



# The 0500 Number Range

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Re-consultation on specific elements of Ofcom's proposal for the withdrawal of 0500 Freephone telephone numbers

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EE Ltd response to consultation

30 January 2014

Non-confidential version

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## Introduction

EE Ltd (EE) has previously made extensive submissions to Ofcom in relation to EE's preferences for the 0500 range, involving continued use of the range rather than withdrawal. EE does not repeat those submissions here. EE maintains its preferences for the reasons previously provided to Ofcom. Notwithstanding and without prejudice to the foregoing, the following consultation response is provided with the aim of minimising harm to the interests of consumers on the basis that Ofcom does proceed with its proposal to withdraw the 0500 range from use.

This consultation response is not confidential.

## Response to Consultation Questions

### Section 2 – Withdrawal basis and implementation approach

**Q2.1: Should new replacement 080 numbers – offered to SPs with 0500 numbers in use at present as a migration path away from the 0500 range, prior to the withdrawal of the 0500 range – begin with an 080 85- prefix or with an 080 50- prefix? Please explain your preference.**

EE recommends that this question is answered by considering which solution is most likely to be of benefit to consumers. EE expects that process to involve weighing up the preferences of those 0500 Service Providers (SPs) who are being required to migrate as between these 080 migration path choices<sup>1</sup>. In the event of conflict between the preferences of different SPs, in viewing the matter through a consumer benefits lens, EE would expect Ofcom to give greatest weight to the preferences of those SPs who currently receive the highest volume of minutes terminated on their current number ranges (i.e. who are running the most popular services).

**Q2.2: Do you agree with our assessment of the technical difficulties, and potentially significant costs and disruption, that would result from making the proposed 080X migration sub-range available for allocation to all CPs currently hosting active 0500 telephone numbers and that, accordingly, it is appropriate to restrict the allocation of the sub-range to Vodafone (C&WW) during the migration period? If not, please explain your reasons.**

EE does not have any views on this question.

**Q2.3: Do you agree with the measures proposed to ensure that all 0500 SPs are able to migrate regardless of the CP they use to host**

<sup>1</sup> EE assumes that there are no 080 SPs currently using the proposed 080 migration path ranges. To the extent that there are any existing such 080 SPs, their interests and traffic volumes would also need to be considered given the proposal that the migration range would ONLY be available for use by an SP migrating from a matching 0500 number (§3.36).

**their 0500 number(s) currently? If not, please explain your reasons.**

EE does not have any views on this question.

**Q2.4: Do you agree with our proposal to impose a time limitation of 3 years and 3 months on the allocation of each block of 10,000 numbers within the 080X migration sub-range to Vodafone (C&WW), save to the extent that at least one number within the block is taken up by a migrating 0500 SP (in which case the allocation of that block will not be so time-limited)? If not, please explain your reasons.**

EE does not have any views on this question.

**Q2.5: Do you agree with our proposal of a 3-year timeframe for the withdrawal of 0500 numbers and for the migration of active services on these numbers to a new 080X sub-range (if so desired by any individual SP operating an 0500 number)? If not, please explain your reasons.**

EE agrees with this proposal, on the basis of our understanding that, as from the present date and in respect of any period in which 0500 numbers remain in use beyond the point in time when the 080 range is made free-to-caller, the pricing regime for 0500 calls remains unchanged as from the status quo today (i.e. originating communications providers will be able to continue to charge for these calls so long as they make the appropriate pre-call announcement). (§2.64). EE considers that it would cause harmful and unnecessary disruption and commercial uncertainty / damage for all concerned stakeholders were a contrary position to be taken requiring 0500 numbers to be priced free-to-caller at the retail level without the same underpinning regulatory arrangements being in place as for the 080 and 116 ranges in relation to the wholesale origination charges to be applicable in this case.

## Section 3 – Legal framework

**Q3.1: Do you have any comments on the draft modifications to the Numbering Plan, as set out in Annex 8, that we are proposing? Where you disagree with any of the proposed modifications, please explain why.**

No.<sup>2</sup>

**Q3.2: Do you have any comments on the draft modifications to the numbering application form, Form S8, as set out in Annex 9, that we are proposing? Where you disagree with any of the proposed modifications, please explain why.**

No.

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<sup>2</sup> This is on the basis of EE's understanding that there are currently no 080 SPs using the proposed migration ranges. To the extent that there are, it would need to be clarified what would happen in these cases in relation to the proposed new paragraph B3.2.4.