



Rip-off customer service number and failure to provide refund due under the law
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Your problems

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Cash

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Focus on optician's illegal number

After an unsatisfactory experience with David Clulow Opticians, I discovered it uses a premium-rate phone number for its customer service, costing about 67p a minute.

Moreover, its website fails to display call charge information alongside the number, which is a breach of Ofcom regulations.

I contacted David Clulow, and parent company Luxottica, and told them it's been illegal to provide this sort of number for existing customers for five years but I am ignored.

BW, Her sham, Surrey

The David Clulow chain, which has 30 stores across the south-east, is in double breach of the law.

In 2014, the Consumer Rights Directive banned the use of premium-rate numbers for after-sales services, and Consumer Contracts Regulations and rules of the regulator Ofcom also require all costs to be displayed.

David Hickson of the Fair Telecoms Campaign says of the 084 and 087 numbers: "We urge all businesses to abandon them for sales lines, as the only real winners are the telephone companies. Their use for customer service has been illegal since June 2014. Customers are entitled to a refund of costs."

David Clulow changed its helpline to a standard-rate number as soon as the *Observer* queried it, but failed to comment on why it had continued the premium rate in breach of the law and ignored your complaints. You are entitled to a refund of any costs you have incurred calling the premium-rate number.

The government is currently reviewing the impact of the regulations, and the Fair Telecoms Campaign is in discussion with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute over potential improvements to enforcement action.

This article is also [published on the Guardian website](#)

David Hickson



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