

The table which follows completes [the written answer given on 21 May 2012](#) by showing the cost surcharge incurred by callers due to **HMRC** using 0845, as opposed to 0345, numbers. The call duration of 15 minutes and 32 seconds is as given in that written answer.

The call charge for any 03 number is the same as that for any geographic (01/02) number. The rates shown are for weekday daytime calls.

The selected examples

The table reflects the fact that contract telephone services invariably include a calls package. Users of the call plans offered for calls made only at weekends and during the evening (after 7:00 pm), will incur a penalty charge for “out of plan” weekday daytime calls.

The fully inclusive landline “Anytime” plans are the most popular overall (this is confirmed by the major providers, **BT** and **Virgin Media**). The minority who do not select them would be unlikely to be making daytime calls from home anyway - that is probably why they selected the other plans.

All of the mobile providers have confirmed that the overwhelming majority of calls to normal geographic rate numbers are made under the terms of packages.

The table given here does not show any penalty rates. “[When are 084 calls more expensive](#)” is the full **fairtelecoms** briefing on this subject, from which the rates have been taken.

BT (the exception) and its share of calls

One perverse effect of the current regulation of **BT** is its ability to include 0845 calls in packages, without the cost of the package becoming excessive due to the premium that is paid to the called party. This unusual move is also facilitated by the fact that **BT** is itself the leading provider of 0845 numbers. Competition has compelled some other providers to suffer the cost of following this move.

Ofcom statistics show that **BT** accounts for around 40% of landline calls, which represent roughly 50% of non-business calls made. It may be fair to assume that, with **Talk Talk** and other “**BT** followers”, the first group in the table accounts for around 25% of calls made.

HMRC has produced figures to show that the pattern of calling to its numbers is atypical of the general pattern, with far fewer calls from mobiles than would be expected. When one looks at the costs incurred, it is not difficult to suggest why this may be!

I have no clear evidence, but it would be highly likely that people incur inconvenience and indignity by not being able to use their own phone to contact HMRC, because of the costs.

The HMRC financial benefit

The revenue share benefit which accrues to **HMRC** (albeit indirectly) is shown per call for the example call duration selected. The rate given (1.7p per minute) is based on a rough conservative estimate. The actual figure is understood to be commercially confidential.

An easy way of evaluating this benefit is to understand the additional ongoing telecoms cost that **HMRC** would incur on moving to 03. The only difference to it is that this benefit is lost.

<u>Tariffs</u>		<u>Charge rates</u>		Call duration used: mins:secs 15:35		
<u>Landlines</u>		<u>0345</u>	<u>0845</u>	Benefit to called party @ 1.7p per minute: per call = (£0.26)		
Most Popular Landline Packages						
BT and its followers						
BT		inclusive	inclusive			
Talk Talk		inclusive	inclusive			
O2 Home		inclusive	inclusive			
Phone Co-op		inclusive	inclusive			
Others				<u>Setup (p)</u>	<u>ppm</u>	
Virgin Media		inclusive	11.24	10.22	-	175p £1.75
Sky Talk		inclusive	12.50	6.13	-	111p £1.11
Primus Saver		inclusive	12.90	6.00	-	109p £1.09
The Landline Social Tariff (available only to those receiving some DWP benefits)						
BT Basic		inclusive	3.10	4.03	-	66p £0.66
Public Payphone						
1 min to 30 min		60p	40.00	20.00	60p	360p £3.00
Mobiles		<u>0345</u>	<u>0845</u>	<u>0345 0845 surcharge</u>		
Pay Monthly Mobile packages				<u>ppm</u>		
Virgin Mobile		inclusive		41.00	-	639p £6.39
3		inclusive		35.00	-	560p £5.60
T-Mobile		inclusive		33.30	-	533p £5.33
O2		inclusive		20.40	-	318p £3.18
Vodafone		inclusive		14.00	-	224p £2.24
Orange		inclusive		12.40	-	199p £1.99
PAYG Mobile Tariffs		<u>ppm</u>	<u>ppm</u>			
O2		5.00	25.00	78p	390p	£3.12
T-Mobile		30.00	40.00	480p	640p	£1.60
3		26.00	35.00	416p	560p	£1.44
Virgin Mobile		26.00	31.00	405p	483p	£0.78
Orange		12.00	12.00	192p	192p	