



An Coimisiún um  
**Rialáil Cumarsáide**  
Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

# Combating scam calls and texts

## Consultation Overview

Consultation

**Reference:** ComReg 23/52e

**Date:** 16/06/2023

**An Coimisiún um Rialáil Cumarsáide**  
**Commission for Communications Regulation**

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## Chapter 1

# 1 Consultation Overview

1. Scams are a blight on Irish society and cause significant financial and economic damage to all sectors of society including consumers, business, and public bodies. Scams also diminish the trust placed by consumers and businesses in calls and SMS, thereby undermining the benefits of such services. The prevalence of scam calls and SMS has increased in recent years, with the vast majority of mobile users reporting to have received scam calls or SMS.
2. Research commissioned by ComReg provides the first insight into the harms caused by scam calls and SMS texts. This research indicates that in 2022 alone in Ireland there were:
  - approximately **365,000 cases of fraud as result of scam calls and texts**, (or **1,000 cases a day**)
  - up to **89 million annoying/irritating communications** and 31 million distressing communications.
  - over **5,000 businesses that were the victim of fraud** after receiving scam calls and texts
3. Overall, the total quantifiable harm to Ireland's society arising from nuisance communications is conservatively estimated at **over €300 million per annum**.
4. **To combat scams**, ComReg is proposing to require operators to implement a number of technical interventions to combat scam calls and texts:
  - Fixed CLI<sup>1</sup> Blocking: To stop fraudsters abroad spoofing Irish geographic numbers (e.g., 01-xx) to make scam voice calls.
  - Mobile CLI Blocking: To stop fraudsters abroad spoofing Irish mobile numbers (e.g., 087-xx) to make scam voice calls.
  - A Protected number list: To stop fraudsters using numbers that are not yet in service or have yet to be allocated to a telecoms operator prior to entering service.
  - Do-Not-Originate list: Allows businesses/organisations to secure their numbers by blocking those numbers not used to contact consumers.
  - A SMS ID Registry: Allows businesses/organisations to register a SMS Sender ID<sup>2</sup> while blocking those that are not on the Register
  - Voice-firewall: To block spam calls wherever they arise (i.e., Ireland or abroad) and protect against future more sophisticated scams.

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<sup>1</sup> CLI means 'calling line identification'. Calling line identification allows the person receiving the call to see the caller's number.

<sup>2</sup> The SMS sender ID is the text display that you see at the top of your phone's screen and is typically used to identify who sent the message.

ComReg also assessed a SMS Scam Filter: To block scam SMS and protect against future more sophisticated scams.

5. ComReg appreciates the valuable input from the telecommunications industry via ComReg's Nuisance Communications Industry Taskforce in designing these proposed interventions.
6. The overall benefit of the package of interventions, if implemented, would be in the order of **€1.5 billion over the coming seven years** while the benefits to society for each euro spent on the interventions is substantial and should bring **€50 in economic and social benefit for every €1 spent**.
7. The SMS Scam filter is an essential measure to prevent criminals from attempting to defraud Irish customers because, like the voice firewall, it is a dynamic intervention that reacts to the latest scams. However, this intervention requires legislation. ComReg has played an active role in engaging with its parent department, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications ("DECC") in taking this forward. Within the European Union, equivalent legislation is already in place in Belgium, and is proposed to be implemented in Poland. ComReg further notes that as Ireland is part of the *anglosphere*, it is more susceptible to text based scams than its European counterparts.
8. ComReg's interventions are now being consulted upon and further details are available in ComReg Document 23/52.

# Combating scams



Irish consumers rely on SMS and calls to communicate with friends, family, businesses and government services

In 2022, Irish networks delivered over 15 billion voice calls and 2.5 billion texts

021... ✓  
086... ✓  
087... ✓

**Irish mobile and geographic numbers are trusted**



Scammers at home and abroad target Irish consumers  
**91%** of mobile consumers report receiving a scam call or text in the last 12 months



**83%** of Irish consumers know their local area code



Scammers can misuse Irish numbers to trick consumers

Resulting in an estimated 1,000 instances of fraud each day

This causes over **€300 million** in harm each year



The interventions aim to:

- 1 Secure Irish numbers
- 2 Empower organisation to secure their own numbers
- 3 Stop scams in real time



ComReg wants telecom companies to combat scams

The consultation runs until 28th July 2023



## 1 Securing Irish numbers

**Fixed CLI Blocking:**  
To stop scammers abroad using Irish geographic numbers (e.g., 01-xxx)

**Mobile CLI Blocking:**  
To stop scammer abroad using Irish mobile numbers (e.g., 087-xxx)

**Protected number list:**  
To stop scammers using unowned numbers

## 2 Empower organisation to secure their own numbers

**Do-Not-Originate list:** To enable businesses and gov agencies to secure their own numbers

**A SMS ID Registry:** To enable businesses and gov agencies to secure their name being used in SMS headings



## 3 Stop scams in real time



**Voice- firewall** to catch scam calls



**SMS Scam filter** to catch scam texts

This should protect:



Trust in Irish numbers



The use of SMS and voice calls



Consumers and businesses



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## 2 Have your say

We want your feedback on this serious matter including the key issues we've identified and our plans to combat them.

Please see our Consultation for more information and send your views to [marketframeworkconsult@comreg.ie](mailto:marketframeworkconsult@comreg.ie).