



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

27th July 2001

ODTR outlines framework for development of National Numbering Scheme over next 5 years.

Full Mobile Number Portability by end of 2002.

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator today (Friday 27th July 2001) announced changes to the National Numbering Scheme. Following a public consultation and an extensive audit of numbers in use, the numbering changes will affect less than 10% of numbers.

The main numbering changes will be in Navan, Letterkenny, Kilkenny Sligo, Castlebar, Athlone and Carlow. While most of the numbering changes will be capacity driven, number changes will also be necessary in some of the STD Code Areas that adjoin these areas. The existing numbers will remain in operation until 2003. Detailed plans will now be developed with the operators and full details will be supplied to users well in advance of their introduction.

The affected areas are

Navan & Enfield

Letterkenny, Buncrana, Dungloe and Donegal

Kilkenny

Sligo, Manorhamilton, Carrick-on Shannon and Boyle

Castlebar, Ballinrobe and Castlerea
Athlone, Ballinsloe, Roscommon and Portumna
Carlow, Athy, Baltinglass

According to the Regulator " Since the liberalisation of the market in December 1998 demand for numbers has significantly increased putting pressure on the telephone numbering infrastructure. This demand has been fuelled in the main by the growth of the Irish economy, the start up requirements for newly licensed operators and the demand from consumers for additional numbers."

She continued " The audit confirmed that some operators are holding large quantities of spare numbers in excess of that which is reasonable for the efficient provision of service to new customers. The changes are therefore not as extensive as originally envisaged. Any changes made are primarily driven by localised number exhaustion. At the same time as these changes are been made there will also be scope to simplify the existing numbering scheme."

The ODTR will have discussions with network operators on the implementation of the number changes to confirm the format of the new numbers and the start date for parallel working (a call can be made by using either the existing number or the new number.) The existing numbers will remain in use until mid-2003, after which calls will be routed to recorded announcements.

The Regulator also outlined further details of the plans to prepare for Full Mobile Number Portability to be available in Ireland during the last quarter of 2002. Mobile customers will be able to retain their entire number when changing to a new operator. This is particularly valuable for business customers who are now more reliant on their mobile numbers.

According to the Regulator " The introduction of FMNP removes the threat of a number change for all mobile users which would otherwise arise. It will also enhance competition by enabling mobile customers' transfer with ease to their mobile operator of choice.

01/56 Implementing Full Mobile Number Portability in Ireland - Report on the Consultation

01/58 Review of the National Numbering Scheme for Telephony in Ireland - Decision Notice D9/01

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Issued By

Brigid Smyth
Public Affairs Manager
ODTR
Ph: 01 804 9639
Mobile: 086 8270905