



# **Termination of provision of Prepaid Mobile Services by Easycall Limited - Follow-up Actions by OFCA and Recommendations to Consumers**

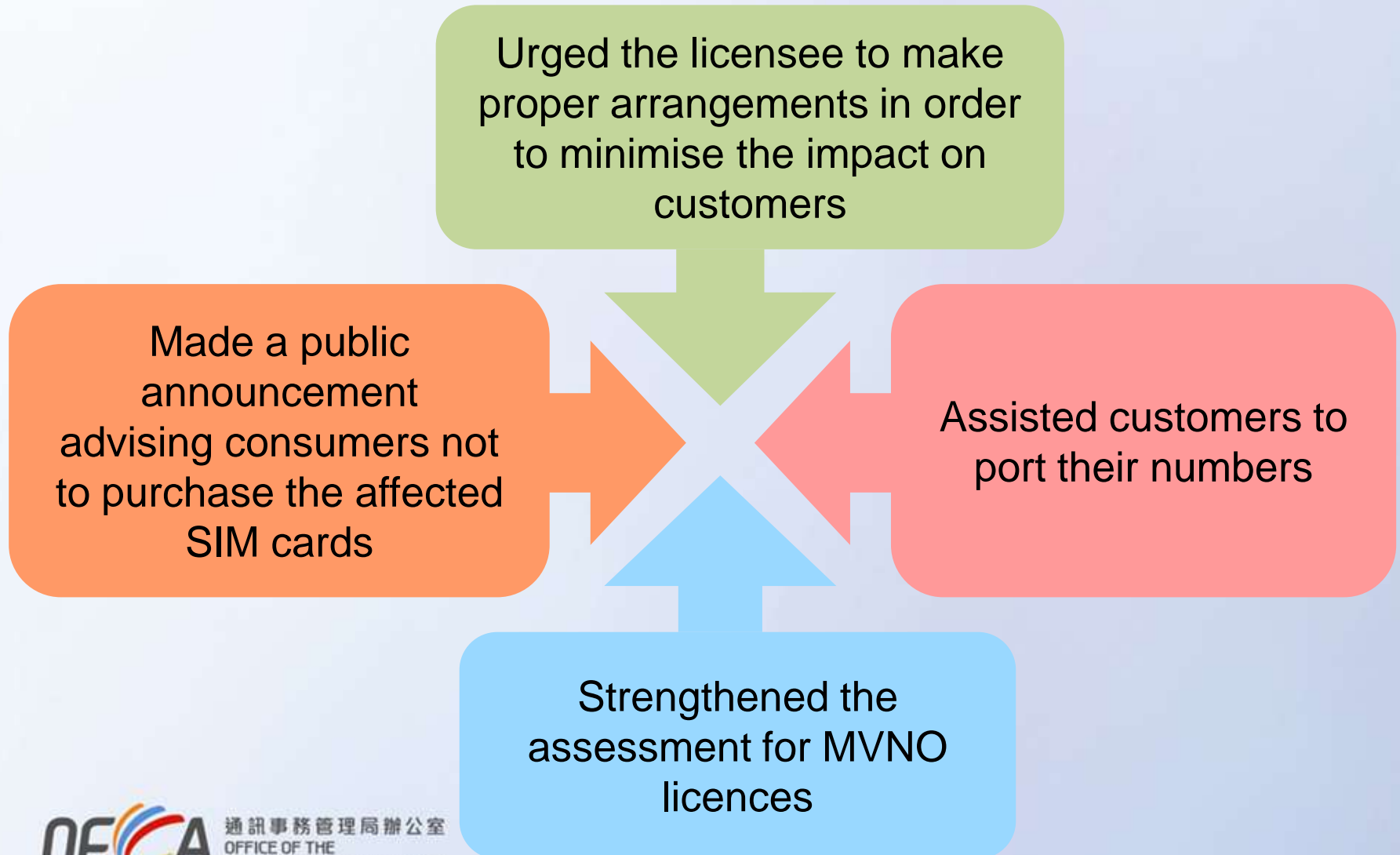
Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee

26 May 2016

# Termination of Prepaid Mobile Service by Easycall

- Easycall Limited (“Easycall”) is a mobile virtual network operator (“MVNO”) providing prepaid mobile services by procuring relevant network service and capacity from a mobile network operator (“MNO”)
- Owing to the termination of service provisioning by the MNO, Easycall terminated its prepaid mobile services by phases, starting from 15 March 2016
- All its mobile services terminated at the end of March 2016

# Follow-up Actions by OFCA



# Urged the Licensee to Make Proper Arrangements

- OFCA urged Easycall to make all the necessary arrangements to minimise the impact on customers
- Easycall has stopped selling new SIM cards to its distributors/resellers
- Easycall informed its customers about the service termination and associated arrangements by SMS and notification on social media platform



Easycall 易通電

(Only available in Chinese)

3月14日 · 🌐

各位，因市場環境劇變，零售市場急速下滑，本公司儲值咭業務服務被暫停，現正使用中的客戶如需保留號碼，請盡快攜同儲值咭到各大網絡商，辦理攜號轉台手續。所以未開啟儲值咭則不能開啟使用，也懇請各大零售商停止售賣產品，以免引起投訴及不便。我們也不想這樣，但無奈要作出這樣決定，很抱歉為大家帶來不便，敬請大家原諒。

# Announcement to the Public

- OFCA published a Consumer Alert on its website to promulgate the relevant information to the public
- Consumers are advised not to purchase or recharge the prepaid SIM cards offered by Easycall



The screenshot shows the OFCA website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area on the right. The main content area features a blue banner with the text "CONSUMER FOCUS" and a sub-header "Consumers Advised Not to Purchase or Re-charge Prepaid Mobile SIM Cards Offered by Easycall Limited". The main text of the alert is as follows:

**Consumers Advised Not to Purchase or Re-charge Prepaid Mobile SIM Cards Offered by Easycall Limited**

Easycall Limited ("Easycall") is a mobile virtual network operator ("MVNO") offering prepaid mobile services in Hong Kong. Easycall has been providing its MVNO service by procuring relevant network service and capacity on a wholesale basis from a mobile network operator ("MNO").

The Office of the Communications Authority ("OFCA") was informed that Easycall would suspend its prepaid mobile services by phases, starting from 15 March 2016, owing to the termination of wholesale service provided by a MNO. According to the latest information available, all its mobile services will be suspended at the end of March 2016.

On learning of the impending service suspension, OFCA has immediately urged Easycall to make all the necessary arrangements to minimise the impact on its customers. On OFCA's demand, Easycall has stopped selling new SIM cards to its distributors/resellers, and has informed its customers of the service suspension and associated arrangement by SMS, and by publishing a notification on social media platform<sup>1</sup>.

Members of the public are advised not to purchase the prepaid SIM cards offered by Easycall. For Easycall's existing customers, they are advised not to recharge their prepaid SIM cards, and to approach the card distributors/resellers or Easycall to request for refund.

Affected customers who wish to retain their mobile numbers may arrange for porting their mobile numbers to another mobile service provider as they see fit. OFCA has secured the assistance of the concerned operators to facilitate the number-porting arrangements. OFCA would continue to monitor the developments closely.

Office of the Communications Authority  
15 March 2016

# Assistance on Number-porting

- OFCA has secured the assistance of other mobile network operators to facilitate the number-porting arrangements
- OFCA urged affected customers who wish to retain their mobile numbers to arrange for porting the numbers to another mobile service provider as soon as possible

# Strengthened the Assessment for MVNO Licences (1)

- MVNOs provide mobile services by procuring relevant network service and capacity from licensed MNO(s)
- Does not possess radiocommunications infrastructure or spectrum
- A Services-based Operator Licence of Class 3 Service (MVNO) is required
- There is no preset limit on the number of licences to be issued, and mobile service operators may provide a wide range of services on the basis of market competition to fulfil the different needs of customers

# Strengthened the Assessment for MVNO Licences (2)

- With a view to reducing the possibility of similar incidents recurring in future, OFCA has reviewed the assessment procedures for MVNO licence applications
- Licence applicants are required to provide information to the Communications Authority (“CA”) to demonstrate its financial capability of providing a satisfactory service
- For the case of Easycall, after a careful consideration, the CA has decided that any licence renewal request from Easycall will not be accepted



# Recommendations to Consumers (1)

- Choose reputable mobile service operators
- Do not purchase excessive number of prepaid SIM cards
- Recharge your prepaid SIM card according to actual needs, and do not have excessive recharge
- Before purchasing prepaid SIM cards or recharge vouchers, check with the card distributor or reseller whether or not there is any refund arrangement and understand the relevant terms and conditions

# Recommendations to Consumers (2)

- Keep the receipt and card holder certificate. In case of service being affected, customers can contact the distributors, resellers or service operators and request for refund.
- Customers may also consider taking civil action in the Small Claims Tribunal
- Customers are advised to bring the original SIM card (including the card holder certificate) to the mobile service operator you wish to switch to for the number-porting arrangement.

**Thank you**