



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Provision of Universal Service by eircom

Performance Data - Q2 2008

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Foreword

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector in accordance with national and EU legislation. One of ComReg's functions in this regard is to determine the scope of the Universal Service Obligation ("USO") for the Irish market and decide which undertaking(s) should be designated as the Universal Service Provider(s) ("USP"). In July 2003, eircom was designated as the Universal Service Provider (USP) for a period of three years. Following a public consultation in July 2006, eircom was again designated as the USP for the period to end-June 2010.

Regulation 10 of the Universal Service Regulations requires the USP to publish information on its performance in relation to the provision of the USO. In exercise of ComReg's general powers to publish information under Regulation 17 of the Framework Regulations, ComReg simultaneously publishes the performance data with eircom on a Quarterly basis.

A Response to Consultation and Decision Notice on eircom's USO in relation to Quality of Service Performance Targets (ComReg Decision No D02/08, ComReg Document No 08/37) was published on 28 May 2008, setting legally binding performance targets with respect to connections, fault rate occurrence and fault repair times. Following the publication of ComReg D02/08, ComReg invoked Regulation 10 (5) of the Universal Service Regulations to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the data submitted by eircom by arranging for an independent audit of the data. In October 2008, an independent external auditor was engaged to conduct this work and, accordingly, performance information published by eircom from, and including, Q2 2008 is subject to independent audit. ComReg also obtained technical input to verify that the definitions and the basis of calculation of each of the key metrics of the performance data were based on European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) standards.

The obligations on eircom with respect to Quality of Service Performance are effective from 1 July 2008 (Q3 2008) and to be achieved and fully complied with by eircom by 30 June 2009. The Q2 2008 data presented in this Information Notice is

not, therefore, subject to compliance with the legally binding targets. Performance in relation to other elements of the USO, which are not subject to the new legally binding targets, is also presented in this Information Notice.

In April and May 2009, ComReg will publish information on eircom's performance for Q3 and Q4 2008 and, going forward, eircom will provide ComReg with the performance data within two months from the end of each Quarter. ComReg considers that the new measures and requirements introduced to this process will facilitate enhanced accuracy and timeliness of reporting of eircom's performance and, importantly, that the binding quality targets will serve to provide consumers with a better and more consistent level of service.

John Doherty
Chairperson
Commission for Communications Regulation

1 Quality of Service Targets - Performance

1.1 Performance of eircom with respect to connections

This Section measures eircom's performance in completing fixed-line installations by providing information on performance for in-situ connections, all other connections and information on the percentage of connections completed by the date agreed with the customer.

Table 1.1 – In-Situ Connections¹

Performance Targets		Result
Within 24 hours of request	80% of connections to be completed within this time period	86.4%
Within 2 weeks of request	99.8% of connections to be completed within this time period	96.9%
Within 2 months of request	100% of connections to be completed within this time period	99.8%

Table 1.2 – All Other Connections²

Performance Targets		Result
Within 2 weeks of request	80% of all requests to be completed within this time period	59.6%
Within 4 weeks of request	85% of all requests to be completed within this time period	78.6%
Within 8 weeks of request	90% of all requests to be completed within this time period	87.9%

¹ Data reported in this section excludes information regarding in-situ connections with an agreed date, as agreed dates for in-situ connections only arise when a customer seeks, and eircom agrees to, a deferred installation e.g. a connection for a holiday home, etc.

² Data reported in this section excludes information regarding in-situ connections. Also, where a customer-introduced delay is recorded, and there is auditable evidence of such, eircom shall exclude these Valid Service Orders for the purposes of the performance targets.

Within 13 weeks of request	95% of all requests to be completed within this time period	93.1%
Within 26 weeks of request	100% of all requests to be completed within this time period	97.8%

Table 1.3 - Agreed Date completion for all connections³

Performance Targets		Result
Percentage of connections completed by agreed date	95%	93.4%

1.2 Performance of eircom with respect to Fault Rate Occurrence

This Section measures the number of line faults reported to eircom. All line faults reported in the specified Quarterly period are expressed in relation to total installed lines⁴. As ComReg publishes USO performance data on a Quarterly basis, the sum of the four Quarterly results will be an indication of performance towards the annual target. The actual annual performance will be assessed with reference to the total number of line faults for the year and the average number of installed lines for the year.

Table 1.4 – Fault Rate Occurrence

Annual Performance Target		Result
A maximum fault rate of 15.5 line faults per 100 lines (1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009)	To be achieved and fully complied with by 30 June 2009	4.1

³ Data relating to this metric relates to customer-introduced delays for in-situ connections. For information, a date can only be agreed for in-situ connections where the customer requests and eircom agrees to, a deferred installation.

⁴ For this Quarter, the number of total faults per 100 lines was 5.4.

1.3 Performance of eircom with respect to Fault Repair Times

This Section measures eircom's performance in completing fault repairs during the reporting period and provides information on the percentage of fault repairs completed by the date agreed with the customer.

Table 1.5 – Fault Repair Times⁵

Performance Targets		Result
Within 2 working days	80% of fault repairs to be completed within this time period	62.6%
Within 4 working days	95% of fault repairs to be completed within this time period	84.6%
Within 5 working days	99.8% of fault repairs to be completed within this time period	90%
Within 10 working days	100% of fault repairs to be completed within this time period	97.9%

Table 1.6 - Agreed Date completion for Repairs⁶

Performance Target		Result
Percentage of Fault Repairs completed by agreed date	95%	74.2%

1.4 Performance Measurement

Performance by eircom relating to the obligations shall be determined by reference to the information normally set out in ComReg Information Notices published every Quarter and entitled "*Provision of Universal Service by eircom –*

⁵ Data pertaining to the length of time taken to carry out Fault Repairs with an Agreed Date is presently excluded from this metric due to the technical capabilities of eircom's Fault Handling System.

⁶ Fault Repairs with an Agreed Date arise when an appointment is required to visit the customer's premises and repair the fault. Where a customer-introduced delay is recorded, and there is auditable evidence of such, eircom shall exclude these Fault Repairs for the purposes of the performance targets.

Performance Data”, or as may be published by ComReg in such other format from time to time.

1.5 Non-Compliance with obligations

The failure by eircom to achieve any of the targets will constitute non-compliance and may give rise to the enforcement procedures set out under Regulation 32 of the European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Universal Service and Users’ Rights) Regulations 2003.

2 Other USO Performance Indicators

2.1 Introduction

Regulation 10 (1) of the Universal Service Regulations requires the USP to publish adequate and up to date information on its performance in respect of the USO. The information is to be based on the quality of service parameters, definitions and measurement methods which are set out in the relevant EU Directive⁷. These, in turn, are based on the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) standards which provide precise detail on definitions and methodologies and have been used as guidance when recording the performance data. Where the ETSI standards do not cover an aspect of the USO, specific indicators have been developed to ensure that the performance is measured accurately.

2.2 Functional Internet Access

This Section records the percentage of PSTN lines that are capable of the minimum data rate of 28.8 kbps (kilobits per second) or greater. In September 2005, ComReg specified a target data rate of 28.8 kbps (kilobits per second) as the minimum data rate which could be considered as capable of delivering functional internet access. Also issued, by way of guidance, was a performance target of 94% of lines to be capable of the target data rate by June 2006. As broadband access does not fall within the scope of the USO, this guideline focuses on single narrowband connections.

Table 2.1 – Functional Internet Access

	Guideline Performance Target (ComReg D9/05)	Result
Percentage of PSTN lines capable of data rate of 28.8kbps, or greater	94%	94.9%

⁷ DIRECTIVE 2002/22/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive)

2.3 Public Payphones

This Section provides statistics on the average number of public payphones provided and the proportion of these public payphones that are in full working order during the reporting period.

Table 2.2 - Public payphones

	Result
Average number of public payphones for the period	3,428
Proportion of public payphones in full working order (%)	95.3%

2.4 Affordability of Tariffs

This Section records the availability of the Department of Social and Family Affairs' (DSFA) Household Benefits Package and eircom's Vulnerable Users Scheme (VUS) and also provides information on the number of bill correctness complaints.

Table 2.3 – Affordability of Tariffs Measures

Residential consumers who qualify for the DSFA Telephone Allowance	Under the DSFA Household Benefits Package, qualifying customers may avail of the Telephone Allowance (€25.90 per month)
eircom residential consumers availing of the VUS	eircom's customers may avail of the VUS, which is targeted at customers with a relatively low usage level

2.5 Bill Correctness Complaints

The following Table provides information on the number of Bill Correctness Complaints received by eircom for the period per 100 bills issued.

Table 2.4 – Bill Correctness Complaints

	Result
Number of Bill Correctness Complaints per 100 bills	0.07

2.6 Specific Measures for Disabled Users

This Section records the services and equipment available for people with disabilities, as follows;

For customers who are hearing impaired:

- Inductive couplers
- Amplified phone
- Visual indicator
- The national relay service (Minicom)
- STEP rebate scheme

For customers with limited dexterity or mobility:

- Speed dial and automatic redial buttons
- Hands free facility
- Special directory enquiry arrangements, which are free of charge

For customers with restricted vision:

- Braille billing, which is free of charge
- Standardised layout of key pads around central number (5) with raised dot
- Large high contrast buttons

3 Supplementary Quality of Service Performance Data

3.1 Direct Access PSTN Connections – Supply Time Fastest⁸

Supply Time Fastest for All Connections	Total	Residential	Business
Fastest 95% - elapsed days	51	58	32
Fastest 99% - elapsed days	170	180	82

3.2 Connections with an Agreed Date v. Total Connections

	Result
Percentage of Connections with an Agreed Date versus Total Connections	10.8%

3.3 Direct Access PSTN Repair – Repair Time Fastest⁹

Repair Time Fastest for All Repairs	Total	Residential	Business
Fastest 80% completed (working hours)	27.2	28.1	23.3
Fastest 95% completed (working hours)	56	56.9	51

3.4 Fault Repairs with an Agreed Date v. All Repairs

	Result
Percentage of Fault Repairs with an Agreed Date v. All Repairs	8.1%

⁸ Data pertaining to connections with an Agreed Date is excluded from this metric as a date can only be agreed for in-situ connections where the customer requests and eircom agrees to, a deferred installation.

⁹ Data pertaining to Fault Repairs with an Agreed Date is excluded from this metric due to the technical capabilities of eircom's Fault Handling System.

Appendix 1 - The Universal Service Obligation (USO)

The USO is a set of requirements designed to ensure that all persons have access to a minimum set of telephone services. The services to be provided under the USO, as set out in the USO Regulations,¹⁰ are as follows:

- Meeting reasonable requests for connections at a fixed location to the public telephone network and access to publicly available telephone service. The connection is required to be capable of allowing voice calls, fax communications and data communications at data rates which would permit functional internet access
- Directory services – provision of printed Directories and Directory Enquiry service, along with the operation and maintenance of the National Directory Database (NDD)
- Provision of public payphones
- Specific measures for disabled users
- Affordability of tariffs for consumers and options to control expenditure

eircom was designated as the USP in July 2003 for a 3-year period. Following a public consultation in July 2006, eircom was again designated as USP for the period to end June 2010¹¹. Detailed requirements have been set in respect of some aspects of the USO including;

- Document 05/64¹² amended an earlier decision requiring the production of telephone directories in CD format.

¹⁰ European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Universal Service and Users' Rights) Regulations 2003 – S.I. No. 308 of 2003, as amended

¹¹ The Future Provision of Telephony Services Under Universal Service Obligations

¹² Directory Enquiry Services and Directories - Amendment of requirement to make directories available in CD format

- Document 05/70¹³ set out requirements to be followed by the USP when considering the reasonableness of requests for connections and it also set out guidelines to be followed (including performance targets) in providing such connections. The document also provided guidelines in respect of a target data rate for Functional Internet Access.
- Document 06/14¹⁴ provided guidance on the criteria to be applied when considering requests for the removal or re-location of public payphones.
- Document 08/37¹⁵ (ComReg Decision D02/08), published on 28 May 2008, set legally binding quality of service performance targets for connections, fault occurrence and fault repairs for eircom, as the current designated USP to meet with effect from 1 July 2008. (The guideline connection targets published in ComReg Decision D9/05 (05/70) have been superseded by the new legally binding connection targets).

¹³ Universal Service Requirements: Provision of Access at a Fixed Location – Connections to Public Telephone Network and Provision of Functional Internet Access

¹⁴ Universal Service Obligations - Removal/Relocation of Public Pay Telephones

¹⁵ Decision Notice (And Decision Instrument): Response to Consultation – Eircom's Universal Service Obligation : Quality of Service Performance Targets