



**BT Call Protect -
Our reaction, after three months of use**

When **BT Call Protect** was launched three months ago, we expressed some concerns but wanted to wait to see its effect in use - see [our media page](#), notably [these comments on Sky News](#).

BT has announced that the service is estimated as being only 65% effective and has offered some other interesting statistics – see [More than two million now on BT's free service to crack down on nuisance calls](#).

We are particularly concerned on the following points:

ft **BT** claims that “*offending*” callers are added to its blacklist, reporting that in one week it has noted around 11 million criminal cases of attempted fraud (‘*scams*’) and 14 million cases of breaches of ICO regulations (‘*Claims Management*’ and ‘*Other*’).

There is however no indication of these “*offences*” being notified to the respective authorities, nor any mention of the action they have taken in respect of reports from earlier weeks.

ft **BT** also claims in one week to have diverted over two million calls attempting to help people resolve debt problems (“*Debt collection*”) - or perhaps these were also criminal fraud!

We believe that **BT** should follow advice from [the Police](#) and [the ICO](#).

ft When a blocked call is diverted to voicemail, the user is not notified when a message has been left. This poses a significant risk of calls being blocked in error and not recovered.

ft Users who pay for a premium service may specify blacklisted numbers which should not be blocked. There is however no list of organisations from which one may select these numbers.

ft See [BT Call Protect blocks real HMRC calls ...](#), – this will apply to many other valid calls.

The **fair telecoms campaign** is firmly opposed to sledgehammer call blocking tactics based on CLI (or it being withheld) as these need constant revision, are easily circumvented, will only offer limited relief from unwanted calls and also prevent genuine wanted calls from getting through.

BT has adopted the **trueCall** technology on the BT8600 series of handsets. This enables effective and proper control of incoming calls. We urge **BT**, and its competitors, to deploy the same technology as a feature on all landline and mobile networks– see [BT holds the answer to enabling victims to avoid nuisance calls, but chooses not to make it available to all customers](#).



Over 50% of the calls diverted by **BT Call Protect** originate from the Claims Management sector. We have long been calling on the **Claims Management Regulator** (part of the **Ministry of Justice**) to cease its current tolerance of telemarketing of these services and impose a total ban on the practice, including the handling of leads generated in this way by third parties. We make the same call to other competent regulators – see [Banning un-solicited direct marketing telephone calls](#).

Whilst **BT** would be disappointed if the number of calls it blocked fell by 50%, (a disappointment shared by those who capture marketing information through third party reporting tools) reflecting the rather perverse nature of this ugly business, most of us would be delighted.

We are still awaiting our invitation to discuss this matter with **DCMS** and the **MoJ**, in response to [this parliamentary intervention](#).

David Hickson 

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