



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

# **Preliminary Consultation 15/31**

## **Selective Call Barring**

Submissions received

Submissions to Consultation Document 15/31

**Reference:** ComReg 15/54

**Version:** Final

**Date:** 16/06/2015

## **Legal Disclaimer**

This Response to Consultation is not a binding legal document and also does not contain legal, commercial, financial, technical or other advice. The Commission for Communications Regulation is not bound by it, nor does it necessarily set out the Commission's final or definitive position on particular matters. To the extent that there might be any inconsistency between the contents of this document and the due exercise by it of its functions and powers, and the carrying out by it of its duties and the achievement of relevant objectives under law, such contents are without prejudice to the legal position of the Commission for Communications Regulation. Inappropriate reliance ought not therefore to be placed on the contents of this document.

# Content

Section	Page
1. BT Ireland: .....	4
2. Eircom/Meteor.....	9
3. Three .....	19
4. UPC .....	28
5. Vodafone .....	36
6. Zamano.....	40

## 1. BT Ireland:

### BT Communications Ireland Limited ['BT'] response to ComReg Consultation:-

#### Preliminary Consultation – Selective Call Barring

#### Issue 1 – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015

#### 1.0 Introduction

We welcome this preliminary consultation into selective call barring and have addressed our response directly to your questions.

#### 1.1

#### 1.2 2.0 Response to the Detailed Questions

**Q. 1 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.1 We agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs. However the availability of these facilities must also balance with the reasonableness of networks and operators being able support the facilities.

**Q. 2 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.2 We agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers. For example it would be inappropriate to allow children access to adult services plus there are numerous scenarios where access to services such as international numbers is barred to prevent unexpected and potentially high costs to the bill payer. The barring of these services is widely available today and users are generally aware of their availability. However, as in our

response to question 1 the barring of calls must also align with the ability of networks and operators to support these facilities.

**Q. 3 Do you agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes)? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.3 BT has no comment on the operation of mobile services as we do not trade in that sector, however for the fixed line services we generally agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that would be desirable to allow consumers to control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes). In most cases the call barring facilities are already available, however we are aware that many current generation telephony switches do not support certain of these facilities such as discrete number or number block barring. That said the switches continue to operate at carrier quality and do an excellent job.

In addition there is no facility when using the WLR service to bar the inbound service without suspending all services on the line.

**Q. 4 (a) Does the telecommunications services provider (i.e. undertaking) to which you are subscribed provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that you avail of. OR**

A4 (a) We purchase WLR services from another undertaking and they provide service barring other than to a discrete number ranges/blocks or inbound calls.

**(b) As an undertaking do you provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that consumers may avail of.**

A4 (b) As an undertaking we provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to:

- mobile numbers - available
- national numbers - available
- International destinations - available

- premium rate numbers – available

NB: barring of discrete numbers or number ranges is not available

**Q. 5 Is there a charge to availing of any of these facilities? If so please specify what these charge are, to include details of any initial/setup charges and any subsequent recurring charges.**

Our business customers generally use private networks and or PBXs and this is managed as part of that solution without specific charges.

**Q. 6 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please provide details of any such solutions.**

A.6 In the business sector it is common practice for the Office PBX/private network to be used to manage call costs either by efficient routing procedures for inter-company calls (national and international), call barring and Directory Enquiry Access. BT Ireland does not provide mobile services hence we are not commenting on this question in relation to mobile handsets.

**Q. 7 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers, or any other discrete number range are there any impediments either financial or technical for instance, to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

A.7 As per our response to question 4b above the only facility that offers a potential challenge is to bar calls to discrete numbers and blocks.

**Q. 8 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.8 BT Ireland does not provide mobile services hence we are not commenting on this question.

**Q. 9 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.**

A.9 BT Ireland does not provide mobile services hence we are not commenting on this question.

**Q. 10 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

A.10 Please see our response to question 4b. The limitation that we currently have is the ability to bar to a discrete number or number block. As BT Ireland does not provide mobile services we are not comment on the mobile aspects of the question.

**Q. 11 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service**

A.11

**Q. 12 Should undertakings provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to discrete premium rate number ranges, for example the 1599 range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.12 As indicated in our earlier answers this may not be economically viable on legacy switch platforms. However we can and do offer call barring to number categories.

**Q. 13 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to PRS that are provided over to discrete premium rate short code ranges, for example the 59XXX range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.**

A.13. A.8 BT Ireland does not provide mobile services hence we are not commenting on this question.

**Q. 14 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, regardless of whether these PRS are accessed by placing an outgoing call or provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.**

A.14. Please see our response to question 6.

**Q. 15 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, on the basis that they are provided on discrete premium rate number and/or premium rate shortcode ranges and/or by DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available to consumers?**

**Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

A.15. Please see our earlier answers. On the issue of barring discrete numbers and number blocks we would not be able to viably provide on our legacy switches.

**Q. 16 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.**

A.16 Please see our earlier answers



## 2. Eircom/Meteor

**eircom**

**Response to ComReg Preliminary Consultation Paper:**

**Selective Call Barring**

**ComReg Document 15/31**



**8 May 2015**

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

<b>Document name</b>	eircom response to ComReg Consultation Paper 15/31
<b>Document Owner</b>	eircom Group
<b>Last updated</b>	08 May 2015
<b>Status</b>	Non-Confidential

The comments submitted to this consultation are those of eircom Ltd (eircom) and Meteor Mobile Communications Ltd. (MMC), collectively referred to throughout this response as “eircom”.

## Response to Consultation Questions

Q. 1 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs? Please give reasons to support your view.

At paragraph 15, ComReg has stated its preliminary view that measures for controlling costs should be available and that if these measures are not available, ComReg should consider requiring operators to make them available. ComReg's views should be supported by objective justification and in particular ComReg should establish whether there is a significant level of un-served demand for the barring services that are being considered here. Only then should ComReg seek to determine whether it would be necessary and proportionate to require operators to provide such services.

We welcome ComReg's reference to the need to balance the promotion of consumer protection against promotion of efficiency and competition. In the interest of efficiency, due consideration should be given to the options available to consumers. As devices have evolved it has become apparent that barring need not be available at a network level and that consumers can benefit for greater control through device level barring which is possible on both fixed and mobile devices. eircom appreciates that ComReg asks for views in respect of third party solutions in question 6. We provide examples of such solutions in our response to question 6. Barring facilities for premium and international calls are typically provided by operators and feature predominantly among the bars used by eircom. Therefore absent regulation in this area, it can be concluded that the key barring requirements have to date been delivered by the market. Nonetheless eircom would expect the demand even for international and premium rate bars to decline for the following reasons.

The decline in demand for premium rate services combined with vast improvements in the regulation of premium rate services, which have been achieved by ComReg since it took charge of premium service regulation, have reduced the need for premium service barring. The market has also experienced a decline in demand for fixed voice services which are migrating to mobile, while in general traditional voice services are being substituted by over the top services such as VoIP, particularly in the case of international calls. Furthermore content services are migrating from traditional premium SMS and MMS services to (OTT) applications.

Nonetheless, eircom intends to continue to provide the suite of fixed barring services that it currently provides regardless of the current USO obligations. In light of this

we do not consider it necessary to retain the call barring obligations under the Universal Service Obligation (USO).

The above factors call into question the proportionality of any proposal to mandate additional barring facilities in declining markets, while the fragmented nature of these markets means that the barring of circuit switched calls or indeed SMS is becoming less relevant. This must be taken into account in any related cost benefit analysis as part of a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA).

Q. 2 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers? Please give reasons to support your view.

---

eircom agrees that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain services. eircom contends that such controls are already available to consumers. As outlined in response to question 1, access to premium, international and adult services can no longer be fully controlled though the activation of barring facilities on the access network, due to the fact that the data layer which is typically provided as part of a voice package, will enable OTT access to each of service types that ComReg is considering. Such access can only be controlled at a device level and the applications market has delivered a myriad of low cost and often free barring applications for fixed and mobile devices. eircom recognises that barring may be sought to avoid unintended spend as well as preventing access to certain number ranges and if there were no other way to bar traditional circuit switched calls, ComReg might be justified in seeking to impose barring obligations. However device level applications address both traditional and OTT access and this questions the justification for and proportionality of network level barring obligations.

While applications offer the possibility of having specific bars for fixed and mobile numbers, given the growth in the number of bundles that offer inclusive and often unlimited calls to fixed and mobile numbers with no distinction being made between the two, the demand for barring such usage is likely to be in decline. Furthermore, in combination with the growth in all inclusive national fixed price plans, local and trunk call pricing distinctions are on the decline. In the case of mobile subscriptions, such barring is of no relevance, given that mobile operators apply all Ireland call bundles and rates.

Q. 3 Do you agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes)? Please give reasons to support your view.

Any service provider seeking to offer premium adult services must use numbers from the 1598 and 1599 voice ranges or the 58XXX and 59XXX SMS ranges which operate behind robust access controls. The fixed and mobile operators actively engaged ComReg and RegTel<sup>1</sup> in advance of the introduction of these ranges with a view to ensuring that robust controls were put in place to prevent under age access. Shortly after these ranges were designated for adult services, some operators visited a service provider that was trialing real-time validation<sup>2</sup> and subsequently informed the decision by RegTel to reject this method of establishing the age of callers seeking to avail of these services, demonstrating the level of vigilance that operators exercise in the interest of protecting minors.

Services were ultimately launched on these ranges with access controls that rely on credit card based age verification<sup>3</sup> with PIN controlled access that allow consumers to fully control access to these services. This demonstrates that ample protection is already in place in respect of adult number ranges.

Q. 4 (a) Does the telecommunications services provider (i.e. undertaking) to which you are subscribed provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that you avail of. OR .  
(b) As an undertaking do you provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that consumers may avail of.

eircom provides its fixed customers with facilities to bar outgoing calls to mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations and premium rate numbers. Meteor and eMobile customers have the option of barring voice calls to premium and international numbers.

We note that question 4 (a) seeks to solicit information from end users. ComReg cannot expect to get comprehensive or even representative information from such a limited call from input. This highlights the need for ComReg to conduct the

---

<sup>1</sup> The former Regulator of premium rate services.

<sup>2</sup> This sought to establish that the caller was over 18 by observing the pitch of voice, the responses to various questions with respect to date of birth, and the demeanour of the caller.

necessary consumer research to establish not only the current use of call barring but more importantly to identify whether there is any significant level of un-served need for call barring.

<sup>33</sup> Whereby credit card details are initially sought from prospective users of adult services. The credit card details are validated with the credit card company e.g. through a transaction. Credit card ownership is used as evidence that the applicant is over 18. The applicant is then provided with a PIN which can be used when access the services of that service provider thereafter.

Q. 5 Is there a charge to availing of any of these facilities? If so please specify what these charge are, to include details of any initial/setup charges and any subsequent recurring charges.

---

eircom's call barring charges are as follows:

Barring Type	Charge (Euro Ex VAT)	
	Setup	Monthly
Temporary Off Service	20.32	
Outward Service Barred	20.32	4.14
Inward Service Barred	20.32	2.76
PRS+ISD+XCH+STD Barred	20.32	2.76
PRS+ISD+XCH Barred	20.32	2.76
PRS+ISD Barred	20.32	2.76
PRS + Mobile Barred	20.32	2.76
PRS Barred	Free	Free
PRS (Premium Rate Service), ISD (International Direct Dial), XCH(Cross Channel), STD (Inland Trunk).		

There is no charge for utilising Meteor or eMobile call barring.

Q. 6 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please provide details of any such solutions.

As mentioned above, there is a wide selection of mobile phone barring applications available. The following links are provided by way of example:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.anttek.callconfirm&hl=en>

<https://www.mobileguardian.com/features-block-contacts>

<http://www.phonesheriff.com/parental.html>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wsandroid.suite&hl=en>

Notably these applications extend beyond traditional barring facilities by addressing OTT services.

Device based solutions are less common among fixed telephony devices. This in itself may be a reflection of the lesser demand for such facilities. Nonetheless, there are some smart landline devices that offer barring facilities. The Panasonic KX-PRX120<sup>3</sup> is an example which demonstrates that the device market is able to deliver a solution.

Q. 7 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers, or any other discrete number range are there any impediments either financial or technical for instance, to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

eircom currently provides a comprehensive set of call-barring services to customers of PSTN & ISDN voice services. These barring services are offered using the feature set in the Ericsson and Alcatel Lucent PSTN/ISDN voice switches in eircom's network. It must be noted that the current range of services available in those switches was already extended to facilitate market liberalisation and new market entrants and all available barring categories are now in use. eircom is committed to continuing to support the current level of barring services offered, and will include these products on any future releases of BSS (Billing & Service Support) software

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.panasonicstore.ie/products.html/accessories/dect-phone/kx-prx120-single-dectphone-with-smart-features>

that may be required. However, any further extension of barring categories is not possible in these switches, as the voice switching platforms have been closed for further software development by the vendors for a number of years.

If extended call barring requirements were mandated, this would require the accelerated replacement of elements of the legacy PSTN & ISDN networks. This would be a very substantial commitment of capital investment for what are legacy networks with declining use which would not appear to eircom to be proportionate. Replacement of PSTN & ISDN networks by next generation networks using currently available VOIP technology would require build-out of Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Broadband to 100% of customers. Fibre based access would be required in order to support VOIP on long lines outside the reach of DSL technologies. It should be noted that eircom does not currently plan to retire its PSTN & ISDN networks until a next generation access solution is in place nationally. In short it would be disproportionate to mandate additional call barring options on eircom.

In the case of our mobile offerings, the implementation of the additional barring capabilities addressed in the consultation would also involve significant investment, if feasible at all. For instance the barring of premium SMS has historically proven to be infeasible for all mobile operators due to limitation on SMS vendor solutions which were initially developed in the context of SMS being a peripheral mobile service feature. Premium SMS emerged long after SMS itself became generally available. While more recent technical developments may address some of the obstacles faced by industry, assessment of any possible solution would alone involve extensive analysis, demanding significant resource. SMS generally is in rapid decline with premium SMS declining even more rapidly. Therefore there is an onus on ComReg to analyse the premium SMS market trends both with respect to usage and compliant volumes and the positive impact of ComReg's heightened enforcement activity, before it can seek to justify premium SMS barring.

Q. 8 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please give reasons to support your view.

---

In response to question 1 we referred to the fact that the regulation of premium services in Ireland has improved dramatically since ComReg took charge. Prior to this the market was already experiencing a dramatic decline in premium service usage as ComReg is aware and this decline has continued unabated. A key element of ComReg's regulation of premium services is the robust statutory footing which empowers ComReg to take enforcement action which was not available to



RegTel. Furthermore, ComReg has introduced improvements in price transparency particularly for subscription services. Through measures such as the double opt-in for subscription services, customers have been presented with a purchasing experience more akin to that provided through reputable on-line stores, providing comprehensive information about purchases in advance, before securing express acceptance of the service and its associated conditions.

While eircom does not offer any Direct Carrier Bill (DCB) services, we understand that these services operate to a model that closely resembles that of on-line stores.

With the robust regulation that is now in place and the demand for these services in decline, coupled with technical constraints and the potential for any new requirement resulting in significant cost to the industry (which in a competitive market would ultimately be reflected in higher costs to consumers), ComReg needs to carefully consider the proportionality of any proposal to mandate additional barring facilities. In doing so ComReg would need to firstly research barring from a consumer perspective with a view to establishing what if any consumer benefits might accrue from the proposals.

Q. 9 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.

Please refer to the response to question 6.

Q. 10 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

As stated in response to question 8 eircom does not offer any DCB services. With regard to barring premium SMS or premium MMS, please refer to the response to question 7.

Q. 11 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service

eircom does not currently provide such facilities.

Q. 12 Should undertakings provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to discrete premium rate number ranges, for example the 1599 range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.

Please refer to the response to question 3.

Q. 13 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to PRS that are provided over to discrete premium rate shortcode ranges, for example the 59XXX range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view

Please refer to the response to question 3.

Q. 14 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, regardless of whether these PRS are accessed by placing an outgoing call or provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.

Refer to the response to question 6.

Q. 15 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, on the basis that they are provided on discrete premium rate number and/or premium rate shortcode ranges and/or by DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available to consumers? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

Please refer to the answer to question. 7.

Q. 16 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.

As outlined above any change to barring services is likely to result in significant capital expenditure, in addition there are substantial costs associated with the support and maintenance of call barring, involving core network, billing and customer care systems. For each barring feature that is offered operators face the recurring IT cost of testing these features each time a change is made to an associated service or any of the systems that support call barring.

**3. Three**

**Response to Document 15/31  
from Three**

**08 May 2015**



**Three.ie**

Three welcomes the opportunity to provide input into ComReg's preliminary consultation regarding the Proposed Measures in relation to Selective Call Barring and look forward to providing further input into the actual consultation when issued by ComReg.

The telecommunications market is a dynamic one, constantly evolving providing innovative products and services for all users to enjoy. The technological environment for electronic communications services is changing at an increased pace, and the usage of those services is changing accordingly. Most notably with the introduction of apps (software applications that run on mobile devices and tablets) they have further revolutionised the way users can use their devices. There are thousands of apps available for download with new ones constantly being developed. There are apps available that have been designed specifically to block services and a full review of the available apps should be undertaken prior to any disproportionate measures being imposed on all service providers. Further research is required which should involve engaging the app creators and device manufacturers so to understand what apps and device features are available and to know what apps and features are coming down the line

Three ultimately agrees with ComReg's intentions as to ensure that customers can control their access and cost to services, but Three believes that there are sufficient mechanisms currently available that enable customers to manage their access and costs without mandating unnecessary and unjustified requirements on all service providers. ComReg should allow the market to compete on the additional facilities that service providers offer which ultimately benefit the consumer. The telecommunications market is a competitive one where operators try to distinguish themselves in the market by providing best in class customer care services, content filtering and barring facilities. With regard to customer care services and customers' ability to manage their costs, Three offers a self-care service that provides real time rated information to customers regarding their account information. This access is readily available via the handset and therefore customers can manage their costs and spend easily. Three believes that having these type of services available would negate the need to mandate measures in relation to cost control facilities for customers. Doing so would be disproportionate, unreasonable and unjust.

In addition, ComReg's Code for Tariff Presentation requires that all pricing information must be comprehensive, accurate and accessible to ensure end-users can make informed transactional decisions. Following the amendments to the Premium Rate Services ("PRS") Code of Practice, premium rate service provider must adhere to the Double opt-in and Regulatory spend updates requirements. These requirements have already enhanced consumer awareness of the costs of PRS services. Three believes that the costs associated with DQ services should be reviewed as part of this consultation.

In relation to blocking facilities, Three already provides a level of blocking to its customers. On a subscriber level a bar can be placed to block all calls to / from all International destinations; all calls to all premium rate numbers and on a network level we can also block all calls to a single number / number range or premium number & to an international destination or range but this will block all subscribers for calling the blocked numbers. Furthermore certain handsets provide blocking capabilities and settings which allow the user to turn off data and /or remove apps downloaded on the devices so that customers can manage their costs. A full review will need to be undertaken as to the options available across each handset manufacturer and the apps that are available – some apps are free and some are chargeable.

Overall ComReg in its consultation will have to ensure that it provides a comprehensive cost benefit analysis regarding its proposals. The proposals as they currently stand would be unjustified and unreasonable.

**Q. 1 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs? Please give reasons to support your view.**

Three agrees with ComReg in that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs, however Three believes that consumers have multiple ways of doing this currently without ComReg having to mandate unnecessary requirements on service providers.

With regard to ComReg's preliminary view that *'in a fully functioning market, measures to allow consumers to control their costs should be available and, therefore, it follows that if any of these measures are not currently available to consumers then ComReg should consider requiring undertakings to make them available.'* Three believes that in a functioning market, there should be no need for general ComReg intervention on such detailed service parameters as this. If the market is functioning properly, then there's no need for additional intervention or ridged rules that restrict operators' offering to the market.

Three would question the basis behind this consultation in that has ComReg seen an increase in the number of complaints with regards to consumers ability to manage their spend?

Ultimately Three's customers have effective and easy to use cost control mechanisms readily available via their handset which does not rely upon the user having to contact anyone to assist them in controlling their costs. Three also provides usage alerts for certain services which again are sent to the user's handset directly. With regards to prepay products, it is worth pointing out that pre-pay is a product which is completely designed to facilitate cost-control, and it should eliminate the need for regulated cost control measures.

Three believes that the costs associated with DQ services should be reviewed as part of this consultation and how customers are informed of the significant costs of access to DQ services before the calls are connected (which service providers are obligated to provide access to but have no control over the costs). As service providers have no control over the costs incurred in order to provide access to DQ services Three believes that DQ providers should be advising customers before the call is connected of the potential maximum cost of the call thereby enabling consumers make informed decisions as to the usage of the service. Consumers who are price conscious could choose to use alternative means to access the information they require for example some may use their data allowance to access the information they require over the web, which means that unless they are out of bundle i.e. exceeded their allowance for the period that they would not pay any additional costs for this service. Three's data plans are the most valuable in the market, see [three.ie](http://three.ie) for further information on these plans.

With regard to ComReg's preliminary view that consumers should be able to decide, either for themselves or for their children, that access to certain number ranges for example the 1598 and 1599 access codes and 58XXX and 59XXX short codes be blocked/restricted, Three has been advocating for years with RegTel and ComReg that prior to the launch of any adult services on these number ranges that there should be robust age verification systems required, this would negate the need to block these number ranges. Having effective and robust age verification systems in place for adult type services would ensure that inappropriate content is not accessed by minors.

In 2011, ComReg consulted on the premium rate code of practice and one of the questions back then was **Q. 28. What are your views on the establishment of an Age Verification Framework for ensuring appropriate access to Adult (including Sexual) Entertainment Services?** Three in its response fully supports the establishment of an Age Verification Framework for ensuring appropriate access to Adult (including Sexual Entertainment Services). Three proposes that ComReg engage fully with industry to (i) understand the Age Verification mechanisms that would be employed for age verifying consumers for adult content for example PIN Controls and (ii) produce a content classification framework which would be consistent with standards used in other media that SP's would be required to adhere to.

Three, as a signatory of the European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children ("EU Framework") fully adheres with its requirements and works with industry across Europe to ensure that facilities are available to protect children from inappropriate content and services. The framework is a self-regulatory initiative of the European mobile industry and it contains recommendations designed to ensure that younger teenagers and children can safely access content on their mobile phones. Three would support ComReg's establishment of an Age Verification framework and propose that ComReg also introduce a classification framework, this is the gap that needs to be filled to ensure no minor is subject to inappropriate content whilst giving adults the freedom of choice they are entitled to.

**Q. 2 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers? Please give reasons to support your view.**

Three agrees with ComReg's intention that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers, but disagrees with ComReg proposing to mandate this disproportionate requirement across all service providers considering the demand for same is non-existent. Three believes that there is sufficient competition in the market to drive barring facilities.

With regard to child protection services, Three invested in a product called KidSafe a number of years ago so to provide parents with an ability to control the contacts their children had, including the ability to block access to PRS and effectively provided an ability to block access to any service that was not approved. Unfortunately due to the lack of uptake of this free service, the service itself fell by the wayside. Restricting access to these services was not the priority of the parents it was that their child had the latest handset. Therefore mandating a requirement in this regard without sufficient demand for same would be unreasonable and disproportionate. Three believes that

there are a number of apps that can be loaded on the child's handset which would provide the blocking facility should it not be fulfilled by the service provider.

**Q. 3 Do you agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes)? Please give reasons to support your view.**

Three does not agree that the range of facilities listed are necessary and there is not justified demand for same.

Three believes that ComReg should consider including in its further consultation Age Verification processes and the introduction of an appropriate Content Classification Framework.

**Q. 4 (a) Does the telecommunications services provider (i.e. undertaking) to which you are subscribed provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that you avail of. OR 14 -**

Three provides the following barring facilities whereby on a subscriber level a bar can be placed on the HLR to block all calls to and from all International destinations and all calls to all premium rate numbers; and on a network level Three can also block all calls to a single number and/or number range or a premium number and can block calls to an international number or range but this will block all subscribers for calling the blocked numbers.

Hutchison Three (Services) Limited implemented a service called BlockIT which provides a blocking facility for inbound voice and SMS services. Hutchison Three (Services) Limited have changed the vendor of the BlockIT service and therefore a cost benefit analysis will have to be carried out on whether the service in its current form should be amended so to provide for the services not currently captured by the BlockIT service.

Three believes that in relation to providing blocking services of app's that customers have the ability to manage what apps are available on their handsets (i.e. as all they have to do is remove it from their handset). Customers can make informed decisions and not download any apps they don't want to have access to. Apps are in the control of the user.

As detailed by ComReg in the preliminary consultation there are certain cost control measures provided for by the Handset itself whereby the user is required to adjust the



settings on their handset in order to bar incoming calls while roaming abroad, furthermore customers can turn off data services and therefore they can control their costs as required.

In relation to ComReg stating that some customers may be experiencing bill shock in respect of domestic data charges. Three would argue that tariff plans are so competitive now that most plans come with inclusive calls volumes, text volumes and data volumes. Three customers currently are provided with All You Can Eat data and has the most competitive prepay offer in the market see [www.three.ie](http://www.three.ie)

**(b) As an undertaking do you provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that consumers may avail of.**

See response to (a) above.

**Q. 5 Is there a charge to availing of any of these facilities? If so please specify what these charge are, to include details of any initial/setup charges and any subsequent recurring charges.**

Three has not charged for this facility to-date.

**Q. 6 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please provide details of any such solutions.**

Different Handsets allow different restrictions e.g. Samsung A5 will allow all outgoing calls, International calls & International calls except national calls to be disabled. Also all incoming calls and incoming calls when roaming can be disabled. The apps market facilitates a variety of blocking apps, however further research is required in this area and can be provided as part of the response to ComReg's consultation.

**Q. 7 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers, or any other discrete number range are there any impediments either financial or technical for instance, to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

N/A

**Q. 8 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please give reasons to support your view.**

Three can block access to a single premium rate service for all customers. This has been done in the past due to fraud or at the request of ComReg.

**Q. 9 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions. –**

Further research is required as to the services available and Three will aim to gain information from its manufacturers regarding handset settings and will engage the products team to understand if any apps are available and suitable.

**Q. 10 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

N/A

**Q. 11 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service**

Three has commenced an investigation into the costs associated with the facilitation of barring services offered. Three aims to have this detail for the consultation.

**Q. 12 Should undertakings provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to discrete premium rate number ranges, for example the 1599 range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.**

As above Three can bar all calls / texts to a single number or range.

**Q. 13 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to PRS that are provided over to discrete premium rate shortcode ranges, for example the 59XXX range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.**

As detailed above, Three believes ComReg should extend the scope of this consultation so to comprehensively address adult services, ensure appropriate access to same and introduce a content classification framework.

**Q. 14 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, regardless of whether these PRS are accessed by placing an outgoing call or provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.**

See response to Q9.

**Q. 15 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, on the basis that they are provided on discrete premium rate number and/or premium rate shortcode ranges and/or by DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available to consumers? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.**

N/A

**Q. 16 For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.**

Three has commenced a comprehensive review of the costs incurred for the network development's which were implemented so to enable Three to provide the facilities referenced above. This review is complex and Three would hope to provide details of the costs in ComReg's subsequent consultation.

## 4. UPC



# **UPC Ireland Response to: ComReg 15/31 Preliminary Consultation, Selective Call Barring**

## **Introduction**

UPC Communications Ireland Limited (“UPC Ireland”) welcomes the opportunity to provide its response to ComReg on its Consultation (“the consultation”) on selective call barring.

UPC Ireland recognises the importance and desirability of enabling consumers of telecommunications services to control costs incurred in the use of those services. UPC Ireland has been to the forefront of innovation and developments

in this area and has proactively introduced call barring services on a commercial basis over 5 years ago. These services were introduced at a minimal charge, largely designed to cover implementation and administrative costs. While these services have been available for some time to UPC customers, take up has been very low and virtually non-existent in recent times (currently 2% of UPC Ireland telephony consumers). The benefit and practical use of such services has to a large extent been overtaken by greater competition and value for consumers in fixed telephony. Consumers now have access to a wide array of fixed telephony packages, a number of which include unlimited calls to many of the call types ComReg proposes to include in its selective call barring proposals i.e. National fixed lines, International and Mobile.

As such, UPC Ireland is of the view that ComReg's approach to this issue is disproportionate and out-dated.

Given market developments and the proactive nature of UPC Ireland and other telecommunications providers in Ireland, it is important that ComReg is properly guided by key legislation in this area (stated below, emphasis added) and does not retrospectively overly prescribe solutions that may now be inappropriate or disproportionate:

Communications Regulation Act, 2002 - 2011 which provides:

12(3) In carrying out its functions, the Commission shall seek to **ensure that measures taken by it are proportionate** having regard to the objectives set out in this section. 12 (2)(iii) encouraging efficient investment in infrastructure and **promoting innovation**.

**UPC Ireland response to specific questions in ComReg 15/31:**

Q. 1 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs? Please give reasons to support your view.

UPC Ireland agrees with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs however, UPC Ireland is of the view that ComReg's approach to this issue is disproportionate and out-dated. UPC Ireland consumers already have a number of means by which they can control their costs, including;

- Choice of a number of tariff plans with a wide array of unlimited and inclusive minutes across most call types i.e. (National, Mobile and International).
- Call barring facilities for an array of call types (International, Mobile, Premium) at a minimal charge (very low consumer take up, less than 2% of UPC Ireland telephony consumers).

Q. 2 Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers? Please give reasons to support your view.

UPC Ireland agrees with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers, specifically premium services, given the nature and content of some of the services offered. This service is already available to UPC Ireland consumers.

Q. 3 Do you agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes)? Please give reasons to support your view.

UPC Ireland does not agree with ComReg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges. Although UPC Ireland offers barring to many of the call types mentioned by ComReg i.e. (Mobile, International and

Premium), the take up of this facility has been very low and virtually non-existent in recent times. The benefit and practical use of such services has to a large extent been overtaken by greater competition and value for consumers in fixed telephony. Consumers now have access to a wide array of fixed telephony packages, a number of which include unlimited calls to many of the call types ComReg proposes to include in its selective call barring proposals i.e. National fixed lines, International and Mobile. As such ComReg's proposals for inclusion of these call types is of little practical use in facilitating consumers to fully control their costs.

Q. 4 (a) Does the telecommunications services provider (i.e. undertaking) to which you are subscribed provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that you avail of. OR

(b) As an undertaking do you provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that consumers may avail of.

UPC Ireland offers its customers the following call barring services;

- ALL CALLS EXCEPT 999 112 & UPC CUSTOMER SERVICES
- MOBILE PREMIUM & INTERNATIONAL CALLS
- MOBILE & INTERNATIONAL CALLS
- MOBILE & PREMIUM CALLS
- MOBILE CALLS
- PREMIUM & INTERNATIONAL CALLS
- INTERNATIONAL CALLS
- PREMIUM

Q. 5 Is there a charge to availing of any of these facilities? If so please specify what these charge are, to include details of any initial/setup charges and any subsequent recurring charges.

UPC Ireland charges consumers €3 per month plus a €30 set up charge for availing of a call barring service.

Q. 6 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please provide details of any such solutions.

UPC Ireland understands that call barring functionality is common in mobile handsets.

Q. 7 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers, or any other discrete number range are there any impediments either financial or technical for instance, to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered / offset.

UPC Ireland currently does not offer call barring to discrete number ranges. Implementation costs for barring to discrete number ranges are not available at this time.

Q. 8 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please give reasons to support your view.

As stated above, UPC Ireland agrees with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers, specifically premium services, given the nature and content of some of the services offered. This service is already available to UPC Ireland consumers.



Q. 9 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.

No comment.

Q. 10 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered / offset.

No comment.

Q. 11 For undertakings that already offer these facilities please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.

No comment.

Q. 12 Should undertakings provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to discrete premium rate number ranges, for example the 1599 range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.

As stated above, UPC Ireland agrees with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers, specifically premium services, given the nature and content of some of the services offered. This service is already available to UPC Ireland consumers. Application of this to discrete premium number ranges would need to be assessed for proportionality against the cost of implementation.

Q. 13 Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to PRS that are provided over discrete premium rate shortcode ranges, for example the 59XXX range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.

Application to discrete premium rate short codes would need to be assessed for proportionality against the cost of implementation. UPC Ireland does not have access to these costs at this time.

Q. 14 Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, regardless of whether these PRS are accessed by placing an outgoing call or provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB?

Please provide details of any such solutions.

No comment.

Q. 15 If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, on the basis that they are provided on discrete premium rate number and/or premium rate shortcode ranges and/or by DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available to consumers?

Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered / offset.

UPC Ireland has been to the forefront of innovation and developments in this area and has proactively introduced call barring services on a commercial basis for premium calls. The service currently offered does not cater for discrete number ranges. Application to discrete premium number ranges would need to be assessed for proportionality against the cost of implementation.

If ComReg mandates facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, UPC Ireland is of the view that this should only be done on the basis that operators can set commercial charges for customers

availing of the service. Regulating operator charging for this service or retrospectively regulating charges for already existing call barring services would set a very damaging precedent for industry regulation and add to the significant economic uncertainty already being experienced by operators. In particular, UPC Ireland believes it would not be consistent with ComReg's objective of encouraging efficient investment in infrastructure and promoting innovation<sup>4</sup>.

Q. 16 For undertakings that already offer these facilities please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.

UPC Ireland does not have these costs available at this time.

---

<sup>4</sup> Communications Regulation Act, 2002 – 2011 12 (2)(iii)

## **5. Vodafone**



8 May 2015

Commission for Communications Regulation  
Irish Life Centre  
Lower Abbey Street  
Freepost  
Dublin 1,

RE: Submissions to ComReg 15/31

Dear Sirs,

We refer to the Preliminary Consultation on Selective Call Barring issued by ComReg on 27 March 2015.

In accordance with Paragraph 45 we would like to submit our initial views on the questions raised by ComReg and set out in Annex 2. Vodafone is of the view that regulatory intervention in relation to the provision of selective call barring facilities is not necessary or appropriate. Vodafone would point out that there are already a number of facilities available to our consumers to allow them to control their costs for instance:-

#### 1. Vodafone Safety Net

With our Safety Net app, a customer can block numbers and filter inappropriate content from Android phones. Safety Net is a free Android app which allows customers to manage their, or their child's, phone connections. They can block calls and messages from specific contacts and disable the use of features such as the camera and the Internet. We provide an access control system that filters out inappropriate Internet content for users registered with Vodafone as under 18. Our filtering system is maintained by one of the top classification companies in the world, which assesses millions of websites. The app is available to download from the [Google Play store](#) or text SAFETYNET to 51745 from the phone you want to manage.

#### 2. Call Barring Facilities for Vodafone Fixed Customers

We currently offer our fixed customers call barring facilities subject to a monthly charge which is set out on the table in Appendix 1. The types of calls that can be blocked include mobile calls, premium rate calls, international calls, all outbound calls, all inbound calls.

#### 3. My Vodafone App

Consumers have access to "my vodafone app" which allows them to easily track their usage and to control their costs with the aim of preventing bill shock.

#### 4. Vodafone Protect

Vodafone Protect allows customers to Find, Lock & Wipe their phone for free, with further enhanced features such as Antivirus, Call & SMS filtering, App and Web Protection included in the premier package. They can easily manage these features and your account online at <http://protect.vodafone.ie>. In addition customers can set up blocked numbers both calls and texts as follows:-

#### **Vodafone Ireland Limited**

MountainView, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Ireland  
T - +353 (0)1 203 7777 W - [www.vodafone.ie](http://www.vodafone.ie)

Registered Office: MountainView, Leopardstown, Dublin 18. Registered in Ireland No. 326967  
Directors: Anne O'Leary (CEO), Nadya Bhattay (SA), Edward Traynor

➤ Call block:

A pop up will show on the mobile device and will show the mobile number and that it has been blocked. The person calling on the other end will be disconnected after three beeps, no phone ring will occur and they will not know that they have been blocked yet simply disconnected, effective immediately.

➤ Text block:

A pop up will NOT be shown on the mobile device and the person texting on the other end will not receive delivery confirmation. A customer can view blocked CALLS/SMS that they have set up in the filter log within the CALL/SMS filter feature with the Vodafone Protect app on their device.

Having considered the contents of the Preliminary Consultation issued by ComReg we have now commenced a full review of the facilities offered to customers in the area of call barring, consideration also needs to be given from a financial and technical perspective. Following this review we would then be in a position to provide a fully comprehensive response to the questions raised.

Please note we reserve our right to respond in full to any further consultation issued by ComReg in this area. In the meantime should you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Yours sincerely,



Fionnuala Power  
Legal & Compliance Manager

[Fionnuala.power@vodafone.com](mailto:Fionnuala.power@vodafone.com)

**Call barring charges**

<b>Charge</b>		<b>Connection</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
<b>Temporary off service</b>	Temporary off service	€24.58	€0.00
<b>Outward service barred</b>	Outgoing calls barred	€24.58	€4.61
<b>Freefone access</b>	Freefone access	€24.58	€3.06
<b>Inward service barred</b>	Incoming calls barred	€24.58	€3.99
<b>PRS+ISD+XCH+STD barred</b>	Premium rate , international , calls barred	€24.58	€3.99
<b>PRS+ISD+XCH barred</b>	Premium rate & calls barred	€24.58	€3.99
<b>PRS+ISD barred</b>	Premium rate & calls barred	€24.58	€3.99
<b>PRS+mobile barred</b>	Premium rate & mobile calls barred	€24.58	€3.99
<b>PRS barred</b>	Premium rate calls barred	€0.00	€0.00

## 6. Zamano

### Question 1

Do you agree with ComReg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to avail of facilities that allow them to adequately control their telecommunication costs? Please give reasons to support your view.

### Answer

We feel that these facilities are already in place for PRS with both the ComReg Code of Practice and the Consumer Rights directive making sure that consumers are only charged after giving informed consent.

Furthermore, we question the need for such a bar on PRS given the limited volume of complaints that now exist given the protections now in place for the consumer.

Mobile phone penetration rate in Ireland is over 120% with over 5 million subscriptions. Of these approx. 4.5 Million for mobile phone SIMs.

In 2014 there were only 221 complaints relating to PRS. These stats do not back up the call for a PRS barring system to be put in place. Can Comreg please clarify why it feels that such a system is required to protect consumers when consumer complaints are at such a low volume and have been continually falling?

### Question 2

Do you agree with Comreg's preliminary position that consumers should be able to control their (or their children's) access to certain types of numbers? Please give reasons to support your view.

### Answer

We feel that these facilities are already in place for PRS with both the ComReg Code of Practice and the Consumer Rights directive making sure that consumers are only charged after giving informed consent.

We note that there have been only 9 complaints relating to access of a PRS by a minor according to askcomreg.ie.



**Question 3**

Do you agree with Comreg's initial assessment of the range of facilities that could be necessary to allow consumers to fully control their costs and access to certain number ranges (for example number ranges using the 1598 and 1599 access codes)? Please give reasons to support your view.

**Answer**

With regards to PSMS on discrete number ranges. It is our understanding that while these are allocated there are no such numbers active. Also the steps that have to be taken to access the adult IVR line in Ireland would offer the consumer protection while ensuring age verification i.e. Credit card details required for access not billing.

So we do not see the need for a barring of access to these number ranges?

For PSMS as stated above both the Comreg Code of Practice and the Consumer Rights directive offer plenty of protection to consumers prior to charges being applied to their phone. We would also point to the continuing decline in PRS complaints to Comreg in 2014.

DCB is new and only starting to grow slowly. It already has to stay complaint with both the Comreg Code of Practice and the Consumer Rights directive. A barring facility such as this would only serve to stifle its growth before it has even started.

While customers should be able to control their telecommunication costs it is imperative that any action, if any, taken by Comreg do not stifle innovation, particularly in the Direct Carrier Billing (DCB) space. By introducing the controls proposed in the consultation document Comreg are potentially introducing impediments that would stifle the uptake of a new payment mechanism.

**Question 4**

(a) Does the telecommunications services provider (i.e. undertaking) to which you are subscribed provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that you avail of.

(b) As an undertaking do you provide facilities to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations,

premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please specify which, if any, of these call barring services that consumers may avail of.

**Answer**

N/A

**Question 5**

Is there a charge to availing of any of these facilities? If so please specify what these charge are, to include details of any initial/setup charges and any subsequent recurring charges.

**Answer**

N/A

**Question 6**

Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers or any other discrete number range? Please provide details of any such solutions.

**Answer**

Android phones will prompt you when attempt to text a PRS.

**Question 7**

If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar outgoing calls to all or any of the following: mobile numbers, national numbers, International destinations, premium rate numbers, or any other discrete number range are there any impediments either financial or technical for instance, to making these facilities available? Please provide details to support your answer to include details of any investment costs that would be

required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

**Answer**

N/A

**Question 8**

Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please give reasons to support your view.

**Answer**

No. We feel that these facilities are already in place for PRS with both the Comreg Code of Practice and the Consumer Rights directive making sure that consumers are only charged after giving informed consent.

Also Comreg's consultation mentions 50XXX and 51XXX short codes. These would need to be made exempt from any barring as these are mainly used for marketing purposes and are not governed by the COP.

**Question 9**

Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.

**Answer**

Android phones will prompt you when attempt to text a PRS.

**Question 10**

If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to all PRS, including those provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available? Please

provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

**Answer**

N/A

**Question 11**

For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service

**Answer**

N/A

**Question 12**

Should undertakings provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar outgoing calls to discrete premium rate number ranges, for example the 1599 range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.

**Answer**

No. We feel the current system of verification in place as requested by Comreg offers an adequate facility to the consumer along with both the COP and Consumer Rights Directive.

**Question 13**

Should MNOs provide facilities that would allow consumers to bar access to PRS that are provided over to discrete premium rate short code ranges, for example the 59XXX range set aside solely for adult services of a sexual nature? Please give reasons to support your view.

**Answer**

No. We are not aware if these short codes are in use. And feel the current system of verification in place as requested by Comreg offers an adequate facility to the consumer along with both the COP and Consumer Rights Directive.

#### **Question 14**

Are you aware of any third-party solutions, such as handset settings or apps that would allow consumers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, regardless of whether these PRS are accessed by placing an outgoing call or provided by PSMS/PMMS and DCB? Please provide details of any such solutions.

#### **Answer**

Android phones will prompt you when attempt to text a PRS.

#### **Question 15**

If, as an undertaking, you do not currently offer facilities that would allow subscribers to bar access to certain categories of PRS, on the basis that they are provided on discrete premium rate number and/or premium rate shortcode ranges and/or by DCB, are there any impediments to making these facilities available to consumers? Please provide details to support your answer to include verified details of any investment costs that would be required to make such facilities available and how such costs might be recovered/offset.

#### **Answer**

N/A

#### **Question 16**

For undertakings that already offer these facilities, please provide details of the actual cost to you in providing this service.

#### **Answer**

N/A