



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

**Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association**

*The Voice of Advanced Communications*

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### **ITSPA supports Ofcom position on 999**

ITSPA has announced its general support for Ofcom's decision to make 999 mandatory for certain types of VoIP services. From 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008, all VoIP services that allow users to make calls to normal national phone numbers (Type 2 and Type 4 services) will have to provide a 999/112 service.

ITSPA Chair Eli Katz said: "ITSPA has always advocated the requirement for VoIP services to offer 999 and many of its members are already providing this service. Whilst we have had some concerns with aspects of the proposals and timescales for implementation, we are supportive of the Ofcom statement. We look forward to working with the regulator to ensure all our members are compliant by next September."

ITSPA will be keen to make sure that Ofcom enforces this statement properly, along with the other regulatory changes made this year. This should include all providers, offering a service to UK customers, including those that operate from overseas.

Points which ITSPA are keen to highlight:

1. Ofcom's announcement is in line with proposals across the European Union to require all providers of standard phone services to provide access to emergency services.
2. ITSPA's main concern has been the additional regulatory obligations, which attach complexity and cost to the provision of 999 access. Some VoIP providers who were not previously subject to these regulations will find themselves now classed as providers of "publicly available telephony services" and thus subject to extra obligations. ITSPA has long advocated the delinkage of PATS obligations with 999 access and welcome the recent ERG paper which supports this idea. It also welcomes proposed changes in definition within the EU Telecoms Framework Review.
3. There are a number of elements in terms of cost and time for VoIP providers, which need to be considered. While ITSPA deems it feasible, there are a number of technical, legal and contractual hoops to go through. We would have preferred a 12 month timescale to be compliant with all PATS conditions and to establish an interface with a 999 operator.
4. In terms of location information, ITPSA members are working within the NICC to provide a resilient solution to this problem.

### **Notes to Editors:**

NOTE – This statement is issued on behalf of ITSPA and does not necessarily reflect the views of all its members.

### **About VoIP**

Internet Telephony is the ability to make voice calls over any Internet Protocol (IP) connection, particularly broadband, using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). IP Communications also enable a rich multi-media set of advanced services, including Video, High Definition Sound, Instant Messaging and Presence. Internet Telephony Service Providers can provide regular and enhanced phone line services – often at substantial cost reductions .

### **About ITSPA ([www.itspa.org.uk](http://www.itspa.org.uk))**

**ITSPA is the UK's industry body for Internet Telephony Service Providers. Founded in 2004, with over 60 members, ranging from the largest Tier 1 operators to the new entrants, providing services to millions of consumers and businesses. It launched the industry's first Code of Practice in 2005, which is mandatory for all its members.**

### **ITSPA exists to:**

- Encourage the innovation and development of the VoIP industry through the promotion of self-regulation and competition;
- Lobby Ofcom, the UK Government and the European institutions to ensure the UK and Europe remain the most favourable environment in which to run a VoIP business and in which to be a VoIP customer;
- Respond to UK Government and European regulators on behalf of its members;
- Investigate solutions for industry, including fraud black lists, peering and interoperability;
- Reassure Consumers that any product or service bought from a company displaying the ITSPA logo comes with a high standard of consumer protection, which is properly enforced and includes a dispute resolution procedure.

### **ITSPA believes in:**

- The benefits of self-regulation to promote the growing VoIP sector;
- The need to foster a truly competitive and innovative market where VoIP providers can compete with existing telecoms providers on a level playing field;
- The facilitation of the provision of "naked DSL" (i.e. the provision of broadband access without needing to also pay for telephone line rental);
- Open, non-discriminatory access through all Broadband ISPs (i.e. ISPs should not block/hinder customers from using third party VoIP providers);
- The promotion of best efforts provision of access to emergency services and the provision of accurate information to the consumer about the level of access to emergency services available to them;
- Effective and competitively priced Local Loop Unbundling;
- The use of geographic numbers for VoIP providers;
- Efficient and competitively priced number portability (i.e. the ability to transfer/retain your phone number when you change service provider).