

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep name confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Question 1.1: What are the implications of market change for mobile and wireless services?:

lower costs; higher speeds; higher profits, by charging the same price for services which are now cheaper to provide.

Greater profit seeking to recoup losses from roaming charge changes, including an increase in cost per minute for pre-pay customers.

Texting for example, costs far more per message than the bandwidth and service reasonably costs, especially as bandwidth costs have plummeted, so again a rich source of profit.

Question 1.2: How are citizens and consumers affected by developments in the mobile sector?:

Still no commitments to improve coverage in rural areas. Much higher costs for pre-pay customers than contract customers.

Contracts very expensive for low users; much of the contract wasted every month. High costs still for calling between networks outside inclusive minutes.

Regular use of extra charges for unwanted services secretly added to the bill. Expiry of pre-pay minutes used to again penalise low use customers and extract more profit.

Improvements in technology still not seen by customers, as cost of entry for, example, broadband services via mobile are very high.

Question 1.3: What are the purposes of mobile regulation, and where should its focus lie?:

Overall, the focus should be on ensuring a fair deal for consumers. Mobile phone contracts are over complicated, especially for pre-pay customers.

Ensuring that costs of services provided, such as texting and mobile broadband reflect the real costs of providing the service. Preventing the use of hidden charges, including 'free' extra services on contract phones that then become chargeable after a few months without warning. Ensure that advertising is not misleading.

Reducing the use of expiry dates on purchased minutes (imagine if £5 notes expired after a few weeks!), and continuing to prevent termination charges - again a barrier of entry and a method of extracting profit from low-use customers.

Contract termination terms are very harsh, and with a 2 year contract the company has very little incentive to provide reliable service and coverage - it's very hard to leave a company providing poor service without being charged through the nose, so they know they have lock in.

Privacy is also important. Ensuring mobile companies store and use customer data with the greatest of care - especially the information required to be stored on customers by law.

Overall - require that the mobile companies provide a fair and reasonable service. In many rural areas there is virtually no competition at all, only one or two companies have coverage. Even in urban areas, the prices and products are very similar across all providers. There's very little effective choice, as companies act in apparent concert.

Question 1.4: What is the scope for deregulation, competition and innovation in the mobile sector?:

As stated, competition is not delivering much improvement on prices. The amount of minutes available on a contract have improved, but the contract itself gets ever more expensive, and the lock in terms with hefty penalties get ever longer.

Innovation in technologies are being stymied by the high costs of contracts using them, the phones to support them, and the continued high costs of basic services like texting.

Given the apparent amount of changes the mobile companies seem to all take in concert due to 'market conditions', I have no faith competition will deliver a reasonable service for the customers. Greater deregulation would lead directly to higher costs, lower choice and poorer service for customers.

Question 3.1: What do you think are the features of a well-functioning mobile market? What evidence do you see that those features are present in the UK market?:

Question 3.2: What measures are most appropriate to assess whether the mobile sector is performing well for citizens and consumers?:

Question 3.3: How will market dynamics change as a result of trends such as availability of new spectrum, mobile broadband and new ways of delivering voice services?:

Question 4.1: What is your experience, as an individual consumer or an organisation that uses mobile services?:

Generally, I feel ripped off. My costs for phone and contract have risen, my service levels have fallen, and I've seen little benefit of the supposed revolution in mobile services.

Question 4.2: How should regulators and policy-makers respond to signs of rising consumer concern? :

By acting to deal with those concerns, and clamping down illegible contracts, high charges, high termination costs and poor service levels.

Question 4.3: What are the important factors to consider in striking a balance between protecting mobile consumers and enabling markets to work flexibly? Have we got this balance right in today's mobile market?:

Question 5.1: How does the use of mobile services affect our participation as citizens in society?:

It's key. Many people use mobile phones heavily to keep in touch for business and socially. Making mobile technology more widely accessible and affordable is a key aspect of bridging the digital divide, and ensuring the poorer members of society can participate fully in its benefits.

Question 5.2: What factors should we take into account in thinking about access and inclusion issues in mobile markets?:

Question 5.3: What factors should we take into account in thinking about new services, and how those services may affect issues like protection of children, privacy and security?:

Question 5.4: Have you been affected by issues about coverage or 'not spots'? How has it affected you?:

Coverage at my home and work, in rural areas such as Dorset is patchy at best. Many times I've missed calls and messages because I was out of range, and have even lost work because of it.

Question 7.1: What do you see as the most influential trends and features of mobile and wireless markets in future?:

Question 7.2: What new policy and regulatory challenges could the trends identified in this section bring? Which policy and regulatory challenges could they address?:

Question 8.1: Should Ofcom do more to promote competition in mobile and wireless markets?:

Question 8.2: Ofcom's strategy in telecommunications is to promote competition at the deepest level of infrastructure that is effective and sustainable. How might this strategy be applied, given future developments in the mobile sector? Under what circumstances, if ever, would it make sense to consider access regulation for mobile platforms?:

Question 8.3: What role can competition play in ensuring that future development of the mobile internet provides an open and flexible environment for a wide range of services? Should Ofcom explore open access requirements to ensure opportunities for innovation? What role might 'net neutrality' play in the mobile sector?:

'Fair use' policies should not be a tool to restrict services that are otherwise advertised as unlimited. Mobile data services run by mobile phone companies should not be allowed to throttle or prevent the use of VOIP services via contracts for data plans, in order to protect their voice business profit margins.

Net neutrality is a key requirement to ensure fair provision of services for customers, and improve competition as there's a level playing field.

Question 8.4: What role might competition play in addressing questions about transparency of prices, services and contractual conditions offered to consumers of mobile and wireless services? What role should regulation play in addressing these questions?:

Regulation should be used to enforce competition; deregulation would allow the companies to take greater advantage of their captive userbase, not less.

Question 8.5: What is the best way to promote content standards and ensure privacy protection for increasingly complex content and transaction services? How will privacy issues fare in a world where services are more personal and more complex?:

Privacy and data protection practises should be held to high standards by regulators, and breaches heavily punished.

Automatic 'opt in' services that harm customers privacy should be restricted.

Question 8.6: Will the mobile termination rate regime need to evolve or change more fundamentally? What is the best approach to adopt?:

Knowing several friends in the US, introducing termination charges would be a real step backwards for UK customers.

Termination charges are nothing but a profit grab to extract more money from previously low use, low profit users.

If people will have to pay extra charges once they run out minutes on a contract, or their prepaid credit, they will turn their phone off rather than risk receiving expensive incoming calls. This harms public participation in the social fabric - especially the young and poor - and would again increase social exclusion and the digital divide. We should be lowering costs of entry for owning a mobile, not increasing them via bad ideas such as termination charges.

Question 8.7: If competition does not reduce international roaming charges sufficiently, how should regulators respond, if at all?:

Regulators should require companies to lower charges, and not simply increase them elsewhere.

The public airwaves are owned by the public, not the mobile companies. If they wish to make a profit from that which is owned by the public, the very least they can do is offer services which reasonably approach the actual costs of providing them, rather than making huge profits simply because they can.

Question 8.8: How might universal service and universal access need to adapt in a world where we increasingly rely on mobile services? What role might mobile play in universal access delivery in future?:

Universal service should be extended to the mobile phone companies. It's not reasonable that BT should be required to solely carry the load.

Question 8.9: Can markets and commercial agreements address issues such as ?not spots? and emergency access?If not, what role might be played by a regulator to address these issues?:

Forcing companies to provide 100% coverage can only be done by regulation. Without it, they will simply cherry pick the most profitable areas, and leave the rural areas out to dry.

Question 8.10: How might access for particular groups (such as the elderly and disabled users) need to evolve in future? What role can competition play in addressing these questions?:

Question 8.11: Do you have any comments regarding our proposed way forward and the objectives of the next phase of this Assessment?:

Additional comments: