



Our relative Call Costs Guide - "Normal" Call Cost vs. "Number Crunching"

The [Ofcom "Number Crunching" document](#) is often used to give illustrations of the current cost of calling various types of telephone number. Because it offers only the potential minimum and maximum costs, it reflects some perverse charging and provides no indication of what is "normal". It is not inaccurate, however it is of little value in seeking to present the differences between the various ranges, for people in general.

In June 2015, the "unbundled tariff" regime (see [Clear call rates for everyone](#)) will split the "Access Charge", retained by the caller's phone company, from the "Service Charge", paid to the person called - on 084, 087, 09 and 118 numbers. Publications like these will then become redundant, as the same Access Charge will apply to all ranges and each Service Charge will be declared whenever the number is given.

The table which follows provides a refined way of looking at **the relative cost of a 5 minute call to each of the different types of number**. It presents a "Normal" Call Cost, fairly determined from published tariffs and an understanding of both the usage of the tariffs and typical calling patterns.

Ofcom does not collect the data required to support these figures, however well informed officers of Ofcom have expressed informal contentment with the publication of this table, albeit that the absence of complete data prevents them from providing complete formal endorsement.

Number beginning	Service Charge	"Normal" Call Cost			
		Landline		Mobile	
		Rate	5 min call ★	5 min call	Rate (ppm)
01, 02 or 03	none	none - inclusive	0p	0p	none - inclusive
0870	none	inclusive for some, otherwise setup fee + 10ppm	0p / 64p	£1.60	12 to 45, average 32
0845	2 ppm				
0844/3	(up to) 7 ppm	setup fee + 6 ppm	44p	£1.75	21 to 45, average 35
0871/2/3	(up to) 13 ppm	setup fee + 11 ppm	69p	£2.00	35 to 45, average 40
080	None	none	0p	£1.50	14 to 40, average 30

"Number crunching"	
Landline	Mobile
Rates (ppm)	Rates (ppm)
up to 9	8 to 40
up to 12	5 to 40
1 to 12	5 to 41
1 to 13	5 to 41
11 to 15	5 to 40
Free	7 to 40



Notes

★ A "normal" call setup fee of 14p is assumed in the cost of a 5 minute call from a landline.

No charge for calling 01, 02 or 03 numbers

A key point reflected in the table is that it is now "normal" not to incur call charges for calling 01, 02 or 03 numbers.

Those who call these numbers outside the terms of their chosen Call Plan or Bundle incur a sizeable "penalty charge". In some cases this is greater than the premium charge incurred as a result of a Service Charge paid to the person called when calling a 084 or 087 number.

Although both the premium (which is passed on) and the penalty (for going beyond the terms of a Call Plan or Bundle) contribute to the cost of the call, we see them as two quite separate items.

080 to become truly "free to caller"

The changes - [Clear call rates for everyone](#) - will also include passing the full cost of calls to 080 numbers onto the recipient in all cases. This means that those who will continue to use 080 numbers past June 2015 will have to pick up the full cost of calls from mobiles, as 080 numbers become truly "free to caller" in all cases.

We urge these organisations to think carefully about whether they need to pay the full cost of every incoming call, given that calls to 03 numbers are normally made at no cost, under the terms of a Call Plan or Bundle.

There are some callers who benefit from use of a 080 number, although this is becoming less common. It must however be noted that call originating telephone companies always benefit, because they are paid for every call.

Providers of important and essential services must be prepared to meet all of the call costs of all callers. Where this point does not apply, providing additional income to telephone companies must be balanced against the benefit to callers, who in many cases have selected the wrong Call Plan and are paying penalty charges on their calls to ordinary numbers.

When all subscribers pay the Service Charge

Some telephone companies currently collect the Service Charge, passed on to persons called, from all of their subscribers, so that these calls (most commonly to 0845 numbers) may be included in Call Plans and Bundles.

This practice is permitted, but we see it as unfair, because the effect of the Service Charge (which applies only to some calls) is thereby hidden within the cost of the Call Plan or Bundle.

We believe that the Service Charge should only be collected when it is properly incurred, i.e. when someone calls the organisation which benefits.

(If anyone comes upon any data that may help us to improve the quality of the table, we would be delighted to apply it.)

