



The facts behind nuisance calls and how to deal with them

We occasionally get calls or social media posts asking as to why customers are getting calls from cold callers, known as nuisance or spam calls using numbers that appear to be owned by Gamma.

Gamma, as a group of companies, is a wholesale telecommunications network, providing voice, data and mobile telecommunications services to some 725 channel partners and resellers in the UK who in turn supply those services to tens of thousands of businesses and consumers alike.

We'd like to first of all assure you that we are not making the calls to which you refer ourselves, however, we shall take appropriate action against any of our customers that are found to be in breach of any legislation or regulation.

We would also point out that there are documented cases of call centres making outbound calls and deliberately "spoofing" numbers allocated to Gamma to give the impression they are connected to us; if this is the case, there is often little that can be done.

Any call centre making outbound calls is required to first of all check that the number they are calling is not registered with the Telephone Preference Service (<http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/index.html>) – this applies if the number is residential or business – and we would encourage you if you do not want to receive unsolicited marketing calls, to register all your numbers (be that home, mobile, or a range of numbers in a business).

In addition to checking the Telephone Preference Service database, the same legislation requires that call centres are also required to ensure that your number is removed upon request; if you answer such calls in the future, you may wish to quote Section 21(1)(b) of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 which relates.

If you wish to take your complaint further, then you have two options depending on the type of call you have received.

If it is a so-called "Silent and Abandoned Call", which meets any of the following criteria:

- A call centre not ensuring that people are not contacted within 72 hours of their receiving an abandoned call without the guaranteed presence of a live operator;
- A call centre not playing an automated message in the event of an abandoned call telling the person called on whose behalf the call was made and providing them with a number to dial to stop any future marketing calls from that organisation;
- A call centre not making valid and accurate calling-line identification ("CLI") information available to call recipients so they can identify who rang them via caller display or by dialling 1471 in the event of a silent call;
- A call centre not ensuring that where a call has been identified by dialler equipment as being picked up by an answer machine, any repeat calls to that specific number within the same 24 hour period are only made with the guaranteed presence of a live operator.

Then the Office of Communications ("Ofcom") is the body that will handle a complaint. Their Consumer Contact team can be reached on 0300 123 3333.

If you are receiving calls when you have registered with the Telephone Preference Service and/or have explicitly told the calling party to not call you, then the Information Commissioner is the body that will handle the complaint. They can be reached via 0303 123 1113.

In both cases, they co-operate with each other, so if you are unsure, then either body will take your complaint.