Gold Standard Wholesale Criteria   v2.1

In addition to the common criteria, v1 of the Gold Standard Criteria referenced:

- Open Access principles as per SA 33671 (BDUK NBS 2012) Section 52, 53
- NICC-ALA Interoperability Standards
- Network Charter draft 2014
- Equal treatment of customers

The Technical Committee has reviewed those documents, extracted the relevant parts and updated them here in a single reference document to replace the multiple references above.

1. Open Access Principles

The Wholesaler will offer access to its network to the retail market with at least one of the access methods in the following table. It may choose to offer any other access mode in addition.

Technology	Minimum acceptable access	Possible additional access
Fibre to the home (FTTH) or building (FTTB)	Active access (for example): Bit-stream, unbundling (P2P) or VULA equivalent (P2MP) and/or Physical access to duct or dark fibre	Multiple physical access Splitter access White label
Fibre to the cabinet/node (FTTC/N)	Active access (for example): Bit-stream, unbundling (P2P) or VULA equivalent (P2MP) and/or Physical access to duct or dark fibre	Multiple physical access Cabinet space and power White label
Wireless / mobile	Active access (for example): Bit-stream, unbundling (P2P) or VULA equivalent (P2MP) and/or Physical access to duct or dark fibre	White label
Cable (DOCSIS v3.0)	Active access (for example): Bit-stream, VULA equivalent and/or Physical access to duct or dark fibre	Multiple physical access Head end space and power White label
Other technologies	Bit-stream	White label

Gold Standard Wholesaler does not have to offer all these technologies to qualify – just the ones appropriate to its sectors.

Networks built to the Open Access principles in the BDUK NBS Scheme S52 and 53 will usually be compliant with this table.

If the Wholesaler operates in retail, it must allow other retailers to access its wholesaler services on an equal basis to its retail operation.

2. Interoperability Standards

All Communications Providers have a general requirement to adopt common technical standards. This is both to comply with the relevant UK regulations and to facilitate interconnections in as standard a way as possible with its customers and suppliers.

Ofcom General Conditions also place obligations on Public Electronic Communications Networks in respect of network access and interconnection.

The NICC organisation develops interoperability standards for public communications networks and services in the UK.

To qualify as a Gold Standard Wholesale network, the INCA Member must comply with the requirements of relevant Ofcom obligations for its type of organisation and/or the NICC standards relevant to the services and networks it wholesales.

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3. Products and Services

The 2014 "Network Charter" draft document was prepared by Point Topic on behalf of Fluidata who have kindly given permission for this to be used in preparation of these Wholesale criteria.

The following provides an outline of the wider service surround requirements for an effective Gold Standard wholesale service.

3.1 Products

3.1.1 Outline

The Wholesale network will provide a maintained, wholesale product between the network aggregation point and the NTE (network termination equipment). By definition, Gold Standard networks must be NGA at minimum and may be Full Fibre, Hybrid Fibre or Wireless.

3.1.2 Product set

The products will include a set of standard profiles aligned with typical retail service provider requirements.

They may also include any other product of any speed / symmetry.

3.1.3 Interface

The product provides an Ethernet presentation at the end-user. Service providers may use their own IP addresses and provide their own brand services, email etc over the network.

3.1.4 End user access

Network operators own the NT device usually installed on a wall at the end-user premise. This is the demarcation point into which the service provider's CPE is connected. Network operators may offer a list of approved CPE.

3.1.5 Pricing

Network operator charges including those listed in the following table, are set out clearly to service providers for each identified product:

Charges	Notes
Installation	These include set-up, connection and activation fees, covering the costs of first connection port set-up and engineering
Time period rental	Usually monthly
Usage	Fixed rate or 95th percentile
Maintenance and support	Including enhanced care options
Changes to service	Including migration, regrading, cease, order cancellation pre-delivery, end user modify request
Miscellaneous	Examples include missed engineer appointment, CPE replacement

Commercial terms will be clear and appropriate to market requirements.

3.2 Processes

Processes must be available to allow efficient handling of the normal actions to provide, modify, cease, support and report on services to the retail service providers' customers. These should be, as far as possible, presented as "business as usual" processes to make it as easy as possible for retailers to consume the wholesale products and services offered.

The processes may be offered as an administrative system (e.g. by email or ticket), as a portal, as an API or as decided between wholesaler and service provider.

3.2.1 Ordering

- Availability Check – Yes / No / Yes after action (e.g. dig)
- Order acceptance
- Install / activation booking with change date / failed visit / estimated completion date.
- Service passed to service provider through interconnect

3.2.2 Cease

- Cease request with details from service provider.
- Confirmation response with date.

3.2.3 Regrading
- Regrading request from service provider
- Confirmation response with date

3.2.4 Migration.
There is a process in place which allows end users to migrate from one service provider to another. The MAC approach or equivalent may be used. The migration should take no more than 10 working days. It includes:
- Supply MAC to losing service provider by email or portal
- Network operator receives switch commit from gaining service provider, migrates and notifies both service providers.

3.2.5 Portal
A service provider portal can provide a uniform experience. Functionality should include:
- availability checker – individually and in bulk
- ordering – individually and in bulk
- view order and port status
- modify status: upgrade, downgrade, migration, cease

3.2.6 API
The API for the portal may be made available if desired by service providers. A standard API has advantages in ease of multiple integrations and consistent functionality.

3.2.7 Reporting
Accurate reports will be provided to include:
- technical support levels, provisioning issues, service levels, overall performance
- service provider requirements and escalations
- product roadmap

Frequency and format as decided by wholesaler and service provider.

3.2.8 Security
There must be appropriate security of service provider and end user data. Relevant standards include NICC minimum security standards, ISO 7001, GDPR.

3.3 Support

3.3.1 Scope
Wholesaler will provide 3rd line support to service providers according to agreed SLA (service level agreement) between wholesaler and service provider. Updates to all cases will be advised promptly via the chosen process (email, ticket, portal, API).

3.3.2 Provisioning
If service cannot be provided, service provider will be notified within 2 working days.

Service provision / migration target for premises already "connectable" is 10 working days where access to premises meets wholesaler requirements.

Where special access requirements or new physical connections are needed, dates will be given and adhered to wherever possible.

3.3.3 Fault response
The agreed SLA will include standard definitions for fault severity and maximum fix times.

3.3.4 Escalation
Escalation routes will be clear and to relevant named teams with direct contact details, availability and response times. To cover service delivery, development, support, accounts.

3.3.5 General Service queries
Wholesaler will respond to general service queries promptly and via an agreed route.

3.3.6 Service availability
Service availability will be to the levels defined in the SLA. Wholesaler will always use best efforts to rectify faults and interruptions and keep service providers informed.

3.3.7 Compensation
Compensation for failures which are not fixed within the metrics will be paid according to the agreed commercial terms on a monthly basis.

3.3.8 Planned outages
Planned outages will be informed to service providers at the earliest possible stage.

Reasonable endeavours will be used to keep outages to a minimum and at times with the least impact.

Reasonable endeavours will be used to minimise the impact on service providers.

4. Equivalence Principles
Wholesaler commits to treating all their customers on an equal basis including their retail service provider if there is one. Commercial terms will be appropriate to the type of customer (e.g. service providers, other wholesalers). Commercial terms may include volume and other terms as negotiated.

5. Switching
The market is moving toward an environment in which end-user customers will expect to be able to migrate easily between service providers. This is being encouraged by policy makers and the regulator.

Wholesalers providing an efficient migration service will be capable of serving as wide as possible range of service providers.

Wholesalers in the Gold Standard scheme will use reasonable endeavours to provide the migration processes suitable for their service providers and other customers in as standard a way as possible.