

NEW FREE DIRECTORY ENQUIRIES SERVICE CHALLENGES 118 NUMBERS

The UK's only free directory enquiries service launches today, posing a significant threat to existing 118 providers.

For many Britons, a directory enquiries call is the priciest call they make, with the nation squandering at least £298 million a year on 118 services. With 118 calls costing up to 79p just to connect to the service, forecasts predict that the new number, **0800 100 100**, will save the average user £18.87 a year.

0800 100 100 does not charge callers from mobiles, landlines or cable networks, and is the only free directory enquiry service to be answered by trained operators, rather than an automated service, with all operators based in UK call centres.

0800 100 100's free service is sustained through advertising: callers will be asked to listen to a short (up to 20-second) message before they receive their requested information, which they also receive as a text message. Household names such as Alliance & Leicester, EDF Energy and Anglian Home Improvements have already signed up to advertise with **0800 100 100** at launch.

Uniquely, the majority of the advertising will be relevant to the individual query, and many will communicate exclusive discounts. For example, if a caller requests the number for their energy provider, the message they listen to will be a linked offer from EDF Energy. The caller simply has to press a button to connect directly through to the advertiser's call centre.

One of **0800 100 100**'s founders, Isabel Magan-Campbell, said: "**0800 100 100** operates without any cost to the consumer and will be carried on all networks, ending the days of overpriced information, when of course this information should be free. We believe that this model will revolutionise the industry – and finally give consumers what they want.

“Furthermore, many Britons are banned from calling 118 numbers on their company landline and mobile phones because it is so costly, which can be incredibly frustrating in the work environment when you urgently need information. Again, **0800 100 100** will change this – by offering all directory enquiries information for free.”

The UK directory enquiries market is currently fragmented, with some 400 providers competing for customers who need help finding phone numbers. But **0800 100 100** will be a welcome addition for British consumers. New research carried out by the company reveals that four in 10 respondents actually think that operators drag out conversations to boost costs. While over two-fifths (43 per cent) of callers who request connections via 118 aren't informed that this incurs additional charges.

“Ad funded, free, directory enquiry services have already proved to be highly successful in the US – and we expect **0800 100 100** to be welcomed by British consumers who now have access to the free information they deserve,” said Isabel Magan-Campbell.

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