

999 Guidance consultation: Frequently Asked Questions

The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (the Authority) is responsible for the economic regulation of the telecoms, ports, and postal sectors, and for promoting competition in the supply of goods and services in Jersey.

As part of its work on telecoms, the Authority is consulting on proposed 999 Guidance being issued to telecoms operators required to provide a local emergency calls service for use free of charge by islanders and visitors. The first step in this consultation is publishing a draft of the guidance for review and comment by any interested parties.

This document contains information on why this consultation is taking place, its approach, focus and potential outcomes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the local emergency calls service?

It is critical for the safety and security of islanders and visitors that anyone with a fixed line or mobile telephone connection can dial a short single number to call and swiftly reach the police, ambulance, fire service or marine rescue – the emergency services.

Because of this, local operators providing a public telecoms service have a specific condition in their licence issued by the Authority requiring them to provide an emergency calls service that is free of charge to users, through dialling short codes 999 or 112.

Why has the Authority chosen to issue guidance covering the emergency calls service?

The licence condition is short and specific, designed to establish an explicit, legal requirement for operators to provide an emergency calls service, or 999 service.

Following several recent service incidents that affected the ability of some users to call the emergency services, the Authority committed to provide additional information setting out in more detail the expected service level associated with the 999 service.

The purpose of this additional information, issued as a 'Guidance on the Provision of a Public Emergency Calls Service' document, is helping operators understand expectations when designing, building and running networks and systems associated with the 999 service.

Cont.

If there are any future incidents affecting 999 calls, the Authority can also use the 999 Guidance to evaluate whether an operator complied with its licence conditions or not.

The proposed 999 Guidance and associated consultation aligns with the Authority's business plan and prioritisation principles, which include a commitment to work for the benefit of the public and consumers in Jersey.

What does the guidance contain?

Providing a 999 service involves multiple network elements and systems and the associated facilities, people and processes. It potentially requires agreements between operators for passing calls or providing outsourced services. And needs close coordination with government agencies that operate the actual emergency services, the police, ambulance, fire service and so on.

The proposed 999 Guidance covers all these areas, including requirements for service availability and reliability, support for the development of new features, performance reporting and reporting service incidents.

Why is the Authority consulting on the guidance?

While the Authority has committed to provide 999 Guidance, comments and views on what the final version may contain are welcomed.

Any interested parties, including telecoms operators, will have a period of time to review a draft version of the 999 Guidance and provide feedback on the contents. As a result of feedback received, the Authority may adjust or amend the final document to reflect.

How long will the consultation take?

The consultation period opens in December 2021 and runs to February 2022. Subject to time needed to assess and understand points raised by contributors, the Authority expects to publish a final version of the 999 Guidance as soon as possible after.

Who will carry out the consultation?

An Authority case officer will project manage the consultation, with the support of independent technical, legal or other specialised expertise if necessary.

Where is more information available?

The Authority's website at www.jcra.je contains information on this consultation and previous ones carried out. Background information on the Authority's approach to telecoms regulation can be found at www.jcra.je/competition-and-regulation/telecoms.