

Industry Communications Framework

The purpose of this document

This document outlines what is expected from telecoms companies and site providers (including site provider agents and organisations) when communicating on the renewal or new installations of mobile and fixed infrastructure on sites. The communications framework provides a streamlined and common process that all relevant parties within the industry can refer and commit to as a guide to help maintain and improve connectivity across the UK.

Introduction

The communications framework has been developed with representatives from across the industry to identify how telecom companies and site providers can improve engagement and build trusting relationships, in the interest of supporting the roll out and maintenance of communications infrastructure. The framework intends to set out the best practice commitments to be referred to during the process of site renewal and acquisition, specifically focussing on the use of the revised Code legislation. The objective is for all parties to practice the agreed framework process to enable an improved way of working within the industry. This will support the government's digital strategy and the public benefit for communication services.

It must be acknowledged that most organisations and companies will have their own specific company processes to be followed too, which must be considered in individual cases.

Communications

Communication best practices by mobile operators/infrastructure providers:

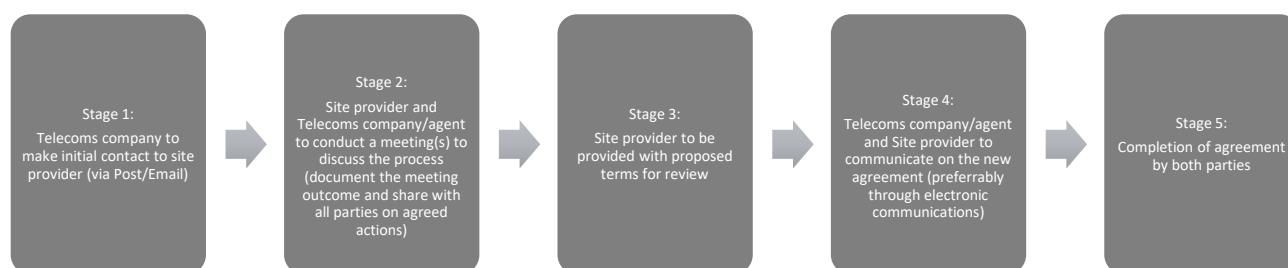
When communicating to site providers, the following should be provided:

- A clear reason as to why the site provider has been approached
- A description of the [the operator/infrastructure services provider] e.g., company introduction
- A recommendation for the site provider to seek professional advice
- Fee's information (to include that the site providers reasonably incurred professional fees would be compensated where relevant and at what point they become payable)
- Clear steps on what can be expected during the process (within the letter or as an accompanying brochure)
- Contact information for the agent and the applicant
- A list of requirements needed from the site provider if available i.e., structural drawings, asbestos surveys, access policies etc
- Simple, concise, and timely communications (respond to the site provider within a reasonable timeframe). Specific industry jargon must be avoided
- Simple explanation of when information is required by
- The communication process, which should be a staged approach. The first point of contact should be based on "what the site provider is being contacted for and what the upcoming process will be."
- A map denoting the area of land and/or cable routes in question (if appropriate)
- Information on different aspects when available or relevant, for example, drawings, ICNIRP certificates and details of comparables.
- Information about the Electronic Communications Code including the Code rights (but keeping it simple for the site provider. The information needs to address those that may already know about the Code and others who don't know about it. Getting the right balance of information is key).

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Communication best practices by site provider community:

- Engage with telecom companies within a reasonable timeframe (typically within 28 calendar days for the initial response but thereafter a shorter timeframe. During busy periods e.g., harvest or lambing seasons, an acknowledgement to any communication from the telecom companies would help set the expectation).
- Continue to communicate with the applicant in a timely manner throughout the process (typically within 10 days)
- The site provider should try and provide details of all other superior landlord's freeholders / tenants or other parties with an interest in the land where known
- Seek clarification from the telecom companies on any matters which are unclear (so, the telecom companies can respond with more information/explanation to help the process)
- Advise the telecom companies if there will be professional representation and include contact details
- Engage with the telecom companies with respect to any requirements sought in order to enter into an agreement – including any reasons for objecting to the rights sought in the counteroffer
- Site visits can be helpful to answer any questions site providers may have – advise the operators/infrastructure providers if you are open to this
- Site providers and/or their representatives should respond in full, including in relation to financial and non-financial aspects of the negotiation
- Provide information to aid the assessment of the site process where this is reasonably available - such as asbestos register
- If known, indicate at an early stage if there may be any barriers to entering into an agreement (this forms the basis of the agreement to discuss specific matters between the parties to help the process)
- Provide up to date detail of the agreed access route and access procedures
- If applicable provide information on the buildings service charge to assist in valuation

Communication process:**Stakeholders**

Stakeholder groups	
Mobile Network Operators (MNO's)	The Mobile Network Operator (MNO) provide wireless and data telecommunications services for its mobile users. There are four MNO's in the UK including EE, Three, Vodafone and O2.
Fixed Network Operators (FNO's)	The Fixed Network Operators provide cabled telecommunications services for tenants. There are

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	hundreds of Fixed Network Operators with many operating in different parts of the country and Openreach covering the whole country. It is unlikely that you will have more than four FNOs wanting to install their cables at your properties.
Mobile Infrastructure Services Company	The mobile infrastructure services companies e.g., Cornerstone and MBNL manage and facilitate the agreements with the site providers.
Wireless Infrastructure Providers	Providers of wireless infrastructure which is offered on an open access basis to the mobile network operators and other wireless operators
Industry suppliers (on behalf of the FNO's, MNO's and Mobile Infrastructure Services Companies or the Wireless Infrastructure Providers)	There are multiple suppliers who liaise with site providers on behalf of the FNO's, MNO's or the Mobile Infrastructure Services Company or the WIPs, who facilitate the agreement process / site build/ site maintenance
Site Provider Agents	Site Provider Agents provide professional advice and guidance to Site Providers. They facilitate and liaise with the opposite parties on behalf of the Site Providers.
Site Providers	Site Providers are property owners or landowners and if they host mobile infrastructure on their property, they become the landlord.
Professional bodies and organisations	Represent members and provide guidance and advice on specific issues or topics

Further information

Code legislation:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/part/2/crossheading/electronic-communications-code/enacted>

Ofcom code of practice:

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/108790/ECC-Code-of-Practice.pdf