



Code of Practice for Service Delivery of Common Mobile Shortcodes in the UK for all Communications Media

Overview

- Under this code of practice, originally issued May 2003, Mobile Network Operators currently support a range of services behind short (4, 5 or 6 digit) telephone numbers (“Shortcodes”) for their own and Service Provider services. These Shortcodes are provided and maintained on a common basis across all UK Mobile networks to allow services to be promoted with consistency regardless of the network of the targeted user.
- The UK Mobile Network Operators collectively manage and provide common Shortcodes under an open framework that will allow Service Providers and Content Providers to secure Shortcodes, which will operate across multiple mobile networks and will be applicable to all mobile communications subject to caveats detailed below.
- The code of practice also provides for a pricing and numbering framework that will contribute to consumer protection from unexpectedly high service charges and inappropriate or unexpected service content.
- The UK Mobile Network Operators agree that where a Shortcode is subject to this scheme it shall only be used by the party (or their contracted Service Provider or Technical Provider) to which it has been provided under the rules of the scheme.
- The provision of Shortcode services on any individual mobile network is subject to the conclusion of a satisfactory bilateral service agreement between the Service Provider and the individual Mobile Network Operator in question as well as the network’s ability to support the proposed service. No aspect of commercial service delivery is subject to this code of practice and individual Mobile Network Operators are not obliged to enter into a commercial agreement with a Service Provider or Information Provider who has obtained a Shortcode under this code of practice.
- Service Providers and Information Providers using Shortcodes are required to comply with PP+ Code of Practice, the requirements of the Data Protection Act, European Privacy Directives, European E-Money regulations and other relevant legislation, individual and combined network

codes of practice and other industry codes as notified from time to time. Failure to ensure compliance in the case of services behind Shortcodes may result in revenues being withheld, services being suspended and relevant Shortcodes withdrawn.

- The definition of Service Provider, Information Provider and Premium Rate Services can be found in the latest edition of the PP+ Code of Practice (www.phonepayplus.org.uk)
- Under this code of practice, the networks have formed a Short Code Management Group (SCMG), which meets quarterly to discuss improvements to the scheme and to resolve any issues that may have arisen. The SCMG communicates frequently in-between on topics related to management of the Shortcodes and implementation of consumer protection measures that have been introduced under cross network codes of conduct.

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Part 1 - Scheme description

1.1 Which codes?

The UK mobile networks agreed that Shortcodes in the range '5-8' to be within the scope of this code of practice and shall be only 5 digits in length.

Codes that are outside of the ranges detailed in this code of practice and have been allocated to Service Providers by Ofcom (e.g. Directory Enquiry ranges) will be honoured by networks as if they were part of this scheme providing the network technology will support the proposed use of the code and providing the intended use is the same as the use for which Ofcom issued the Shortcode.

Hence common Shortcodes will be allocated from **50000** to **89999**. This will provide for 40,000 codes in total in the Ofcom defined Type C category (Operator own use). However, no more than a proportion of this space will be opened initially to encourage efficient numbering practices and to allow room for subsequent Shortcode expansion in contiguous ranges for future categories of services and other scheme development.

1.2 Shortcode Structure

A coherent structure is required for common Shortcode access to ensure consumer clarity and to mirror other numbering schemes. The following ranges are therefore allocated for current and future use. All pricing mentioned is inclusive of VAT.

Short code	Designation
50000 – 59999	Reserved for future expansion and dual UK/ROI services
60000 – 68999	Open-ended fixed fee per message or call or open-ended time dependent services
69000 – 69999	Open-ended fee per message or call (as a fixed fee) or open-ended time dependent services that are aimed at an adult (18 years and over) audience including PP+ defined Sexual Entertainment Services.
70000 – 77999	Reserved for future expansion
78000 – 78999	Available from the end of August 2005 and classified as a range to be used for payment facilities for products or services where the product or service is not delivered to the mobile phone. This range is subject to restrictions on usage and charging.
79000 – 79999	Available from the end of August 2005 and classified as a range to be used for payment facilities for products or services aimed at an adult (18 years and over) audience and where the product or service is not delivered to the mobile phone. This range is subject to restrictions on usage and charging. It is the responsibility of the provider of the service to validate the age of the user as being

	over 18 and all applicable UK laws must be adhered to.
80000 – 88999	Open-ended fixed fee per message or call or open-ended time dependent services
89000 – 89999	Open-ended fixed fee per message or call or open-ended time dependent services aimed at an adult (18 years and over) audience including PP+ defined Sexual Entertainment Services.

1.3 Provision of new Shortcodes within the scheme

Participating operators will only issue new 5 digit Shortcodes from the ranges detailed in 1.2 in accordance with this code of practice. These provisions do not affect Shortcodes that have been provided before any individual operator has agreed to observe this code of practice.

An active service on Shortcode that is outside the ranges provided in accordance with this scheme does not grant the service provider automatic rights to extend the Shortcode to other means of communications e.g. a 4 digit code for a Text service not issued in accordance with this scheme cannot be migrated to a voice service. This is designed to encourage migration of services to scheme administered short codes.

Part 2 - Scheme administration

2.1 Who will manage the scheme?

The Short Code Management Group (SCMG) which consists of at least one representative of each participating Mobile Network Operator and meets collectively every quarter and communicates in between on areas of administration and code compliance. In addition, Ofcom's Numbering Unit, PP+and independent bodies such as the MDA are welcome to attend to witness the workings of the group. The role of the SCMG is to agree policy with respect to the use of common Shortcodes on participating Mobile Networks, to agree on areas of improvement of administration, and to agree processes for guideline or code monitoring and enforcement. This code of practice will be revised from time to time and any revision will be published on the Short-Codes web site for the purposes of transparency. A review is envisaged every six months. Minutes of meetings plus any other policy documentation will be made available to Service Providers upon request.

Full details of the operation of the SCMG can be found on the web site www.short-codes.com

2.2 Number administration

The participating Mobile Network Operators originally created a range-divided responsibility for administering the scheme.

The agreed available Shortcodes in the range 6XXXX, 7XXXX and 8XXXX are divided equally between the participating Mobile Network Operators into further ranges and are administered by the "lead operator" for a particular range. Individual lead operators will take responsibility for issues in the allocation and administration of Shortcodes within their range.

The introduction of the Shortcode web service on www.short-codes.com, where availability, request and allocation of Shortcodes are performed automatically, reduces the administrative requirements on each lead operator is reduced.

Based on selection by lot the codes which each operator will administer are shown as follows. Shortcode ranges currently available, subject to the conditions of the scheme, are shown in white.

Shortcode range	Designation / Lead operator
50000 – 59999	Reserved
60000 – 60999	Orange
61000 – 61999	O2
62000 – 62999	3
63000 – 63999	T-Mobile
64000 – 64999	Vodafone
65000 – 65999	Orange
66000 – 66999	O2
67000 – 67999	3
68000 – 68999	T-Mobile
69000 – 69999	Vodafone
70000 – 77999	Reserved
78000 – 78099	Orange
78100 – 78199	O2
78200 – 78299	3
78300 – 78399	T-Mobile
78400 – 78499	Vodafone
78500 – 78599	Orange
78600 – 78699	O2
78700 – 78799	3
78800 – 78899	T-Mobile
78900 – 78999	Vodafone
79000 – 79099	Orange
79100 – 79199	O2
79200 – 79299	3
79300 – 79399	T-Mobile

79400 – 79499	Vodafone
79500 – 79599	Orange
79600 – 79699	O2
79700 – 79799	3
79800 – 79899	T-Mobile
79900 – 79999	Vodafone
80000 – 80999	Orange
81000 – 81999	O2
82000 – 82999	3
83000 – 83999	T-Mobile
84000 – 84999	Vodafone
85000 – 85999	Orange
86000 – 86999	O2
87000 – 87999	3
88000 – 88999	T-Mobile
89000 – 89999	Vodafone

2.3 How does a Service Provider secure preferred Shortcodes?

With the exception of 5xxxx shortcodes, Service Providers will be able to secure a preferred Shortcode by:

1. Accessing the Shortcode website at www.short-codes.com
2. If this is a first time use, a Service Provider will be able to browse or search for Shortcodes that are available but they cannot reserve Shortcodes until they are granted an account. Registration details are required through the web site to request an account and this will be processed by one of the 5 UK Network Operators, in consultation with the other 4 Operators. The UK Mobile Network Operators will provide an account to established and verifiable Service Providers, Content Providers, and legitimate UK based businesses and UK based individuals. Provision of an account is at the discretion of the UK Mobile Network Operators.
3. Once an account is provided, Service Providers should log on to the website using the issued username and password and use the Code Search or Browse Codes facility from the home page to check availability of the Shortcode(s) required.
4. Shortcodes are listed as "Available", "Reserved", or "Active" or "Service not Available" against each network.
 - a. "Available" Shortcodes are those, which are available for Service Providers to reserve and to subsequently make active.

- b. "Reserved" Shortcodes are reserved by another party but may become available again.
 - c. "Active" Shortcodes are live on the networks detailed.
 - d. "Service not Available" is indicated under the network and the column of the particular service, e.g. MMS may not be available on only one network.
5. If the Shortcode is available, the Service Provider can reserve the Shortcode immediately using the "Reserve" button. If the Shortcode is already reserved or active, the Service Provider can register interest in the Shortcode (for when it becomes available again) by using the "Interest" button.
6. Service Providers will have three months to activate this Shortcode on at least one of the 5 UK networks, otherwise the reservation is automatically withdrawn. A reminder e-mail will be sent two weeks prior to the end of the three months period to advise a Service Provider that this Shortcode will be reclaimed in two weeks if it is still reserved. Any parties who registered interest in the Shortcode will be sent an email stating the Shortcode has become available.
7. There is a maximum allocation of 5 reserved Shortcodes. To reserve more Shortcodes, the existing reserved Shortcodes must be activated on at least one of the 5 UK mobile network operators.

5xxxx Shortcodes

A service provider can apply to the UK SCMG for a 5xxxx shortcode if they meet the following conditions;

1. Commercially and Technically connected to both UK and R.O. Ireland networks
2. Running a current service in ROI on a 5xxxx shortcode
3. The promotion of that service is likely to be seen by both UK and ROI audiences
4. Has (and can supply) a valid certificate of allocation of that shortcode from ComReg plus approval to run the service from RegTel

Subject to unpredictable limitations on any UK network and possible duplications as a result of another service, the UK networks will honour the shortcode thus allowing its dual operation in both countries.

The SCMG reserves the right to withdraw any 5xxxx shortcode from individual networks if they feel that consumer clarity on pricing or service recognition has been compromised by the operation of the code in both countries.

2.4 Additional Scheme rules

Scheme rules are designed to facilitate the correct and efficient provision of Shortcodes to Service Providers

1. Web site (www.short-codes.com) account registration will be granted to legitimate individuals and organisations seeking to create new business opportunities and to add value through the active provision of services behind common Shortcodes. Grant of account is at the discretion of the SCMG.
2. All Shortcodes "*reserved*" by a Service Provider shall be *made* "Active" on at least one UK mobile network operators within 3 months of their provision. Shortcodes reserved for longer than 3 months without becoming active will be automatically made "Available".
3. Shortcodes which are made "Active" will be marked as "Active" on the on-line website by the Operator on whose network the Shortcode has become active for the communication mechanism by which the Shortcode is active (e.g. for MMS).
4. No more than a total of 5 Shortcodes across the complete range which are not "*active*" on at least two participating networks may be held by any party. Exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the SCMG
5. A Service Provider may voluntarily relinquish a Shortcode via short-codes.com by using the "remove shortcode" button next to the Shortcode. This can only be removed if the Shortcode is not showing "Active" on any network. If a Shortcode becomes inactive on all networks but is not relinquished voluntarily, then the Shortcode will automatically become "Available" after 3 months of "inactive" status

2.5 Mobile operator commitment to this scheme

The SCMG has provided an efficient and timely mechanism of provision of Shortcodes to Service Providers for scheme ranges managed under this code of practice. Where a Shortcode has been provided under this scheme, participating operators agree that it shall only be used on their network by the party to which it has been provided under the scheme rules or their contracted technical service provider upon written confirmation to indicate this arrangement exists. The only exception shall be Shortcodes that were in use at the time of formal scheme commencement.

Mobile Network Operators agree to co-operate with Service Providers who have been provided with a Shortcode under this scheme to facilitate use of these Shortcodes across all UK mobile networks. However, for the avoidance of doubt, opening a service on a Shortcode on an individual mobile network is subject to the conclusion of a satisfactory bilateral commercial agreement between the Service Provider in question and the individual Mobile Network Operator. Such bilateral arrangements are outside the scope of this scheme. The party who has been provided with a Shortcode may connect the Shortcode using one of the established Service Providers who have gained connectivity to the UK mobile networks for the communications technology concerned.

Individual operators reserve the right to apply commercial conditions subject to normal commercial processes. Under no circumstances will an individual Network Operator be obliged to conclude an agreement with a Service Provider who has been provided with a Shortcode under this scheme.

No aspect of commercial service delivery, including the form or nature of commercial agreement between Service Providers and Mobile Network Operators, is subject to this code of practice.

2.6 What information will be required by participating Network Operators?

Under the scheme Service Providers will be required to:

1. Confirm their identity including contact name, company name, address, UK company registered number and telephone contact details when requesting a short-codes.com account;
2. confirm that they will abide by the rules of the scheme as provided to them on the web site www.short-codes.com and updated from time to time;
3. request activation of reserved Shortcodes using the Cross Network Care Form (and other ordering systems as provided by individual mobile network operators) including provision of a publicly available UK contact number which a Shortcode service user can use to contact their customer services; and
4. agree to abide by such other co-regulatory rules which may apply to services provided behind common Shortcodes, including but not limited to the PP+ Code of Practice and the cross network and individual networks codes of practice as issued from time to time.

More information can be obtained from <http://www.short-codes.com/pages/documents.php>

Part 3 - Regulatory matters

3.1

PP+ is the industry funded regulatory body for premium rate services which generally have the following characteristics, they:

1. are charged to a telephone bill;
2. involve revenue share between a network and service provider; and
3. involve some form of content, product or service delivered as part of the call or as a consequence of the call.

PP+ has a Code of Practice which is recognised by Ofcom and is backed by the Communications Act 2003 (Section 120). PP+ enforces its Code of Practice on service providers and has powers to enforce sanctions where their code is breached. Powers of sanction range from warnings to fines and/or access bars upon services for defined periods.

PP+S' powers encompass both traditional premium rate services and the fast developing Premium-SMS sector. Participating Mobile Network

Operators support this approach and value the protection which this provides to customers. Service Providers will be required to comply with the PP+S' Code of Practice, the requirements under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation. Failure to ensure compliance in the case of services behind Shortcodes may result in revenues being withheld or services being suspended.

Typical PP+ concerns surrounding premium rate services (both SMS and voice) include: unsolicited and misleading promotions, price transparency, inappropriate promotion to children, unclear instructions on how to unsubscribe from services and a general lack of awareness among consumers of how new services operate.

It is the responsibility of Service Providers who provide services behind Shortcodes within this scheme to ensure compliance with the PP+ Code of Practice. Operators may be required by PP+ to withhold monies or suspend the service pending the investigation of a complaint by PP+. In the event of any PP+ complaint regarding any particular Shortcode, Network Operators including the lead administrative operator, may be required to inform PP+ of the identity of the Service Provider.

3.2 Ofcom

Oftel and its successor, Ofcom has welcomed moves by the mobile industry to develop a common co-regulatory approach to Shortcodes consistent with the current UK numbering framework. Ofcom has suggested¹ that such an approach for Shortcodes outside 1XXXX (Type A' Shortcodes) would be consistent with Ofcom's strategy of moving towards co- and self-regulation.

Participating Network Operators will work closely with Ofcom to ensure that there is effective numbering management of the short code space and that effective consumer protection measures are developed. This will take into account best practice rules and approaches produced by regulatory bodies and other numbering management organisations.

To ensure transparency, any common approach to numbering management and rules will be shared with Ofcom and will be made publicly available to other interested Service Providers

3.3 UK code of practice for the self-regulation of new forms of content on mobiles

This code of practice has been developed by Orange, O2, T-Mobile, Vodafone and 3 (referred to collectively in the code of practice as 'the mobile operators') for use in the UK market.

The background to the code is that, increasingly, mobile devices are available with enhanced features, including colour screens, picture messaging, video cameras and Internet browsers and can be used to access a growing variety of content.

¹ For example in: Access Codes: options for the future use and proposals to revise access codes and short codes conventions

In anticipation of these products being widely adopted by consumers, including consumers under the age of 18, the mobile operators are putting in place the measures described in this code of practice. The intention is that parents and carers should have access to the information with which they can show their children how to use new mobile devices responsibly and the power to influence the type of content they can access.

The code covers new types of content, including visual content, online gambling, mobile gaming, chat rooms and Internet access. It does not cover traditional premium rate voice or premium rate SMS (texting) services, which will continue to be regulated under the PP+ Code of Practice.

The code does not cover peer-to-peer communications but it does give assurances to customers that the mobile operators are taking action to combat illegal, bulk and nuisance communications.

This code provides a basic common framework and does not prevent mobile operators and content providers from adopting different commercial and brand positions with respect to the content and services they supply, providing these are consistent with the overall provisions of the code. Each mobile operator may choose or need to use different organisational and technical solutions to enable it to meet aspects of the code.

Part 4 - Definitions

PP+ - The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. PP+ is an industry-funded self-regulatory body for the Premium Rate Services industry.

Lead Operator - an operator which has agreed to administer a proportion of the Shortcode space within the context of this scheme.

Mobile Data Association (MDA) - A body established to reflect the interests of suppliers of new data services on mobiles.

Mobile Network Operator - One of 3, O2, Orange, T-Mobile or Vodafone participating in the proposed Code of Practice for Service Delivery of common mobile Shortcodes in the UK.

Ofcom - The statutory body created by the Office of Communications Act 2002.

Sexual Entertainment Services - services of a clearly sexual nature or any services for which the associated promotional material is or implies a clearly sexual nature.

Service Provider - an individual organization or company which contracts with a Network Operator for facilities enabling the provision of Premium Rate Services, including premium SMS.

Premium Rate Services - services where part of the overall charge paid by the customer for the call or short message service represents payment for the content, other product or service delivered is passed to the Service Provider and is paid through the customer's telephone bill.

Part 5 - Administration

5.1 Contact details for Shortcode reservation

Requests for the reservation of Shortcodes may be made through the website www.short-codes.com

Requests for the activation of Shortcodes on each network are made through the normal commercial channels advised at commencement of the commercial relationship.

Issues related to individual shortcodes that are potentially resolvable by a single party from the SCMG (for example changing reservation name or stopping a potential de-reservation) should, be addressed to the Lead Operator for that shortcode.

Lead operators are identified next to the shortcode in the web service www.short-codes.com or from the listing earlier in this document.

Contact details are shown below:

Operator	Contact address
Orange	shortcodes@orange.co.uk
O ₂	WholesaleDataSupport@o2.com
3	shortcodes@three.co.uk
T-Mobile	shortcodes@t-mobile.co.uk
Vodafone	shortcodes@vodafone.co.uk