

Name Withheld 8

Additional comments:

Question 1: We would welcome views and evidence from stakeholders on (a) the main types of harm that consumers experience from nuisance calls in general and specifically in relation to silent and abandoned calls and (b) how to measure the harm. Please refer to [Annex 4 Call for inputs questions](#) for details of the points you may wish to consider in your response.:

Silent calls are I would not say distressing but can be an annoyance if repeated. The telecom providers seem unable to provide clear noise free call lines anyway so I don't think the odd silent call makes a difference if the customer has a number to call back and talk to a live person. the volume of dead calls that I have had in my personal life are not from the telesales businesses that are already compliant but from the businesses that don't care. The number of calls that are routed from India or Pakistan and use withheld numbers for operators that are not regulated and do not care is too high. A simple solution is to remove the ability to make calls from withheld numbers totally, no good can come from someone trying to hide their identity.

Question 2: We would welcome views and evidence from stakeholders on what are the key drivers of (a) silent calls and (b) abandoned calls. Please refer to [Annex 4 Call for inputs questions](#) for details of the points you may wish to consider in your response.:

The main drivers of Silent calls are call centres who have absolutely no interest in following the current regulations.

Question 3: We would welcome views and evidence on the use of AMD including (a) if call centres have changed their use of AMD in recent years and if so why (b) the volume of calls made by call centres with and without the use of AMD (c) false positive rates when using AMD and any data to suggest that the accuracy of AMD has improved in recent years.:

This is a manufacturer/vender problem manufacturers touting they have a 100% AMD detection rate is just ridiculous. If the rate is more like 60%-70% then still a fair amount of answer machines make it to live agents but for those few people that talk in a very monotone style voice they still get through to a live agent thus avoiding false positives. Also things like call quality again which the UK Telco providers cannot seem to provide has an effect on AMD.

Question 4: We would welcome views and evidence on potential changes to the policy to help reduce the harm caused by silent and abandoned calls including those identified in Figure 2 (abandoned call rate and approach to AMD), Figure 3 (time limits for calling consumers and connecting to a live agent) and

Figure 4 (good management and appropriate processes). Please refer to [Annex 4 Call for inputs questions](#) for details of the points you may wish to consider in your response. .:

a lot of Call Centres that I know operate with their attempts set too high I believe this should be usually around 4 attempts if the contact is a current customer then this can be higher but no higher than 8. I have had conversations with supposedly experts in the industry and they set their retries at 30 which in my experience even in a cold calling scenario is too high. This can also be limited by the manufacturer so that could be a regulation set there and not on the business. Again the call centres not interested in following regulations are the ones that

Question 5: We would welcome views and evidence on potential changes that could be made to the policy relating to the a) current five general examples of persistent misuse (misuse of automated calling systems, number-scanning, misuse of a CLI facility, misuse for dishonest gain ? scams, and misuse of allocated telephone numbers) or b) other examples of persistent misuse. Please refer to [Annex 4 Call for inputs questions](#) for details of the points you may wish to consider in your response.:

The main growth area for new contact systems in the UK has been VICIdial (an open source dialler platform) which by default has no AMD and on most sites AMD is not added. We still believe the main increase in silent calls is from ACS users who do not adhere to the current regulations i.e. to have an abandon call message. As already stated the dialling practices across our client base have never been more vigilant than they are today. The fact that a lot of our own call centre's have disabled AMD, yet in your own test there was still a significant amount of silent calls, indicates that business' either have an agent issue or are ignoring the regulations as they currently stand. Making the regulations more stringent will not solve this problem, but only serve to severely impact the compliant section of the industry. Dare we say it, if the enforcement on offending call centre's was carry out more vigilantly, we believe the regulations could actually be relaxed. The issue with most offending call centres is generally the number is withheld making them hard to track down. Yet the compliant call centre's display their number thus making them easy to report and hence bear the brunt. Dropping the current target abandon rate from 3% to 1% will effectively make outbound dialling in the UK using ACS impossible. The calls will still

I need to be made and will simply create a growth market for the rogue contact centres to fill. You will create an environment whereby the rules are so ridiculously tight that the fringe contact centres who are currently walking the fine line between compliance and non compliance will simply abandon their attempts at adherence.

Setting a hard fast number of abandon calls is a terrible idea, and one that will only mean shrewd businesses breaking up their larger call centres into smaller call centres - which you are then proposing could now drop more calls. Sticking to the 3% percentage is the only option. Whether one call centre with 500 staff abandons 100 calls or ten 50 seat call centres abandon 10 calls each the abandons overall is the same. Agent behaviour should not be ignored, we do feel this is being severely underestimated from my own investigations and it is an area that could be backed up with evidence, The issue as already stated when removing AMD on ACS, it is extremely hard to identify agent initiated silent calls and to continuously monitor on an on-going basis. Further clarity on any regulations is always welcome and providing examples of what is "allowed" and not "allowed" again would be of benefit. The only thing that would reduce the silent calls

would be more enforcement of the regulations already in place. Since the silent call regulation came into play it has become more and more severe, yet the complaints have only increased. For us this is evidence in itself that the regulations, however strict are not going to reduce the problem and it is time it was looked at differently. It is the rogue traders that are the issue, rather than what the regulations stipulate. Focus on closing down these rogue contact centres, not driving the legitimate businesses into the ground with further unnecessary regulation.

Question 6: We have not identified any significant changes to this section of the policy, relating to the issuing of notifications, at this stage. However, we welcome views and evidence from stakeholders on any changes they consider may improve the understanding or clarity of this section of the policy :

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Question 7: We would welcome information on the current operation of the outbound call centre market, in particular a) the size of the current outbound calling market e.g. the annual number of calls made as well as the value, b) the size of total annual costs in the outbound market (where possible split by operating costs and capital costs (or depreciation)), c) the average costs per call/per agent (or per agent hour), d) the split of call centre locations (domestic or overseas) that make calls to UK numbers.:

we are based in the UK but I cannot provide these figures at the moment

Question 8: We would welcome any initial views and evidence on the potential costs and benefits of any of the potential changes to the policy. In particular, whether any of the potential changes would a) require investment in new technology or other capital costs, b) have an impact on efficiency and operating costs, c) have an impact on call-centre costs or call-centre prices (to their clients), d) affect competition in the call-centre market, e) have a different impact on different types of call centre, and if so, what factors affect the level of impact.:

No benefits to tightening regulations.

Cost of altering the drop rate setting is null I actually set mine to 1% anyway as good practice but the truth is that it usually ends slightly higher than this due to agent (Human) activity.

Efficiency of ACS users will drop substantially which will have a negative impact on the business. With a proposed drop rate of 1% many ACS users will come to the conclusion that it is highly unlikely that they will be able to achieve compliance and therefore either abandon doing outbound themselves, outsource it to a rogue/offshore contact centre or more likely abandon their attempts to remain compliant. Some businesses do not have the choice as to whether or not to make the calls, a significant numbers of UK jobs rely on the outbound calling industry.

Question 9: We would welcome any views on what factors may influence a call centre's likelihood of adhering to the current or a stricter policy.:

The current policy is fine for those that want to adhere to it. Stricter policies will just make it harder for those following regulations to do business and could make them inoperable. If these businesses go under or go abroad as inevitably they will then there will be no one to pay for DMA fees and the DMA will be diminished as a result. Ofcom are treating compliant call centres as the enemy when this is not the case, we want to be able to adhere to good standards, that cause as little distress as possible to customers, we want our customers to return to us for future business.