



Office of the Director of  
**Telecommunications  
Regulation**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**29<sup>th</sup> August 2001**

## **Telecoms Regulator set out minimum criteria for Handling Customer Complaints for Telecoms Operators**

Telecoms Regulator Etain Doyle, today (Wednesday 29th August 2001) directed all Basic, General and Mobile Telecommunications licensees to modify their current codes of practice for handling complaints to include, at a minimum, the standardised set of criteria which are outlined below. The new code will become effective during December 2001.

The standard criteria outline a comprehensive yet flexible process for dealing with customer complaints by providing practical guidelines for their handling and informing customers as to the level of service they can expect from their operator. The code provides the consumer with transparency as to how licensees treat a complaint and outlines the steps that will be taken while the complaint is being processed.

According to the Regulator "We want to see continued improvements in quality of service from operators generally. While some have set up systems, more effort must be put into high quality, prompt delivery, repair and service response.

She continued " Competition in the telecommunications sector is relatively new and traditionally the general service levels are weak. There is an expectation of higher service standards on the part of the public that are not yet being realised. Accordingly, I consider it necessary to introduce minimum criteria designed to provide a basic standard of complaint handling for all licensed operators. This is a minimum set of criteria and operators are free to adopt standards in excess of this.

Currently the ODTR receives approximately 75 complaints a month from consumers concerning the levels of service provided by their telecommunications provider. The majority of the complaints are from residential consumers who are not happy with the response they have received from an operator in dealing with their complaint. The main areas of complaint surrounding fixed telecom services are billing issues, followed by delay in provisioning new services to customers and the quality of current services. Given the nature and the level of complaints received by the ODTR with respect to mobile operators it appears that they have place a greater emphasis on customer service although there still remains some issues of concern. Billing disputes are the main source of complaints against mobile telecommunications operators while coverage and network faults also represent a substantial proportion of complaints received.

The Regulator concluded " The ODTR focus should be on pressing the companies to upgrade the delivery and maintenance of services so that consumers get quality services from the companies first time. Where complaint handling is fully integrated into an operator's business, the root causes of the complaints get attention and in the end companies will have fewer complaints and be able to handle them more quickly and effectively".

The Decision Notice entitled 01/67 " Codes of Conduct for the Handling of Consumer Complaints by Telecommunications Operators " is now available on the odtr website [www.odtr.ie](http://www.odtr.ie).

**ENDS**

**Issued By**

**Brighid Smyth**

**Public Affairs Manager**

**ODTR**

**Ph: 01 804 9639**

**Mobile: 086 8270905**

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