



Progress with attainment of our Recommendations in relation to Directory Enquiry Services

In May 2017 we published a document calling for significant changes of regulation in respect of Directory Enquiry Services. This listed [7 specific recommendations](#). This briefing is intended to identify what we have achieved, some of which is covered in [these Mail on Sunday items](#) .

We are delighted that **Ofcom** and the **Phone-paid Services Authority** have addressed the 6 recommendations specifically aimed at them. **We must classify this as a campaigning success.**

1. Capping of the rate of charge for 118xxx calls.

This **Ofcom** action – see [New price cap on 118 numbers](#) – fully satisfies **Recommendation 7**.

We are disappointed that the approach taken does not add anything to the regulation that already covers **Recommendation 6**, however the rate cap will address this issue.

It effectively covers **Recommendation 5**, albeit in a different way, given that no justification for high-cost services was forthcoming.

2. Banning promotion of DQ services on unused numbers.

The action taken by the PSA – see [PSA takes action against potentially misleading 118 marketing practices](#) – fully satisfies **Recommendation 1**. Some relevant enforcement action has already been taken and we trust that more will be forthcoming, as necessary.

This also addresses **Recommendation 2** as these numbers are generally used to operate the scam known as “wangiri”. The point about further action against this scam still stands in general.

3. Extension of regulation of call connection services

We await a final statement on the action proposed in the **Ofcom** consultation - [Review of the Premium Rate Services Condition](#).

Ofcom is however committed to fulfil its proposed action and the **PSA** is expected to also fulfil its part in fully addressing **Recommendation 3**.

It is unfortunate that, as **Ofcom** prepared these measures, the consumer interest was not supported by useful evidence from a competent body, as we had hoped. Furthermore, this lack of engagement denies consumers of the remaining services valuable help and guidance.

The missing piece of the jigsaw

We remain very disappointed that nothing has been done by **Which?**, or any other suitable consumer-focussed body, to provide consumer advice on which Directory Enquiry services offer good value for money – as covered by **Recommendation 4**.

Ofcom must allow a competitive market to operate, but consumers need informed guidance on how to navigate the very large range of options available. Much will be achieved by eliminating the obvious rip-offs, but consumers still need informed guidance.