



### The new published Daisy position on 0844 numbers

**Daisy** has published a statement - "[Surgery Line Statement on 0844](#)".

This followed today's publication of a **Wales on Sunday** item - [Dozens of Welsh GP surgeries using premium telephone numbers - despite a ban two years ago](#) and the **fair telecoms campaign** news release - [Daisy Surgery Line ends 0844 numbers for NHS GPs](#). We brief and **comment**.

**Daisy** claims, *"We have always listened to the needs of our customers, undertaking extensive work to help support them with compliance and developing solutions which help meet the very significant demands placed upon frontline NHS staff and improved access for patients"*.

**We agree that it is challenging for NHS providers to offer the best possible services without being able to charge patients. It is tempting for providers to overstep the mark set by the need to comply with the principles of the NHS. These are now reflected in contractual conditions for GPs in England and Wales covering their choice of telephone number.**

The **Daisy** statement continues, *"We will continue to work in the interests of our GP customers and develop solutions which support them ... we have taken the decision to no longer proactively market the 0844 product to NHS-related organisations."*

**It is good to know that Daisy will no longer seek to tempt more GPs into specific breaches of their NHS contracts, and NHS Dentists into breaching the principles of the NHS. Existing Surgery Line customers who have wrongly chosen 0844 numbers do however need an assurance that they too will now be supported with compliance.**

The terms of the relevant NHS contracts require GPs already using 0844 numbers to take "reasonable steps" to ensure that callers pay no more than the cost of an equivalent call to a geographic number. This is achieved by changing to a "03 or local intelligent number".

The [Surgery Line FAQ](#) answers the question *"Why would a practice change to 03 or even a local intelligent number?"* by suggesting that this is a cheaper option than changing to a simple geographic number and stating, *"Different costs will apply according the option you choose"*.

Many **Daisy Surgery Line** customers (with support from the **BMA GPC**) assert that the cost of taking this step is not "reasonable", because it includes a contract termination penalty, even though they only seek a variation to the arrangement. **This contradiction must be resolved.**

The statement concludes *"We will continue to work with our GP customers to develop alternative solutions, supporting them by providing them with the products of their choice"*.

**Daisy's** continuing GP customers are required to choose to respond to public opinion that they comply with their NHS contracts, by changing to a 03 or local intelligent number. **If the necessary commercial 'solutions' to support this choice have perhaps not yet been developed, then they are long overdue, as the contractual deadline for this change was 1 April 2011.**

The statement does however indicate that **Daisy's** recently revised position is based on a decision that, *"we will not stand in the way of public opinion"*.

**Public opinion clearly demands that these solutions be put in place immediately and proactively marketed to all existing Surgery Line customers currently using 0844 numbers. Ceasing proactive marketing to encourage further breaches is a welcome move, but the public opinion which has been voiced relates primarily to existing breaches.**

