



## **News Release**

**For immediate release** 26 January 2010

### **Raising the stakes on silent calls**

The Communications Consumer Panel is calling on Government to raise the maximum level of fines on companies that make persistent silent calls to £2 million. In its response to a BIS (Department for Business and Skills) consultation, the Consumer Panel says that consumers will only be protected from the harm caused by silent calls once companies no longer have a financial incentive to make them. Writing to BIS, the Panel says that it supports Government proposals to give Ofcom the ability to fine companies up to £2 million.

“Silent calls cause a huge amount of anxiety and inconvenience, particularly for consumers who are more vulnerable, such as older people living alone,” says the Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley. “We need action against companies that break the rules to show that silent calls will not be tolerated”

### **Ends**

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

#### **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.

Read the full response on the Communications Consumer Panel website at [www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/25.01.10%20Letter\\_CCP%20response\\_silent%20calls.pdf](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/25.01.10%20Letter_CCP%20response_silent%20calls.pdf)

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](http://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

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