

## **Defra's Progress Report on Customer Service Lines**

**March 2015**

### **Summary of Department's Numbering Policy**

**1) Comments re how Defra complies with the guidance, including whether Defra feels they have already implemented the guidance for its lines.**

Defra's customer service lines numbering policy version 1.0 was issued in July 2014. It aims to ensure the Core department, and all bodies within the organisational hierarchy, continue to comply with the HMG Customer Service Lines guidance. The policy states that when either creating a new customer service line or making changes to the number of an existing customer service line, consideration must be made to ensure that Defra fully complies with the HMG and Ofcom guidance. Standard geographic numbers (01, 02) are the preferred solution, or else the 03 non-geographic option. If a new Defra customer service line is being set up, where the primary number offered will not have a prefix of 01, 02 or 03, this will be considered an exception. In such cases, approval will need to be obtained from the Minister for Civil Society, via Defra's internal exceptions route.

Defra has fully implemented the guidance for its customer service lines, with the exception of the Ofcom Revised Regime, to be implemented by June 2015, which requires actual service charges to be specified, wherever 0844/0845/0870 numbers are advertised or presented. By June 2015, Defra intends to have only one active 0844/0845/0870 number. This is the Environment Agency Floodline number, which will continue to run within a dual numbering scenario. Steps are being taken now to ensure the service charges are correctly advertised by the June 2015 deadline.

**2) Comments re prefixes that do not comply with the guidance, including a statement as to when Defra aims to complete implementation of the guidance**

Defra has 12 x 0844/0845/0870 lines which are currently operated under a dual numbering system, whereby an 03 option is also provided. Where dual numbering systems exist, the 03 number is always advertised as the primary contact number. Current online content has been updated (e.g. gov.uk, internet/intranet sites, document templates, IT applications, etc) and all new publications will reflect the new numbering system. Some existing material has also been updated and the remainder will be amended as reprints are ordered. Taking all of this into account, Defra is compliant with the CSL guidance.

**3) Comments regarding call volume data:**

Within the reporting period, Defra has operated 70 customer service line numbers across its organisational hierarchy, via a number of telephony suppliers. Defra has obtained call volume data for 17 of the main lines. An analysis of the available data shows that in December 2014, approximately 5% (2,847 of 58,332) of calls were to an 08\* customer service line number (which existed within a dual numbering system). By February 2015, the number of calls to an 08\* customer service line number had fallen to approximately 2% (1,613 of 72,082 calls).

**4) Comments regarding Value Add Services:**

Defra has 4 x 09 “value-add” customer service lines which are run by the Environment Agency and were created in response to customer demand from anglers and boat users to inform them of river conditions. These lines comply with the principles set out on revenue generation in the HMG Guidance for Customer Service Lines document. The use of these numbers has declined in recent years because the information is clearly publicised as being available free online, via gov.uk. Consequently, the closure of all four lines is in the early planning stage and anticipated to be completed by October 2016.

**Departmental Customer Service Lines: Telephone Number Prefixes**

Lines	0843/0844/0845	Dual Numbering with 0843/4/5	03	Other Geographic	0800	0870	09	Other	Lines closed
<b>GRAND TOTALS for Core Department + all public bodies within organisational hierarchy that fall within scope</b>									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	4 x 03*/0844 16 x 03*/0845	21	2	4	4 x dual numbering 03*/0870	4	Nil	4 x 0844, 18 x 0845 & 1 x 0870 closed to date.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	1 x 03*/0844 10 x 03*/0845	34	3	5	1 x dual numbering 03*/0870	4	Nil	The 08* element of 12 dual number systems have been closed (3x 0844, 6 x 0845, 3 x 0870) so that only the 03 number remains.  The closure of the 08* element of 11 of the remaining 12 numbers is in flight.

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Core Department Totals									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	3 x 0345/0845 dual numbering	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	2 x 0845 closed Summer 2014.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	3 x 0845 closed.
Public Bodies Totals									
Environment Agency (EA)									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	1 x 0344/0844 2 x 0345/0845 dual numbering	Nil	Nil	Nil	3 x dual numbering 0370/0870	4	Nil	1 x 0845 closed Summer 2014.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	2 x 0345/0845 1 x 0370/0870	3	Nil	1	Nil	4	Nil	1 x 0844 and 2 x 0870 closed February 2015.  Future closure of 1 x 0345/0845 and 1 x 0370/0870 are in discussion.
Rural Payments Agency (RPA)									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	8	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	8 x 0845 numbers closed Autumn 2014.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	9	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	One further 0345 identified.
Natural England (NE)									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	11 x 0300/0845 dual numbering	Nil	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	N/A
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0	8 x 0300/0845 dual numbering	3	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	The 8 x 0845 element of the remaining dual

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<b>2015</b>	0845 x 0								numbers are in the final stages of closure; the line closure action is with the supplier.
<b>Marine Management Organisation (MMO)</b>									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	1	1	Nil	1 x dual numbering 0300/0870	Nil	Nil	1 x 0845 closed Autumn 2014.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	2	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1 x 0870 closed December 2014.  1 x new 0191 line set up January 2015.
<b>Forestry Commission, England (FC)</b>									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1 x 0845 no longer used by FC England. Number remains in use by FC Scotland.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	No change since November 2014.
<b>Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)</b>									
<b>Total at November 2014</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	1 x 034 4/0844	4	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	3 x 0844, 5 x 0845 and 1 x 0870 closed 2014.
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	1 x 0344/0844	6	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	The 0844 element of the remaining dual number is in the final stages of closure.
<b>Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA)</b>									
<b>Total at November</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0	2 x 0300/0844 dual numbering	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1 x 0844 closed during 2014.

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<b>2014</b>	0845 x 0								
<b>Total at February 2015</b>	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	Nil	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Organisational changes have transferred the dual numbering lines to APHA.

Note: This template refers to 'Lines closed'. For dual numbering systems, where the 03 and 08 numbers are identical (apart from the second digit), 08 number ownership must be continued, in order to maintain the linked 03 number. As a result, the 08 line cannot be relinquished and fully 'closed'. Instead, a non-chargeable message instructing users to redial using an 03 prefix has been put in place.

**Revenue Generation**

**Does Defra comply with the principles set out on revenue generation in the HMG Guidance on Customer Service Lines? Yes/No**

Yes