

Edinburgh MP backs action against nuisance calls

Edinburgh's Liberal Democrat MP, Mike Crockart, has welcomed the publication of a strategy from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and a joint action plan from Ofcom and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) which outline how the Government and the regulators plan to tackle nuisance calls. Mr Crockart has run a 'No to Nuisance Calls' campaign for the last year and is Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nuisance Calls. He has also lodged a Private Member's Bill to try to curb the calls: The Communication (Unsolicited Telephone Calls and Texts) Bill will have its second reading in the Commons on 1st November.

The strategy paper 'Connectivity, content and consumers: Britain's digital platform for growth' from DCMS sets out the Government's priorities for the media and telecommunications sectors and outlines the legislative changes needed to tackle nuisance calls.

As well as the paper from DCMS, the joint action plan from Ofcom and the ICO sets out the key areas where the two regulators have worked together as well as committing to carry out a review of the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and publishing revised ICO guidance for the industry on marketing consent. These new priorities are both issues which are included in Mr Crockart's Private Member's Bill.

Commenting **Mr Crockart** said:- "It is good to see the Government and the regulators working together to tackle this menace. People have had to put up with this for too long so I am pleased that we have now got the Government's attention. I have been running my 'No to Nuisance Calls' campaign for over

a year and I am sure that without the support of my constituents and the many other thousands of individuals who signed my petition we would not have had today's breakthrough.

"A common complaint I hear is that people who are TPS registered are still bombarded by calls. The TPS is not working as effectively as it should and I am pleased to see the regulators committing to reviewing it. This alone will not be a solution to the thousands of nuisance calls and texts which plague the lives of many across the UK, but it is certainly a step in the right direction.

"I have long called for regulators' powers to be strengthened and my Private Member's Bill aims to tackle the issue of marketing consent which I am pleased to see the Government highlighting as an issue.

"The Government has committed to bringing forward legislation in the autumn to strengthen the powers of the regulators to allow them to carry out their enforcement work more effectively which is excellent news. But regulators need help to identify some of the worst offenders which is why we need to make it as quick and easy as possible for people to report those who abuse the system. Which? has introduced a new online complaints tool where people can register their complaints simply and quickly at www.which.co.uk and I would encourage everyone to use it.

"The All Party Parliamentary Group on Nuisance Calls of which I am Co-Chair is also holding an inquiry and we are asking that people make written submissions to that. You can get all the information you need on my website at www.mikecrockartmp.com. Taken together these actions will send a clear message to the Government that more still needs to be done to tackle this menace which affects so many people

across the UK.”