

Consultation response form

Please complete this form in full and return via email to 070marketreview@ofcom.org.uk or by post to:

070 market review team
Competition Group
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

Consultation title	Personal numbering: Review of the 070 number range
Full name	Guy Howie
Contact phone number	✂
Representing (delete as appropriate)	Organisations (2)
Organisation name	The Risk & Assurance Group (RAG) (http://riskandassurancegroup.org) and Biaas (http://www.biaas.com)
Email address	✂
We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Are there any additional details you want to keep confidential? (delete as appropriate)	Nothing
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	n/a – nothing confidential.

Your response

Question 3.1: Do you agree with our provisional conclusion regarding market definition? Please provide reasons and evidence in support of your views.	No opinion
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<p>Question 3.2: Do you agree with our provisional conclusion regarding SMP? Please provide reasons and evidence in support of your views.</p>	<p>No opinion</p>
<p>Question 4.1: Do you consider that the cost of the proposed control is proportionate to the identified harm to consumers arising from this range? If not please give your reasons.</p>	<p>No – see answers to following questions.</p>
<p>Question 4.2: Do you agree with our proposal for a three-month implementation period? If not, please explain why.</p>	<p>No – see answers to following questions.</p>
<p>Question 4.3: Do you agree that our proposal to implement a charge control on 070 TCPs in the form of a benchmark rate is appropriate? If not, please explain why.</p>	<p>Confidential? – No</p> <p>No, we do not agree with Ofcom’s proposal to implement controls over charges.</p> <p>Probably the most important legitimate use of 070 destinations today is to allow friends and family to speak with their loved ones who are restricted to hospital beds across the NHS. The provision of these services, whilst not universally popular, is still a vital link for patients and their families. This is also true because many NHS wards do not allow the use of mobile phones, not everybody wants a mobile phone, and many friends and relatives do not have the time to make visits.</p> <p>Telecommunications service providers have invested millions in providing and maintaining these vital services to hospital patients and we do not believe it is the role of Ofcom to impose such draconian price changes which risk disrupting such a vital service when the market</p>

	<p>for such services is obviously in decline. Such a move might make great headlines for Ofcom, but would inevitably lead to higher prices in other areas.</p> <p>Ofcom should also please consider publishing the exact proportion of 070 traffic minutes which are legitimate calls terminating to such hospital based services, as we believe this overall proportion in the current day to be much higher than Ofcom thinks. We would also like to see what proportion of legitimate voice calls (by minutes) Ofcom believes to be terminating on the other uses for these numbers such as redirection services, classified adverts, and machine contacts, as we believe legitimate usage (as opposed to fraud) to be minimal.</p> <p>We would encourage Ofcom, if it has not yet had the opportunity, to fully consider the findings of an academic paper entitled ‘The Role of Phone Numbers in Understanding Cyber-Crime Schemes’ by Andrei Costin et al of Eurecom, a communications research centre. This document can currently be found at the following web link. http://s3.eurecom.fr/docs/pst13_phones.pdf “</p> <p>There is an entire section in the document devoted to UK Personal Numbers (070/075/076 – not just 070) which concluded that “just 4 operators (out of 88) provide more than 90% of fraud-related UK PRS numbers.” We therefore believe it is unfair and blunt to enforce pricing controls when only a small number of known operators are the ones responsible for the bulk of problems. Perhaps Ofcom could consider directing efforts at tackling these 4 minor operators instead.</p>
<p>Question 4.4: Do you have any further comment on our proposals for regulating 070 termination rates? Please provide reasons and evidence in support of your views.</p>	<p>Confidential? – No</p> <p>We would urge Ofcom to please consider that the problems it has outlined which are associated with the 070 number range, such as excessive prices, bill shock, service provider fraud, international artificial traffic inflation, and identify related fraud, have very little to do with companies providing services to patients and their loved ones, and more to do with</p>

	<p>management of retail telecommunications number plans and pricing, and also management of telecommunications wholesale operations. We do not believe that the valid service providers should be impacted by these problems as they do not contribute towards them. We believe Ofcom could do more at a strategic level to help guide the industry in best practice for both making pricing more obvious and in the management of wholesale operations to eradicate fraud.</p> <p>Rather than imposing price changes which are restricted to 070, Ofcom may also wish to consider kicking off the wider strategic initiative of reviewing and improving the UK telephone numbering plan. This could be done in such a way as to create a real separation between 'normal 07 mobile' and 'all other expensive 07 type destinations' We observe that there are many other 07 destinations which cause issues such as 07305 - fw10, 074180 - fw12, 074521 - fm11, 077978 - f. These types of other destinations have also been seen to occasionally result in bill shock, service provider fraud or international artificial traffic inflation. They are also, like 070, generally omitted from free bundled mobile minutes for UK consumers. For example, all expensive 07 destinations could in theory be assigned to the 04 or 06 numbering bands. Assignment to existing 08 and 09 bands may not be an ideal solution as the pricing structures required may not be in place and such an assignment may result in issues such as national call barring or inability to dial numbers from overseas. Much longer term, such an initiative could also pave the way for simplification of any possible future portability between UK fixed line and UK mobile telephone numbers.</p>
<p>Question A9.1: Do you agree with our approach to estimating the cost of providing a 070 service? Please provide reasons and evidence in support of your views.</p>	<p>Confidential? No</p> <p>No - see answers to previous questions.</p>