

# Ofcom Number Change Regulations

## What are the changes and why are they being made?

Consumers expressed a range of concerns to Ofcom about 08xx and 09xx numbers, which included a lack of clarity about call pricing and excessively long call waiting times. So, over the last few years, Ofcom has been addressing these concerns, and looking at solutions which would improve price transparency and strengthen consumer protection.

Most importantly, Ofcom wanted to make sure that consumers were:

- Better informed about the price of calls.
- Able to complain about excessively long call waiting times.
- Better protected from scams.

As a result of this, the number ranges that have been or will be affected are:

- 0871/0872/0873
- 09
- 0870

A new 03 number range has also been introduced by Ofcom, designed primarily for public sector and not-for-profit organisations.

Ofcom have now confirmed its proposals on all number ranges. So, it's now time to start thinking about whether you will keep your existing numbers or select a set of new ones.

You may find that because of the regulations some of the numbers could involve a bigger decision, but most importantly, we want to ensure that you make the right choice for your business, so if you have any further questions please get in touch with us.

With these changes you have two options:

1. Stay with your existing number
2. Move to another number range

## Confirmed Ofcom changes to 0871, 0872, 0873, and 09 numbers

From 1 August 2009, the premium-rate regulator PhonepayPlus will regulate 0871, 0872 and 0873 numbers that are charged above 5p a minute and up to 10p a minute (for BT customers).

At the same time, Ofcom will also bring 09 numbers charged at these rates (above 5p and up to 10p a minute for BT customers) within PhonepayPlus' remit.

## What is the impact on you?

Any customers wishing to hold 0871, 0872, 0873 and any 09 ranges must comply with the 11th Code of Practice and the Statement of Application. These can be viewed at [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk).

Some of the things that you must consider if you are going to use one of these numbers are as follows:

- Ensure that the content and the promotion of the service using the number complies with the Code.
- Obtain “prior permission” if you run certain “live services” (unless the type of service is exempted) and comply with additional obligations for that service.
- Consider the call waiting times as services must not be unreasonably prolonged or delayed.
- Publish pricing information wherever the number is published in printed form or on the internet.
- Ensure that services on these numbers comply with the law, do not cause harm or offence and are fair.

You must review the Code in detail in the light of services you run as each of the above has specific rules and requirements and there may be other aspects of the Code that are important for your services. This is not an exhaustive list of requirements.

Failure to comply with the Code can result in a number of consequences including but not limited to fines, barring of services, and prohibitions in running certain services.

Please note that we cannot provide legal advice to our customers. We would like to stress that customers should seek their own legal advice regarding compliance. PhonepayPlus has a dedicated team to help with this, and you can contact them at: [compliance@phonepayplus.org.uk](mailto:compliance@phonepayplus.org.uk).

## Next steps?

1. Continue using your number (in full knowledge of the new regulations)
2. Move to another number range

## 0870 Changes

Ofcom have announced the changes to 0870 numbers that will be valid from 1 August 2009. The regulation is designed to provide customers with better protection over calls and pricing transparency issues.

1. 0870 calls will be aligned to the cost of a geographic national rate call.
2. Revenue share will stop from 1 August 2009.

A termination charge will be introduced which you will have to pay. With this in mind, we encourage you to plan for what impact this will have on your business.



## What do you need to think about?

Changing your numbers can be a big decision to make, as there will be a lot you will need to think about. We understand that you will have your own reasons to change (or not) but to offer some assistance, we have provided you with a few points to consider:

**1. The cost of change**

The cost of changing collateral and informing your customers.

It may actually make commercial sense not to change or to manage change over time.

**2. The right choice of number**

As well as the different costs to you for different number ranges, it is important to weigh up the impact this may have on the calling party.

**3. Managing change effectively**

It's important to inform your customers in enough time and make them aware of a new number to call.

Building an effective transition program will ensure the changes are as smooth as possible.

You may also need to think about what needs to be changed. To assist, we have provided you with a checklist of possible changes:

- Stationary – pens, paper, compliment slips etc
- Business cards
- Website/online material
- Fleet of vehicles
- Email signatures
- Branded merchandise
- Advertising – posters/press/banners
- Voice recordings
- Leaflets/company brochures
- Internal communications
- Online/printed directories
- Signage
- Branded clothing

We want to make sure that you make the right decision for your business and your customers, so, if you need any more information, please contact your Vialtus Solutions Account Manager.