



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

Nuisance Communications: Fixed Calling Line Identification Blocking Intervention

Arrangements for International Operations

Information Notice

Reference: ComReg 22/114

Version: 1.0

Date: 20/12/2022

Content

Section	Page
1 Introduction	3
2 Businesses Using Irish Numbers from Overseas	3
3 Services on Cloud Communications Platforms	4
4 Next steps	4

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Scam calls and texts are a widespread problem in Ireland. Fraud offences have nearly doubled from 9,219 in 2021 to 17,354 in 2022¹ and An Garda Síochána have indicated that this increase is largely due to scam communications.
- 1.2 A common tactic used by criminals to defraud victims is to imitate – or ‘spoof’ – phone numbers. In particular, fraudsters based abroad often spoof Irish numbers as their Calling Line Identification (CLI), knowing that recipients in Ireland are more likely to answer.
- 1.3 ComReg and the telecoms industry are fighting this fake number fraud and have been working together in the Nuisance Communications Industry Taskforce² (NCIT) on interventions to tackle this and other scam communications.
- 1.4 In general, Irish fixed phone numbers should **only** be used within Ireland by legitimate Irish businesses and consumers³. **Therefore, NCIT operators are working towards blocking calls from outside Ireland that are using Irish Fixed Line numbers⁴ as their CLI by the end of March 2023.**

2 Businesses Using Irish Numbers from Overseas

- 2.1 Some operators in the NCIT have highlighted that a number of their business customers in Ireland have overseas branch offices or call centres that make calls to Ireland.
- 2.2 These businesses may wish to use Irish Fixed Line numbers assigned to their businesses in Ireland as their CLI when contacting customers in Ireland from their overseas call centres or branch offices. In such cases, call recipients recognise the Irish Fixed Line number and, if needed, can make return calls to that number at local or national rates.
- 2.3 The NCIT has agreed an intervention specification that allows for this use to continue. The specification states that operators should have commenced consultation with customers wishing to present their Irish CLI from abroad. Operators can cater for these customers by providing them with a direct connection⁵ to their network in Ireland. This will avoid the risk that these calls into Ireland would be blocked as the

¹ Central Statistics Office, Recorded Crime Q1 2022.

² [ComReg 21/129](#): Nuisance Communications: Formation of the NCIT, dated 17 December 2021

³ See the most recent version of the Numbering Conditions of Use document - [ComReg-15136R3.pdf](#)

⁴ Fixed Line numbers include Geographic Numbers e.g. (01) Dublin numbers or (021) Cork numbers, and Non-Geographic Numbers, either 1800 Freephone or 0818 Standard Rate numbers.

⁵ A dedicated voice data path e.g. a SIP Trunk that bypasses normal international voice traffic routes.

NCIT intervention is rolled out by operators.

3 Services on Cloud Communications Platforms

- 3.1 Separately, ComReg has also been made aware that some operators currently route calls that have originated from Irish customers to network nodes or Cloud Communications Platforms that are located outside Ireland. Services being provided include Virtual Contact Centre platforms or voice calling features on conferencing platforms. Such call traffic should not be redirected back to Ireland on normal international routes and any such arrangements should urgently be addressed by these operators and cloud communications service providers by providing a direct connection e.g. a SIP trunk. Operators can implement this solution with minimal disruption to customer operations.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 Operators that are members of the NCIT represent approximately 90% of fixed line voice traffic. ComReg is therefore additionally notifying all other operators offering fixed line telephony services and is also contacting organisations representing Irish businesses to highlight this situation.
- 4.2 Operators should already be contacting customers known to be affected (e.g. with a known overseas call centre) and who may wish to continue presenting their Irish Fixed Line CLI when contacting customers from abroad.
- 4.3 If you operate a business that uses Irish Fixed Line CLIs as described above and you have not heard from your operator, you should make contact now to discuss your connectivity options. You may alternatively decide not to present your Irish Fixed Line CLI going forward.
- 4.4 In March 2023, ComReg will launch a public consultation to set out proposals for the long term. This consultation will also propose new guidance on how telecoms operators should ensure that Irish Fixed Line numbers are not misused in the future.