



Department
for Education

DfE customer service lines report 2014

**This report shows the department's progress
towards implementing HMG's December
2013 guidance on customer service lines**

November 2014

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Purpose

In December 2013 the government [published guidance](#) to help departments make decisions about their telephone prefixes.

This report sets out the Department For Education's progress towards implementing key principles in the December 2013 guidance.

Summary of Department's Numbering Policy

In line with HMG Guidance on Customer Service Lines the Department and its Executive Agencies recognise that it is inappropriate for callers to pay substantial charges for accessing core public services, particularly for vulnerable and low income groups. The Department is aiming to cease its 0845 numbers replacing them with standard rate non-geographic numbers where required. Where a non-geographic number is needed, the Department regards the use of the 03 prefix as a default policy position for the provision of core public services. In certain circumstances where services are directed at callers who are likely to be part of a vulnerable or low income group, the Department may regard it as necessary to use a 'free to call' 080 number. For example the Department provides funding to a number of organisations to provide free telephony services supplying information, advice and guidance and intensive support services relating to issues affecting families and children. In addition the Department may also use 'free to call' 080 numbers where there is a desire to positively reach out and attract telephony contact. For example the Return to Teaching Helpline which provides advice to ex-teachers looking to return to the profession.

In the last 12 months the Department has replaced a further three 0845 numbers with numbers using the 03 prefix. In addition it has ceased four Helplines using non-geographic numbers one of which used the 0845 prefix.

Although the Department still has three 0845 numbers in use by the Teachers' Pension Scheme, an alternative geographic number is also provided as a means of contacting this Helpline. The Teachers' Pension Scheme Helpline is provided under contract by Capita and the Department is currently reviewing the options available under the existing contract to see if it is appropriate to replace the 0845 numbers. The DfE is confident that it will fully comply with the HMG Guidance on Customer Service Lines by March 2015.

The total aggregate volume of calls made to 03 prefix numbers in October 2014 was a little over 14,000 compared to 16,500 made in November 2013. Calls to 080 numbers also fell from around 11,300 in November 2013 to 9,400 in October 2014, whilst calls to geographic service lines increased from around 3300 to approximately 5,700. Despite the closure of four 0845 prefix numbers, calls to Helplines using an 0845 prefix increased from around 38,300 in November 2013, to nearly 44,400 in October 2014. This was due to an increase in calls to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Departmental Customer Service Lines: Telephone Number Prefixes

Lines	0843/0844/0845	Dual Numbering with 0843/4/5	03	Other Geographic	0800	0870	09	Other	Lines closed
GRAND TOTALS for Core Department + all listed bodies within organisational hierarchy									
Total at November 2013	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 7	1	13	9	11	nil	nil	n/a	
Total at October 2014	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 3	1	13	10	12	nil	nil	n/a	4 x 0845 closed 3 x 03 closed
Core Department									
Total at November 2013	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	nil	2	3	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total at October 2014	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	nil	2	4	1	nil	nil	nil	nil
Executive Agencies and NDPBs									
Total at November 2013	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 2	nil	10	6	9	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total at October 2014	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 0	nil	8	6	9	nil	nil	nil	2 x 0845 closed 3 x 03 closed
External Organisations									
Total at November 2013	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 5	1	1	nil	2	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total at October 2014	0843 x 0 0844 x 0 0845 x 3	1	3	nil	2	nil	nil	nil	2 x 0845 closed

Revenue Generation

Q. Does the Department For Education comply with the principles set out on revenue generation in the HMG Guidance on Customer Service Lines?

A. Yes



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