

Press Release

For immediate release 24 September 2010

Panel welcomes £2m fines for silent call offenders

Commenting on the statement today on enforcement action on silent calls from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), Communications Consumer Panel Chair, Anna Bradley said:

“BIS has listened to our advice and we are delighted that Ofcom can now fine companies up to £2 million for making persistent silent calls. Consumers will now be better protected from the anxiety and annoyance that silent calls bring.”

Ends

CONTACTS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information.

The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

For a copy of the Communications Consumer Panel response *Tackling abandoned and silent calls* go to our website www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/telecommunications/silent-calls

What are silent calls?

The consultation explains that silent and abandoned calls are usually made to consumers by companies using automated calling systems (ACS), also known as predictive diallers. These are essentially machines that can automatically dial telephone numbers, generating outbound calls to consumers. If the called party answers the call, then the dialler automatically transfers the call to an available agent. If no agent is available, then the call is disconnected, which results in the consumer receiving an abandoned call. If no recorded information message is played then the call will be silent. Ofcom's proposals will mean that if this happens that subsequent calls within a 24-hour period can only be made with a live operator.