

Consultation Question Responses

Q1 Do you agree that consumers are concerned by silent calls and that Ofcom is right to take enforcement action against the companies that make them?

Most certainly. When the telephone rings it is not possible to know in advance who is ringing or why and whether or not the call will prove to be silent. Answering the telephone is by its nature an action which forces the answerer to take an unanticipated action which disturbs whatever they were doing. It is annoying enough when the call turns out to be an unsolicited marketing call and even more annoying when this is silent so that the disturbance has been for no purpose at all.

Q2 Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed approach to taking enforcement action, guided by a sense of administrative priority?

I am not sure I understand what the second part of this question means but I do agree that enforcement action needs to be taken by Ofcom as the appropriate regulating body. Unsolicited telephone calls of this sort are an invasion of privacy and a misuse of a communications system. This is all the more the case when the call turns out to be silent. Automatic pre-recorded responses when no live operator is on the other end of the telephone call are just as bad.

Q3 Do you agree that the range of procedures proposed in the statement will be effective in reducing the degree of anxiety, annoyance and inconvenience caused by silent calls?

Yes I think they will but I think they should go further. Why has the 3% limit been decided on? Ideally I think it should be 0% but if this is not practicable then I think the limit should be no higher than 1%. I also think that the no further call back period should be at least a week not 72 hours.

I do not think that the person called should have to pay to have these calls stopped and I would argue that the number they can ring should always be a freephone (0800) number and not an 0845 number which carries a charge.

I also do not think that the CLI number should be chargeable at the national rate but at the local rate at the most.

Q4 Are there any additional procedures which call centres could adopt to reduce the degree of anxiety, annoyance and inconvenience caused by silent calls?

Ideally I would like to see this type of call, whether silent or not, banned altogether, but if this is considered not to be practical then I think people should have the right to opt in to receive them (rather like they can decide whether or not to have their telephone number included in the telephone directory).