



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

Irish Text Relay Service

Measures for disabled end-users Take up and usage statistics

Information Notice

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Commission for Communications Regulation

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Irish Text Relay Service (“ITRS”)

1. On 30 December 2015, following a public consultation, ComReg in ComReg Decision D09/15¹ decided that service providers with more than 100,000 subscribers must provide access to a Text Relay Service.
2. Since 2017, the ITRS is available to end-users and full information on how to access and use the service is found on the official ITRS web site.² Prior to the introduction of the ITRS in 2017, there was a text relay facility for those who had access to a minicom terminal which operated with a fixed line only.
3. ITRS translates text into voice and, voice into text, to facilitate deaf and hard of hearing people and those with speaking difficulties in making and receiving calls, including when using mobile devices, in the Republic of Ireland. Calls are relayed through ITRS agents who perform this translation. ITRS can be used with smartphones, tablets, computers and textphones. ITRS is a pathway for end-users with a disability to access services (e.g., banking, utilities, travel, medical etc.) by phone or online.
4. The ITRS service is operated by Eircom limited (‘Eir’) acting as the host of the ITRS, and serving the customers of Three, Eir, Sky, Tesco Mobile, Virgin Media and Vodafone and, is funded by each of these operators.
5. The following Tables set out the usage and service levels of ITRS for the period from July 2018 to December 2019.³

Usage and Service Levels of ITRS

6. Historic usage of the minicom system indicated that, for text to voice (TTV) calls, usage had increased, from just under 1,100 TTV calls annually using the Minicom in 2016, to over 5,300 TTV calls annually using both the new ITRS and existing minicom during 2017, the ITRS first year of operation.
7. Table 1 below reflects the monthly usage by ITRS end-users of (i) TTV calls and (ii) voice to text calls (VTT). There were more TTV calls than VTT calls, indicating that

¹ ‘Provision of Access to a Text Relay Service’, Ref ComReg 15/143, Decision No. D09/15.

² www.itrs.ie

³ Details of the usage and service levels of ITRS for the period June 2017 to 31 August 2018 were published in the ComReg Information Notice, ‘Text Relay Service Measures for disabled end-users Take up and usage statistics’ Ref, ComReg 18/83.

ITRS end-users are more likely to use the ITRS for making calls rather than receiving text calls.

8. More recent usage indicates that the average number of TTV calls via ITRS between July 2018 and November 2019 was 295, peaking at 414 in October 2018 with a low of 152 in September 2019, rising again to 323 in November 2019.
9. The usage of VTT calls by ITRS end users fluctuated in the period, 91 text calls in January 2019, compared to 3 VTT calls in each of the months February, March and June 2019.

Table 1- Monthly ITRS Call volumes July 2018 - November2019

ITRS Calls	Text to Voice Calls Offered	Voice to Text Calls Offered
Jul-18	345	11
Aug-18	277	12
Sep-18	346	7
Oct-18	414	17
Nov-18	379	9
Dec-18	391	9
Jan-19	397	91
Feb-19	320	3
Mar-19	305	3
Apr-19	341	5
May-19	216	21
Jun-19	199	3
Jul-19	211	18
Aug-19	182	4
Sep-19	152	7
Oct-19	222	4
Nov-19	323	8

10. Table 2 shows the quality of the ITRS service delivered each month during the period; call abandoned rates⁴ and call answer speed.⁵ Both the TTV and VTT calls are handled by the same ITRS agent as part of the relay or translation service.

Table 2: Monthly Figures for Quality of Service of the ITRS

ITRS Calls	TTV calls			VTT calls ⁶		
	Text to Voice Calls Offered	% Abandoned	% Answer Speed	Voice to Text Calls Offered	% Abandoned	% Answer Speed
Dec-18	391	0.26	96.04	7	0	100
Jan-19	397	0.26	98.71	91	2.25	97.8
Feb-19	320	0	97.18	3	0	100
Mar-19	305	0	98.36	3	0	100
Apr-19	341	0	97.05	5	0	100
May-19	216	0	99.07	21	10.53	80.95
Jun-19	199	0	97.49	3	0	100
Jul-19	211	0	98.58	18	0	94.44
Aug-19	182	0	94.47	4	33.33	50
Sep-19	152	0	99.33	7	0	85.71
Oct-19	222	0	94.12	4	0	100
Nov-19	323	0.33	92.13	8	0	75

⁴ % Abandoned ITRS calls refers to the rate at which end-users of ITRS abandon an attempt to make an ITRS call via the ITRS service. The recommended rate of abandon calls for ITRS calls (both TTV and VTT calls) is less than 5% of calls, as set out in D09/15.

⁵ Refers to the percentage of calls answered by the ITRS agent within 20 seconds of the call being made to them, the recommended % for ITRS calls (both TTV and VTT calls) as set out in D09/15.

⁶ For VTT calls, the % Abandoned and % Answer Speed are based on a small VTT call volume per month and may not provide a robust statistical basis for separately drawing a conclusion on service levels for this aspect of the ITRS .

ComReg Consumer Engagement

11. An ongoing ComReg Consumer Engagement programme is underway to inform the public about ITRS and its benefits. To date this has included:
 - a. Updates on ITRS to the [Consumer Advisory Panel](#)
 - b. Talks and visits to Active Retirement Groups and County Libraries, nationwide
 - c. February 2019: Presence and information from ComReg at the Holiday Show in Limerick
 - d. September 2019: Presence and information from ComReg at the National Ploughing Championships in Carlow
 - e. An ITRS themed advertisement in the National Ploughing Championships official catalogue
 - f. An ITRS themed advertisement in Senior Times magazine, which was distributed at the 50 Plus Expo in Dublin.
 - g. ITRS information during COVID-19 restrictions.