to switch plans from one provider to another or to change one service from a package deal – for example, you may get mobile, landline, and broadband from one provider but want to switch your mobile phone plan to a new mobile operator.



Contact us for advice and support

Consumer Care Team

- Phone:** (01) 804 9688
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 9am to 1pm
- Email:** consumerline@comreg.ie or
businessconsumers@comreg.ie
- Text:** COMREG or ASKCOMREG to 51500 to receive a
call or text back (standard SMS rates apply)
- By Post:** Consumer Care Team, ComReg, One Dockland
Central, Guild St., D01 E4X0
- Web chat and online form:** comreg.ie

Access officer

- Phone:** (01) 804 9639
- Email:** access@comreg.ie
- By Post:** As above addressed to the Access Officer

ITRS (Irish Text Relay Service)

The ITRS ensures that those of us who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and, or speech-impaired, may make and receive calls independently. The service provides the translation of text into voice and voice into text. These calls are relayed through an ITRS agent who performs the relay of the text.

The service is accessible from mobile phones, tablets, and PCs. The ITRS service is operated by Eir serving the customers of Three, Eir, Sky, Tesco Mobile, Virgin Media and Vodafone.

Visit itrs.ie for more information.

Privacy information: Our Privacy Notice explains what personal information we collect and use about individuals, what we do with it and why. See our Privacy Notice here comreg.ie/privacy

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