

Consultation response form

Please complete this form in full and return to futureofnumberingteam@ofcom.org.uk or:

Future of Numbering Team
Ofcom
125 Princes Street
Edinburgh, EH2 4AD

Consultation title	Future of telephone numbers
Full name	
Contact phone number	
Representing (delete as appropriate)	Self
Organisation name	
Email address	

Confidentiality

We ask for your contact details along with your response so that we can engage with you on this consultation. For further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights, see [Ofcom's General Privacy Statement](#).

Your details: We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Is there anything else you want to keep confidential? Delete as appropriate.	Nothing
Your response: Please indicate how much of your response you want to keep confidential. Delete as appropriate.	None
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	Yes

Your response

Question	Your response
<p>Please note that I am responding to Question 4.1 only and do not have any comments to make on the other points in the consultation. Thank you.</p>	
<p>Question 4.1: What are your thoughts about 084 and 087 numbers? What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of contacting an organisation by calling an 084 or 087 number? Can you tell us of any experience you've had calling these numbers? Have you expressly chosen not to call a service that uses these numbers? If so, what led to that decision and how did you choose to make contact instead (if you did)?</p>	<p>Confidential? – N</p> <p>If companies were providing honest and accurate call cost warnings there may be less cause for complaint as callers would be able to make informed choices about calling or not.</p> <p>However, companies using 084 and 087 numbers seem to routinely ignore the requirement to display costs or be ignorant of the need to do so.</p> <p>As an example, Keolis Amey Wales has just erected, in early 2019, dozens of signs at stations right across the Transport for Wales rail network that give an 0845 number for enquiries with no indication of the applicable call charges (see photo below). This is despite the requirement to publish call charges having been put in place several years previously.</p> <p>In many locations, these new signs actually replaced older signs that had been amended by the previous operator of the rail franchise, Arriva, to show a standard rate '03' number following the Consumer Rights Act 2015 coming into force.</p> <p>The fact that the new franchise-holder has reverted to an 0845 number for contact and failed to provide the required call cost statements would suggest that they are ignorant of the rules around such numbers.</p> <p>Indeed, given that their other published customer service numbers are '03' numbers, it would seem strange to use 0845 here at all – which rather suggests that even large and well-resourced businesses are confused about what numbers they should be using.</p> <p>Ultimately this kind of issue is probably down to inertia and 0845 numbers' historic association with local rate. It seems likely that many of those responsible for selecting, maintaining and publicising business contact numbers still believe that 0845 is a local rate or low cost call and therefore are never prompted to consider their appropriateness or whether they need to state call costs.</p>

I believe that as 0845 and similar numbers are badly misunderstood and the only way to prevent consumer harm as a result of this is to withdraw them from use or institute systems to fine those who misuse them.



[End of response]

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