



Transformational Government - INWG Response

INWG welcomes the opportunity of contributing to this consultation.

The Intelligent Number Working Group (INWG) fully supports the aims of Transformational Government. The key is how we manage such change in this complex and uncertain digital age and ensure equity of access for all.

A central theme in transformational government is the need to give citizens choice and design services around *their* needs. Core to public services' ability to deliver these services to citizens through technology, is the confidence of citizens in their ability to access and use their preferred technology, coupled with its availability and the cost of access. It is clear that fixed line and mobile telephony will be a key channel.

The document rightly emphasises the need for a strategic view to ensure the development of better, more joined-up services. However current proposed regulatory changes contradict government policy and risk the investment in Transformational Government. Ofcom's proposed NTS (Number Translation Services) changes will break down the public's understanding of 07, 08 and 09 numbers which now typically represent Mobile, Special Service and Premium Rate services respectively.

The 08 number range has become the accepted platform for citizen access to information and service delivery, not only within the public services but also throughout the commercial sphere. Many public services have benefited from Intelligent Numbers' capability to support resilience and continuity as well as provide simplified single contact numbers for citizens nationally and have used the 08 number range to improve public access. This success is threatened as the proposals may make the public feel that that the 08 range has moved to Premium Rate charges.

The aim of Transformational Government is for customers and businesses to increasingly serve themselves and to provide fair access for all. The proposed regulatory changes are retrograde and could actually decrease use due to misunderstanding and fear of cost. Vulnerable groups such as children and the disadvantaged, who tend to be more reliant on mobile phones, could be worse affected.

INWG believes that education and transparency regarding these Access Numbers are essential elements of delivering the benefits of e-government. Confusion regarding numbering schemes must be alleviated, not increased.

INWG has been formed to give a voice to all – to join in the debate go to www.inwg.org.uk

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