

**HMRC withdraws the 'Telephone Tax' from its helplines**

Today, HMRC has begun removing the **Telephone Tax** from its own helplines.

The primary HMRC helpline numbers, covering **VAT**, **National Insurance** and **Income Tax**, are all changing from **0845** to **03** numbers during this week. See the HMRC announcement:

[New numbers for VAT, National Insurance, Income Tax, Self Assessment Helplines](#)

This is the beginning of its fulfilment of an assurance that ALL HMRC 0845 numbers will be replaced by 03 numbers "by the end of the summer". See our [news release](#).

An example to others

Some may think it odd that those enquiring by telephone about whether a **tax avoidance scheme** is legitimate no longer have to pay the **Telephone Tax**, whereas a pensioner enquiring about their **pension** will have to continue paying it. It has even been applied to the newly introduced helplines for the **Personal Independence Payment** and **Universal Credit**. See our release:

[Department for Work and Pensions to retain 0845 numbers](#)

A report prepared by John Healey MP into the **Telephone Tax**, also reveals its imposition by the **Department for Environment and Rural Affairs**, the **Department for Transport**, the **Home Office** and the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** on more than 50% of their helplines.

Read John's news release and report: [John calls for probe into 'telephone tax'](#)

This week we identified **938 NHS GP surgeries** in the UK which are imposing the **Telephone Tax**. In these cases it is retained to the benefit of the GPs, in covering part of the cost they incur in providing NHS services under contract. See our release, with links to listings from official sources - [Lists of UK GPs using 084 telephone numbers](#).

There are also **many NHS hospitals** and **other NHS bodies** which impose the **Telephone Tax**, through use of 084 numbers (a list is available on request).

When the provisions of the **Consumer Rights Directive** are implemented, through the Consumer Rights Bill, businesses will no longer be able to use 084 or 087 numbers for customer enquiries. To register a complaint about a breach of this regulation however, consumers will pay the **Telephone Tax** when calling the **Citizens Advice Consumer Service** on 0845 4 04 05 06.

National Audit Office to investigate the 'Telephone Tax'

We look forward to the National Audit Office report "[Charges for customer telephone lines](#)", which is expected to be published before parliament begins its summer recess.

We trust that this report will ensure that all public bodies (and their contractors) who apply the Telephone Tax, both declare and justify its imposition.

HMRC announced its decision to remove this tax in response to an earlier [NAO report](#).

See [our release covering the announcement of this new NAO study](#).

