



All firms must end ALL costly calls from customers

Background

Regulations to implement the requirements of the Consumer Rights Directive will be introduced shortly, to take effect from June 2015. This will prohibit use of numbers charged at more than the “basic rate” for telephone contact from customers.

We [announced this](#) when the draft of the regulations was published.

We have [highlighted cases that remain excluded](#).

These cases were adopted to form the basis of the demands of the **Which?** [Costly Calls Campaign](#).

Which? has itself prepared evidence covering the potentially excluded transport and travel sectors. Joint work is also proceeding in relation to public services and financial services.

Further exemptions

It has been proposed that firms using 084 numbers are also exempted from the ban. The disgraceful suggestion appears to have been advanced by the telecoms industry.

Service Charges and Access Charges

084 numbers are associated with a relative low level of **Service Charge** - up to **7p per minute**. This makes little or no contribution towards the actual costs of running a customer support operation, but may pay for the telephone system itself. Calls to 084 numbers do however attract some very high **Access Charges** - up to **39p per minute**.

(The cost of calling a 084, 087 or 09 number consists of two elements: the “**Service Charge**” to the benefit of the company called and the “**Access Charge**” to the benefit of the telephone company with whom the call is made. **Ofcom** proposes that these be “unbundled” so as to be transparent.)

The Government and Consumer Rights

It is absurd to pretend that a call which provides any subsidy of costs to the person called is charged at the “basic rate”. The government cannot possibly declare that a charge of up to 7p per minute for a telephone enquiry or complaint is acceptable! - or can it?

Future Action

Friday 11 October is the deadline for submission of comments on the draft provisions. Following this, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will consider the comments, and make any revisions to the terms of the regulations, to be placed before parliament.

We urge those who wish to argue for exemption of those using 084 numbers to come forward and present their arguments in public. Any business that wishes to continue charging its customers for making post sales enquiries and complaints must present its arguments to those customers.

