

**“Howler” by Grayling and Morgan kicks off coverage of the complete “Rip-off Helplines” story**

The current rip-off by one of 55 helplines covered by our news release **‘Free’ Charity Helplines will have to own up to their telephone charges on 084/087 numbers** is now exposed.

See [“Revenge porn government helpline costs callers 41p a minute to get advice”](#) in today’s Sunday Mirror. (The relevant item is highlighted in the list overleaf.)

Our release, repeated on the following pages, gives the full story about the problem facing all helplines using 084 / 087 numbers when they will have to declare their own Service Charge on callers from 1 July this year. (This point was not covered in the Sunday Mirror piece.)

However much they try to wriggle now (see below), under the current messy regime, the truth will be clearly exposed under the [Ofcom UK Calling programme](#) which will come into effect on 1 July.

Whatever mistakes have been made in the past (even as recently as two weeks ago), our primary concern is for the situation to be put right for the future.

The howler

The Sunday Mirror quotes me as saying *“It’s a hell of a howler”*.

Recent reports from both the [Department for Education](#) and the [Department for Justice](#) indicate that they understand the unacceptability of use of 084 numbers and have taken action.

Both Nicky Morgan, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Woman and Equalities, and Chris Grayling, Minister for Justice, have therefore clearly missed an important point when being so closely involved with the launch of this helpline. See [Revenge porn helpline launched by government](#) - *is the headline wrong to imply that it is a government-funded helpline?*

It is quite absurd for the Department for Education to say, as quoted, *“... it is not charged at premium rate”*. Although a technical definition of ‘Premium Rate Services’ could support this nonsense, most callers would regard 41p per minute (as against no charge for an inclusive call to a 03 number) as a ‘premium rate’. That is why the DfE has changed many of its own numbers!

The position of the South West Grid for Learning is even more ridiculous. Laura Higgins, manager of the revenge porn line, is said to hold the view that she is content to carry the shame of using an expensive number when there is relatively little cost incurred with calls, and so she could readily go without the modest subsidy obtained at the expense of callers. **If callers are not “running up big bills” then there would not be a big bill for properly funding the service.**

Moving forward with this story

For independent helpline services, funded by government and using 084 numbers, the solution may well be for additional funding to be provided. Initially, this could be to allow a switch to a 03 number, which is free to call for most because it has no Service Charge. Alternatively, there may be cases where it is necessary to provide the further funding necessary for a switch to completely free-to-call 080 numbers, for when these come into effect, also on 1 July.

As a new government will be formed following the forthcoming General Election, now could be a good time to discuss how far voters wish their taxation to be used to provide socially valuable services. Those who seek a role in such a government may be ready to offer their views.





'Free' Charity Helplines will have to own up to their telephone charges on 084/087 numbers

New regulations, coming into effect on 1 July, will cause major problems for many 'free' helplines unless urgent action is taken. (See the [video](#) and newspaper ad →)

Central government has already dealt with departmental helplines and, through regulation, businesses helplines.

From 1 July, all those who benefit from a subsidy towards the cost of their telephone service, at the expense of callers, will have to declare this "Service Charge". It is currently hidden within a rate set by the phone company.

The level of Service Charge on calls to 084 / 087 numbers may be lower than that on calls to 09 numbers, but it is false and misleading for these to be described as being "lo-call" or even "local" rate. "Geographic rate" numbers (01/02/03) are mostly free to call, being included in the caller's Plan or Bundle, and having no Service Charge.

See our list of examples (overleaf)

We list many of the affected helpline services.

Each name gives a link to the web page where the information about the service is published. The number and the level of Service Charge which will have to be declared from 1 July are also given.

No surprise

According to the 'UK Calling' Website - ([see "Find out your Service Charge"](#)) - the telephone company providing the helpline will have advised the helpline service provider of the applicable rate of Service Charge from "late summer 2014". Although not all of the rates have yet been made available publicly, none of this should come as a surprise to the helpline providers.

Unless the helpline provider is happy to declare this, as a charge for their service, they must switch to an alternative number, or withdraw the service, before 1 July. Each should be ready to explain what they intend to do:

declare the charge or **switch numbers** or **withdraw the service**

Please get in touch for further comment and information

Changing numbers takes time, even after any necessary additional funding has been secured - the process should now be well underway.

The **fair telecoms campaign** has prepared a set of proposals, which would provide a way of addressing these issues, without placing undue costs on either helpline providers or callers.

We understand that the [Helplines Partnership](#) is across all of the relevant issues and is advancing proposals of its own. It may be prepared to offer comment.

David Hickson 

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CLEAR CHARGES FOR 08, 09, 118 NUMBERS

You might be surprised how often you call 'service numbers'. They're used by customer service lines, directory enquiries and premium rate services. Some cost a few pence, but others can be several pounds.

Before the call: the cost

From this summer, the cost of calling service numbers will be made up of two parts:

The access charge (which goes to your phone company) and **the service charge** (set by the people you're calling).

Add them together, and you know exactly what you'll pay.

New Freephone rules

Also from the summer: Freephone numbers (0800 and 0808) will be free from consumer mobiles, not just landlines.

For more, visit [ukcalling.info](#) or contact your phone company

UK CALLING
CLEAR CALL RATES FOR EVERYONE

Ofcom
WORKING WITH THE PHONE COMPANIES



'Free' Charity Helplines that will have to own up to their charges on 084 / 087 telephone numbers

Aanchal Women's Aid	0845 451 2547	3ppm	The Lesbian & Gay Foundation	0845 330 3030	3ppm
Action Against Medical Accidents	0845 123 2352	2ppm	Maternity Action	0845 600 8533	5ppm
Aid for the Aged in Distress	0870 803 1950	7ppm	MND Connect (Motor Neurone Disease Association)	0845 762 6262	TBC
Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 769 7555	TBC	National Bullying Helpline	0845 225 5787	7ppm
Anxiety UK	0844 477 5774	7ppm	National Centre for Domestic Violence	0844 804 4999	7ppm
ARCH (Abortion Recovery Care & Helpline)	0845 603 8501	5ppm	National Kidney Federation	0845 601 0209	5ppm
Battle Against Tranquillisers	0844 826 9317	7ppm	Natural Parents Network (NPN)	0845 456 5031	3ppm
Beat (beat eating disorders)	0845 634 1414	2ppm	Network 81	0845 077 4055	2ppm
Beat Youthline	0845 634 7650	2ppm	OCD Action	0845 390 6232	2ppm
Bladder and Bowel Foundation	0845 345 0165	3ppm	OCD UK	0845 120 3778	2ppm
British Red Cross	0844 871 1111	7ppm	The Only Way is Up Foundation	0845 467 2231	5p + 5ppm after 1 min
Carers Trust	0844 800 4361	7ppm	The Patients Association	0845 608 4455	5ppm
Coeliac UK	0845 305 2060	2ppm	The Pituitary Foundation	0845 450 0375	2ppm
The Compassionate Friends	0845 123 2304	2ppm	The Pituitary Foundation (Endocrine Nurse Helpline)	0845 450 0377	2ppm
Cruse Bereavement Care	0844 477 9400	7ppm	RoadPeace	0845 450 0355	2ppm
Cry-Sis Helpline	0845 122 8669	2ppm	RP Fighting Blindness	0845 123 2354	2ppm
Dementia UK (Admiral Nursing DIRECT)	0845 257 9406	7ppm	Samaritans	0845 790 9090	TBC
Ectopic Pregnancy Foundation	0845 070 4636	2ppm	SAMM (Support After Murder and Manslaughter)	0845 872 3440	2ppm
Education Otherwise	0845 478 6345	3ppm	Saneline	0845 767 8000	TBC
False Allegations Support Organisation	0844 335 1992	7ppm	SCARD (Support & Care After Road Death & Injury)	0845 123 5542	2ppm
The Family Survival Trust	0845 603 7121	5ppm	Sleep Apnoea Trust	0845 038 0060	TBC
Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays	0845 652 0311	TBC	South West Grid for Learning Trust (Revenge Porn Helpline)	0845 6000 459	5ppm
The Farming Community Network	0845 367 9990	7ppm	Tackle Prostate Cancer	0845 601 0766	5ppm
Freedom Charity	0845 607 0133	5ppm	VoiceAbility (ICMA advice)	0845 017 5198	2ppm
Grandparents' Association	0845 434 9585	7ppm	Winston's Wish	0845 203 0405	2ppm
Hampshire Macmillan Citizens Advice Bureau	0844 847 7727	7ppm			
HemiHelp	0845 123 2372	2ppm			
Herpes Viruses Association	0845 123 2305	2ppm			
Kidney Cancer UK	0844 870 7054	7ppm			
La Leche League GB Ltd	0845 120 2918	2ppm			

