



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

**REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF
TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATION ON THE
WORK OF THE TASK FORCE ON NUMBERING**

Document No. ODTR 99/18

March 1999

Oifig an Stiúrthóra Rialála Teileachumarsáide
Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation
Abbey Court Irish Life Centre Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.
Telephone +353-1-804 9600 *Fax* +353-1-804 9680
Web: <http://www.odtr.ie>

Task Force on Numbering

Foreword by the Director

When I established the Task Force on Numbering last August, it was for the ODTR a first exercise in the use of advisory groups. Our idea at that time was to form a group whose all-round knowledge and expertise would be such that we could rapidly collect intensive feedback and guidance on a number of complex and inter-related issues concerned with telephone numbering.

The TFN's work has been completed within the challenging deadlines set for it and my office has a much better understanding of the views of the telecoms industry and consumers on all the issues discussed. Furthermore, the TFN's deliberations are formally recorded in the set of TFN Recommendations and Position Papers included herein. That this was achieved in a time of upheaval for the industry is a great tribute to the determination and dedication of those involved.

The enclosed document (TFN35) is the summary report which I received from the TFN at the conclusion of its work. I have decided to make it available on our ODTR web site for the information of the wider public and to stimulate debate on some of the far-reaching measures discussed by the Group, such as the overall scheme of future numbering plans for Ireland. The report is a tribute to the excellent quality of work carried out in such a short timeframe.

I wish in conclusion to express my sincere thanks to all members of the TFN as well as to the organisations which so readily supported their involvement. I can assure you all that my office is and has been taking full account of the Group's conclusions in all our subsequent work.

Etain Doyle
Director of Telecommunications Regulation

March 1999

Task Force on Numbering

Report to the Director of Telecommunications Regulation on the Work of the Task Force on Numbering

Document No. TFN35

December 1998

Summary:

The Task Force on Numbering (TFN) was set up by the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation (ODTR) as one outcome of Decision Notice D2/98 “Numbering in Ireland for The 21st Century”. It functioned as an interim forum, through which industry and consumer feedback could provide important guidance to the Director of Telecommunications Regulation on a range of important numbering issues. The TFN met on four occasions and, arising from its work, produced eight recommendations and two position papers. This report introduces the TFN itself and records the work it carried out.

Task Force on Numbering (TFN)

c/o Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation
Abbey Court, Irish Life Centre Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.
Telephone +353-1-804 9600 Fax +353-1-804 9680

1. Introduction:

1.1 General

The Task Force on Numbering (TFN) was established at the end of August '98 by the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation (ODTR). It was set the objective of completing its assigned tasks before the end of 1998 and its first meeting was held on September 7.

The TFN's role was to provide guidance to the Director on a number of issues which arose during the numbering consultation exercise, as described in Decision Notice D2/98 "Numbering in Ireland for The 21st Century". In consequence, its terms of reference¹ were extracted directly from D2/98 (see Annex 4).

Membership of the TFN was provided from a representative cross-section of the telecommunications industry and from the telecommunications users sector. This membership is listed in Section 2, below.

1.2 Methods of Work

The TFN, because of its short lifespan, operated on the basis of a series of pre-scheduled meetings, supported by E-mail² circulation of documents and E-mail comment stages for documents. In order to ensure maximum progress and tight focus during the meetings, discussion documents on all important issues were prepared in advance of the meetings by ODTR personnel and these were also circulated by E-mail.

Following each meeting, revised documents were circulated for agreement by E-mail correspondence, along with minutes of the meeting.

Although this modus operandii placed significant pressures on TFN members, due to the volume of work produced and the compressed timescales, it operated very efficiently throughout the short TFN lifetime. In view of the heavy concurrent pressures on members arising from liberalisation, such a high degree of co-operation is very much to all members' credit.

¹ The terms of reference are in Annex 3.

² Fax back-up was necessary in only a few cases.

2. Membership of the Task Force on Numbering

Membership of the Task Force was invited from all main elements of the telecommunications industry. This included network operators, service providers, and telecommunications users. Some TFN members could be considered to fall into more than one of these categories.

Network operator representation included incumbent operators, both fixed and mobile and new entrants. Members in this grouping included Telecom Eireann, Eircell, ESAT Digifone, ESAT Telecom, OCEAN and Cable & Wireless.

The telecoms service provider category was represented by CONDUIT.

The telecoms users category included representation from the business user field (IBEC and Chambers of Commerce of Ireland), the rural and farming community (John Donnelly of IFA), and the private consumer sector (European Consumer Information Centre).

Those organisations which contributed members to the TFN are listed in Table 1 below. Furthermore, the personnel who attended TFN meetings on behalf of those organisations³ are identified within the table.

³ Strictly speaking, TFN members attended as individuals providing their own personal expertise, rather than as representatives of their individual organisations.

Table 1: TFN Membership List

Sector	Nominating Organisation	Representatives
Telecoms Industry	ODTR	John McQuaid (Chairman) Pat Walsh (Secretary) Tom Hickey Peter Murphy Albert Redmond
	Cable & Wireless Ireland	Paul Rosbotham
	CONDUIT Ireland	Liam Young
	Eircell Ltd.	Horace Burns
	ESAT Digifone	John Gunnigan Blaithin Hartnett
	ESAT Telecom	Janet Li
	OCEAN Communications	Bernard Cherdo Phil Rushton
	Telecom Eireann	Catherine Brady Allen Collinge Eddie Nugent James O’Cleirigh Paul Walsh Joseph Styles
	WorldCom Ireland Ltd.	Ciaran Black
Telecoms Consumer	Chambers of Commerce of Ireland	Alison Begas Simon Nugent
	European Consumer Information Centre	Anne Hynes
	IBEC	Kevin Barrett Terry Ralph
	IFA	John Donnelly

3. Output of the TFN

During its lifetime the TFN produced thirty-five formal documents, as listed in Annex 1. These included the eight Recommendations and two major Position Papers which are listed below. The full texts of these Recommendations and Position Papers are included as Annex 2.

3.1. TFN Recommendations

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering recommends:

TFN Recommendation 1. Freephone Services

TFN11; Issue 2.

- R1.1. that network operators should not charge for calls to Freephone (1800) numbers by any caller, regardless of which network operators, service providers or Freephone customers are involved in the calls;
- R1.2. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and that recommendation R1.1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
- R1.3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 2. Shared Cost Services

TFN12; Issue 2.

- R2.1. that the charge made by network operators to callers to 1850 numbers should be independent of the duration of the call, and should in no case exceed the cost of a 5 minute call calculated at the appropriate local tariff rate of the network from which the call is made;
- R2.2. that the charge to callers to 1890 numbers should in no case exceed the cost of a call of the same duration calculated at the appropriate local tariff rate of the network from which the call is made;
- R2.3. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and that recommendations R2.1 and R2.2 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions
- R2.4. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 3. Premium Rate Services

TFN13; Issue 5.

- R3.1. that the ODTR should allocate Premium Rate numbers to new service providers, from the eight numbering ranges, 1559 for Adult type services, and 15X0 for all other services, where X= digit 2-8, inclusive;
- R3.2. that the ODTR should consider the options for future use of other Premium Rate numbers;
- R3.3. that Premium Rate services of a sexually suggestive or titillating nature are provided only using 1559 numbers;
- R3.4. that the charge for calls to all Premium Rate services is clearly stated in all promotions;
- R3.5. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and that recommendation R3.1, R3.3 and R3.4 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;

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- R3.6. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 4. Universal Access Services**TFN14; Issue 2.**

- R4.1. that the charge made by network operators to callers to 0818 numbers should not exceed the cost of making a call, calculated at the national tariff rate of the network operator concerned;
- R4.2. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and that recommendation R4.1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
- R4.3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 5. Personal Numbering Services**TFN15; Issue 2.**

- R5.1. that the charge to callers to 0700 numbers should not exceed the cost of making the call to the service provider alone, and should not include any of the cost of providing a call from the service provider to the caller, or any of the cost of providing the Personal Numbering service;
- R5.2. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and that recommendation R5.1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
- R5.3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 6. Directory Enquiry Services**TFN21; Issue 2.**

- R6.1. that two separate access numbers of the form 118XX be provided for Directory Enquiry services in Ireland, for each qualifying SP. One of these codes is to be used for queries on Irish numbers while the other is used for international numbers;
- R6.2. that Northern Ireland should be included under Irish Directory Enquiry services, but may also be included in international Directory Enquiry services if the operator so wishes;
- R6.3. that authorisation to operate these numbers should be given to all then-qualifying applicants, from the same commencement date. That date should be at least three months after the numbers are first allocated;
- R6.4. that withdrawal of the existing 119X codes should occur 12 months after the same commencement date;
- R6.5. that to maintain fairness, all 118XX access codes for Directory Enquiry services in operation in Ireland subscribers should be open to subscribers on all networks, with no preference being shown for any particular access code(s);
- R6.6. that no default Irish access codes common to all network operators will be provided, once the current 119X codes are withdrawn;
- R6.7. that the ODTR should only allocate access codes to service providers which provide a full and adequate level⁴ of Directory Enquiry service;

⁴ To be defined by the ODTR

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- R6.8. that all Directory Enquiry services should be reachable from all Irish networks, without discrimination, subject only to the conclusion of fair and satisfactory commercial arrangements by the organisations concerned;
- R6.9. that 118XX directory enquiry codes should be used only for the provision of directory enquiry services;
- R6.10. that the ODTR should deal separately with other outstanding Directory Enquiry issues, such as database access, costs and potential new directory services.

TFN Recommendation 7. Handling of bursty traffic**TFN28; Issue 1.**

- R7.1. that bursty traffic should be identified in the same way as before, but using the leading digits 71 instead of just 8 i.e. the full number becomes: Service code + 71 + (4-digits)⁵;
- R7.2. that blocks of 100 numbers beginning with these digits should be allocated to service providers and network operators for use with services whose traffic can be characterised as bursty (ensuring 100 blocks are available, per service)⁶;
- R7.3. that network operators and service providers should be required to make all efforts to ensure that traffic of a bursty nature is confined to the appropriate numbers;
- R7.4. that the ODTR should specify sanctions to be taken against users/customers who stimulate bursty traffic on number ranges other than the 71 range without consultation and agreement by their access network providers;
- R7.5. that the ODTR should draft a set of Numbering Conventions and the above recommendations R7.1-R7.4 should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
- R7.6. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 8. Adjustment of Geographic Areas**TFN23; Issue 3.**

- R8.1. that the existing minimum numbering areas should all remain unchanged, unless or until over-riding considerations arise in the future to change this position;
- R8.2. that the boundaries of these areas in the new multi-operator environment shall be defined for future purposes by the then current versions of maps which are now under control of the ODTR and which are described in document ODTR 98/42;

⁵ This releases all numbers commencing with 8 for other use. Furthermore, the digit 1 within this digit pair has no accompanying alphanumeric characters on normal keypads, rendering telephone numbers containing it less valuable for mnemonic purposes.

⁶ This block size could be changed, at ODTR discretion, thus correspondingly altering the available number of blocks.

3.2. TFN Position Papers

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering has adopted the following Positions:

TFN Position Paper 1. Long term numbering Option A v Option B⁺ TFN29; Issue 1.

- P1.1. The current rapid developments in multimedia, broadband communications and Internet/IP technologies, as well as trends towards convergence (among others), make realistic future estimates of demand for non-geographic numbers very difficult to determine at present;
- P1.2. For the same reason, and because of the amount of disruption which closure of the Numbering Plan would cause, there remains insufficient consensus within the TFN on any change of approach towards Option B⁺ at present;
- P1.3. The TFN therefore believes that continuance with the present approach of meeting demand as it arises is best for the immediate future. In the meantime, a steady move towards uniform 9-digit number lengths as changes occur, should continue.

TFN Position Paper 2. Recovery of 7X Range of Numbers TFN30; Issue 1.

- P2.1. There is consensus that changing the balance between non-geographic and geographic numbers within the Irish Numbering Plan, when required, is best achieved by use of the 7X range;
- P2.2. There should be a long lead time for this process, in order to assist customers in adapting to the change;
- P2.3. The ODTR should immediately initiate its own internal preparatory work, right up to but not including the 'commit' step;
- P2.4. Before a final decision is made on this issue, there should be a public consultation on the matter.

3.3. Other Results of TFN Work

The following activities have already been undertaken or will be undertaken by the ODTR in the period ahead, which is consistent with the TFN deliberations:

1. Numbering Convention(s) will be raised to cover:
 - 1.1. Recommendation R1.2, above (Freephone).
 - 1.2. Recommendation R2.3, above (Shared Cost Services).
 - 1.3. Recommendation R3.5, above (Premium Rate Services).
 - 1.4. Recommendation R4.2, above (Universal Access Services).
 - 1.5. Recommendation R5.2, above (Personal Numbering Services).
 - 1.6. Recommendation R7.5, above (bursty traffic).
2. Work on Directory Enquiry services (TFN9, TFN18 and TFN21) has already been taken into account in the course of inviting applications for access codes to directory information services.

3. Work on Premium Rate services (TFN7, TFN13 and TFN17) has already been taken into account in the course of setting down policy for access codes to Premium Rate services in Decision Notice D5/98.
4. The ODTR will initiate its own internal preparatory work in respect of preparing for recovery of the 7X range of numbers, which is now in use in the North-West of Ireland (i.e. as per Position Paper 2). This will include all steps up to but not including the 'commit' step (see next bullet).

4. Conclusions

The Task Force on Numbering was established as an interim and short term advisory body by the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation. It has fulfilled its designated function within its planned schedule, notwithstanding other pressing concurrent demands on the time of the TFN members. It formed a valuable resource for the ODTR Numbering staff to quickly and reliably establish telecoms industry and consumer viewpoints and priorities on difficult issues in the run-up to Irish telecoms liberalisation.

In view of this success, the possibility of establishing a more permanent successor to the TFN was considered during the final TFN meeting. The outcome of these deliberations was that such an expert advisory body would indeed be useful, though its modus operandii should reflect its longer term and (normally) less urgent schedule of work. In principle, the body might act as an expert panel, meeting about two to four times per year. However, many or most issues could be handled between meetings by on line contact (i.e. E-mail/Fax) with selected groups of members from the panel, for issues falling within their specific fields of competence or interest.

Annex 1. List of TFN Documents -TFN0

Doc. Ref.	Title	Current
TFN0	TFN document list	14/12/98
TFN1	Agenda for Meeting No. 1 of TFN	Original
TFN2	Terms of Reference for Task Force on Numbering (TFN)	Original
TFN3	Proposed Schedule of Meetings for Task Force on Numbering	Iss. 4; 04/10/98
TFN4	Mailing List for Task Force on Numbering (TFN)	Iss. 6; 24/11/98
TFN5	Tabulated Access Codes	Original
TFN6	(Agreed) Minutes of Meeting No. 1 of TFN	Original
TFN7	Discussion Paper on Non-geographic numbering Services	Original
TFN8	Discussion Paper on “bursty” traffic	Issue 2; 7/10/98
TFN9	Discussion Paper on Directory Assistance codes	Issue 1; 28/9/98
TFN10	Discussion Paper on minimum geographic areas	Issue 1; 29/9/98
TFN11	TFN Recommendation 1, Freephone Services	Issue 3; 8/12/98
TFN12	TFN Recommendation 2, Shared Cost Services	Issue 3; 8/12/98
TFN13	TFN Recommendation 3, Premium Rate Services	Issue 5; 25/11/98
TFN14	TFN Recommendation 4, Universal Access Services	Issue 3; 8/12/98
TFN15	TFN Recommendation 5, Personal Numbering Services	Issue 3; 8/12/98
TFN16	Agenda for Meeting No. 2 of TFN	Original
TFN17	OCEAN Paper: Universal Access + Premium Rate Numbers	Original
TFN18	CONDUIT Paper: Allocation of Directory Assistance Codes	Original
TFN19	(Agreed) Minutes of Meeting No. 2 of TFN	Original
TFN20	Communication with the Public	Issue 1; 22/10/98
TFN21	TFN Recommendation 6, Directory Enquiry Services	Issue 3; 08/12/98
TFN22	Moving Premium Rate Services to a 90X ‘Flag’	Issue 1; 22/10/98
TFN23	TFN Recommendation 8, Adjustment of Geographic Areas	Issue 4; 08/12/98
TFN24	Recovery of 7X Range of Numbers	Issue 2; 22/10/98
TFN25	Agenda for Meeting No. 3 of TFN	Original
TFN26	Assessment of long-term demand for numbers and need for Option B ⁺	Issue 1; 23/10/98
TFN27	(Agreed) Minutes of Meeting No. 3 of TFN	Issue 2; 25/11/98
TFN28	TFN Recommendation 7, Handling of Bursty Traffic	Issue 2; 25/11/98
TFN29	TFN Position Paper 1 on Option A v Option B ⁺	Issue 2; 25/11/98
TFN30	TFN Position Paper 2 on recovery of 7X numbers	Issue 2; 08/12/98
TFN31	Approaches taken elsewhere to Premium Rate Services	Issue 2; 18/11/98
TFN32	Agenda for Meeting No. 4 of TFN	Issue 2; 23/11/98

Doc. Ref.	Title	Current
TFN33	Minutes of Meeting No. 4 of TFN	Original
TFN34	Proceedings of the Task Force on Numbering	Iss.1; 14/12/98
TFN35	Report to the Director on the Work of the TFN	Iss.1; 14/12/98

Annex 2. Compendium of TFN Recommendations and Position Papers

TFN Recommendation 1 - Freephone Services

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that a Freephone service is free of charge to the caller;
- that it is desirable to have a distinct range of telephone numbers for Freephone services;
- that it is desirable that Freephone telephone numbers can be easily recognised;
- that all calls to Freephone numbers must be free of charge to the caller, if the identity of the numbering range is to be preserved;
- that numbers beginning with the digits 1800 are currently used for Freephone services;

and taking into account

- that all telecommunications services will be liberalised from 1 December 1998;
- that the caller to a Freephone number might not have a direct relationship with the Freephone service provider involved in handling the call;

recommends

1. that network operators should not charge for calls to Freephone (1800) numbers by any caller, regardless of which network operators, service providers or Freephone customers are involved in the calls;
 2. that the ODTR should draft a set of “Numbering Conventions” and that sub-recommendation 1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
 3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.
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TFN Recommendation 2 - Shared Cost Services

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that in a Shared Cost telephone call, the cost of the call is shared between the calling and the called party;
- that Shared Cost services can be subdivided into two main categories, (i) services where the charge to the caller is dependent upon the duration of the call, and (ii) services where the charge to the caller is independent of the duration of the call;
- that it is desirable to have a distinct range of telephone numbers for each category of Shared Cost service;
- that it is desirable that Shared Cost telephone numbers can be easily recognised;
- that numbers beginning with the digits 1850 are currently used to provide access to Shared Cost services where the charge to the caller is based on the local tariff rate, and is independent of the duration of the call;
- that numbers beginning with the digits 1890 are currently used to provide access to Shared Cost services where the charge to the caller is time dependent, and does not exceed the local tariff rate;
- that 1850 and 1890 numbers are generally recognised as implying a low tariff rate to callers and that it is desirable to preserve this identity;

and taking into account

- that all telecommunications services will be liberalised from 1 December 1998;
- that the caller to a Shared Cost number might not have a direct relationship with the Shared Cost service provider involved in handling the call;

recommends

1. that the charge made by network operators to callers to 1850 numbers should be independent of the duration of the call, and should in no case exceed the cost of a 5 minute call calculated at the appropriate local tariff rate of the network from which the call is made;
2. that the charge to callers to 1890 numbers should in no case exceed the cost of a call of the same duration calculated at the appropriate local tariff rate of the network from which the call is made;
3. that the ODTR should draft a set of "Numbering Conventions" and that sub-recommendations 1 and 2 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
4. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 3 – Premium Rate Services

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that in a Premium Rate telephone call, the caller may be charged for the cost of the call, and in addition may be charged for access to an information or other service;
- that it is desirable to have a distinct range of telephone numbers for Premium Rate services;
- that it is desirable to have a separate range of telephone numbers for Adult type Premium Rate services;
- that it is desirable that consumers of Premium Rate services be made aware of the charges that apply to these services;
- that there are currently eight different numbering ranges in use to provide Premium Rate services;
- that numbers beginning with the digits 1559 are currently used for Adult type services;
- that numbers beginning with the digits 1550 are most commonly used and recognised;

and taking into account

- that all telecommunications services will be liberalised from 1 December 1998;
- that the caller to a Premium Rate number might not have a direct relationship with the Premium Rate service provider involved in handling the call;

and noting

that while these present proposals cater for a start-up situation in respect of the allocation of Premium Rate numbers to new service providers, it is nevertheless recognised that many of the issues related to Premium Rate services will require further consideration in the future, particularly the handling of multiple charging levels;

recommends

1. that the ODTR should allocate Premium Rate numbers to new service providers, from the eight numbering ranges, 1559 for Adult type services, and 15X0 for all other services, where X= digit 2-8, inclusive;
2. that the ODTR should consider the options for future use of other Premium Rate numbers;
3. that Premium Rate services of a sexually suggestive or titillating nature are provided only using 1559 numbers;
4. that the charge for calls to all Premium Rate services is clearly stated in all promotions;
5. that the ODTR should draft a set of “Numbering Conventions” and that sub-recommendation 1, 3 and 4 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
6. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 4 – Universal Access Service

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that a Universal Access service is one which allows the called party to specify the location at which the call will be answered;
- that the location where the call is answered may vary according to the called party's preference, depending on certain criteria, including the location of the caller, the time the call is made etc.;
- that the caller may not know the location at which the call will be answered;
- that Universal Access service should be accessible from outside of Ireland;
- that the ODTR intends to allocate numbers beginning with the digits 0818 to service providers for Universal Access services;

and taking into account

- that all telecommunications services will be liberalised from 1 December 1998;
- that the caller to a Universal Access number might not have a direct relationship with the Universal Access service provider involved in handling the call;

recommends

1. that the charge made by network operators to callers to 0818 numbers should not exceed the cost of making a call, calculated at the national tariff rate of the network operator concerned;
 2. that the ODTR should draft a set of "Numbering Conventions" and that sub-recommendation 1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
 3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.
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TFN Recommendation 5 – Personal Numbering Service

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that a Personal Numbering service allows a person to be called at various different locations, depending on the location of the called person at the time of the call;
- that the caller may not know the location at which the call will be answered;
- that the ODTR intends to allocate numbers beginning with the digits 0700 to new service providers for Personal Numbering services;

and taking into account

- that all telecommunications services will be liberalised from 1 December 1998;
- that the caller to a Personal Number might not have a direct relationship with the Personal Number service provider involved in handling the call;
- that a Personal Numbering call may be composed of a call to the service provider and a further call from the service provider to the called person;

recommends

1. that the charge to callers of 0700 numbers should not exceed the cost of making the call to the service provider alone, and should not include any of the cost of providing a call from the service provider to the caller, or any of the cost of providing the Personal Numbering service;
2. that the ODTR should draft a set of “Numbering Conventions” and that sub-recommendation 1 above should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
3. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.

TFN Recommendation 6 - Directory Enquiry Services

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that three Directory Enquiry numbers are currently in use in Ireland; viz:
 - a) 1190 for national and Northern Ireland Directory Enquiries
 - b) 1197 for Directory Enquiries for Great Britain
 - c) 1198 for international Directory Enquiries;
- that a decision⁷ has been made to use codes of the form 118XX for access to all Directory Enquiry services;
- that it is intended⁷ to move all Directory Enquiry services to the 118 range and to reclaim the 119X range after a period of parallel running of not less than 12 months;
- that the process of allocation of these codes to qualifying Service Providers (SPs) will soon commence;
- that there will be competition for Directory Enquiry services;

and taking into account

- that it is necessary to ensure no discrimination exists between the accessibility levels of individual Directory Enquiry services;
- that there should be no special distinction between Directory Enquiry services for UK numbers and those for other international numbers;
- that the levels of usage, the cost structure and other factors distinguish national from international Directory Enquiry services;
- that Directory services have commercial value and the widest possible access to all available such services is in the public interest;
- that a number of additional issues relating to directory access, including costs and database access will still need to be addressed at a later stage by the ODTR;
- that the cost of calls to Northern Ireland may vary, depending on whether an Irish NDC or the full international code is used;

⁷ Document D2/98

recommends

1. that two separate access numbers of the form 118XX be provided for Directory Enquiry services in Ireland, for each qualifying SP. One of these codes is to be used for queries on Irish numbers while the other is used for international numbers;
2. that Northern Ireland should be included under Irish Directory Enquiry services, but may also be included in international Directory Enquiry services if the operator so wishes;
3. that authorisation to operate these numbers should be given to all then-qualifying applicants, from the same commencement date. That date should be at least three months after the numbers are first allocated;
4. that withdrawal of the existing 119X codes should occur 12 months after the same commencement date;
5. that to maintain fairness, all 118XX access codes for Directory Enquiry services in operation in Ireland subscribers should be open to subscribers on all networks, with no preference being shown for any particular access code(s);
6. that no default Irish access codes common to all network operators will be provided, once the current 119X codes are withdrawn;
7. that the ODTR should only allocate access codes to service providers which provide a full and adequate level⁸ of Directory Enquiry service;
8. that all Directory Enquiry services should be reachable from all Irish networks, without discrimination, subject only to the conclusion of fair and satisfactory commercial arrangements by the organisations concerned;
9. that 118XX directory enquiry codes should be used only for the provision of directory enquiry services;
10. that the ODTR should deal separately with other outstanding Directory Enquiry issues, such as database access, costs and potential new directory services.

⁸ To be defined by the ODTR

TFN Recommendation 7 – Handling of Bursty Traffic

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that certain types of telephone services can by their nature generate very large volumes of calls over comparatively short periods of time;
- that the intensity of call traffic can in some cases be so severe as to risk overloading telephone networks, which in extreme cases could lead to escalation into major network failure;
- that avoidance of such network failure is regarded as a matter of strategic national importance;
- that bursty traffic generally occurs with calls to non-geographic numbers, and the ODTR has commenced allocation of non-geographic numbers to new service providers;
- that some mechanism is required whereby all networks at risk can identify traffic which is potentially bursty in nature, allowing implementation of the necessary protective measures;
- that currently services which are potential generators of bursty traffic are allocated telephone numbers commencing with the digit 8. Network operators are therefore able to take special precautions when such numbers are dialled and overload can thus be avoided;
- that it is planned within the overall development of the numbering plan to re-allocate these numbers, as the reservation of all numbers beginning with 8 for this purpose is inefficient;

and taking into account

- that the telephone network most adversely affected by bursty traffic might not be the network of the service provider carrying the service responsible for the sudden traffic bursts;
- that the implemented solution must be agreeable to all network operators and service providers who might be affected;

.../

recommends

1. that the bursty traffic should be identified in the same way as before, but using the leading digits 71 instead of just 8 i.e. the full number becomes: Service code + 71 + (4-digits)⁹;
 2. that blocks of 100 numbers beginning with these digits should be allocated to service providers and network operators for use with services whose traffic can be characterised as bursty (ensuring 100 blocks are available, per service)¹⁰;
 3. that network operators and service providers should be required to make all efforts to ensure that traffic of a bursty nature is confined to the appropriate numbers;
 4. that the ODTR should specify sanctions to be taken against users/customers who stimulate bursty traffic on number ranges other than the 71 range without consultation and agreement by their access network providers;
 5. that the ODTR should draft a set of “Numbering Conventions” and the above sub-recommendations should be included in those Numbering Conventions;
 6. that the ODTR should include a condition in the licences of network operators and service providers requiring their compliance with the Numbering Conventions.
-

⁹ This releases all numbers commencing with 8 for other use. Furthermore, the digit 1 within this digit pair has no accompanying alphanumeric characters on normal keypads, rendering telephone numbers containing it less valuable for mnemonic purposes.

¹⁰ This block size could be changed, at ODTR discretion, thus correspondingly altering the available number of blocks.

TFN Recommendation 8 – Adjustment of Geographic Areas

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

considering

- that the Irish geographic numbering system has developed over many years of practical use;
- that the plan uses a distinctive sub-NDC area code for each individual geographic region that is treated as a separate entity. These individually coded and minimum-sized areas, whose boundaries are defined in document ODTR 98/42, are known as the minimum numbering areas;
- that maps defining existing boundaries of the minimum numbering areas are now available for inspection in ODTR 98/42;
- that some future detailed boundary changes and map changes are inevitable as new developments occur;
- that each operator is free to aggregate minimum numbering areas into its own desired arrangement for charging purposes;

and taking into account

- that the minimum numbering areas will be used as the basis for the introduction of inter-operator Number Portability and Location Portability in Ireland¹¹;

recommends

1. that the existing minimum numbering areas should all remain unchanged, unless or until over-riding considerations arise in the future to change this position;
2. that the boundaries of these areas in the new multi-operator environment shall be defined for future purposes by the then current versions of maps which are now under control of the ODTR and described in document ODTR 98/42.

¹¹ What is foreseen is that a subscriber moving within his/her minimum numbering area will be allowed to retain his/her full telephone number subject to agreement only of his/her network services provider in the new location. Movement outside the minimum area will generally involve a number change.

TFN Position Paper 1 – Option A versus Option B⁺

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

having considered

1. that the ODTR's consultation exercise on numbering identified two main long term numbering options for Ireland; Option A and Option B⁺;
2. that in the outcome of the consultation as described in document D2/98, Option B⁺ was favoured, but it was determined to keep both options open at present;
3. that there is still a considerable degree of free capacity in most parts of the Irish Numbering Plan;
4. that number changes are sometimes necessary to ensure adequate future number capacity;
5. that new emerging developments¹² make the future demand for numbers, and especially non-geographic numbers, very uncertain;
6. that there must be regard to new and emerging services – number decisions should not only take account of today's services;
7. that the recovery period for allocated number ranges can span several years whereas the need for new codes may arise very quickly in the future;

and having taking into account

8. that extension of number length is no longer perceived to have a major negative impact on users;
9. that number changes themselves do have a major impact – and more so on users than on network operators;
10. that users expect there to be offsetting benefits arising from a number change;
11. that users need a reasonably long period of notice (e.g. up to 2 years) to prepare for major number changes; this reduces the impact on users);
12. that numbering options should not be closed off before necessary, in order to be well positioned to cater for future developments;
13. that uniform number lengths and closure of the numbering scheme, both being features of Option B⁺, may go together, but neither is a pre-requisite for the other; (*Note: ODTR policy is now to move towards full uniform number length in any situation where number changes must occur*);

¹² e.g. Internet developments, multimedia, UMTS and other broadband technologies, convergence of media and of technologies etc.

Now adopts the following positions

14. The current rapid developments in multimedia, broadband communications and Internet/IP technologies, as well as trends towards convergence (among others), make realistic future estimates of demand for non-geographic numbers very difficult to determine at present;
15. For the same reason, and because of the amount of disruption which closure of the Numbering Plan would cause, there remains insufficient consensus within the TFN on any change of approach towards Option B⁺ at present [*Note: this is consistent with item 2, above*];
16. The TFN therefore believes that continuance with the present approach of meeting demand as it arises is best for the immediate future. In the meantime, a steady move towards uniform 9-digit number lengths as changes occur, should continue.

TFN Position Paper 2 - Recovery of 7X range of numbers

The ODTR Task Force on Numbering,

having considered

1. that Decision Notice D2/98:
 - 1.1. noted the strong viewpoint that the 8X range of numbers is, on its own, inadequate to provide a sufficient future supply of distinctive non-geographic NDCs;
 - 1.2. concluded the 7X range should be recovered for non-geographic use, if Option B⁺ is selected;
 - 1.3. believed there could be a good case for recovering 7X even if Option A is picked;
1. that extra non-geographic capacity would allow construction of a logical numbering scheme, whereas restriction to use of the existing 8X codes may result in a poor structure;
2. that the main drawback to recovery is that current 7X users in the North-West are impacted, with some possible effect also on 9X users¹³;
3. that the TFN considers numbering options should not be closed off before necessary, in order to keep Ireland well positioned to cater for future developments¹⁴;
4. that a consequence of the TFN viewpoint in item 3 above is that the 3X range cannot be used for non-geographic services¹⁵;
5. that it could take up to 4 years to recover 7X numbers, from the point at which a recovery decision is made;
6. that the disruption and cost to end users can be reduced by giving longer advanced notice of number changes;

and having taking into account

1. that the 07 area faces some potential number changes in any case in the interim period ahead (as described in the consultation document);
2. that amalgamation of current 07 and 09 areas has some practical advantages, due to their low population densities;
3. that on the one hand there are several million numbers available for non-geographic purposes in the 8X range, while on the other hand useful 8X codes are fast running out;
4. that the area where industry expects large non-geographic growth to occur is in new advanced services, which may be intensely number-hungry;

¹³ The latter impact depends on the recovery scheme selected.

¹⁴ Meeting 3 minutes, point 3.2.

¹⁵ It must be retained to prefix Dublin numbers in case Option B⁺ is selected.

Now adopts the following positions

1. There is consensus that changing the balance between non-geographic and geographic numbers within the Irish Numbering Plan, when required, is best achieved by use of the 7X range;
 2. There should be a long lead time for this process, in order to assist customers in adapting to the change;
 3. The ODTR should immediately initiate its own internal preparatory work, right up to but not including the 'commit' step;
 4. Before a final decision is made on this issue, there should be a public consultation on the matter.
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Annex 3. Terms of Reference for Task Force on Numbering (TFN)

Each member of the Task Force on Numbering (hereafter the TFN) shall respect the following guidelines and is expected to carry out the listed tasks as an independent expert and not as a representative of his/her own organisation.

1. The basic function of the TFN is to examine the issues listed in Annex 4 and then provide its recommendations to the ODTR, having due regard to the overall development of an Irish numbering policy.
2. The TFN will be chaired by a member of the ODTR.
3. The ODTR will also provide a Secretary, who will be responsible for producing meeting agendas, and for noting of minutes, decisions and actions. The Secretary will be responsible for providing working papers, as necessary, to the TFN members.
4. The other TFN members will be invited representatives of the telecommunications industry and telecommunications consumers.
5. In order to ensure as compact a group as possible each participating organisation will be limited to one representative, with the exception of ODTR which will additionally provide the chairman and secretariat, and Telecom Eireann which may provide two representatives¹⁶.
6. At its first meeting the TFN shall agree its deadline for accomplishment of all prescribed tasks, as well as setting down a provisional set of 3 or 4 additional meeting dates and venues.
7. The TFN shall agree a set of short-term issues, based on the initial set of time-critical issues proposed by the ODTR, upon which it will report within a maximum of 1 month. It shall provide its conclusions upon the remaining issues presented to it within a further period of 2 months.
8. The set of all issues to be tackled, with each provisionally identified as being for short or longer-term consideration, is as listed in Annex 4.
9. The membership of the TFN may be temporarily expanded to include specialist expertise for individual meetings or tasks, at the Chairman's discretion.

¹⁶ *It is anticipated that the TFN will place a greater burden on Telecom Eireann, as the incumbent, than on other participants, considering that much historical and/or (Irish) PSTN-specific background knowledge resides in that company. It is therefore especially important to ensure TE presence at TFN meetings is adequate for this.*

Annex 4: Issues to be Tackled by the Task Force on Numbering (TFN)

<i>TASK OR ISSUE</i>		<i>SHORT/LONGER TERM (S/L)</i>	<i>D2/98 REFS: FIG 6.2 AND:</i>
1	Consider and advise the ODTR on maximum charging limits for Freephone, shared costs, personal numbering and universal access services.	S	4.7
2	Consider and advise the ODTR on protection measures against excessive charging for Premium Rate Services.	L	4.7
3	Consider and advise on ODTR proposals for dealing with “bursty” traffic	S	4.4
4	Consider whether any of the current minimum numbering areas should be adjusted or (geographically) re-defined	L	4.2
5	Examine how the ODTR might best allocate directory assistance codes	S	4.10
6	Consider the implications and options for moving Premium Rate services to the 900 number range	S	4.5
7	Make an assessment of long-term demand for numbers; examine the benefits and drawbacks of Option B ⁺ for users; and make appropriate recommendations to the Director	L	3.2
8	Examine and advise on the value of recovering the 7X range of numbers for use by non-geographic services (in conjunction with the 8X range), even if Option B ⁺ is not selected.	S	3.4

Note: The above task descriptions are in accordance with Decision Notice D2/98 “Numbering in Ireland for The 21st Century”. The references quoted are to Section numbers or to Figure 6.2, within D2/98.