



BT holds the answer to enabling victims to avoid nuisance calls, but chooses not to make it available to all customers

The **fair telecoms campaign** believes that serious action should be taken to address the problem of Nuisance Calls - wholly and effectively prohibiting the practice of unsolicited direct marketing by telephone. See our briefing - [Banning unsolicited direct marketing telephone calls](#).

Individual protection for citizens is however still required for the following reasons:

- Whilst we wait for the government and regulators to stop supporting business by granting them the legal right to cause nuisance through unsolicited direct marketing telephone calls
- To provide protection against those who break the law and seek to scam us over the telephone
- To enable us to manage our incoming calls, avoiding all those which are untimely or unwanted, so as to provide happier use of the telephone.

We have long celebrated the approach followed by the **trueCall** product. Unlike the approach of blocking calls from a prepared list of “bad numbers”, this addresses all of the above requirements.

This approach allows calls from known, welcome callers to proceed as normal, whilst causing all unknown callers to be challenged to identify themselves - before the phone rings. If the caller gives their name, the phone rings and the call may either be accepted or rejected on hearing their announcement. Experience shows that nuisance callers rarely respond, eliminating the nuisance.

We are delighted that **BT** incorporates this feature, under licence and re-branded as **Call Guardian**, in its **BT 8600** series handsets.

Unlike the approach offered by attempts at blocking calls from those who foolishly persist in causing nuisance by repeatedly using the same identifiable “bad” number, this feature focuses attention on the actual call itself. (it is important to note that those who find their number on a block list can readily switch to using a different number.)

Friends and wanted callers not using a number that has been recognised previously still get through, whereas unwanted callers generally hang up when challenged to identify themselves. Automated calling devices will never respond to the challenge so, unless they are using a pre-advised number, they will never get through.

This feature could equally well be deployed on the telephone network, rather than by using equipment in the home. This has been proved in testing, and offers the benefit of being equally available to mobile networks (such as those operated by **BT** subsidiary **EE**) as well as landlines. The government has even set aside funding for the development of solutions to the problem of Nuisance Calls and a large proportion of this has not yet been allocated.

No other proposal offers benefits on anything approaching the scale of those offered by this solution.

The fair telecoms campaign is dismayed that we are still talking about blocking calls that have not been made illegal, when both a sensible regulatory approach and an effective practical solution are both staring us in the face.

Please get in touch for more details and comment on this issue.

