



Hello and welcome to the **fair telecoms campaign**.

We're writing to you because you contacted or registered support for the campaign, or sent us details of your GP practice because it uses a 084 number. **If you don't wish to receive further communications from us, then let us know by replying to this e-mail.**

## About fairtelecoms

**fairtelecoms** campaigns for workable solutions to unjust and "rip-off" practices within the industry. Issues can be anything and so aren't limited to a pre-defined list.

We are here to harness and support the campaigning energies of everyone who shares our views. If you've been working on something that might be of interest, or can help in any way, then get in touch.

## fairtelecoms news

You can keep up-to-date with the **fair telecoms campaign** by viewing our [news feed](#). You can also receive e-mail updates or follow it using an RSS reader. The feed contains links to:

- The postings on our [blog](#), which includes briefings, news releases and other comment.
- News items from the media that are of interest to the campaign. If there are any stories that you have come across that we haven't included, please let us know.

## In this newsletter

### ➤ [Nuisance calls](#)

More and more people are being pestered by nuisance calls. The **Sunday Post** is running a petition which we ask that you sign. We are also calling for an agency to be set-up to take reports from consumers, investigate and take steps to eradicate these types of calls.

### ➤ [084 numbers in the NHS](#)

Despite being outlawed nearly three years ago, many **NHS GPs** continue to pass on part of the cost of their phone systems by using these numbers. We continue to draw attention to the issue and celebrate cases where, albeit belatedly, surgeries and other NHS organisations change numbers.

### ➤ [Reform of 08/09 numbers](#)

It's been eight years since **Ofcom** admitted that 0870 numbers were "premium rate, but by another name". In the next month or so we expect it will announce radical changes to these ranges which will cause the level of benefit that users enjoy brought out into the open.

### ➤ [Consumer Rights Directive](#)

The EU has decided that the UK must "say no" to customer service lines that charge anything more than the **basic rate**. We await **BIS'** statement following the consultation and we hope that this will see the end to much widespread misuse of 084 and 087 numbers.





## Nuisance calls

They are a growing annoyance and the powers that be are doing very little. Please [sign the Sunday Post petition](#) which calls on the government to act.

At the moment it is down to **Ofcom** and the **Information Commissioner's Office** to police this area. They choose to draw-up “policies” that fleet around the edges and explicitly permit practices such as Silent Calls.

We [propose](#) that there should be a “nuisance calls agency” set-up to investigate and work pro-actively towards eradicating this practice.

## 084 numbers in the NHS

**Gloucestershire Hospitals and PCT** [have recently replaced](#) their raft of 0845 numbers with one beginning 0300. It is great news, but there are still many more NHS providers using 084 numbers.

Some practices have opted for a local number to run alongside the 084 one, albeit that it gives the engaged tone if someone is using it. This disgraceful breach of the NHS creates a [two-tier system](#).

## Reform of 08/09 numbers

These numbers are a widespread rip-off with [SayNoTo0870.com](#) being a popular destination for consumers who loath them. There are many organisations that use 084 numbers that shouldn't and which couldn't sustain them should “the truth come out” – that they enjoy a petty subsidy.

In the New Year, Ofcom will announce its statement and a further consultation on the reform of the 08 and 09 number ranges. It is anticipated that this will mean that users will have to declare how much they benefit from calls (the **Service Charge** element), as well as call providers publishing how much they add on (the **Access Charge** element). This is expected to be referred to as the “**Unbundled Tariff**”.

In [our response](#) we said that this will introduce much needed clarity. Currently the two elements are bundled together in a single charge which means that users aren't open about how much they benefit or how much callers are likely to pay.

## Consumer Rights Directive

The EU passed the Consumer Rights Directive which the UK government must enact into law. It requires companies to provide customers with numbers that charge no more than the **basic rate**.

In [our response](#) to the recent government consultation on this we said that 084 and 087 numbers certainly do not fit the bill as “basic rate”; only 01, 02, 03 and 080 numbers should be permitted.

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See our [animated Christmas card](#). We wish you all the best for the festive season and here's to a fairer 2013!

*Dave Lindsay*

