

Reference: 01596288

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

Dear ,

11 May 2023

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to VoIP and PSTN. We received this request on 11 April 2023. We have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”).

Your request

You asked:

1. *how many calling minutes are used on PSTN landline connections*
2. *how many calling minutes are used on VoIP home ISP connections (for example, BT digital voice)*
3. *has ofcom considered the resilience of VoIP home phone services compared to the PSTN service?*
4. *will ofcom mandate an industry wide social tariff across all ISPs and mobile providers?*

Our response

We hold some information in relation to the first two questions:

1. *[We have interpreted this part of the request as relating to information regarding residential PSTN call minutes, given question 2 specifically mentions call minutes over **home ISP connections**]. We do not have the number of minutes for calls originating on PSTN lines only. However, we have the combined total number of minutes originating on PSTN lines and on emulated PSTN lines.¹ In case this information is helpful, we have decided to provide it as part of our response to this request. It may be worth noting that emulated PSTN services do not rely on the PSTN, and therefore customers on those services are not directly impacted by the PSTN switch off.*

Number of minutes for calls originating on residential PSTN and emulated PSTN lines: 17,719 million minutes of outgoing calls in 2022.

¹ Emulated PSTN services mimic a PSTN network from the point of view of a customer’s handset through an Internet Protocol (IP) gateway located in a Communications Provider’s access network. More information on PSTN emulation may be found here: ITU-T Y.2262 ‘PSTN/ISDN emulation and simulation’
<https://www.itu.int/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

2. We have the number of minutes for managed VoIP calls originating on residential connections: 1,162 million minutes of outgoing calls in 2022.
3. This question is not a request for information however we can confirm that yes, Ofcom has considered the implications of the move of landline services from the PSTN to VoIP services and we include links to 2 published documents which will provide you with more information:

In 2018, Ofcom published [guidance](#) on how providers can meet their obligation to take all necessary measures to ensure uninterrupted access to emergency organisations for their customers, as customers move from traditional landline services to VoIP services.

In 2019, we published a [statement](#) on the future of fixed telephone services. In that document, we explain what changes are taking place, the roles and responsibilities of different organisations, and our expectations of telecoms providers as they make these changes.

We also have an ongoing programme monitoring the migration.

4. This question is not a request for information, and we can advise that Ofcom does not have the power to introduce regulated social tariffs without being directed to do so by the UK Government.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any queries, then please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review, **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF