

Cover Sheet for response to an Ofcom Consultation

BASIC DETAILS

Consultation title: Telephone Numbering - Safeguarding the future of numbers

To / E-mail address: Nic Green

Name of respondent: Name Withheld 11

Representing (self or organisation/s): self

Address (if not received by email):

CONFIDENTIALITY

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?

Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name/address/contact details/job title	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Whole Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part of the Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	If there is no separate annex, which parts?	

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DECLARATION

I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response. It can be published in full on Ofcom's website, unless otherwise specified on this cover sheet, and I authorise Ofcom to make use of the information in this response to meet its legal requirements. If I have sent my response by email, Ofcom can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Ofcom seeks to publish responses on receipt. If your response is non-confidential (in whole or in part), and you would prefer us to publish your response only once the consultation has ended, please tick here.

Name

Signed (if hard copy)

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Sirs,

The most important things about telephony are surely transparency - that customers know when they are being charged premium rates for a phonecall, and choice – that customers can make vital phonecalls without being forced to use premium phone numbers.

Companies should not be able to hide their non-geographic numbers for reasons of profit – but privacy considerations for the individual should remain paramount:: any regulations should be drawn up so individuals cannot suffer. Trading should be transparent, and personal privacy a right.

May I propose that, as is common in America, a short recorded message is transposed between dialling and connection advising customers of any excessive charges – above the national average cost of a call, ie on 0870 numbers and such, and that alternative numbers be readily available to the consumer, enforced by legislation.

Where companies use the premium call rate to make money (insidious junk mail/calls/faxes) there should be an absolute obligation to publish non-geographical service numbers.

Where calls are deliberately made long to accrue profit there should be repeated information messages detailing charge calls and accumulated costs.

Where companies are charging customers directly for performing vital functions by phone – such as reporting faults, mistakes, or asserting their rights under consumer legislation such as the Sale of Goods Act, there should be provided an alternate non-premium number by law (or telephone supplier contract) or this will result in a diminution of rights whereby the cost of repairing a wrong may be more than the cost of suffering it – we already have this problem in the courts.

The iniquity of the consumer paying for what should be an integral part of company operations cannot be allowed to go on. A company should suffer for its faults rather than be able to profit by them, and should not be able to inflate its balance sheets by offloading the costs of legally required customer interaction onto the consumer.

Essential calls to premium numbers should also be tax deductible or refundable where necessary.