



**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**.

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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.