

# What action we've taken in January, what we're doing now and what we're doing next

Nuisance calls and messages remain a concern and tackling them is a key action for the ICO. Report your concerns to us at [ico.org.uk/concerns](http://ico.org.uk/concerns).

## What action we've taken



### Six fines

In January we issued six monetary penalties for making or sending unsolicited marketing calls and messages, amounting to £1,250,000 in total. The penalties included:

- **£300,000 against Holmes Financial Solutions Ltd** for making 8.7 million unlawful automated marketing calls;
- **£350,000 against Miss-sold Productions UK Ltd** for making over 74 million unlawful automated marketing calls;
- **£40,000 against Goody Market Ltd** for sending unlawful marketing text messages;
- **£250,000 against Barrington Claims Ltd** for making over 15 million unlawful automated marketing calls;
- **£80,000 against TFLI Ltd** for sending over 1.1 million unlawful marketing text messages; and
- **£230,000 against Newday Ltd** for sending over 44 million unlawful marketing emails.



### 175 cases are under investigation



### 36 third party information notices issued

These notices compel communications service providers to give information to the ICO. The evidence we gather helps our investigations.

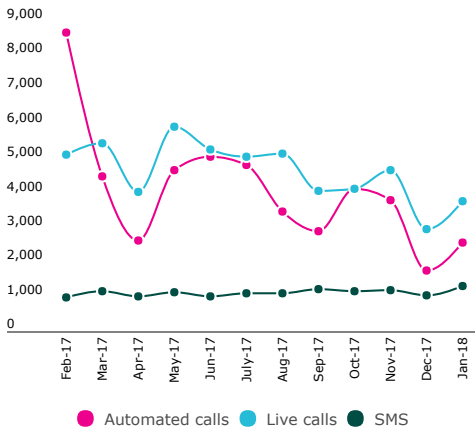


### 7,680 concerns were reported to the ICO in January 2018

This was an increase of approximately 33% compared with last month.

**Chart 1: Concerns reported by type, February 2017 - January 2018.**  
**Chart 2: Number of overall reported concerns, 2016 v 2017 v 2018.**

Chart 1



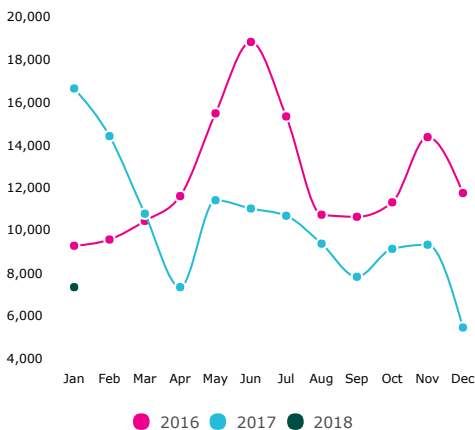
### Why have concerns been falling year-on-year?

As expected, reports have risen following the Christmas period. However, levels have not yet returned to the numbers seen in the second half of 2017. Also, the number of concerns in January 2018 fell by 55% compared to the same period in 2017, and fell by 20% compared to January 2016.

There are a number of possible reasons for the decrease in reported concerns:

- Successful investigations and enforcement action by the ICO may have prevented further breaches.
- Call blocking and SMS anti-spam technology are playing a part in reducing the impact of unsolicited marketing. Analysis of our data shows an increase in complaints about calls that have been intercepted by call blockers.
- The Claims Management Regulator and Ofcom have carried out further regulatory action.

Chart 2

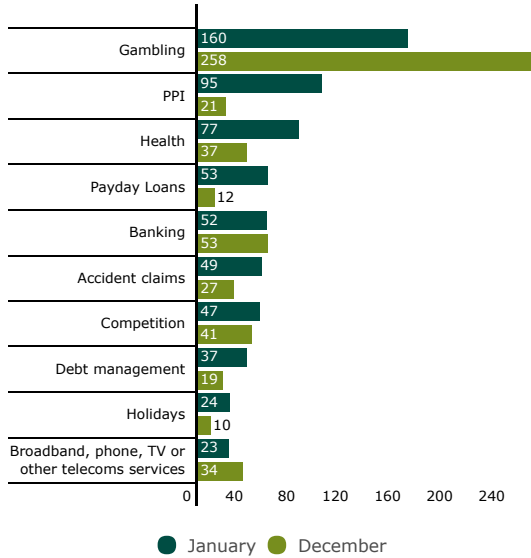




## 1,309 spam text concerns were reported in January 2018

This represented a month-on-month increase of 23%, and was the largest number of SMS concerns since November 2016.

### Most common spam text concern types, January 2018 v December 2017.



### Gambling spam messages remain the highest-reported topic

Although gambling concerns decreased by 38% last month, numbers are still comparatively high to those seen throughout 2017.



### Seasonal increase in health concerns

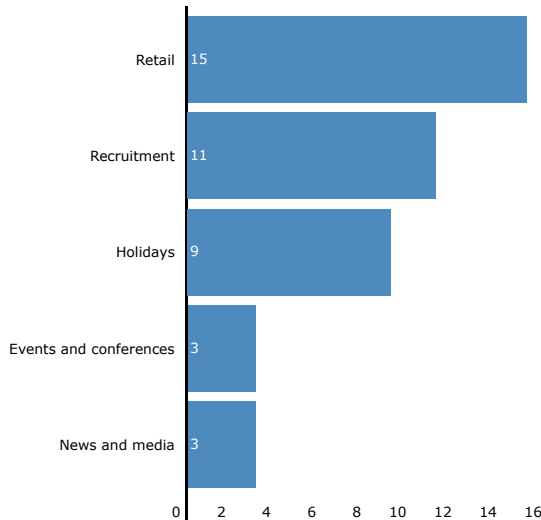
Although PPI and payday loan concerns were the topics with the largest increases in January, health concerns rose by 108% as messages relating to fitness increased. The most common subjects included weight loss drinks, gym memberships and 'muscle food'.



## Spam email concerns

We also conduct investigations into spam emails reported to the ICO. Complaint volumes are typically much smaller than seen in other contact types.

### Most common spam email concerns, January 2018.



### Annual trends

**2015-16:** We received 697 reports and the key sectors of concern were retail (217), spam (105), recruitment (51), news and media (35) and holidays (29).

**2016-17:** We received 2,663 reports and the key sectors of concern were retail (684), recruitment (216), banking (195), insurance (119) and news and media (119).

**2017-18 to date:** Up until the end of January, the ICO received 2,125 reports. Retail (444), insurance (224), recruitment (149) and banking (90) are again amongst the top 5 topics but are joined for the first time by gambling (159).

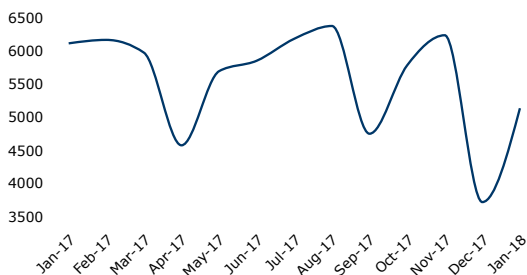
So far this year, the ICO has taken formal enforcement action against four organisations resulting in fines of £370,500.



## There were 5,263 concerns submitted to the Telephone Preference Service in January

This was an 37% increase on the figure for December.

### Concerns submitted to the Telephone Preference Service, January 2017 - January 2018.



This figure consists of all valid complaints, both issued and not issued. Despite the increase, volumes haven't quite returned to the numbers seen before Christmas, a trend also mirrored in the overall number of complaints submitted to the ICO.

## What we're doing now

We are monitoring the following companies:



### We have seen improvements from...

Secure Calls  
EDF Energy  
Car Finance 247



### We have concerns about...

Solartech North East Ltd  
Horizon Windows  
Waterloo Solutions Ltd t/a Uclaim4me  
Uniplus Telecom Ltd  
Goodwin Barrett Ltd  
Mainframe Limited  
Guardian Inheritance  
Aditus Audience Acquisition Ltd  
Choice Future Planning Ltd  
CR Smith Ltd  
Coastal Windows & Conservatories

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This report was published on 20 February 2018. We aim to update this report every month.