



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Provision of Universal Service by Eircom

Performance Indicators Q4 2006

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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. Among ComReg's functions in this regard 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 a 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 Universal Service Obligation (USO). In exercise of ComReg's general powers to publish information under regulation 17 of the Framework Regulations, ComReg has decided to simultaneously publish the performance indicators along with Eircom and the data will continue to be updated on a quarterly basis. ComReg considers that publication provides increased transparency regarding the fulfilment of the USO and will help to inform debate regarding related matters.

As indicated in the previous quarterly update, (ComReg 07/11) ComReg is also today publishing a consultation which proposes to set new binding performance targets. In the consultation paper, ComReg considers Eircom's recent performance in both installations and fault repair and is of the preliminary view that while some aspects are satisfactory, both installation times and fault occurrence/repair performance could be improved in a manner which would give considerable benefits to end-users. The consultation paper proposes binding targets for the delivery of these obligations.

Mike Byrne
Chairperson

1 About the Universal Service Obligation

The Universal Service Obligation (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 Universal Service Obligation as set out in the USO Regulations¹ are set out in Regulation as the provision of:

- 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 Inquiry service along with the operation and maintenance of the National Directory Database
- Provision of Public payphones
- Specific measures for disabled users
- Affordability of tariffs for consumers and options to control expenditure

Eircom was designated as the Universal Service Provider (USP) in July 2003 for a 3 year period. Following a public consultation, in July 2006, Eircom was again designated as USP for a period to end June 2010².

Detailed requirements have been set in respect of some aspects of the above Document 05/64³ amended an earlier decision requiring the production of telephone directories in CD format.

¹ European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) Universal Service and Users' Rights) regulations 2003 – S.I. No. 308 of 2003

² [The Future Provision of Telephony Services Under Universal Service Obligations](#)

Document 05/70⁴ set out requirements to be followed by the USP when considering the reasonable of requests for connections and also set out guidelines to be followed (including performance targets) on providing such connections. The document also provided guidelines in respect of a target data rate for Functional Internet Access. Document 06/14⁵ provided guidance on the criteria to be applied when considering requests for the removal or re-location of public payphones

³ [Directory Enquiry Services and Directories - Amendment of requirement to make directories available in CD format](#)

⁴ [Universal Service Requirements: Provision of Access at a Fixed Location – Connections to Public Telephone Network and Provision of Functional Internet Access](#)

⁵ [Universal Service Obligations - Removal/Relocation of Public Pay Telephones](#)

2 Methodology for Quality of Service Performance Indicators

Regulation 10(1) of the 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 Directive⁶. These, in turn are based on European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) standards which provide precise detail on definitions and methodologies and have been used in recording the performance indicators. Where the ETSI standards do not cover an aspect of the USO, specific indicators have been developed to ensure that the performance is measured

In summary the performance indicators address the following aspects of the Universal Service Obligation:

2.1 Direct Access Public Service Telephone Network (PSTN) Provision

This section deals with the USP's record in completing fixed line installations. This section provides information on the percentage of installations which were completed by the date agreed with the customer. Also measured is the time taken for 95% and 99% of all installations. Both of these metrics are as specified in the ETSI standard.

In September 2005, ComReg issued as guidelines, performance targets for installations as guidelines. The distribution of actual installations against the time periods set out in the performance targets is also shown.

2.2 Direct Access PSTN Repair

This section deals with how many line faults were reported to Eircom and how many were fixed during the reporting period.

⁶ 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)

All faulty lines that are reported in the specified quarterly period are included and reported as a percentage of total installed lines. It should be noted that fault reports which are subsequently found not to be justified (e.g. if a customer reports a fault and it turns out not to be a fault) are excluded i.e. the data reported here represents actual faults.

In terms of reporting on repair rates, the ETSI standard calls for the measurement in working hours for the fastest 80% and 95% completed.

2.3 Functional Internet Access (FIA)

Broadband access does not fall with the scope of the USO with the Directive making clear that the requirement is for a single narrowband connection. 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 function internet access. Also issued by way of guidance was a performance target of 94% of lines to be capable of the target data speed by June 2006.

This section records the percentage of PSTN lines which are capable of the minimum data rate 28.8 kbps (kilobits per second) or greater. This is calculated by combining the total of working lines taking broadband (by definition, line capability will be above the target rate) and residual lines which are estimated as having a capability greater than 28.8kbps based on sample measurement of data speeds encountered by customers of Eircom's dial-up services.

2.4 Public Payphones

This section provides figures on the numbers of USO payphones provided and the proportion in full working order during the reporting period.

2.5 Affordability of Tariffs

This section provides information on the numbers of bill complaints and records the availability of the Vulnerable Users Scheme and support under the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) household benefit scheme.

2.6 Specific Measures for Disabled Users

This section records the services and equipment available for people with disabilities.

3 Appendix

All data relates to Eircom retail services only as the performance indicators are for the purpose of measuring compliance with the Universal Service Obligation. The data has been supplied by Eircom in accordance with Regulation 10(1) of the USO Regulations.

3.1 Direct Access PSTN Provision

	Residential	Business
Supply time fastest 95% (in working days)	5 working days	26 working days
Supply time fastest 99% (in working days)	126 working days	82 working days
Percentage of requests completed by agreed date	92%	83%

Table 1.1 – Provision of Access

Table 1.1 shows that 95% of residential requests for PSTN Access take 5 working days and business requests take 26 days.

99% of requests for PSTN Access have taken on average 126 and 82 working days for Residential and Business areas respectively.

Also, 92% of Residential requests and 83% of Business requests were completed by the customer agreed date.

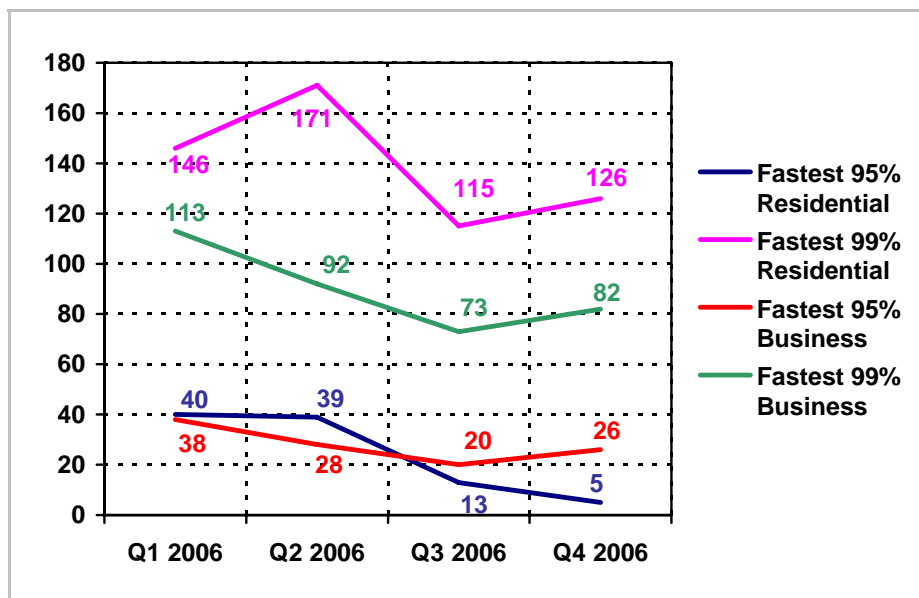


Fig 1.1 – Provision of Access (working days)

Fig 1.1 illustrates the provision of PSTN access over the period of 2006.

	Performance Targets	Residential	Business
Less than 4 weeks	60% of requests to be met in this time period	97.47%	95.10%
4 – 8 weeks	80% of requests to be met in this time period	98.66%	97.85%
8 – 13 weeks	90% of requests to be met in this time period	99.32%	99.13%
13 – 26 weeks	95% of requests to be met in this time period	99.84%	99.79%
26 – 52 weeks	All requests to be met in this time period	100.00%	100.00%
More than a year		0	0

Table 1.2 – Completed Connections

Table 1.2 shows the age profile of completed connections. Both Residential and Business figures meet the set guideline performance targets.

3.2 Direct Access PSTN Repair

	Residential	Business
Proportion of faults per 100 lines	6.9	2.9
Fastest 80% completed (in working hours)	34.4	31.4
Fastest 95% completed (in working hours)	70.5	70.3

Table 1.3 – Reported Faults and Fault Repair Time for Q4 2006

Table 1.3 displays the proportion of faults for the fourth quarter of 2006. When these figures are added to the overall trend of 2006 displayed below in Fig 1.2, it illustrates that the proportion of Residential faults is still increasing.

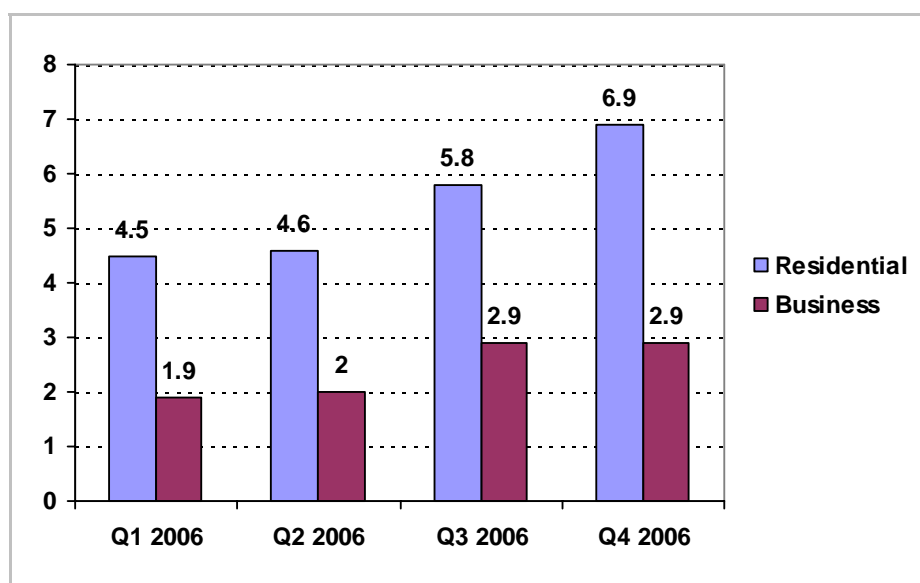


Fig 1.2 – Proportion of faults per 100 lines for 2006

Also the time taken to repair faults is still steadily increasing for both Business and Residential areas as shown in Fig 1.4 below.

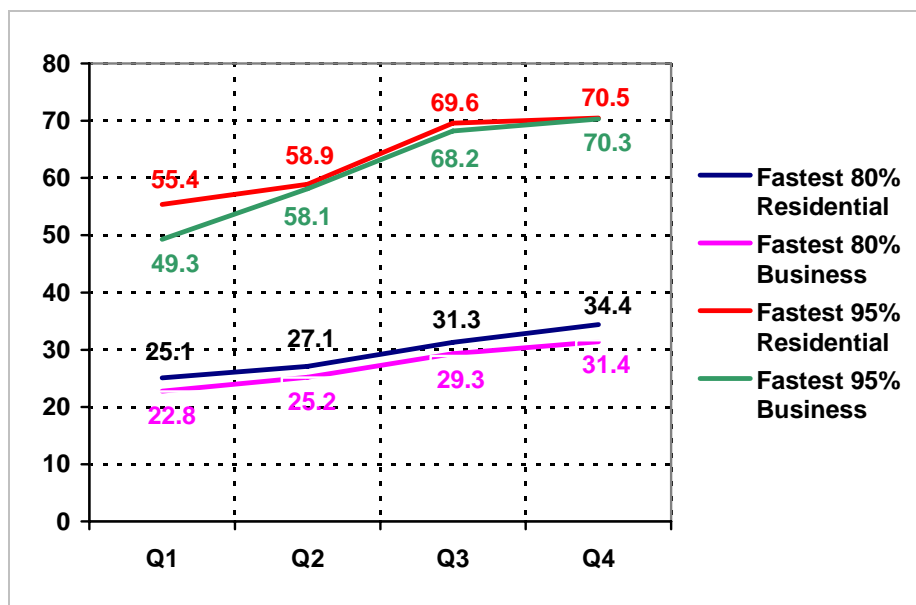


Fig 1.3 – Trend of Fault Repair times over the period of 2006 in working hours

3.3 Functional Internet Access

	Performance Target	Q4 2006
No of access lines capable of data speed <= 28.8kbps	94%	94.29%

Table 1.4 – Percentage of lines capable of greater than 28.8kbps target (residential and business)

3.4 Public Payphones

Table 1.5 shows the number of USO payphones in the country between October and December 2006.

	Q4 2006
Number of USO payphones for the period	3,906
USO Payphones in full working order	90.18%

Table 1.5 – Public Payphones

Fig 1.4 shows the number of payphones for each quarter in 2006.

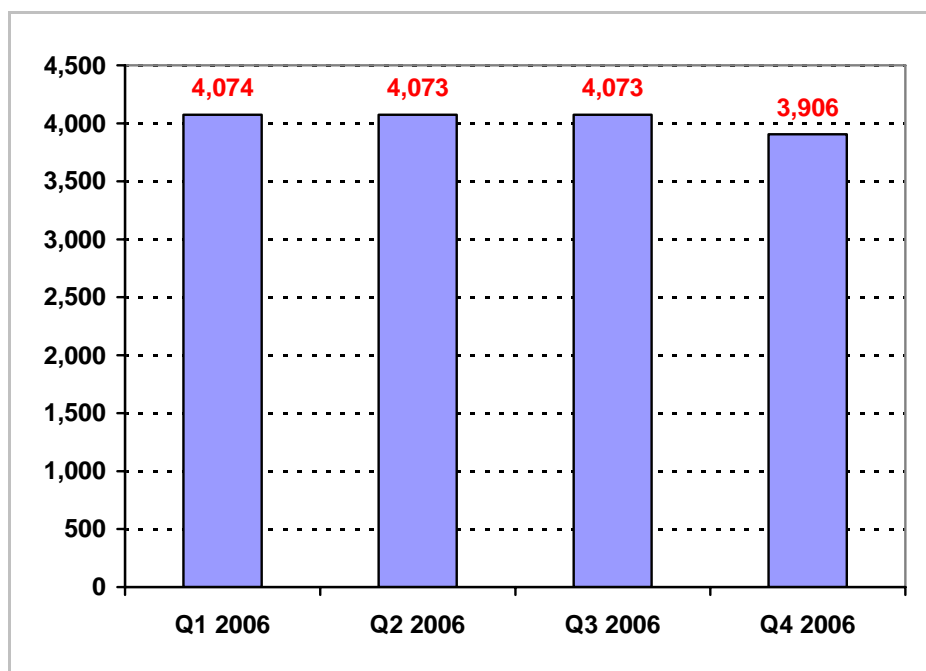


Fig 1.4 – Number of Public Payphones available in each quarter of 2006

3.5 Affordability of Tariffs

Residential consumers who qualify for the DSFA free telephone rental allowance	Under the Department of Social and Family Affairs' Household Benefit Package, qualifying customers can avail of the telephone allowance which is valued at €4.70 per month
Residential consumers subscribing to the Vulnerable Users Scheme	Customers can avail of the Vulnerable User Scheme which is targeted at users who need a telephone line but use it infrequently

Table 1.6 – Affordability of Tariffs

	Residential	Business
Gross number of bill correctness complaints per 100 bills	0.05	0.01

Table 1.7 – Billing Complaints for Q4 2006

3.6 Specific Measures for Disabled Users

For customers who are hearing impaired:

- Inductive Couplers
- An Amplified phone
- Visual indicator when phone rings
- The national relay service (Minicom)
- The STEP rebate scheme provides text telephone users with a rebate on text telephone charges

For customers with limited dexterity or mobility:

- Speed dial and automatic redial buttons
- Hands free facility
- Special directory enquiries

For customers with restricted vision:

- Braille billing
- Standardised layout of key pads around central number (5) raised dot
- Extra large, high contrast buttons.