

SERVICE-SPECIFIC GUIDANCE NOTE

Directory enquiry services

Who should read this?

Any providers that are planning to offer directory enquiry (DQ) services.

What is the purpose of the Guidance?

To assist providers by clarifying the Phone-paid Services Authority's expectations around the use of directory enquiry (DQ) services, which are defined by the Phone-paid Services Authority as those premium rate services which provide the consumer with telephone numbers of other individuals, companies or services by searching one or more sources of information, based on information given by the consumer to the provider.

What are the key points?

The main issues for providers to consider are:

- Information provided by DQ services should be from legitimate and up-to-date sources.
- Providers of DQ services should take reasonable steps to ensure that the consumer receives the information the service advertises that it is offering.
- The obligation placed on any DQ provider, in being able to match or make available a listing through its data sources, is dependent on sufficient information being given by the consumer in the first instance.
- DQ services should not connect consumers to other, inappropriate premium rate services.
- Refunds should be provided to consumers, where necessary.

1. Legitimate and up-to-date sources

- 1.1 All DQ services operating in the UK should use legitimate and current sources, in respect of the consumer information that is being provided.
- 1.2 In respect of information being provided in relation to individuals, companies or services outside of the UK, all information should be gathered from legitimate sources that are updated in accordance with the appropriate standards of the relevant country and/or jurisdiction concerned.
- 1.3 Where a DQ service does not provide information and/or connection for the generality of consumers in the UK, but rather a different, specific group, then promotional material should clearly state this, and clearly identify the specific group to which the service does apply.

2. Consumer to receive the information the DQ service advertises

- 2.1 Providers should ensure that, where sufficient information has been given to them by a consumer, such a consumer is given the requested telephone number, and at no additional charge. Ordinarily, consumers should be given the requested number immediately. The exception to this is where consumers may be offered the chance to listen to an advert prior to receiving the number. Where this option is offered, the offer must be clear and succinct, and consumers must be able to opt out of listening to advertisements and be given the requested number immediately.
- 2.2 In instances where the consumer has accessed the service by a voice-call, the requested number should be verbally delivered to them (either by a live operator or by being generated electronically). In all other instances, any other communication format (inclusive of email, text message, etc.) can be used.
- 2.3 Prior to any further connection being made by the provider, the consumer should be clearly informed of the cost, and have the opportunity to opt out of the connection, whether by hanging up before they are connected or otherwise. If the consumer declines this option, they should be provided with the requested number at no additional charge.

3. Connection to other, inappropriate premium rate services

- 3.1 DQ services should not connect consumers through to:
 - Any premium rate service which is a chatline service;
 - Any premium rate services which is a sexual entertainment service; or
 - Any individual, business or organisation that the DQ service provider has an agreement or arrangement to share call revenue with.
- 3.2 DQ services can connect consumers through to a premium rate number, provided that number relates to business services.

4. Refunds to consumers

- 4.1 Where a consumer has provided relevant information, but was not provided with the requested number, and where a complaint has been made to the provider and upheld, the provider should give a refund to the consumer for the full cost of the initial call made, and for any subsequent calls (such calls are limited to those made to the provider in respect of the initial request for information) and those made during the complaint process.
- 4.2 For more information in relation to consumer refunds, please see the Phone-paid Services Authority's [Code 14 Supporting Procedures](#) and the section on refunds.