fair telecoms campaign **news release**

Rip-off numbers – new action coming soon

After many **fair telecoms campaign** successes with the elimination of much improper use of 084 and 087 numbers (e.g. by GPs and government departments), one particular issue remains.

We have long campaigned (see an earlier posting) for serious action to be taken to effectively eliminate what are known as **"Information, Connection and Signposting Services (ICSS)"**.

These are rip-off services which offer connection to customer service lines at a premium rate, when the company being contacted uses a compliant regular number.

This scam is very well explained in this splendid item produced by **BBC Wales X-Ray**.

The Phone-paid Service Authority (PSA) responded in 2019 with some stricter regulations, however we understand that it is finally now ready to step these up further.

An announcement is expected, in the coming days, of new proposals which we hope may finally bring an end to a scam that has been tolerated for far too long.

We will review these proposals when they are published (there will be no embargoed advance notice) and will be ready to respond with comment.

Please get in touch for further information.

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In the coming months, we hopefully expect **Ofcom** to announce a long-awaited serious proposal **to remove the 084 and 087 ranges of numbers** from the National Numbering Plan. This will mean that all those who wish to offer Premium Rate Services will have to use the well-recognised ranges of numbers beginning with 09.

We believe that this will see an end to those who use 084 and 087 numbers to gain a small subsidy towards their telephone costs at enormous expense to callers, when there can be no question of them delivering a Premium Rate Service, e.g. on a sales enquiry line. (Use of any premium rate number is already prohibited for direct contact from existing customers – another great success!)

Ofcom has already consulted on this potential proposal but has no timescale for a final decision.

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Many successes and the redirection of media, politics and regulators onto urgent current issues have led to the **fair telecoms campaign** not being prominent over the last few years.

We nonetheless remain strongly engaged in drawing attention to issues that need the attention of the public and those holding the powers to ensure great fairness and to eliminate bad practices.

David Hickson

Wednesday, 1 February 2023