

Enhancing the Real Name Registration (“RNR”) Programme

Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee

14 August 2025



Outline

- **Background**
 - Latest progress of initiatives taken for combating phone deception
 - Enhancement in Public Education
- **Implementation situation of RNR Programme and enhancement measures**
- **Proposed enhancement measures**
 - Lowering the registration limit of Pre-paid SIM (“PPS”) cards for individual users
 - Establishing new offences to combat improper use of registered SIM cards
- **Conclusion and Way Forward**

Latest progress of initiatives taken for combating phone deception (1)

OFCA, the Police and major telecommunications service providers (“TSPs”) jointly set up a working group in September 2022 to devise and implement a series of measures to combat deception at the source :

(i) Promptly blocking phone numbers and websites suspected to be fraudulent

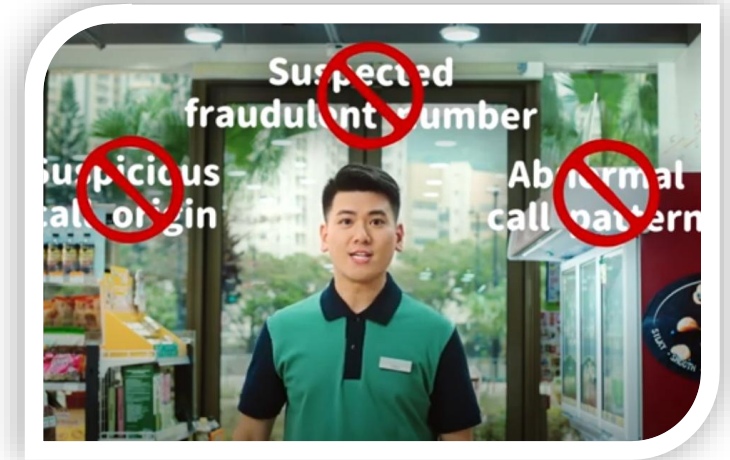
- As at end-June this year, over **9 000 local and non-local phone numbers** and over **60 000 websites** have been successfully intercepted based on the Police’s records.

(ii) Suspending services of phone numbers with specific operational patterns

- TSPs are required to monitor calls and messages originating from their networks and systems. Once call patterns of suspected phone deception have been identified (e.g. making or sending a large number of calls or text messages within a short period of time), TSPs will suspend the services of the relevant phone numbers.
- As at end-June this year, about **1.44 million local phone numbers** were suspended.

(iii) Combating non-local deception calls

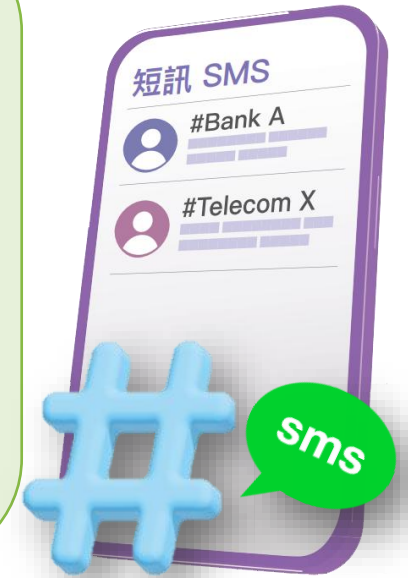
- TSPs are required to block suspicious calls starting with “+852”, and send voice or text alerts to mobile service users for other incoming external calls prefixed with “+852” to alert call receivers.
- As at end-June this year, TSPs have blocked over **6 million suspicious calls** and have sent over **31 million voice or text alerts**.



Latest progress of initiatives taken for combating phone deception (2)

(iv) Combating fraudulent SMS messages involving identity impersonation

- With the launch of SMS Sender Registration Scheme (“Scheme”), only those companies or organisations being Registered Senders are allowed to send SMS messages to local mobile services users using their Registered SMS Sender IDs with the prefix “#”.
- Strengthen blocking of SMS messages sent by those masquerading as Registered Senders to protect the interests of members of the public
 - As at end-June this year, over **570 public and private organisations** have participated in the Scheme.
 - OFCA has made available the SMS Sender Registry on its website for checking of registered organisations by members of the public and will continue to encourage more organisations to participate in the Scheme.



(v) Playing voice alert message for calls made from newly activated local PPS cards

- When members of the public answer calls made from newly activated local PPS cards, TSPs will first play a voice alert message stating, “This call is made from a new PPS card”, before the call is connected, to raise public awareness of suspicious phone calls.



Latest progress of initiatives taken for combating phone deception (3)

(vi) Strengthening identification of suspicious calls by the public

- The Police launched the mobile application “**Scameter+**” to assist the public in identifying suspicious online platform accounts, payment accounts, phone numbers, email addresses, and websites, as well as providing anti-fraud tips.
 - As at end-June this year, “Scameter+” has recorded **over 1 million downloads**, and the search engine has logged **9.26 million searches**, issuing **1.07 million alerts** to the public. It has also issued over 890 000 warnings about suspicious calls and websites to the public through its automatic function.
- In response to phone deception that impersonating government departments, OFCA has established a mechanism to provide designated phone numbers for government departments or public organisations in need of hotline numbers or communication with the public. With OFCA’s active appeal, a number of TSPs now offer free call filtering value-added services to all or some of their customers (e.g. customers aged 60 or above).

The Police, between January and June this year, received a total of 3 317 phone scam cases, representing an increase of 97 cases (3%) compared to the same period last year but a significant slowdown compared to last year’s overall growth in cases (186.5%). In addition, the total monetary amount involved in scam cases decreased by HK\$920 million as compared to the same period last year, representing a decline of 61.4%. Meanwhile, the Police successfully intercepted HK\$800 million in 627 scam cases, making a 17.6% increase as compared to the same period last year (i.e. HK\$680 million).

Enhancement in Public Education



Encourage use of call management services and filtering applications

Encouraged the public to use call management services and filtering applications, and helped members of the public in need to download and use relevant applications



Organise public education and promotional events

Over the past two years, OFCA has organised a total of **182** public education and promotional events, including **37** roving exhibitions, **75** community talks and **70** school touring performances



Launch the District Anti-Phone Deception Ambassador Scheme

OFCA launched the District Anti-Phone Deception Ambassador Scheme in January this year. The Scheme has garnered support from over **150** District Council members' ward offices, with more than **300** District Council members and their staff appointed as District Anti-Phone Deception Ambassadors



Collaborate with District Anti-Phone Deception Ambassadors to carry out roadshow events

Since May this year, OFCA has collaborated with District Anti-Phone Deception Ambassadors to carry out a series of roadshow events in all **18** districts and will continue to organise various types of activities

RNR Programme

- The RNR Programme was **fully implemented on 24 February 2023**, requiring that all SIM cards issued and used locally (including SIM Service Plan (“SSP”) and PPS cards) **must complete real-name registration before service activation**, to ensure the integrity of telecommunications services and the security of communications networks
- Under the Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation (Cap. 106AI) (the “Regulation”):

PPS cards :

Individual user may register no more than **10 PPS cards** with each TSP

Corporate user may register no more than **25 PPS cards** with each TSP

SSP cards :

No limit on the registration quota



Implementation situation of RNR Programme and enhancement measures

- OFCA, since the implementation of the RNR Programme, has been closely monitoring market developments to ensure the effective operation of the registration systems, and has launched various enhancement measures of the RNR Programme taking into account the operational experience:
 - Since February 2023, TSPs have been required to conduct **regular sampling checks** on the registration information of registered PPS cards, step up checks on suspected cases and refer suspected illegal cases for the handling by the Police. If the users subject to sample checks are unable to verify their registered information in accordance with the instructions of the respective TSPs, the relevant PPS cards will be deregistered and cannot be used thereafter. As at end-June this year, around **4.96 million PPS cards were rejected for registration**. Besides, about **3.51 million PPS cards have been deregistered**.
 - Since October 2024, OFCA has required TSPs to adopt “**iAM Smart**” as the default registration method for Hong Kong identity (“HKID”) card holders. For PPS cards with registration made by non-HKID holders via the online registration platform, TSPs will first verify the identity document with their systems before activating relevant PPS cards, followed by **manual checking** to verify the authenticity of the identification documents of the registered users. If any PPS cards are found to be non-compliant with the regulatory requirements (e.g. suspected use of forged documents for registration), such registration will be cancelled.

Proposed enhancement measures

- The RNR Programme has been implemented for almost two and a half years. Taking into account factors including the implementation of the RNR Programme in the past, development of the local telecommunications market, experiences of other economies and modus operandi of deception syndicates involving the use of PPS cards as well as deception trends provided by the Police, the Government plans to **further enhance the RNR Programme** to strengthen efforts in combating phone deception.
- The specific proposed measures include:
 - (1) Lowering the registration limit of PPS cards for individual users
 - (2) Establishing new offences to combat improper use of registered SIM cards

Proposed enhancement measures

– (1) Lowering the registration limit of PPS cards for individual users

- Based on the past verification experiences of TSPs
 - Only **fewer than 5% of users** would complete the required verification requests of the TSPs. PPS cards would be deregistered if the users fail to comply with the verification requirements. The above information indicates that many users holding multiple PPS cards possibly register with identity documents that do not comply with existing regulatory requirements, or they may have improperly purchased PPS cards registered by others.
 - PPS cards registered under the same HKID or non-HKID document (e.g. passports and other travel documents) with **one to three PPS cards** accounted for 97% of all PPS card users
- Preliminarily propose to significantly lower the maximum registration limit for individual users from the existing limit of 10 PPS cards per TSP per person to a **maximum limit of 3 PPS cards per TSP per person**.
- Members of the public can still opt for SSP services which do not have a registration limit

Proposed enhancement measures

– (2) Establishing new offences to combat improper use of registered SIM cards

- According to the ongoing market surveillance conducted by OFCA
 - It has been found that some individuals are selling registered PPS cards or offering to provide their personal information for real-name registration in the market or through online social platforms
 - Such practices are inconsistent with the objectives of the RNR Programme and could possibly involve fraudulent activities
- Propose **establishing new offences to criminalise the improper use of SIM cards (regardless of SSP or PPS cards) registered with others' information without lawful authority or reasonable excuse/justification**. Specifically, we suggest making the following three types of activities illegal:
 - (1) Providing or soliciting the provision of personal information for the purpose of registering another person's SIM card;
 - (2) Selling/buying, leasing/renting, lending/borrowing or supplying/acquiring registered SIM cards; and
 - (3) Possessing SIM cards registered with others' information unless with reasonable cause / excuse, otherwise the possession of more than 10 SIM cards registered with others' information will be presumed to have the intent to use such SIM cards to commit a crime or facilitate the commission of a crime

Proposed enhancement measures

– (2) Establishing new offences to combat improper use of registered SIM cards

- Proposed Penalties
 - Adopt the current maximum penalty under the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) (“TO”), which is a **Level 4 fine (HK\$25,000) or imprisonment for 12 months**
- Enforcement Agency
 - **The Police** will be the primary enforcement agency. OFCA will continue to work closely with the Police to effectively combat illegal activities conducted through telecommunications networks



Conclusion and Way Forward

- The legislative intent of the Government is to combat crimes. Hence, the proposed legislative amendments in the future will specifically target the improper use of registered SIM cards. **Members of the public, businesses or organisations that use or possess multiple SIM cards registered with others' information with reasonable justification or excuse (for example, actual operational needs of enterprises and uses by family members) will not be affected by the proposed new offences.**
- The Government believes that criminalising the improper use of registered SIM cards, coupled with the reduced registration limit of PPS cards for individual users, can effectively combat fraudulent activities involving PPS cards, and thereby better protecting telecommunications service users from potential harm.
- Lowering the registration limit of PPS cards for individual users and introducing new offences to combat the improper use of registered SIM cards would involve amendments to the existing Regulation under the TO. We will prepare the legislative amendments for the proposals, **with an aim to introducing the amendments into the Legislative Council for scrutiny in 2026.**

The background is a deep blue gradient, overlaid with a complex pattern of lighter blue diagonal lines and semi-transparent geometric shapes, primarily triangles and parallelograms, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Thank you