fair telecoms campaign **news release**

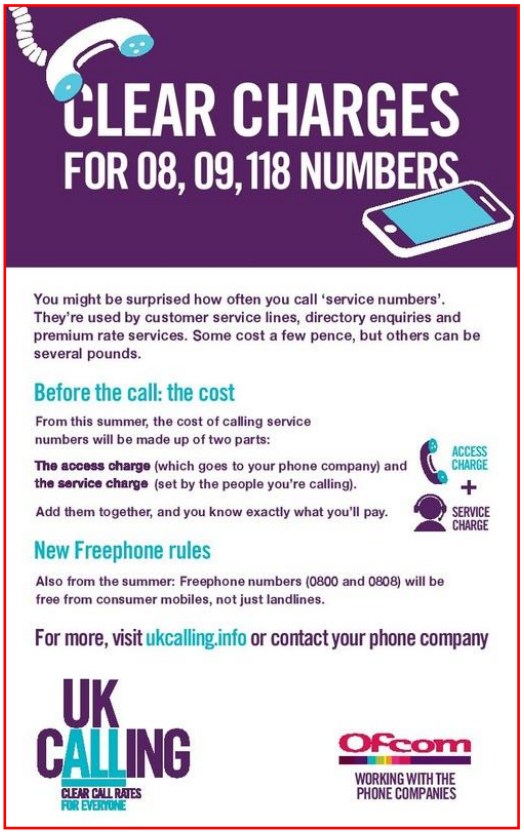
‘Free’ Charity Helplines will have to own up to their telephone charges on 084/087 numbers

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

Tuesday, 17 February 2015

fair telecoms campaign **briefing**

‘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
Action Against Medical Accidents	0845 123 2352	2ppm
Aid for the Aged in Distress	0870 803 1950	7ppm
Alcoholics Anonymous	0845 769 7555	TBC
Anxiety UK	0844 477 5774	7ppm
ARCH (Abortion Recovery Care & Helpline)	0845 603 8501	5ppm
Battle Against Tranquillisers	0844 826 9317	7ppm
Beat (beat eating disorders)	0845 634 1414	2ppm
Beat Youthline	0845 634 7650	2ppm
Bladder and Bowel Foundation	0845 345 0165	3ppm
British Red Cross	0844 871 1111	7ppm
Carers Trust	0844 800 4361	7ppm
Coeliac UK	0845 305 2060	2ppm
The Compassionate Friends	0845 123 2304	2ppm
Cruse Bereavement Care	0844 477 9400	7ppm
Cry-Sis Helpline	0845 122 8669	2ppm
Dementia UK (Admiral Nursing DIRECT)	0845 257 9406	7ppm
Ectopic Pregnancy Foundation	0845 070 4636	2ppm
Education Otherwise	0845 478 6345	3ppm
False Allegations Support Organisation	0844 335 1992	7ppm
The Family Survival Trust	0845 603 7121	5ppm
Famlies and Friends of Lesbians and Gays	0845 652 0311	TBC
The Farming Community Network	0845 367 9990	7ppm
Freedom Charity	0845 607 0133	5ppm
Grandparents' Association	0845 434 9585	7ppm
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

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation	0845 330 3030	3ppm
Maternity Action	0845 600 8533	5ppm
MND Connect (Motor Neurone Disease Association)	0845 762 6262	TBC
National Bullying Helpline	0845 225 5787	7ppm
National Centre for Domestic Violence	0844 804 4999	7ppm
National Kidney Federation	0845 601 0209	5ppm
Natural Parents Network (NPN)	0845 456 5031	3ppm
Network 81	0845 077 4055	2ppm
OCD Action	0845 390 6232	2ppm
OCD UK	0845 120 3778	2ppm
The Only Way is Up Foundation	0845 467 2231	5p + 5ppm after 1 min
The Patients Association	0845 608 4455	5ppm
The Pituitary Foundation	0845 450 0375	2ppm
The Pituitary Foundation (Endocrine Nurse Helpline)	0845 450 0377	2ppm
RoadPeace	0845 450 0355	2ppm
RP Fighting Blindness	0845 123 2354	2ppm
Samaritans	0845 790 9090	TBC
SAMM (Support After Murder and Manslaughter)	0845 872 3440	2ppm
Saneline	0845 767 8000	TBC
SCARD (Support & Care After Road Death & Injury)	0845 123 5542	2ppm
Sleep Apnoea Trust	0845 038 0060	TBC
South West Grid for Learning Trust (Revenge Porn Helpline)	0845 6000 459	5ppm
Tackle Prostate Cancer	0845 601 0766	5ppm
VoiceAbility (ICMA advice)	0845 017 5198	2ppm
Winston's Wish	0845 203 0405	2ppm

David Hickson

Tuesday, 17 February 2015

fair telecoms campaign **news release**

"... charges on 084/087 numbers" - Supplementary

Coverage of the issues raised in our release 'Free' Charity Helplines will have to own up to their telephone charges on 084/087 numbers is being confused by attempts to repeat the confusion that has surrounded this area for many years, but is now about to be removed.

We understand that a statement may have been released regarding a 0845 telephone number - "... ***this number is charged at 'local' rate, not a 'premium' rate"***. **This is misleading nonsense**.

- Such a statement uses a definition of the word 'premium' which disregards the premium charge paid by most callers (e.g. up to 45p per minute by customers of EE).

  The 'premium' cost involved should not be confused with the special category of "Premium Rate Services". These are specially regulated, as they are used to provide income, rather than the cost subsidy which is obtained from use of 084 numbers.

- The reference to 'local' rate is relevant only to some business BT callers, as all BT residential customers were taken off the "BT standard tariff" from 2004 and now enjoy no distinction between 'local' and 'national' rate calls.

  The reference to "local rate" and the "BT standard tariff" in the current version of the National Telephone numbering plan (see the version currently in effect) is now removed (see the new version to come into effect from the implementation of UK Calling).

We deeply regret the fact that some people continue to try to exploit (and misrepresent) these technical definitions of call costs rather than accepting the reality which faces those who call helplines.

Our unhappy role is to expose this exploitation and misrepresentation, not to introduce the complications which this behaviour creates.

The Ofcom UK Calling project, which we wholly support, will remove all of the confusion surrounding 084 numbers in particular. It is not thought appropriate to add the burden of additional regulation which continues to apply to 087, 09 and 118 numbers, however they are included in the definition of "Service Numbers" and clear cost declaration will be required.

All users of 084 numbers, including the helplines listed in our release, will have to declare the existence and level of the "Service Charge" component of the call cost, which is currently hidden within a bundled charge set by the caller's telephone company. Telephone companies will also have to declare their own "Access Charge" separately.

Our wish is to support the provision of helpline services, by ensuring that providers, and those who fund them, are aware of the coming changes and are able to properly address the implications of the subsidy, which they currently obtain through indirect charges on callers, being brought into the open.

Over recent years we have won many battles with businesses and even public bodies who have sought to pretend that this subsidy does not exist. It is very disappointing to find that these battles still have to be fought.

David Hickson

Saturday, 21 February 2015