

**Gloucestershire NHS finally gives up its 084 numbers,  
but it allows its GPs to continue their rip-off**

The **fair telecoms campaign** is delighted to congratulate the **Gloucestershire NHS Health Community** (Hospitals, PCT and Care Services) on its move to compliance with the Directions to NHS bodies issued by the **Department of Health** on 21 December 2009 - [see here](#).

From Monday, 26 November 2012 (23 months after the deadline for compliance) the 0845 numbers used across these three bodies will change to 03 numbers. [See the media release](#).

## The 03 option



All numbers from the 03 ranges allow the benefits of non-geographic numbers to be deployed, but without the imposition of a **"Service Charge"** on callers. This additional charge, to the benefit of the person called, applies to all 084 numbers. **Gloucestershire NHS** has chosen to make some changes to the further structure of its numbers, and has therefore chosen the 0300 range. An even simpler option is available, as any 084 number may be changed to its direct 034 equivalent.

The latter option is that which should be used by GPs who are under contract for use of a non-geographic number from a particular provider, who is guaranteed by Ofcom to be able to offer migration from 084 to 034 without any other change to the arrangements.

The key point about all 03 numbers is, to quote from the Gloucestershire NHS media release,

***"Calls from both landlines and mobiles will be charged at no more than the cost of a call to an 01 or 02 number."*** This reflects the reality of the situation, supported by **Ofcom** regulation.

## The requirements for NHS bodies and GPs

Since 21 December 2009 and 1 April 2010, respectively, NHS bodies and contracted GPs have been subject to a requirement that ***"persons will not pay more to make relevant calls than they would to make equivalent calls to a geographical number"***. A period of 12 months was allowed for changes necessary to achieve compliance to be made.

This very neatly defines the 03 ranges as the only non-geographic numbers that may be used.

## Gloucestershire GPs and other NHS bodies in breach

Despite being aware of the 03 option and the requirements, although NHS Gloucestershire (the Primary Care Trust) has itself now moved to compliance, **it permits its GPs to remain in breach**.

NHS Choices shows 18 GP surgeries contracted to **NHS Gloucestershire** still using 084 numbers - [see this list](#), with links to the NHS Choices entries.

The move to 03 must be celebrated as an example to the **many other NHS bodies** that remain in breach - [see this list](#).

