



Quoted in The Observer 31 May 2020 -
Illegal 'rip-off' number still being used by DHL

Cash

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Your problems

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DHL's delay proves expensive to chase

I contacted DHL about a delayed parcel containing home-working equipment that I was expecting. The emails it sent advertised a premium rate 0844 number for its customer service. I have repeatedly asked why it is using this number during a national crisis and I have been ignored.

BW, Hersham, Surrey

The number you were invited to call charges 7p a minute, plus the access charge levied by your telephone service provider, which can be up to 65p per minute. That means that ringing DHL to chase a delivery could potentially cost 72p a minute.

Premium rate numbers for after-sales helplines were banned in 2014, but the legislation – the Consumer Contracts (information, cancellation and additional charges) Regulations

– applies to the company with whom the customer has a contract. In the case of couriers, it is with the sender rather than the recipient. This was DHL's defence when I got in touch. It added that recipients who don't want to pay the charges can use email or webchat.

However, **David Hickson**, of pressure group **The Fair Telecoms Campaign**, reckons it is questionable. "DHL is unquestionably acting as an agent of that company, and so the obligations of the regulation do apply to any call made in relation to fulfilment of the transaction," he says. "Strictly speaking, the company which engaged DHL is required to ensure that an 0844 number is not used and to refund the cost of any telephone call that is made."

The use of the number is doing DHL no favours as it looks like profiteering. But it is, in fact, the service providers who rake in the most through access charges up to five times the cut DHL receives.

