



**Consumer
Focus**
Campaigning for a fair deal

The Confidence Code

Audit process

Introduction

This document outlines Consumer Focus's internal audit processes. In the Confidence Code decision document, Consumer Focus confirmed its plan to maintain regular monitoring of sites and implement the new, quarterly audit. This is in addition to the independent annual audit.

Aims of the new process

1. Consumer Focus aims to ensure that service providers continue to meet the key criteria of the Code and to further improve consistency and accuracy of results on sites.

What is involved in the internal audits?

Quarterly audit:

1. A minimum of 10 pricing tests looking at a combination of several factors including: region, usage, and payment method.
2. A 'check list' to ensure all service providers are meeting all requirements of the code.

Ad-hoc audit:

1. A pricing test looking at a combination of several factors including: region, usage, and payment method. This *may* follow a product launch or amends to an existing product.

Timings

1. Three quarterly audits will be undertaken each year in each of the calendar quarters (excluding the quarter where the annual audit takes place). These will be undertaken over a four week period as detailed below:

Week 1: Service providers informed testing will take place from that week

Testing commences (approximately five tests)

Friday: service providers emailed details of any queries, or informed they do not have any queries

Week 2: **By Tuesday:** service providers acknowledge receipt of queries

By Friday: service providers resolve all queries. If any queries are unable to be resolved or are disputed, service providers must detail what steps are being taken to resolve these, or what the dispute involves. Timescales for resolution should be discussed at this point

Week 3: Testing re-commences (enough to give a total of at least 10 tests)

Friday: service providers emailed details of queries, or informed they do not have any queries

Week 4: **By Tuesday:** service providers acknowledge receipt of queries

By Friday: service providers resolve all queries. If any queries are unable to be resolved or are disputed, service providers must detail what steps are being taken to resolve these, or what the dispute involves. Timescales for resolution should be discussed at this point

Week 5/6: Service providers are given written feedback on the audit

2. Ad-hoc testing will be carried out on a frequent basis and this *may* follow a product launch or amends to an existing product.

Day 1: Service providers emailed details of queries

Day 2: Service providers acknowledge receipt of queries

Day 4: Service providers resolve all queries. If any queries are unable to be resolved or are disputed, service providers must detail what steps are being taken to resolve these, or what the dispute involves. Timescales for resolution should be discussed at this point

What is required of the service provider?

1. Meeting the timescales as detailed above.
2. Occasionally service providers may be required to provide additional information. Timescales of the completion of this will be discussed at the time.

Audit results

1. These will be provided on the timescales discussed above.
2. If Consumer Focus decides service providers are failing to providing sufficiently accurate information they may require one of the following, depending on the severity of the issue:
 - a. Re-testing of the service provider
 - b. A breach to be recorded against that service provider
3. If for two consecutive quarterly audits Consumer Focus decides service providers are providing sufficiently inaccurate or out-of-date information a breach will be recorded against that service provider.

Other information

1. You can be assured that Consumer Focus will do its utmost to minimise impact and disruption to service provider's during these quarterly audits.



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Text Relay:

From a textphone, call 18001 020 7799 7900

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Consumer Focus

4th Floor
Artillery House
Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT

Tel: 020 7799 7900

Fax: 020 7799 7901

Media Team: 020 7799 8004 / 8005 / 8006