



Communications Act 2003

2003 CHAPTER 21

PART 2

NETWORKS, SERVICES AND THE RADIO SPECTRUM

CHAPTER 1

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS AND SERVICES

General conditions: telephone numbers

56 The National Telephone Numbering Plan

- (1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to publish a document (to be known as “the National Telephone Numbering Plan”) setting out—
- (a) the numbers that they have determined to be available for allocation by them as telephone numbers;
 - (b) such restrictions as they consider appropriate on the adoption of numbers available for allocation in accordance with the plan; ^{F1}...
 - ^{F2}(ba) such requirements as they consider appropriate, for the purpose of protecting consumers, in relation to the tariff principles and maximum prices applicable to numbers so adopted or available for allocation; and]
 - (c) such restrictions as they consider appropriate on the other uses to which numbers available for allocation in accordance with the plan may be put.
- (2) It shall be OFCOM’s duty—
- (a) from time to time to review the National Telephone Numbering Plan; and
 - (b) to make any revision of that plan that they think fit in consequence of such a review;

but this duty must be performed in compliance with the requirements, so far as applicable, of section 60.

Changes to legislation: *Communications Act 2003, Section 56 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 08 May 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- (3) OFCOM must also keep such day to day records as they consider appropriate of the telephone numbers allocated by them in accordance with the National Telephone Numbering Plan.
- (4) The publication of the National Telephone Numbering Plan, or of a revision of it, must be in such manner as appears to OFCOM to be appropriate for bringing the contents of the Plan, or of the revised Plan, to the attention of such persons as OFCOM consider appropriate.
- (5) In this Chapter references to a telephone number are (subject to subsection (7)) references to any number that is used (whether or not in connection with telephony) for any one or more of the following purposes—
 - (a) identifying the destination for, or recipient of, an electronic communication;
 - (b) identifying the origin, or sender, of an electronic communication;
 - (c) identifying the route for an electronic communication;
 - (d) identifying the source from which an electronic communication or electronic communications service may be obtained or accessed;
 - (e) selecting the service that is to be obtained or accessed, or required elements or characteristics of that service; or
 - (f) identifying the communications provider by means of whose network or service an electronic communication is to be transmitted, or treated as transmitted.
- (6) In this Chapter references to the adoption of a telephone number by a communications provider are references to his doing any of the following in relation to a number allocated (whether or not to that provider) by OFCOM—
 - (a) allocating or transferring that number to a particular customer or piece of apparatus;
 - (b) using that number for identifying a service or route used by that provider or by any of his customers;
 - (c) using that number for identifying a communication as one to be transmitted by that provider;
 - (d) designating that number for use in selecting a service or the required elements or characteristics of a service;
 - (e) authorising the use of that number by others for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (5).
- (7) The Secretary of State may by order exclude such numbers as may be described in the order from the numbers that are to be treated as telephone numbers for the purposes of this Chapter.
- (8) No order is to be made containing provision authorised by subsection (7) unless a draft of the order has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.
- (9) References in this section to the allocation of a number are references to its allocation for the purposes of general conditions under section 58 or in accordance with conditions under section 59.
- (10) In this section—

“electronic communication” means a communication for transmission by means of an electronic communications network; and

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“number” includes data of any description.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Word in s. 56(1)(b) omitted (26.5.2011) by virtue of [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30** (with Sch. 3 para. 2)
- F2** S. 56(1)(ba) inserted (26.5.2011) by [The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy Regulations 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1210\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 1 para. 30** (with Sch. 3 para. 2)

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 56 in force at 25.7.2003 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2003/1900](#), art. 2(1), **Sch. 1** (with art. 3) (as amended by [S.I. 2003/3142](#), art. 1(3))
- I2** S. 56 in force at 29.12.2003 in so far as not already in force by [S.I. 2003/3142](#), art. 3(1), **Sch. 1** (with art. 11)

Changes to legislation:

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/1900, art. 3(2) by [S.I. 2003/3142 art. 1\(3\)](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 by [S.I. 2004/1492 art. 2](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 by [S.I. 2004/697 art. 2](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2003/3142 art. 4 Sch. 2 by [S.I. 2004/545 art. 2](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 124Q(7)(a) words substituted by [2013 c. 22 Sch. 9 para. 52](#)
- s. 148A and cross-heading inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 73\(2\)](#)
- s. 368E(5)(d)(e) inserted by [2017 c. 30 s. 94\(3\)](#)
- s. 402(2A)(za)(zb) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 2](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 21(6) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(5\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 37(3)(aza) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(9\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 84(1)(aza) inserted by [2022 c. 46 Sch. para. 3\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 103(1)(ca) inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 70](#)
- Sch. 3A para. 119A inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 72](#)
- Sch. 3A Pt. 4ZA inserted by [2022 c. 46 s. 67\(1\)](#)