



SoftLink Computer Systems Limited

Code of Practice

SoftLink Computer Systems Limited is a provider of IT Support services, Communication services, Telecommunication and Broadband solutions for domestic and business customers across the UK.

The Purpose of this Code of Practice

This guide has been developed to help you understand the relationship you have as a customer of SoftLink Computer Systems Limited. It will enable you to:

- Access summary details of our services;
- Understand what you can expect from SoftLink Computer Systems Limited after you have made a purchase or registered for a service;
- Understand what dispute resolution procedures we have put in place in the very unlikely event of us being unable to resolve a customer service issue;
- Find out how to contact us.

Table of Contents

Access to Our Code of Practice	2
General Philosophy	2
To Order Our Services	2
Computer Services	
Telephone and Broadband services	
New Customers	
Cancelling or ending a contract	
How long will it take to install?	
Moving Home	4
Changing supplier	
Cancelling or ending products or services	
Communicating With You	5
Privacy Policy	5
The information we hold about you	
Credit Checks	
How we use your personal information	
How long we keep your personal information for	
If you have a phone contract with us	
Billing, Payments and Pricing	7
Computer Services	
Telephone and Broadband Services	
When you need to pay us	
If we do not receive your payment on time – Computer Services	
If we do not receive your payment on time –Telephone and Broadband Services	
Disconnecting your phone line	
Debt Collection	
If you’ve got payment problems	
Your responsibilities to pay your bills	
Prices	
How to Contact Us	10
Fault Repair	
If you’re not happy with the service we’re providing	11
Complaints	
Dispute resolution	
Other Useful Contacts	12

Access to our Code of Practice

Customers can access this code of practice from our website (www.softlinkcomputers.co.uk/code-of-practice.pdf) or by requesting a copy to be posted or emailed to them.

General Philosophy

SoftLink Computer Systems Limited is a private limited company offering IT Support Services, Telephone Services and Advanced Broadband Communications for both the home and business user, whatever their needs.

Our product range, in very broad terms consists of:

- IT Hardware
- Bespoke Computer Design
- Small and Medium Business Network Support
- Domestic Computer Support
- Network Design
- Telecoms (Line rental and phone calls)
- Telephone System design, construction and support
- Broadband (ADSL, FTTC and leased line Broadband connectivity)

Customers of SoftLink Computer Systems Limited can take advantage of our experienced technical support, with emails answered quickly and phone calls answered in seconds.

The code will be regularly reviewed in line with Ofcom's requirements. We value all feedback from our services to this code of practice. Please email your comments to telecom@softlinkcomputers.co.uk.

To Order Our Services

Computer Services

This section explains how to request computer service work. This can be anything from remote and telephone support or visiting your premises, designing and building bespoke computers and network support.

All services can be ordered by calling us on 01453 765927 or 01453 762553 or emailing us at workshop@softlinkcomputers.co.uk. Requests will be handled by urgency. Any job which we believe to be urgent will be responded to within 1 working day for domestic customers and within 4 hours for business customers.

The time it takes to repair faults may vary, depending on the nature of the fault. Computer builds will usually be completed within 5 working days, however, we cannot guarantee timescales due to variable supply of components.

For more information about any of our computer services, please contact one of our technicians who will be able to provide further information.

Please note that our service contract customers will take priority.

Telephone and Broadband services

This section explains how to order any of our Telecommunication or Broadband packages.

All services can be ordered by calling us on 01453 765927 or 01453 762553 or emailing us at telecom@softlinkcomputers.co.uk. We aim to confirm all new orders by email within 24 hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays).

The time it takes to set up can vary depending on the service purchased.

The minimum term for our broadband services are as follows:

- ADSL and Fibre to the Cabinet – 12 month contract
- Fibre to the Premises – 18 month contract

Once the initial term has expired, you will be moved onto a one month rolling contract.

The minimum term for our telecommunications packages is usually 12 months unless we inform you otherwise. Once the initial term has expired, you will be moved onto a one month rolling contract.

New Customers

When providing a Telephone or Broadband service to new domestic customers, we will suggest the payment option we would prefer to use. This will usually be a monthly BACS transfer.

If we do a credit check and are concerned with the results, we will ask domestic customers to pay a deposit. We are usually able to provide business customers a service without asking for a deposit.

If we do ask for a deposit, you need to pay it before we start providing the service(s). We will inform you, in writing, how long we will hold the deposit for. If during the holding period all bills are paid in full and on time, we will then return your deposit.

If you are a business customer, you will have to pay all charged for the service(s) as agreed at the start of your contract.

Cancelling or ending a contract

You can cancel your contract or any part of the service at any time before we provide the service. We reserve the right to charge for any work that has been carried out or money spent in getting ready to provide you with a service.

To cancel your account please either call or email us, quoting your account username. We will require all cancellation requests to be submitted as a written request in the form of an email. If you cannot access the Broadband, please send a letter to us to the address below:

SoftLink Computer Systems Ltd
Three Gables
Gaineys Well
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 1LQ

Some services may take some time to cancel, as they require us to work with special industry processes (such as ADSL). When you cancel your service, we aim to advise you of the time period from us receiving your cancellation request to the time at which the service is withdrawn. During this period, you remain liable for the costs of any services we provide.

We reserve the right to suspend or cancel your service within the contracted timescales – for example, if you do not pay your bill.

How long will it take to install?

We aim to provide our services for domestic customers and small business within 14 days of receiving your order (as long as there is a phone line to your premises). If we need to arrange a survey before carrying out the work, or provide extra cabling (or both), it may take a little longer to complete the work. If this happens, we will inform you in advance how long it is likely to take.

Moving Home

If you are moving home or office, please let us know at least 14 days before you move so that we do not charge you for any calls made from your old address once you have moved. We will then send a final bill to your new address.

Changing supplier

If you want to move your phone services to or from us and you are still within the local exchange area of both companies, you should be able to keep your existing phone number. This changeover normally takes approximately 10 working days for domestic customers and the suppliers concerned will carry out the necessary work.

If you are a business customer, please contact your new service provider to ensure they offer this service. If you require extra business products to be installed at the same time as moving the service to us, the changeover may take longer.

Cancelling or ending products or services

You may cancel any products or services at any time. However, if the product or service has a minimum term, you may have to pay an early termination fee.

To cancel a product or service, please contact us.

Communicating With You

If you are a domestic customer, we will inform you of any changes to your service(s) via email or written letter.

If you are a business customer, we will send you updates via email or written letters. We will also inform you of any changes to our terms and conditions or prices. You can find out more information about our Business products and services by visiting www.softlinkcomputers.co.uk.

Privacy Policy

We take your privacy very seriously and we strictly follow the procedures laid down by the Data Protection Acts of 1984 and 1998 to protect all user information. Our Privacy Policy below sets out the personal information we collect about you and describes how we may use that information. No customer information will be intentionally used or distributed outside of SoftLink Computer Systems Limited and we have a strict policy of not selling customer details to outside marketing agencies.

Here is some important information about the personal information we may hold about you and how we use it. When we refer to 'personal information', we mean information that identifies you (or could do so). We may hold and use information about you as a customer, a person acting on behalf of a business customer or shareholder, or any other role.

The information we hold about you

When you order a product or service from us, we will ask you for information such as your name, postal address, contact phone numbers and email address. We will collect this information either by phone or in writing.

Credit checks

If you are a new customer requesting a telephone service from us, we may check your credit history through a credit reference agency. Credit checking is regulated and we follow all the legal requirements that apply.

We will inform you if we feel the need to carry out a credit check on you. This information will only be used to assess your credit worthiness and then the data will be destroyed.

When we perform a credit check, you may need to provide proof of your identity, either at the start or when some information is revealed by the check.

Should you wish to retain a copy of your credit score, it can be made available to you for an administration fee of £5 plus VAT.

If we refuse to provide a phone service to you, we will not base this decision purely on the result of the credit check. We may use various ways to reduce the risk to us, such as asking for a deposit. We also reserve the right to refuse to provide a service to people who are not legally able to enter into a contract with us (for example, people under the age of 18). We may also refuse to supply a service if we have reasons (based on reliable evidence) to believe that fraud is involved.

How we use your personal information

We use information about you to do the following:

- Process the orders you place with us;
- Charge for calls you have made from your phone line and other services you take from us, such as broadband. Where necessary, we may give your information to other people or organisations who we instruct to collect payment for us;
- Communicate with you about how to use our services;
- Let you know about any changes to our services;
- Check or confirm your identity if you call us, particularly about changes to your service or requests for billing information.
- Allow checks to be carried out so we can find out if broadband internet access is available on your phone line. We, you or a friend can carry out these checks, online or through a retailer.

How long we keep your personal information for

The length of time we keep personal information for depends on how we use that information. In some cases, by law we must keep information for a minimum period. Unless the law says otherwise, we will keep information no longer than we need to for the purposes we collected or processed the information.

If you have a phone contract with us

When you (or someone using your phone) makes a phone call or connects to the internet, we keep a record of the call, including the phone number called, so that we can charge for it.

If someone abuses or damages the phone network, for example, by making offensive or nuisance calls, we may keep this information on that abuse.

Billing, Payments and Pricing

We provide services which you must pay for. In this section, we describe how we ask for payments and the help we provide if you have problems paying your bill. We also explain what action we will take if you do not pay.

Computer Services

Invoices for all IT service and support work will be processed at the end of each month. Your invoice will include details of IT work that has been carried out and any hardware or software that we have supplied to you during the month.

Telephone and Broadband Services

We process the charges for calls you make on your phone line after you have made them, occasionally by up to as much as four months later. If you are a domestic customer, we will send you your bill on a monthly basis. Business customers can choose if they would prefer to be billed on a monthly or quarterly basis. This will include line rental charges, calls made and any other charges for the period.

Your bill may show:

- The cost of any calls made from your phone line;
- Rental charges for your phone line and any other services such as maintenance;
- One-off charges and any other engineering charges for connecting a service;
- Any amounts we owe you.

When you need to pay us

You must pay your bill as soon as you receive it and ensure payment reaches us before the date shown on your bill. Payment for Computer services and support is 30 days from the date of the invoice. Payment for Telephone and Broadband services is 14 days from the date of the invoice. If you cannot pay by the date shown on your bill, it is important that you contact us immediately. The earlier we know that you are having payment problems, the more help we can give you. Our contact details will be shown on your bill.

We currently accept payments via BACS (bank transfer); this is our preferred payment method. This allows you to pay us either the full balance or a set amount on a day of your choice. We will not take money from your bank (or building society) account and we currently are unable to take payment via Debit or Credit card. Alternatively you can pay via cheque.

If you have a Telephone or Broadband service with us and you are going away for a long period of time and believe you might miss a bill, please tell us as early as possible. This is so that we can avoid restricting your phone service and save you a reconnection fee.

If we do not receive your payment on time – Computer Services

If we do not receive your payment by the date shown on your bill, we will take the following actions:

- Remind you that the payment is due. We will contact you either by telephone or email.

- If we cannot contact you via telephone or email, we will send you a letter a minimum of 7 days before we plan to take any further action. You must pay immediately on receipt of this letter to avoid further action being taken.
- We may charge business customers interest for each day or a late-payment charge.

We will only send one reminder and this must be paid immediately to avoid further action being taken against you.

If we do not receive your payment on time – Broadband and Telephone Services

If we do not receive payment immediately after sending you the first reminder letter, we will:

- Restrict access to services. If you are a Telephone and Broadband customer, you will not be able to use Broadband and you will only be able to receive incoming phone calls. You will not be able to place any outgoing calls, with the exception for emergency numbers such as 999 or 112.
- Restrict your ability to receive calls, if you still do not pay.
- Charge a fee to reconnect you to a full telephone service after you pay your bill.

We do not usually restrict a business customer's service immediately after the payment date set out in the final reminder. We may suspend services in line with your contract with us.

We monitor customers who regularly delay payment and we may take further action.

The following information outlines what we will do if you do not pay the amount that is due without letting us know that you are having problems paying your bill.

Disconnecting your phone line

We will do everything we possibly can to avoid cutting off your phone line. However, if we do cut you off, we will not reconnect your service until we have received full payment for the amount owed. We will also charge a reconnection fee and you will have to pay a deposit. Business customers may also have to pay a deposit or give a guarantee as security for future payments.

We will cut off your phone service in the following situations:

- If you provide incorrect or incomplete information when you applied for us to provide your telephone or Broadband services.
- If we ask you to pay a deposit but you refuse to do so.
- If you break your agreement with us or we believe that your service is being used in a way that is forbidden by your agreement.
- If you have had your service restricted so that you can only receive, not make, telephone calls because you still owe us money and:
 - You refuse to pay the amount;

- We cannot contact you to discuss your account;
- You refuse to agree to, or you fail to keep to, a payment arrangement.
- If twice in the past 12 months you have failed to pay an overdue amount and, as a result, we have restricted your service to incoming calls only.

If you do not pay the overdue amount after we have cut off your service, we will terminate your agreement with us. We may also charge you for all your services for the full term of your agreement.

If we cut you off by mistake, you will not have to pay a reconnection charge.

We will always tell you how and why we would restrict your phone service or limit the number of phone calls you can make. We will also inform you of the circumstances that would allow us to remove the restrictions or limits.

We will not threaten to cut off your phone line to encourage you to pay for extra services that may appear on your bill.

Debt Collection

We may start direct legal action against you if you refuse to pay your bill. Alternatively, we may pass details of the overdue amount to a debt collection agency so that they can collect the money on our behalf. We may charge you our legal costs, or other costs, for hiring a debt collection agency. This would have been explained on the 'termination notice' we send you.

Debt collection agencies are professional members of a recognised association responsible for regulating the debt collection industry. They are licensed to carry out work by the Office of Fair Trading. Information about your debt may be shared with other organisations that give credit.

If you've got payment problems

If you cannot guarantee we receive your payment on time, it is important that you contact us immediately. The earlier we know that you are having problem, the more help we can give you. Our contact details are shown on your bill. If you make an offer to pay us over time, we will get back to you as quickly as we can.

If you tell us that you are having problems paying what you owe us, we can offer you a repayment plan. This will allow you to pay the amount you owe us over an agreed period.

Your responsibilities to pay your bills

As our customer, you have responsibilities to us and we expect the following:

- You should make sure we receive full payment of your bill by the date shown on your bill;
- If there is a reason why you cannot pay your bill, or you need more time to pay, you should inform us immediately;

- If you disagree with any item on your bill, you should let us know and pay the amount you believe to be correct whilst we check everything;
- If you plan to be away from the address we normally send you bill to for a long period of time, please tell us so that we can help you arrange a payment;
- If we ask you to pay a deposit, we will refund it only after an agreed time has passed and we are happy with your payment history.

Prices

Up to date prices for our products and services are always available on our website (www.softlinkcomputers.co.uk) or by calling us on 01453 765927 or 01453 762553.

How to Contact Us

Our contact details are as follows:

Phone: 01453 765927 or 01453 762553

Website: www.softlinkcomputers.co.uk

Email: workshop@softlinkcomputers.co.uk (for IT related queries)

telecom@softlinkcomputers.co.uk (for Phone and Broadband queries)

Our office is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. We are closed on weekends and bank holidays. Calls are charged at local rates.

Fault Repair

Faults can be reported 24/7 via email. Please email all computer faults to workshop@softlinkcomputers.co.uk and Phone or Broadband faults to telecom@softlinkcomputers.co.uk. To report a fault to one of our technicians please call 01453 765927 or 01453 762553 during office hours. Unless otherwise stated in your service agreement, technicians only attend to faults during normal working hours (Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, excluding bank holidays). Faults can occur on our network or another operator's network, as well as on your own equipment.

If the fault is reported during normal working hours, we will try to establish the location of the fault. We may request that you carry out some simple checks to help us establish the cause of the fault. Repairing faults on our network is part of the maintenance cover we provide with our service. If the fault is not on our network then we may not be responsible for its repair and we will advise you of further action you may need to take.

If you're not happy with the service we're providing

If you are not happy with the service we provide, please see below for ways to complain.

Complaints

If you have a problem with any of our services, please phone us on 01453 765927 or 01453 762553 so that we can try to resolve the problem for you. If you are not satisfied with the work done then please contact the managing director Pete Smith:

By Email: psmith@softlinkcomputers.co.uk

By Phone: 01453 765927 or 01453 762553 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

By Letter: If you prefer to put your complaint in writing you can send it to the following address:

Mr P Smith
SoftLink Computer Systems Ltd
Three Gables
Gaineys Well
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 1LQ

We will acknowledge all complaints received by letter or email within 24 hours of receiving your complaint.

Dispute resolution

If we are unable to resolve your complaint satisfactorily, we will issue a “deadlock” letter which will allow you to make a complaint through an independent alternative dispute resolution scheme.

If you are a domestic customer and the dispute is about Computer services, you can contact ‘Which?’. If the dispute concerns Phone or Broadband services then you should make a complaint through Ombudsman Services: Communications. Alternatively, if more than three months have passed since you first made your complaint, please contact the ADR scheme directly.

Which?

2 Marylebone Road
London
NW1 4DF

Phone: 020 7770 7000

Fax: 020 7770 7600

Email: support@which.co.uk

Website: www.which.co.uk

Ombudsman Services: Communications

PO Box 730
Warrington
WA4 6WU

Phone: 0330 440 1614, 0192 543 0049 or 0845 050 1614

Fax: 0330 440 1645 or 0192 543 0059

Text Phone: 0845 051 1513 or 0330 440 1600
Email: enquiries@os-communications.org
Website: www.ombudsman-services.org/communications.html

Other useful contacts

Office of Communications (Ofcom)

Ofcom Contact Centre
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

Phone: 020 7981 3040
Fax: 020 7981 3334
Email: contact@ofcom.org.uk
Website: www.ofcom.org.uk

Citizens Advice

The phone numbers of local Citizens Advice Bureaus are listed in the Yellow Pages and the Phone Book and online at www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

For online information from Citizens Advice about payment problems, go to www.adviceguide.org.uk.