



Government U-turn over child maintenance phone charges

We are delighted to announce achieving a further campaigning success, working with **Gingerbread** – the single parents charity.

The detail behind two statements from Work and Pensions minister Steve Webb is contained in [this jointly prepared release](#).



11 March 2014



Steve Webb (The Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions; Thornbury and Yate, Liberal Democrat)

There have been no discussions with mobile telephone companies on making mobile telephone calls to the Child Maintenance Options Service 0800 telephone line free of charge.

Callers contacting the Child Maintenance Options Service from a mobile phone are informed that calls from **BT** landlines are free of charge.



12 June 2014



Steve Webb (The Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions; Thornbury and Yate, Liberal Democrat)

Calls to the **Child Maintenance Options** 0800 telephone number are free from **BT** land lines but customers may have to pay if they use another telephone company or a mobile, or if they are calling from abroad. We are currently finalising arrangements with the six major mobile network providers to make the numbers free to call from their networks.

In the meantime, callers contacting the Child Maintenance Options service from a mobile telephone are informed by their network provider that they will be charged.

(The full Hansard text is available using the links.)

Gingerbread chief executive **Fiona Weir** said:

“This is an important victory for families for whom every penny counts. This is a government service that hundreds of thousands of parents will have no choice but to call. At 41 pence a minute, the costs for families are eye watering, so we are pleased that the government has reconsidered its position.”

David Hickson from the **fair telecoms campaign** said:

“0800 numbers won’t be made free for all callers until June next year. The DWP is to be congratulated for recognising this and taking the necessary action now for all of its 0800 numbers; omission of the CMO lines appears to have been a mistake, which has thankfully now been corrected.”

