

Ofcom – 03 countrywide numbers

COI comments and issues:

1. Exactly how will the charging mechanism work. If people are on a tariff where their local or national calls are 'free' will this be included. The proposal suggest this would be the case. What happens with mobiles and calls from phone boxes? This is the key as this is what can make calls to Government expensive (see comment from DTI)
2. How will the tariff need to be described in publicity?
3. What is the reaction of the providers, BT, Energis, C&W etc
4. What publicity will be put behind the new tariff to explain to citizens and to gain the trust that the proposal speaks off?
5. Can we avoid a 'free for all' on allocation to providers and number choice i.e. if someone has a particular 08 number can they migrate to the equivalent 03 number – i.e. have first choice.
6. The proposal notes that Ofcom might mandate a change. Why would Ofcom mandate such a change? What would make this occur?
7. What is the definition of public sector according to Ofcom? Who falls within and who falls outside of this? Who will police usage?
8. What role could COI play in the deployment and marketing of 03 on behalf of Ofcom?
9. What assistance (financial and otherwise) could be provided for government departments ad agencies in phasing out their old numbers in favour of 03? Over what timescale?
10. How would 03 numbers be presented – how many digits afterwards?
11. 0800 will need to stay as an option for free, counselling and crises and claim line services and for people with low incomes.
12. What, if any, changes would the providers levy the client departments for use of these numbers? Would aggregation through COI be of benefit?

Overall COI are supportive of an 03 tariff as long as it is very clear to the citizen what is actually means and Ofcom are able to help COI and its clients present this an appropriate tariff for public sector usage. It would give us a fair rate, non-controversial paid for alternative that could complement 0800.

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22/05/06