

Reference: 01280276

1 July 2021

Zach Westbrook
Information Rights Advisor
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning mobile number recycling. Your request was received on 21 June 2021 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request:

"I had a pay as you go number and had not used it in over a year as it was used for 2 factor authentication. I rang ee to see if I could get the number back and they advised it has been disconnected and gone back in to a pool for recycling. How long until this number is then available for someone else to use or am I am to regain the number again? I have the Sim card still."

Our response

Usually a phone network's contract terms require a Pay As You Go customer to carry out a chargeable activity (e.g. a phone call, text, top-up) at least once during a specific timescale. Service providers can suspend and recycle numbers if they have not been used within a specified timeframe, which varies per operator. This is to ensure that the numbers they have are being used efficiently. This is a commercial decision set out by the providers and not something that is dictated by Ofcom.

It may be possible to reactivate a number during the period of suspension, but you would need to check this with the service provider. Regarding the timescale when numbers are put back into the pool for re-allocation, this varies per operator but could be anywhere from 3 months up to a year. Again, this is a commercial decision that is set out and determined by each individual operator. You would therefore need to contact EE to find out if you are able to regain your number once it becomes available for re-allocation.

You may wish to refer to this link for further information: <https://community.ee.co.uk/t5/Pay-as-you-go/What-is-pay-as-you-go-and-flex-hibernation-and-how-do-I-stop-it/td-p/833279>

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Zach Westbrook

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF