



# A three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service

Proposal to designate '105' for the service, including  
notification of a proposed modification to the National  
Telephone Numbering Plan

Consultation

Publication date: 16 February 2015

Closing Date for Responses: 27 March 2015

## About this document

This document sets out our proposal to make the three-digit telephone number '105' available for consumers to call the national power cut and electricity network safety service.

We are undertaking this consultation in relation to a request from the Energy Network Association (ENA) to designate a three-digit number for a service planned by the electricity industry for launch in April 2016. Specifically, we are consulting on designating 105 for the service in the National Telephone Numbering Plan. ENA proposes to use the number to provide a service for the general public to call their Electricity Network Operator about a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern.

Three-digit numbers are a very scarce and valuable resource. We are seeking stakeholders' views on our proposal to designate one of the remaining 14 three-digit numbers for this service on the basis that it would likely constitute "best use" of the number while promoting the interests of citizens and consumers, in line with our general duty in performing our numbering functions.

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## Section 1

# Summary

## Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out our proposal to make the three-digit telephone number '105' available for consumers to call the national power cut and electricity network safety service (referred to in this document as 'the service').
- 1.2 Ofcom administers the UK's telephone numbers. We are undertaking this consultation in relation to a request from the Energy Network Association (ENA) to designate a three-digit number for the service which the electricity industry plans to launch across England, Scotland and Wales in April 2016. ENA proposes to use the number for the general public to call their Electricity Network Operator about a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern.

## ENA's request for a three-digit number for the service

- 1.3 The request for a three-digit number has been prompted by the severe storm events over the winter 2013/14 period and the electricity supply disruptions they caused. The storm events highlighted that the general public is confused about who and what number to call to report an electricity network supply issue and obtain important information or advice. Currently each regional Electricity Network Operator has its own 'emergency and power loss' service for its network and uses its own 0800 freephone number. The national power cut and electricity network safety service, using a single memorable number for contact across Great Britain, is intended to benefit consumers by making it clearer how to make contact in times of need and improving the overall consumer experience.
- 1.4 We have advised ENA on potential number options for the service. ENA has considered these and decided that a three-digit number (similar to the 101 number used for non-emergency police services and the 111 number used for non-emergency healthcare services) is its preferred choice. ENA wants what it believes to be the most memorable number available and considers that the nature of the service and the objectives it is trying to achieve require a distinctive number that is strongly associated with the critical service supplied. In its view, this means a three-digit number. Of the possible three-digit number options available, ENA would like to use 105 for the service.
- 1.5 While ENA's preference is to provide the service on a three-digit number, other number options are available without request to Ofcom, in particular a 080 11-digit freephone number. Three-digit numbers are a very scarce and valuable resource – there are only 14 such numbers currently available for designation for services. Our duty is to decide whether making a three-digit number available for this service would make the best use of the UK's numbering resource, while promoting the interests of citizens and consumers.
- 1.6 We have considered ENA's request and our preliminary view is that designating a three-digit number for the service would likely constitute "best use" of the number while promoting the interests of citizens and consumers, which is our general duty to

secure in performing our numbering functions.<sup>1</sup> We consider that two points in particular support the case for a three-digit number for the service. The first is that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 recognises electricity as one of the “*essentials of life*” and encompasses disruption to power supply in its definition of ‘emergency’. The second is the likely situation of callers when they may need the service, for instance in the dark and without power, so looking up the number may be particularly difficult and the experience stressful. The number therefore needs to be memorable so that it can be recalled at the time of need.

- 1.7 This consultation relates only to the proposed designation of 105. It is not a consultation about the nature of the service itself, other than to the extent that is relevant to our decision whether to designate a three-digit number. It is also not a consultation about other communications issues, such as the price of calling the service or the provision of access to the service. We would expect these issues to be resolved through commercial negotiation between the provider that ENA selects to run the service and other communications providers (CPs) who originate and carry calls to 105.

## The consultation process

- 1.8 We are seeking stakeholders’ views on our proposal to agree to ENA’s request and modify the National Telephone Numbering Plan (‘the Numbering Plan’) to designate 105 for “Access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service”. Annex 2 of this document includes notification of the proposed modification to the Numbering Plan.
- 1.9 This consultation closes on 27 March 2015. We plan to publish the statement concluding on our proposals (and the modified Numbering Plan if we decide to proceed with the designation of 105) in May 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> Under section 63 of the Communications Act 2003, it is our general duty in performing our numbering functions to secure, what appears to us, best use of telephone numbers.

## Section 2

# Introduction and background

## Introduction

- 2.1 Telephone numbers are a critical national resource for consumers, businesses and the delivery of key public services. Ofcom manages the UK's telephone numbers under the Communications Act 2003 ('the Act'). It is our duty, as set out in section 63 of the Act, to ensure that best use is made of the UK's numbering resource and to encourage efficiency and innovation for that purpose.
- 2.2 As part of fulfilling our functions in administering telephone numbers, it is sometimes appropriate for us to make new and/or additional numbers available for use by CPs. This can include setting aside specific telephone numbers for adoption and use by any CP in accordance with the numbers' service designation in the Numbering Plan and without application to Ofcom. In order to do this, we need to consult on modifying the Numbering Plan in accordance with the procedure set out in the Act. Further information on the legal framework is provided in Annex 1.

## The purpose and scope of this consultation

- 2.3 We are undertaking this consultation in relation to a request from ENA to designate a three-digit number for a service planned by the electricity industry for launch across England, Scotland and Wales in April 2016. ENA represents the 'wires and pipes' transmission and distribution network operators for gas and electricity in the UK and Ireland.<sup>2</sup> This consultation and ENA's request relates to electricity networks only.
- 2.4 The electricity distribution network for Great Britain's electricity supply is provided over 14 large electricity distribution networks operated by six large electricity Distribution Network Operator (DNO) companies and a number of smaller independent DNOs. In this document, we refer to these companies collectively as 'Electricity Network Operators'. Currently each Electricity Network Operator has its own 'emergency and power loss' service for its network, each with a different 0800 freephone contact number. ENA proposes to use the three-digit number as the single telephony point of contact for the general public to call their Electricity Network Operator about a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern. The use of a single memorable number for contacting Electricity Network Operators across Great Britain is intended to benefit consumers by making it clearer how to make contact in times of need. We describe the service in more detail in Section 3.
- 2.5 This consultation relates only to ENA's request for a three-digit number to be designated for the service. It is not a consultation about the nature of the service itself, other than to the extent that is relevant to our decision whether to designate a three-digit number. It is also not a consultation about other communications issues, such as the price of calling the service or the provisions of access to the service. We would expect these issues to be resolved through commercial negotiation between the provider that ENA selects to run the service and other CPs who originate and carry calls to 105. If it is necessary for us to consider regulatory measures on these

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<sup>2</sup> ENA's website <http://www.energynetworks.org/> provides further information.

issues in the future, we would need to carry out a further consultation on the specific issues and proposals.

## Three-digit numbers

### Introduction

2.6 As mentioned in paragraph 2.2, from time to time we may set aside specific telephone numbers for adoption and use by any CP in accordance with the numbers' service designation in the Numbering Plan and without application to Ofcom. Three-digit numbers are an example of such a type of number. These numbers are provided to allow consumers access to important public services of social value, such as 112 and 999 for emergency services, and to commonly used services, such as 100 for operator assistance.

2.7 Three-digit numbers are a very scarce and valuable numbering resource. This is because only numbers that begin with the digits 10X or 11X can be designated as three-digit numbers for new services. The reason we cannot use other numbers is that the digit '0' signifies national or international dialling and the digits '2' to '9' are used for local dialling of geographic numbers without the area code. Within the digit '1' numbering space, numbers beginning with '12X' to '19X' have already been set aside for various uses.<sup>3</sup> This leaves only the 20 numbers in the format '10X' and '11X' available for designation. Six of these numbers are already in use, leaving the following 14 options available:

102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109
110	113	114	115	117	119		

2.8 In 2005 and 2009 we carried out consultations on making a three-digit number available for two particular services. Following the consultations we designated the numbers as follows:

- 101 was designated in March 2006 for "Access to non-emergency service".<sup>4</sup> This followed a request from the Home Office for the number in order for the public to call to report or enquire about non-emergency issues relating to police, crime and anti-social behaviour. 101 has more lately developed into the non-emergency number for police services; and
- 111 was designated in December 2009 for "Access to NHS non-emergency healthcare services".<sup>5</sup> This followed a request from the Department of Health for the number in order for the public to call to receive advice and information on non-emergency healthcare issues and services available in the local area.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of these numbers have been designated in the three-digit format for specific services available for use by all CPs, such as 123 to access the speaking clock. Others have been made available for CPs' independent use either to provide services exclusively to their customers, e.g. 150 commonly used for contacting the CP's customer services, or for internal network services.

<sup>4</sup> Ofcom statement *National Single Non-Emergency Number: Designating number '101'* published 8 March 2006 available on our website [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> Ofcom statement *A Three-digit Number for Non-Emergency Healthcare Services: Designating number '111'* published on 18 December 2009 available on our website [here](#).

## Eligibility criteria for a three-digit number

- 2.9 As explained in paragraph 2.7, the supply of three-digit numbers is very limited. They are also a valuable resource. The fewer the digits, the easier the number is to recall at the time it is needed, making three-digit numbers highly desirable. We therefore need to consider carefully any request for the designation of a three-digit number on its individual merits.
- 2.10 As part of our decision to designate 101, we developed criteria that we consider we should take into account in determining whether a particular service should be considered for designation of a three-digit number. We applied the same criteria as part of our decision to designate 111, and we continue to consider that the criteria are relevant to our assessment of a three-digit number request, in particular to help evaluate whether the proposed service would make best use of a three-digit number. The four criteria are:
- i) there is an overwhelming public interest argument;
  - ii) the proposed service has a national impact and/or national provision;
  - iii) the proposed service is not only for the public good but also used only where there is a high demand based on high call volume; and
  - iv) the proposed service benefits everyone or at least a very wide part of society.

## Numbers from ranges designated in the Numbering Plan

- 2.11 There are number ranges already designated in the Numbering Plan that could be suitable for the proposed service. Ofcom would not need to intervene to make these numbers available for use. If a number from a range designated in the Numbering Plan was to be used for the service it would need to be allocated by Ofcom to a CP, who would then sub-allocate the number to the service provider (if a different entity).

## Impact assessment

- 2.12 Impact assessments form a key part of the policy-making process and provide a transparent way of considering different options for regulation, including not regulating. We expect to carry out impact assessments for the majority of our policy decisions.
- 2.13 The analysis presented in this document, in particular in Section 4, represents an impact assessment (as defined in section 7 of the Act) on the proposal to make the three-digit number 105 available for use by CPs to provide access to the proposed service.

## Equality impact assessment

- 2.14 We assess the effect of functions, policies, projects and practices on equality in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Equality impact assessments also assist us in making sure that we are meeting our principal duty of furthering the interests of citizens and consumers. We have therefore also considered what (if any) impact the issues under consideration in this document may have on equality. Where relevant, we have highlighted our consideration of equality issues.



## Layout of this document and supporting documents

2.15 The layout of this document is as follows:

- in Section 3 we explain the service proposed by ENA;
- in Section 4 we evaluate ENA's request for 105 to be made available for the service and set out our preliminary view;
- in Section 5 we summarise our consultation proposal and describe the next steps; and
- in the annexes we set out the relevant legal framework, the notification of the proposed modification to the Numbering Plan and details of how to respond to the consultation.

2.16 We have also published the following two supporting documents to the consultation provided to us by ENA:<sup>6</sup>

- a non-confidential version of ENA's application for a three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service provided to Ofcom on 4 February 2015. (The confidential version was submitted to Ofcom on 21 October 2014); and
- A report of the quantitative research findings conducted by Jigsaw Research on behalf of ENA dated 16 September 2014.

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<sup>6</sup> The two supporting documents are available on our website here:  
<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/three-digit-number-power-cut/>

## Section 3

# The national power cut and electricity network safety service

## Introduction

3.1 In this section we summarise the background to the service that ENA is proposing to provide using a three-digit number, and provide some detail of the nature of that service. It is based on the information set out in ENA's application for a three-digit number, and related discussions between Ofcom and ENA. We have published the non-confidential version of ENA's application as a supporting document to this consultation.<sup>7</sup>

## Background to the service

3.2 ENA has informed us that the severe storm events over the winter 2013/14 period, and the electricity supply disruptions that they caused to over 750,000 households, highlighted that the general public is confused about who and what number to call to report an electricity network supply issue and obtain important information or advice.

3.3 ENA commissioned research (published in a supporting document to this consultation<sup>8</sup>), which found that the vast majority of consumers do not understand the structure of the electricity supply market and are unaware that it is the Electricity Network Operator and not the electricity supplier that should be contacted in the event of an electricity power cut or network safety issue.<sup>9</sup> An added complication is that Great Britain's electricity supply is provided regionally by a number of Electricity Network Operators, each using a different 0800 'emergency and power loss service' number and some have a different number for each area in which they operate.

3.4 ENA considers that confusion over this situation may delay or prevent consumers from calling their Electricity Network Operator in the event of an electricity power cut or network safety issue or result in them calling the wrong organisation. This may lead to an increase in:

- (i) the power restoration time in the event of a power cut;
- (ii) the impact of welfare related issues; and/or
- (iii) the risk of injury when it is a safety related matter.

3.5 ENA's research has found that many members of the general public have difficulty finding out information quickly on who to call in the circumstances that they find themselves in. As a consequence, they are often either delayed in contacting their

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<sup>7</sup> <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/three-digit-number-power-cut/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/three-digit-number-power-cut/>

<sup>9</sup> ENA research found that only 11 per cent of those surveyed could correctly attribute the role of the Electricity Network Operator and only 5 per cent of those surveyed did/would contact their Electricity Network Operator in the event of an electricity power cut or safety issue. Most (45 per cent) would contact their electricity supplier.

Electricity Network Operator; contact the incorrect organisation, or do not make contact at all.<sup>10</sup>

- 3.6 The storm events and the manner in which the electricity industry dealt with the related issues received much media coverage at the time and were subsequently the subject of high profile reviews conducted by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Ofgem. In January 2014, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, The Rt Hon Edward Davey MP, met with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the six DNO organisations. The Energy and Climate Change Select Committee (ECCC) also considered the matters in detail. In March 2014, DECC and Ofgem published their individual reports of their review findings.<sup>11</sup>
- 3.7 ENA considers that a common theme arising from the reviews was the need for a single nationwide number for the general public to contact their Electricity Network Operator. This is to overcome the confusion arising from:
- Electricity Network Operators not currently having a high profile with the general public – and the general public not being aware of their role; and
  - each Electricity Network Operator currently having a different number and some having a different number for each area in which they operate, and the regional dependency that this creates.
- 3.8 In his official statement after a meeting with industry CEOs in January 2014, the Secretary of State said:
- “people need to know how to contact the network operator in their region if there is a power cut, and we’re looking to introduce a single emergency number which people can call irrespective of where they live”.*<sup>12</sup>
- 3.9 Accordingly, in March 2014, ENA was charged by DECC to deliver a single number for use in England, Scotland and Wales on behalf of all Electricity Network Operators.

## ENA’s development of the service

### The public welfare value of the service

- 3.10 ENA reviewed why members of the general public might need to contact their Electricity Network Operator. It found that there are many circumstances when this might be necessary as a matter of urgency, where any delay in contact could have serious electricity network related safety or welfare related implications or delay the

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<sup>10</sup> ENA’s research found that not knowing the telephone number is likely to inhibit the reporting of power cuts/safety issues. Of the 73 per cent surveyed who did not/do not know which number to call, 72 per cent claim it did/may delay them reporting a problem; 56 per cent claim it did/may prevent them from reporting a problem; and 43 per cent were/are concerned about having to search for a number.

<sup>11</sup> DECC report *Severe Weather – Christmas 2013: A review of Electricity Distribution Industry Performance* published March 2014 and available [here](#).

Ofgem report *December 2013 storms review – impact on electricity distribution customers* published 6 March 2014 and available [here](#).

<sup>12</sup> Press Release from DECC and The Rt Hon Edward Davey MP *Customer communications at heart of review into dealing with widespread power cuts* published 8 January 2014 available [here](#).

restoration of power following a cut. These circumstances include incidents in relation to:

- notification of a power cut and seeking power restoration;<sup>13</sup>
- a serious welfare issue associated with a power cut, including resulting stress and feelings of vulnerability; and
- a 'non-trivial' electricity network related safety issue with the risk of serious injury or even death.

3.11 ENA found that power cuts often have very serious welfare and safety implications for the general public. ENA's application states that life threatening situations relating to the supply of electricity can be experienced by all members of the public at or away from their home. They are diverse in nature and can relate, for instance, to a risk of electrocution or to the loss of welfare-related electrical equipment. Unfortunately there have, on occasion, been fatalities and serious injuries as a consequence.

3.12 In addition, the acute distress that a power cut can cause is also a serious welfare issue for many members of the public - particularly for older members or those with specific needs, such as mothers with new born babies or young children. Ofgem's *Consumer Vulnerability Strategy* recognises that "*vulnerability is about the situations in which consumers are in, rather than about the individual per se. Risk factors stem from personal circumstances as well as from the energy market itself. Also, vulnerability can be transitory as people's circumstances change*".<sup>14</sup>

3.13 ENA has argued, therefore, that it is very important that the general public is readily aware of the number that they should call if there is an issue with the electricity supply network; and that this should be capable of dealing with the extremely high call volumes that could be experienced in the event of a severe storm.

### **How the service will operate**

3.14 We set out below a summary of how ENA proposes that the service will operate.

3.15 The service will operate across the whole of England, Scotland and Wales from its expected launch in April 2016.

3.16 Improving the consumer experience of reporting and gaining information in relation to a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern is a key objective in designing service provision. When a customer calls the number, the service will route them to the existing call handling platform of the relevant regional Electricity Network Operator, so that existing electricity network safety, welfare and fault management procedures can be invoked promptly. The use of Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) will only be used where necessary to increase call routing accuracy.

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<sup>13</sup> ENA reports that much of the national electricity infrastructure is above ground and is susceptible to damage in severe weather, particularly from high winds, heavy snow and lightning strikes, with corresponding impact on supplies, which can be widespread on occasions. The quicker Electricity Network Operators are informed about a power cut, the quicker they can identify the fault and restore supplies, thus minimising these impacts on consumers and businesses.

<sup>14</sup> *Consumer Vulnerability Strategy*, Ofgem Statement published 4 July 2013 available [here](#).

- 3.17 The manner in which the caller is routed will take into consideration that the call could be about an electricity network related matter close to or far away from their home; or could be to report a power cut at their home. It will also take into account that the location of the call origination could be close to or far away from the location of the incident being reported; and that the location of the call and/or the incident could be close to the border between two electricity networks.
- 3.18 ENA plans for the service to be free-to-caller. It considers this to be appropriate as the service will deal with non-trivial and urgent situations relating to power cuts and related welfare and electricity network safety issues and, as such, it would not be appropriate for callers to be deterred from using the service by a call cost.<sup>15</sup>
- 3.19 The service is not intended to be a substitute for the existing emergency services accessed via 999/112 and this message would be reinforced when promoting the service and number.

### **Promoting the service and number to consumers**

- 3.20 ENA and the Electricity Network Operators are committed to delivering an effective consumer awareness campaign to ensure that the public are aware of the service and the number to call.
- 3.21 ENA has established a Consumer Awareness Working Group, comprising communications and media experts from the Electricity Network Operators, as well as representatives from ENA and DECC. Their work will take into consideration the service implementation approach and seasonal (weather related) demand for the service. It is recognised that awareness of the service and the number to call will need to be maintained year on year after project delivery.

### **The need to provide the service across Great Britain on a single memorable number**

- 3.22 As mentioned in paragraph 2.4, Great Britain's electricity is supplied regionally over 14 large electricity distribution networks operated by six DNO companies. Within these large networks, there are a multitude of much smaller independent electricity distribution networks currently operated by three Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) companies. Collectively, these networks deliver electricity to in excess of 29 million homes and businesses across England, Scotland and Wales.
- 3.23 The geographic areas of these networks do not align with any common area defining boundaries – such as county, town or postcode – making it difficult for consumers to determine their relevant Electricity Network Operator. In addition, consumers that do happen to know who to call are very unlikely to know the number and would instead have to look it up. This can be very challenging in many circumstances, as internet search devices might not be powered and darkness might preclude finding and using phone directories or electricity bills (which carry the contact number), for example.
- 3.24 ENA considers that the complex and regional based nature of electricity supply distribution, and the potentially challenging circumstances when consumers may need to identify and call their Electricity Network Operator, mean that in order to improve the consumer experience, a single number across England, Scotland and Wales is required. In addition, that single number needs to be memorable and be

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<sup>15</sup> ENA's research found that the vast majority of those surveyed (89 per cent) would expect a call to a three-digit number used for the service to be free.

able to be communicated effectively so that it becomes strongly associated with the critical service to which it provides access.

- 3.25 In the next section, we set out ENA's reasoning for the single contact number to be a three-digit number and our assessment of that request.

## Section 4

# Assessing the proposal for a three-digit number

## Introduction

- 4.1 We now consider whether it would be appropriate for us to propose making a three-digit number available for the national power cut and electricity network safety service to be launched by the electricity industry in April 2016.
- 4.2 While ENA's preference is to provide the service on a three-digit number, other number options are available to be used to provide the service without request to Ofcom. In this section we consider whether the service would make the best use of a three-digit number, taking into account other number options available for use in the Numbering Plan and whether they would be suitable alternatives. Having undertaken the analysis, we set out our preliminary view on whether it would be appropriate to make 105 available for the service.

## ENA's reasoning for a three-digit number

- 4.3 ENA has presented its case for a three-digit number for the service founded on the themes of consumers' urgent need to make contact; issues currently experienced in making contact with the correct organisation; and the need for number memorability. The ENA's key points from its application can be summarised as follows:
- 4.3.1 There are many circumstances when members of the public may need to contact their Electricity Network Operator as a matter of urgency, where any delay in contact could have serious welfare or electricity network related safety implications or delay the restoration of power following a cut;
- 4.3.2 The vast majority of the public do not know who or what number to call in the event of an electricity power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern. Many have difficulty finding this out quickly in the circumstances that they find themselves in. As a consequence, they are often either delayed in contacting their Electricity Network Operator, contact the incorrect organisation, or do not make contact at all;
- 4.3.3 In order that members of the public can make prompt contact with their Electricity Network Operator in times of need, they need to know the number to call. The situations in which it may be necessary to make contact are diverse, and prompt interaction will often be hindered by having to look the number up. The number therefore needs to be memorable and communicated effectively so that members of the public are aware of it;
- 4.3.4 ENA does not consider it realistic to expect the public to recall the 0800 numbers currently used by each of the Electricity Network Operators, or even for them to remember a single 0800 number – no matter how well it is advertised. However, ENA considers that it is realistic to expect the public to recall a single three-digit number and the service that it accesses if branded and advertised appropriately;

- 4.3.5 ENA considers that a three-digit number provides for the creation of a strong brand, enabling more effective use of communication channels to promote awareness, including television, radio, internet and billboards; and
- 4.3.6 Consequently, ENA considers that a three-digit number would enable significantly more members of the public to contact their Electricity Network Operator when necessary and without delay than a standard digit length number.

## Number options

- 4.4 We now consider what alternatives to a three-digit number are available in the Numbering Plan.
- 4.5 In identifying potential number options for assessment, we take into account the key features of the service as proposed by ENA. In particular, we note that the service would require:
- a single number that can be used across Great Britain and is not associated with a specific geographic location; and
  - a number that is free for consumers to call from fixed lines and mobile telephones.
- 4.6 Given the above features that ENA consider are essential for delivery of the service, the following number options in the Numbering Plan are not considered to be appropriate:
- Geographic 01/02 numbers: these have location significance inherent in the area code. A geographic number with a specific area code may be confusing for consumers calling from other areas covered by the service;
  - non-geographic numbers (apart from 080 freephone numbers): these have a call cost associated; and
  - the 116XXX range for harmonised European services of social value: 116 numbers are the European Commission's initiative for 'same number – same service' harmonisation across European for services that answer a specific social need and are potentially of value to visitors from other countries. The Commission decides which services should be reserved 116 numbers and attaches conditions relating to the use of those numbers. These numbers are free-to-caller in the UK.
- However, there is not a 116 number currently reserved by the European Commission for this type of service and it is unlikely that it could be considered to meet the eligibility criteria of being potentially of value to visitors from other countries, as the service is more associated with residents' needs.
- 4.7 We consider that the best alternative number option for the service currently available in the Numbering Plan is a 080 freephone number. 080 numbers are non-geographic, meaning that they do not provide location significance, and therefore a single 080 number would be suitable for use across Great Britain. Although callers currently may be charged for calling a 080 freephone number (provided that the caller is notified by an announcement at the start of the call), Ofcom regulation



coming into force in summer 2015<sup>16</sup> will require calls to 080 numbers to be free-to-caller. Therefore, by the time the service is launched next year, calls to 080 numbers will be free-to-caller. 080 numbers would meet the service criteria of being a single number used across Great Britain which is free-to-caller.

- 4.8 Therefore we assess ENA's request for a three-digit number (which we refer to as Option 1) taking into account the suitability of an alternative 080 freephone 11-digit number (which we refer to as Option 2).

## Assessment of number options

### Criteria for our assessment

- 4.9 We have a duty under section 63(1) of the Act to ensure that the best use is made of telephone numbers and to encourage efficiency and innovation for that purpose. We also have a general duty under section 3 of the Act to further the interests of citizens and consumers in relation to communications matters.
- 4.10 In assessing whether the designation of a three-digit number would be consistent with these duties, we have taken into account the service eligibility criteria for designation of a three-digit number established in our final statement on the designation of 101 (see paragraph 2.10).
- 4.11 As part of our assessment, we also consider the costs, competition effects, distribution and equality impact effects, additional risks and unintended consequences of both number options.

### Promotion of citizen and consumer interests

- 4.12 The aim of the service is to improve citizens' experience of contacting their Electricity Network Operator regarding an electricity power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern. Numbering arrangements can further the success of communications services, and thereby promote citizen and consumer interests. For this service, we consider that citizen and consumer interests would be promoted by the selection of the most memorable, distinctive, easily promoted and easy to dial number, increasing the likelihood that when required, it can be recalled and used by consumers. We assess below how each option could promote citizen and consumer interests.
- 4.13 **Memorability of the number:** We consider it reasonable to assume that the fewer digits in a number, and the fewer numbers of that type in use, the easier it will be for consumers to remember the number correctly when required. Option 1, with three digits, would be considerably shorter than Option 2, with 11 digits. Also, there are very few three-digit numbers in use, whereas there are many thousands of 080 numbers in use.

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<sup>16</sup> For more information on Ofcom's work on simplifying non-geographic numbers, of which our work on making 080 free-to-caller is part, see a series of documents published on our website [here](#). Of particular relevance is *Simplifying non-geographic numbers: Final statement on the unbundled tariff and making the 080 and 116 ranges free-to-caller*, Ofcom statement published 12 December 2013. We are currently consulting on changing the implementation date for these changes from 26 June 2015 to 1 July 2015. The consultation closes on 20 February 2015 and is available on our website [here](#).

- 4.14 ENA's research found that 84 per cent of the general public surveyed said that a three-digit number would be easier to remember than a standard length 0800 number. The research also found that only 15 per cent of those surveyed favoured a 0800 freephone number compared to 65 per cent in support of a three-digit number, the main reason being that a 0800 number would not be as easy to remember, which may delay reporting a problem.
- 4.15 **Distinctiveness of the number:** The distinctiveness of Option 1 may help to raise the service's profile and elevate its importance, encouraging consumers to engage with the service and report electricity power cuts and network related safety issues, which would be in the interest of all citizens. ENA's research found that 86 per cent of those surveyed agreed that a three-digit number is more closely associated with an emergency service, indicating that a three-digit number is associated with the provision of an important service.
- 4.16 We consider that under Option 2 it may be difficult for ENA to find a 080 number that is sufficiently distinct from other 080 customer service numbers to become part of consumers' consciousness. 080 numbers have been in use for many years and the most distinctive digit combinations are likely to be in use for services already. It should also be noted that 0800 10-digit numbers (i.e. in the format 0800 plus six-digits) are not available for use for new services.
- 4.17 **Ease of promoting the number:** Option 1 boasts a highly memorable short number format, which makes it easier to communicate and lends itself more readily to branding and marketing than Option 2. Effective communication of the number and the service, so that it is understood and known by consumers, is vital for meeting the objective of improving consumers' experience of making a call to their Electricity Network Operator when required.
- 4.18 **Ease of dialling the number:** there may be an increased possibility of callers misdialling a number when in the dark and/or under stress. By having fewer digits, Option 1 would reduce the likelihood of misdialled calls compared to Option 2.

### Best use of telephone numbers

- 4.19 It is our duty, with regard to numbering functions, that we secure what appears to be the best use of telephone numbers. The aim of the service is to improve citizens' experience of contacting their Electricity Network Operator. Numbering arrangements can further the success of communications services and best use is made of numbers where they promote citizen and consumer interests.

### **Assessment of best use of numbers under Option 1**

- 4.20 Securing what appears to be the best use of telephone numbers is particularly relevant where the type of number is scarce, as with three-digit numbers. Therefore, under Option 1, we must be satisfied that the service would make appropriate use of this limited resource.
- 4.21 As described in paragraph 2.10, we have developed through consultation a set of eligibility criteria that we consider a service should meet in order to be considered as potentially making best use of a three-digit number. Below we set out our assessment of the proposed service against the four eligibility criteria.

There is an overwhelming public interest argument (i.e. the service is of extreme social value and meets a high level of social value or need)

- 4.22 The Civil Contingencies Act<sup>17</sup> recognises electricity as one of the “*essentials of life*” and encompasses the disruption of energy supply (e.g. electrical supply) in its definition of ‘emergency’. Consumers have an increasingly high dependency on electricity, with power cuts affecting the welfare and lifestyle of most members of the public, with many direct and indirect impacts.
- 4.23 The ENA service would generally meet a vital and/or extremely urgent need for consumers at a time of disruption to the electricity supply, potentially offering a ‘lifeline’ for people in a position of distress or vulnerability. The calling process needs to be straightforward and barriers to making the call should be removed where possible (recognising that storm damage or power cuts could have an impact on telephony provision and/or phone functionality<sup>18</sup>).
- 4.24 If calls to the service are either not made or delayed, there could be serious consequences, including:
- longer restoration time in the event of a power cut;
  - greater impact of welfare related issues; and
  - a higher risk of injury when there is an electricity network safety related matter.
- 4.25 In terms of power restoration, ENA has informed us that only 6.3 per cent of 2013 fault incidents were on parts of the electricity network infrastructure with automatic fault detection mechanisms. The remaining 93.7 per cent of faults required customer notification to the Electricity Network Operator before fault identification and supply restoration processes could commence.
- 4.26 In terms of welfare, ENA has set out in its application how power cuts can have differing impacts on members of the public depending on their disposition and situation. Most find them very inconvenient but for some they are a serious welfare issue – causing distress, risk of illness or, in extreme cases, risk of death. Examples of where a power cut can cause a serious welfare issue include situations where consumers are:
- on dialysis machines or requiring electrically powered breathing apparatus;
  - in need of hoists for their bath, bed or chair, with the risk of being left stranded in a dangerous position part way through a lifting procedure; and
  - required to keep medication cool in their fridge.
- 4.27 Power cuts can also cause consumers significant distress, for example situations where consumers experience:

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<sup>17</sup> Civil Contingency Act 2004 available [here](#).

<sup>18</sup> For example, storm damage may have brought down telephone lines. Also, cordless landline telephones are very unlikely to work in a power cut, even if fully charged, as they need mains power to operate and rarely have a back-up battery. According to Ofcom research, eight in ten homes in the UK use a cordless landline phone. See Ofcom web article [here](#).

- loss of heating and hot water: a power cut precludes all electrified heating and a significant proportion of gas heating, leaving households vulnerable to the effects of cold, particularly babies and older members of the public;
- inability to use a stair lift or lifts in blocks of flats: a power cut could either trap consumers upstairs/downstairs or indoors, and may lead to people taking risks using the stairs; and
- searching for telephone numbers in the dark.

4.28 In terms of electricity network safety, calls reporting incidents to Electricity Network Operators include those concerning dangerous situations such as overhead lines below a certain height, damage to underground cables and the impact of metal theft. ENA's application states that there were in excess of 10,000 electricity network safety incidents in the year from May 2013 to April 2014.

The proposed service has a national impact and/or national provision

4.29 There is a commonality of power cut and electricity network related welfare and safety issues across the UK. The service will be available in England, Scotland and Wales from launch. Northern Ireland may join subsequently, although it has a different energy supply set-up.

The proposed service is not only for the public good but also used only where there is a high demand based on high call volume

4.30 When a power cut occurs, there is potential for a high demand for the service and a high call volume from the section of the public experiencing the power cut. There were in excess of 4.3 million calls made to the different Electricity Network Operators' current 'emergency and power loss' services between August 2013 and July 2014, peaking at over 800,000 calls in December 2014. During 2013, there were 442,613 fault incidents, collectively impacting millions of consumers across England, Scotland and Wales.

4.31 ENA research has shown that consumers are generally unaware of who to call and the appropriate contact number in times of a power cut. Therefore it is reasonable to presume that demand for the service is higher than currently experienced and the number of calls is suppressed. ENA estimates that, with the memorability of a three-digit number, existing call volumes could double, with a forecast volume peak of 14,000 concurrent calls. This estimated increase in call volumes would appear to be a reasonable assumption.

The proposed service provision benefits everyone or at least a very wide part of society

4.32 In excess of 29 million premises across Great Britain are supplied with electricity – covering the homes of almost everyone – meaning that any citizen could experience a situation where they may want to contact the service. As most of the national electricity infrastructure is above ground, it is susceptible to damage in severe weather, and power faults occur. As well as experiencing domestic power cuts, people may be subject to electricity network safety situations outside the home, for example as a result of metal theft or damage to overhead power cables.

4.33 ENA expects Electricity Network Operators' customer service to improve as a result of having a single national number that is easy to remember in times of need.

## Summary

- 4.34 As set out in paragraphs 4.22 to 4.33 above, we have considered how the service as described by ENA would meet the four criteria that we take into account when considering whether a service may make best use of a three-digit number. We consider that two points in particular support the case for a three-digit number for the service. The first is that the Civil Contingencies Act recognises electricity as one of the “*essentials of life*” and encompasses disruption to power supply in its definition of ‘emergency’. The second is the likely situation of callers when they may need the service, for instance in the dark and without power, so looking up the number may be particularly difficult and the experience stressful. The number therefore needs to be memorable so that it can be recalled at the time of need.

## **Assessment of best use of numbers under Option 2**

- 4.35 Option 2 would not require any action from Ofcom in order to provide a number for the service. It would be a suitable use of a 080 number as it is intended for calls to the service to be free-to-caller, which meets the characteristics of the 080 freephone number range at the time the service is launched.
- 4.36 However, the choice of number within the 080 number range would be restricted to those available, and these are unlikely to be particularly memorable as the number range has been in use for many years and the most memorable numbers are likely to be in use already. Using a single 080 number for the service may not provide any significant benefit over the existing 080 standard digit length numbers currently used for calling the Electricity Network Operators. Therefore Option 2 is unlikely to represent the best use of the UK’s numbering resource for this particular socially valuable service.

## Costs of the options

### **For consumers**

- 4.37 ENA intends for the service to be free-to-caller. This is possible under both options. However, there is no tariff associated with Option 1, so this would be subject to commercial negotiation. There is the potential that some CPs would not agree terms to make calls to the three-digit number free-to-caller and therefore call costs could vary. In addition, while ENA’s research found that 89 per cent of those surveyed would expect a three-digit number to be free-to-caller, consumers may not be certain of the call price and this may deter some from making the call. A complicating factor in tariff transparency is that 101 and 111 have different call costs applied, with 101 currently 15 pence per call and 111 free-to-caller.
- 4.38 Under Option 2, regulatory changes coming into force in summer 2015 would ensure clarity and consistency on the cost of calling 080 freephone numbers.<sup>19</sup> By service launch, calls to 080 numbers will always be free from fixed line and mobile phones and consumers will become increasingly aware that 080 numbers are always free to call.

### **For CPs**

- 4.39 ENA has stressed the importance of the overall customer experience in calling the service. Calls will be routed to the appropriate Electricity Network Operator based on

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<sup>19</sup> See paragraph 4.7.

the location of the caller, with the use of IVR only where necessary to increase call routing accuracy. The provision of this call routing arrangement may have different costs for ENA's chosen service provider depending on the number option chosen, although the specifics are currently unclear and are a matter for ENA's service provision tender process.

- 4.40 Option 1 would require commercial negotiation between ENA's chosen service provider and other CPs to set up access, routing and interconnection arrangements for a new three-digit number. There would also be the need for modifications to payphones to accept the new three-digit number and to not charge for the call. This may be costly for the relevant CPs, although we understand from implementation of the 101 and 111 numbers that the ability to modify most payphones remotely meant that the majority of the potential costs were avoided.
- 4.41 Option 2 would be relatively simple to implement as 080 numbers are already available for use, with interconnection arrangements determined. Option 2 would therefore involve no additional costs for CPs beyond 'business as usual' processes for making a new number available.

#### Competition effects

- 4.42 We consider that the choice of number for the service is unlikely to result in any significant competition effects in telecommunications markets. We are mindful that under Option 1, CP(s) that already act as service providers for existing three-digit numbers could have some advantages in terms of having already incurred the set-up costs and developed solutions for handling and routing calls to three-digit numbers. However, we consider that the level of costs involved is unlikely to represent a particular barrier to entry such that competition for service provision would not be effective.

#### Distributional and equality impact effects

- 4.43 Under both options the number would be the same in all geographic areas across Great Britain and there should be no differing impacts by geographic area.
- 4.44 We considered whether we are required to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment for this consultation. On the basis of our Initial Equality Impact Assessment Screening we have determined that this is not required. Under both options the number should be equally accessible to all and we would therefore not expect any differing impacts.

#### Additional risks and unintended consequences of the options

- 4.45 We have outlined some risks of the two options in the paragraphs above. Option 1 has the additional risk that CPs may not open access to the new three-digit number, particularly as call cost and interconnection arrangements would need to be agreed. Commercial negotiations may be protracted and access to the service may not be provided by some CPs who consider that the arrangements are not favourable. Consumers may therefore find that access provision is dependent on the network used to make the call, and whether that network has chosen to provide access to the service. However, our experience of CPs' implementation of the 101 and 111 numbers found there to be no significant issues in this respect. We would anticipate that CPs' recognition of the social value of the service would help to ensure that access is provided to their customers. It should be noted that CPs could also decide not to provide access to the service if it used a 080 number, although there may be

less likelihood of this occurring as interconnection arrangements for 080 numbers are more established.

- 4.46 As three-digit numbers are a particularly scarce resource, there is also a potential opportunity cost with Option 1. Once the number has been designated for a service, we would be unlikely to use it for a different service due to the consumer confusion that it would cause. It therefore carries the risk that it would exclude an alternative use of that particular three-digit number in the future. However, although these numbers are scarce, there would still be a further 13 three-digit numbers available for other services that meet the eligibility criteria.
- 4.47 We are also mindful that the more three-digit numbers that we designate, the less memorable each one becomes, and the more difficult for consumers to recall which 10X or 11X number is for which service. However, we do not consider that the designation of an additional three-digit number is likely to have a material effect at this time.
- 4.48 There is also the risk that even if a three-digit number is made available, the anticipated benefits to consumers of the service and/or the number do not transpire. ENA research has shown that consumers do not understand the structure of the electricity supply market and are generally unaware of the role of Electricity Network Operators, having a retail relationship with their electricity supplier. Therefore, the service concept may be difficult to convey to consumers. This risk applies to both options, but due to the scarcity of three-digit numbers, it would have a more detrimental effect for Option 1. However, this risk is recognised by ENA and its Consumer Awareness Working Group (see paragraph 3.21) will seek to address consumer understanding of the role of Electricity Network Operators in the communications campaign associated with the service and number.
- 4.49 Finally, despite the memorability of a three-digit number, consumers typically find themselves only infrequently in a situation where they might need to contact the service,<sup>20</sup> so some callers may still struggle to remember the number at a time of need. To secure best use of the number, the service would therefore need to be accompanied by a substantial communications campaign to inform consumers of the number, the purpose of the service and what can be expected in response to a call. ENA has confirmed the electricity industry's commitment to adequately promoting the service and number on a national and Electricity Network Operator regional basis, in particular at service launch and in the annual lead-up to winter.

## Our preliminary view

### Appropriateness of a three-digit number

- 4.50 Having assessed the two number options for the service, our preliminary view is that it would be appropriate to designate a three-digit number for this service.
- 4.51 We consider that the significant public value of the service means that a three-digit number is more appropriate than the other possible option of a 080 11-digit number, in that:

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<sup>20</sup> According to call records for Electricity Network Operators' existing 'emergency and power loss' services for their networks, a customer contacts their Electricity Network Operator once every 6.74 years on average.

- (i) it is more likely to promote the interests of citizens and consumers by being more memorable, distinctive, easier to promote and easy to dial, and thereby more likely to become part of consumers' consciousness and be remembered and called correctly at a time of need;
- (ii) it would constitute best use of telephone numbers, in that the service meets the eligibility criteria for a three-digit number and justifies use of this scarce resource; and
- (iii) the costs and risks associated with a three-digit number do not outweigh the benefits to consumers of designating a three-digit number for the service.

## Appropriateness of 105

- 4.52 ENA has selected 105 as its preferred choice from the 14 three-digit numbers available for designation (see paragraph 2.7). In choosing this number, we understand that ENA has taken into account the research into the benefits of particular three-digit numbers undertaken by the Home Office when it selected its choice of three-digit number for its service in 2005.<sup>21</sup> The Home Office research found that an 'up/down/up' finger movement across a telephone keypad can reduce misdials and make the number less likely to be dialled accidentally. Also, the raised pips on the digit '5' key can act as a reference point to the rest of the keypad and assist navigation in the dark and for blind or partially sighted people.
- 4.53 ENA conducted a survey to canvass the views of organisations that support sections of the general public with particular needs and that are more likely to experience welfare issues in the event of a power cut.<sup>22</sup> The selection of 105 as the three-digit number received very strong support in the survey based on its ease of use due to the raised pips on the digit '5' key. All organisations who expressed a view supported this. Ofcom has no comment on ENA's preference to use 105.
- 4.54 As a consequence of the analysis above, we are proposing to modify the Numbering Plan to designate 105 for "Access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service".

*Question 1: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposal to designate 105 for "Access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service" in the Numbering Plan? Please state your reasons.*

## Legal tests and duties

- 4.55 Our proposal would require a modification to the Numbering Plan. It is our duty, when proposing a modification to the Numbering Plan, to show how we consider that the proposal complies with our legal tests and duties in the Act (see Annex 1 for further information on the legal framework).
- 4.56 The proposed modification to the Numbering Plan would add 105 and the service designation to 'Part C1: Public Communications Network Numbers not individually Allocated'.

<sup>21</sup> See paragraphs A5.17 and A5.18 in Ofcom consultation *National Single Non-Emergency Number: Proposals for number and tariff* published 27 October 2005 available on our website here:

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/snen/summary/snen.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> See *Support Organisation Survey* Appendix B of the ENA application supporting document.



4.57 We are satisfied that the proposed modifications to provisions of the Numbering Plan meet the tests set out in sections 60(2) and 49(2) of the Act being:

- **objectively justifiable**, in that it relates to Ofcom's general duty to secure that the best use is made of the UK's telephone numbers. We are responding to a request to modify the Numbering Plan to make 105 available for a service that should further the interests of citizens and consumers;
- **not unduly discriminatory**, in that all CPs may provide subscriber access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service through the use of 105 without application to Ofcom;
- **proportionate**, in that it is the least intrusive way of making the number 105 available for the service, in line with our statutory duties; and
- **transparent**, in that the Notification proposing the modifications to the Numbering Plan, and its effects, are set out in this consultation document.

4.58 We consider that we are fulfilling our general duty as to telephone number functions as set out in section 63 of the Act in making the proposed modifications by:

- **securing the best use of appropriate numbers**, in that the national power cut and electricity network safety service is considered to be a service of significant public value, which we believe would make the best and appropriate use of a three-digit number and which has met the criteria to be eligible for a three-digit number (see paragraphs 4.22 to 4.33); and
- **encouraging efficiency and innovation**, in that provision of the 105 number aids the delivery of an innovative service that is designed to further the interests of citizens and consumers by improving their experience of contacting their Electricity Network Operator about a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern.

4.59 We consider that our proposal to modify the Numbering Plan is consistent with our general duties in carrying out our functions as set out in section 3 and 4 of the Act. In particular, we consider that the proposal would further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters and consumers in relevant markets by providing the most appropriate number for a service of significant public value.

## Notification of modifications to the Numbering Plan

4.60 The draft notification of the proposed modification to the Numbering Plan is set out in Annex 2 of this consultation document.

*Question 2: Do you have any comments on how we consider that we have met the legal tests and/or on the proposed modification to the Numbering Plan set out in Annex 2?*

## Section 5

# Summary of proposal and next steps

## The proposal

- 5.1 We have explained, in the preceding sections of this document, that we are undertaking this consultation in response to a request from ENA. ENA has asked for the provision of the three-digit number 105 for the national power cut and electricity network safety service planned by the electricity industry for launch across England, Scotland and Wales in April 2016. ENA proposes to use the number for the general public to call their Electricity Network Operator about a power cut, associated welfare issue or electricity network safety concern.
- 5.2 We have looked at whether the service would make best use of the three-digit number. We consider that the significant public value of the service means that a three-digit number is more appropriate for the service than the other possible option of a 080 11-digit number, in that:
- (i) it is more likely to promote the interests of citizens and consumers by being more memorable, distinctive, easier to promote and easy to dial, and thereby more likely to become part of consumers' consciousness and be remembered and called correctly at a time of need;
  - (ii) it would constitute best use of telephone numbers, in that the service meets the eligibility criteria for a three-digit number and justifies use of this scarce resource; and
  - (iii) the costs and risks associated with a three-digit number are not considered to be sufficiently significant as to outweigh the benefits to consumers of designating a three-digit number for the service.
- 5.3 As a consequence of the analysis above, we are proposing to modify the Numbering Plan to designate 105 for "Access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service". This consultation requests stakeholders' views on our proposal.

## Consultation process and next steps

- 5.4 This consultation closes on 27 March 2015. We are seeking responses to the specific consultation questions set out in the document (see Annex 3) as well as general comments on our proposals.
- 5.5 Details on how to respond to this consultation are provided in Annexes 4 to 6.
- 5.6 Once this consultation has closed, we will take account of all submissions received and then reach a decision.
- 5.7 We plan to publish the statement concluding on our proposals (and the modified Numbering Plan if we decide to proceed with the designation of 105) in May 2015.

## Annex 1

# Legal Framework

A1.1 The Act provides, amongst other things in relation to numbering, for the publication of the Numbering Plan and the setting of General Conditions of Entitlement relating to Telephone Numbers ("Numbering Conditions"). It also sets out statutory procedures governing the modification of the Numbering Plan and the giving of directions under conditions such as the Numbering Conditions.

## The Numbering Plan

A1.2 Section 56(1) of the Act states that:

"It shall be the duty of OFCOM to publish a document (to be known as "the National Telephone Numbering Plan") setting out–

(a) the numbers that they have determined to be available for allocation by them as telephone numbers;

(b) such restrictions as they consider appropriate on the adoption of numbers available for allocation in accordance with the plan;

(ba) such requirements as they consider appropriate, for the purpose of protecting consumers, in relation to the tariff principles and maximum prices applicable to numbers so adopted or available for allocation; and

(c) such restrictions as they consider appropriate on the other uses to which numbers available for allocation in accordance with the plan may be put."

A1.3 The Act provides for Ofcom to review and revise the Numbering Plan. Section 56(2) states that:

"It shall be OFCOM's duty –

(a) from time to time to review the National Telephone Numbering Plan; and

(b) to make any modification of that plan that they think fit in consequence of such a review; but this duty must be performed in compliance with the requirements, so far as applicable, of section 60."

A1.4 Section 60 of the Act provides for the modification of documents referred to in the Numbering Conditions (which includes the Numbering Plan) and explains the procedures to be followed in order to conduct this review. Section 60(2) of the Act provides that:

"OFCOM must not revise or otherwise modify the relevant provisions unless they are satisfied that the revision or modification is –

(a) objectively justifiable in relation to the matters to which it relates;

- (b) not such as to discriminate unduly against particular persons or against a particular description of persons;
- (c) proportionate to what the modification is intended to achieve; and
- (d) in relation to what it is intended to achieve, transparent."

A1.5 Section 60(3) further provides that:

"Before revising or otherwise modifying the relevant provisions, OFCOM must publish a notification –

- (a) stating that they are proposing to do so;
- (b) specifying the Plan or other document that they are proposing to revise or modify;
- (c) setting out the effect of their proposed revisions or modifications;
- (d) giving their reasons for making the proposal; and
- (e) specifying the period within which representations may be made to OFCOM about their proposal."

## **Ofcom's general duty as to telephone numbering functions**

A1.6 Ofcom has a general duty under section 63(1) of the Act in carrying out its numbering functions:

- “(a) to secure that what appears to them to be the best use is made of the numbers that are appropriate for use as telephone numbers; and
- (b) to encourage efficiency and innovation for that purpose.”

## **General duties of Ofcom**

A1.7 The principal duty of Ofcom to be observed in the carrying out of its functions is set out in section 3(1) of the Act as the duty:

- “(a) to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters; and
- (b) to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition.”

A1.8 As part of the fulfilment of these principal duties, it is Ofcom's responsibility to secure the availability throughout the UK of a wide range of numbering arrangements, having regard to the interests of consumers in respect to choice, price awareness, and consumer protection.

## **Duties for the purpose of fulfilling Community obligations**

A1.9 In addition to its general duties as to telephone numbers, when considering revisions to the Numbering Plan, Ofcom must also take into account the six

A three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service

Community requirements in carrying out its functions as set out in section 4 of the Act. These include the requirement to promote competition in the provision of electronic communications networks and services, and the requirement not to favour one form of network, service or associated facility or one means of providing or making available such network, service or associated facility over another, as well as the requirement to promote the interests of European citizens.

## Annex 2

# Notification of proposed modification to the provisions of the Numbering Plan under section 60(3) of the Act

1. Ofcom, in accordance with section 60 of the Act, hereby makes the following proposals for a modification to the provisions of the Numbering Plan.
2. The Condition has effect by reference to provisions of the Numbering Plan.
3. The draft modification to the Numbering Plan is set out in the Schedule to this Notification.
4. The reasons for making the proposals and the effect of the modification are set out in the document accompanying this Notification.
5. Ofcom considers that the proposed modification complies with the requirements in section 60(2) of the Act.
6. In making the proposals referred to above Ofcom have considered and acted in accordance with the six Community requirements in section 4 of the Act as well as performed their general duties under section 3 of the Act and their duty as to telephone numbering in section 63 of the Act.
7. Representations may be made to Ofcom about the proposals by **5pm on 27 March 2015**.
8. Copies of the Notification have been made available to the Secretary of State.
9. In this Notification-

‘Act’ means the Communications Act 2003;

‘Condition’ means General Condition 17 of the General Conditions of Entitlement set by the Director by way of publication of a Notification on 22 July 2003;

‘Ofcom’ means the Office of Communications; and

‘Numbering Plan’ means the National Telephone Numbering Plan published from time to time by Ofcom.

Signed by

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Gibbs".

Marina Gibbs  
Competition Policy Director

A three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service

A person authorised by Ofcom under paragraph 18 of the Schedule to the Office of Communications Act 2002.

16 February 2015

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## Schedule

The following addition shall be made in numerical order to 'Part C: Telephone Numbers not available for Allocation' of the Numbering Plan. The changes are set out in bold.

C1: Public Communications Network Numbers not individually Allocated	
Numbers beginning or in entirety where marked *	Designation
<b>105*</b>	<b>Access to national power cut and electricity network safety service (Type A Access Code)</b>

## Annex 3

# Consultation questions

- A3.1 We have included two specific consultation questions in this document and we would like you to consider these when responding. We have set these questions below for ease of reference. We also welcome general comments on our consultation proposals.

*Question 1: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposal to designate 105 for "Access to the national power cut and electricity network safety service" in the Numbering Plan? Please state your reasons.*

*Question 2: Do you have any comments on how we consider that we have met the legal tests and/or on the proposed modification to the Numbering Plan set out in Annex 2?*



## Annex 4

# Responding to this consultation

## How to respond

- A4.1 Ofcom invites written views and comments on the issues raised in this document, to be made **by 5pm on 27 March 2015**.
- A4.2 Ofcom strongly prefers to receive responses using the online web form at <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/three-digit-number-power-cut/>, as this helps us to process the responses quickly and efficiently. We would also be grateful if you could assist us by completing a response cover sheet (see Annex 6), to indicate whether or not there are confidentiality issues. This response coversheet is incorporated into the online web form questionnaire.
- A4.3 For larger consultation responses - particularly those with supporting charts, tables or other data - please email [elizabeth.greenberg@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.greenberg@ofcom.org.uk) attaching your response in Microsoft Word format, together with a consultation response coversheet.
- A4.4 Responses may alternatively be posted or faxed to the address below, marked with the title of the consultation.
- Elizabeth Greenberg  
Ofcom  
Competition Group  
Riverside House  
2A Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA
- Fax: 020 7981 4099
- A4.5 Note that we do not need a hard copy in addition to an electronic version. Ofcom will acknowledge receipt of responses if they are submitted using the online web form but not otherwise.
- A4.6 It would be helpful if your response could include direct answers to the questions asked in this document, which are listed together at Annex 3. It would also help if you can explain why you hold your views and how Ofcom's proposals would impact on you.

## Further information

- A4.7 If you want to discuss the issues and questions raised in this consultation, or need advice on the appropriate form of response, please contact Elizabeth Greenberg on 020 7783 4163.

## Confidentiality

- A4.8 We believe it is important for everyone interested in an issue to see the views expressed by consultation respondents. We will therefore usually publish all responses on our website, [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk), ideally on receipt. If you think your

response should be kept confidential, can you please specify what part or whether all of your response should be kept confidential, and specify why. Please also place such parts in a separate annex.

- A4.9 If someone asks us to keep part or all of a response confidential, we will treat this request seriously and will try to respect this. But sometimes we will need to publish all responses, including those that are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations.
- A4.10 Please also note that copyright and all other intellectual property in responses will be assumed to be licensed to Ofcom to use. Ofcom's approach on intellectual property rights is explained further on its website at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/terms-of-use/>

## Next steps

- A4.11 Following the end of the consultation period, Ofcom intends to publish a statement in May 2015.
- A4.12 Please note that you can register to receive free mail Updates alerting you to the publications of relevant Ofcom documents. For more details please see: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/email-updates/>

## Ofcom's consultation processes

- A4.13 Ofcom seeks to ensure that responding to a consultation is easy as possible. For more information please see our consultation principles in Annex 5.
- A4.14 If you have any comments or suggestions on how Ofcom conducts its consultations, please call our consultation helpdesk on 020 7981 3003 or e-mail us at [consult@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:consult@ofcom.org.uk) . We would particularly welcome thoughts on how Ofcom could more effectively seek the views of those groups or individuals, such as small businesses or particular types of residential consumers, who are less likely to give their opinions through a formal consultation.
- A4.15 If you would like to discuss these issues or Ofcom's consultation processes more generally you can alternatively contact Graham Howell, Secretary to the Corporation, who is Ofcom's consultation champion:

Graham Howell  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA

Tel: 020 7981 3601

Email [Graham.Howell@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:Graham.Howell@ofcom.org.uk)

## Annex 5

# Ofcom's consultation principles

A5.1 Ofcom has published the following seven principles that it will follow for each public written consultation:

### Before the consultation

A5.2 Where possible, we will hold informal talks with people and organisations before announcing a big consultation to find out whether we are thinking in the right direction. If we do not have enough time to do this, we will hold an open meeting to explain our proposals shortly after announcing the consultation.

### During the consultation

A5.3 We will be clear about who we are consulting, why, on what questions and for how long.

A5.4 We will make the consultation document as short and simple as possible with a summary of no more than two pages. We will try to make it as easy as possible to give us a written response. If the consultation is complicated, we may provide a shortened Plain English Guide for smaller organisations or individuals who would otherwise not be able to spare the time to share their views.

A5.5 We will consult for up to 10 weeks depending on the potential impact of our proposals.

A5.6 A person within Ofcom will be in charge of making sure we follow our own guidelines and reach out to the largest number of people and organisations interested in the outcome of our decisions. Ofcom's 'Consultation Champion' will also be the main person to contact with views on the way we run our consultations.

A5.7 If we are not able to follow one of these principles, we will explain why.

### After the consultation

A5.8 We think it is important for everyone interested in an issue to see the views of others during a consultation. We would usually publish all the responses we have received on our website. In our statement, we will give reasons for our decisions and will give an account of how the views of those concerned helped shape those decisions.

## Annex 6

# Consultation response cover sheet

- A6.1 In the interests of transparency and good regulatory practice, we will publish all consultation responses in full on our website, [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk).
- A6.2 We have produced a coversheet for responses (see below) and would be very grateful if you could send one with your response (this is incorporated into the online web form if you respond in this way). This will speed up our processing of responses, and help to maintain confidentiality where appropriate.
- A6.3 The quality of consultation can be enhanced by publishing responses before the consultation period closes. In particular, this can help those individuals and organisations with limited resources or familiarity with the issues to respond in a more informed way. Therefore Ofcom would encourage respondents to complete their coversheet in a way that allows Ofcom to publish their responses upon receipt, rather than waiting until the consultation period has ended.
- A6.4 We strongly prefer to receive responses via the online web form which incorporates the coversheet. If you are responding via email, post or fax you can download an electronic copy of this coversheet in Word or RTF format from the 'Consultations' section of our website at <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/consultation-response-coversheet/>.
- A6.5 Please put any parts of your response you consider should be kept confidential in a separate annex to your response and include your reasons why this part of your response should not be published. This can include information such as your personal background and experience. If you want your name, address, other contact details, or job title to remain confidential, please provide them in your cover sheet only, so that we don't have to edit your response.

## Cover sheet for response to an Ofcom consultation

### BASIC DETAILS

Consultation title:

A three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service

To (Ofcom contact): Elizabeth Greenberg

Name of respondent:

Representing (self or organisation/s):

Address (if not received by email):

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Please tick below what part of your response you consider is confidential, giving your reasons why

Nothing

Name/contact details/job title

Whole response

Organisation

Part of the response

If there is no separate annex, which parts?

If you want part of your response, your name or your organisation not to be published, can Ofcom still publish a reference to the contents of your response (including, for any confidential parts, a general summary that does not disclose the specific information or enable you to be identified)?

### DECLARATION

I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response that Ofcom can publish. However, in supplying this response, I understand that Ofcom may need to publish all responses, including those which are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations. 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)

A three-digit number for the national power cut and electricity network safety service