



### Department for Work and Pensions to retain 0845 numbers and declare "Service Charge" of 2p per minute

**BBC Money Box** has announced that the **Department for Work and Pensions** has considered the implications of forthcoming new **Ofcom** regulations and decided, unlike **HMRC**, to retain use of 0845 numbers. These are used for all enquiries about Pensions, Benefits and services for Jobseekers, including the new **Personal Independence Payment** and **Universal Credit**.

This was confirmed in a letter to **John Healey MP**. Click to listen to the [Money Box item](#) .

**Ofcom** will shortly announce the detail of new regulations to **Simplify Non-Geographic Numbers**. The **"Unbundled Tariff"** will require the two component parts of the charge for calling all 084, 087 and 09 numbers to be declared separately, rather than bundled together (hidden), as at present. The **"Access Charge"** - set and retained by the caller's telephone company - will be separated from the **"Service Charge"** - chosen by, and to the benefit of, the party called. Each will be declared. The **Service Charge** for calls to 0845 numbers will be 2p per minute (assuming the present level). The **Access Charge** for calls to 0845 numbers is currently between -2p and 39p per minute. This odd situation will be regularised, under the simplification measures when they come into effect.

In [its most recent statement](#), Ofcom offers an example to illustrate how the Service Charge could be presented



Based on its confirmed current position, the Department for Work and Pensions could use an illustration in a similar style



Contrary to mistaken assertions made by **DWP**, the overwhelming majority of calls to geographic rate (01/02 and 03) numbers are now made under the terms of Call Plans or bundles, i.e. with no call charge. Few pay the **penalty charges** incurred for such calls when breaching these terms.

The **fair telecoms campaign** fully supports the **"Unbundled Tariff"**. Where Service Providers wish to charge for use of their services by telephone they should be free to do so, and must declare the **Service Charge**. They must also be generally aware of the impact of the **Access Charge**.

We note the decision made by **DWP** with surprise, and wait to hear from other bodies who are aware of the forthcoming **Ofcom** announcement, and therefore ready to declare their position.

**e.g. Citizens Advice: Consumer Helpline** - 08454 040506 - **2p per minute**, and **Citizens Advice Bureaux** - 08444 111 444 - **5p per minute**. Will these **Service Charges** be retained and declared?

#### See also

- [A detailed briefing pack on DWP numbers and the option of migration to 03 numbers.](#)
- [A briefing on the recent announcement of the decision to move to 03 by HMRC.](#)

