FORGE

FORGE CONNECTIVITY WHITE PAPER 02

Customer Control in UK Mobile Services

What households and small businesses should be able to manage online

88%

of residential mobile customers surveyed by Ofcom were satisfied with their overall service in 2024. [1]

Overall satisfaction leaves a practical question open. When someone needs to replace an eSIM, control charges on a child’s line or move a team’s numbers, can they complete the task and tell what happened?

NOVEMBER 2026

What customers can do today

UK providers already support several common tasks online. The examples below come from public guidance and describe specific journeys. Availability can depend on plan, device, account type and permissions.

Keep a number when switching

For a single number, Ofcom says customers can text PAC to 65075. Once a valid code goes to the new provider, the switch should normally take place within one working day. Ofcom gives separate guidance for multiple numbers. [2]

Replace a SIM or recover an eSIM

EE documents a process for replacing a lost, damaged or deleted SIM or eSIM and points customers to verification in the EE app. For a lost-phone scenario, the practical question is how the customer verifies their identity and restores service from another device. [3]

Control usage and out-of-bundle charges

O2 lets eligible monthly customers manage a Spend Cap in My O2 and sends alerts at 50% and 100% of the cap. Vodafone’s small-business portal describes bill, usage and spending controls. A customer still needs to know which charges a cap covers and which lines it applies to. [4, 5]

Change a plan at renewal

giffgaff documents changing the next recurring plan in the account and switching auto-renewal on or off in the app. Showing when a change takes effect and what the next payment will be makes that choice easier to check. [6]

A completion test for self-service

Before confirming a change, can the customer see the affected line, expected cost and effective date? Afterwards, can they see whether it is scheduled, completed or needs attention?

Where direct control matters

Households managing several lines

A parent preparing for a trip should be able to see which line has roaming, what charges or allowances apply, and when a change takes effect. Give the account holder control over shared settings and let each member see the information they need for their own line.

Small businesses managing a mobile account

An operations manager should be able to assign a line to a new starter, review usage by line and see the status of a batch of number transfers. A finance user may need invoice access and line-level charges, while a support user may need permission to replace a SIM. Log who made each change.

Support when the usual route breaks

A lost handset or stalled transfer can leave the customer unable to use the usual verification channel. Offer another way to verify identity where appropriate, show what has already been tried, and let an adviser pick up the case without making the customer start again.

How Forge would test demand

Run the same tasks across a mix of UK networks and virtual operators, using comparable plans and devices. Observe households and SME administrators completing those tasks. Record completion without help, time to completion, errors, and when an adviser is needed. Ask participants which improvements would change their choice of provider.

What Forge is designing for

Forge is developing account tools around visibility by line, clear plan and roaming settings, and usage and billing views suited to households and businesses. We welcome examples of mobile tasks you still find hard to complete.
forgemyway.com

Sources and scope

This paper uses Ofcom research and providers' public guidance. The journeys are documented examples. Forge has yet to run the proposed hands-on comparison or customer interviews, so this paper makes no estimate of unmet demand for individual features.

[1] Ofcom customer service comparison. Residential customer experience in 2024. Report reissued September 2026.

[2] Ofcom mobile switching guidance. Number retention, PAC requests and switching timelines.

[3] EE SIM replacement and swap guidance. Physical SIM and eSIM replacement and verification.

[4] O2 Spend Cap guidance. Managing a cap in My O2, eligible charges and alerts.

[5] Vodafone Business portals and accounts. Public descriptions of business billing, usage and spending controls.

[6] giffgaff auto-renewing plan guidance. Changing the next recurring plan and managing auto-renewal.