



## **Ofcom to end the scams on 070 numbers**

The **fair telecoms campaign** is delighted to welcome the Ofcom proposals set out in its consultation, [Personal numbering - Review of the 070 number range](#).

The proposals essentially achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that charges for calling 070 numbers are, as is commonly anticipated, the same as those for calling standard mobile numbers (in the ranges 071-075 and 077-079).
- To ensure, thereby, that the additional costs of using (Follow-me) “Personal Numbering Services” fall on the user of the service, rather than on those who call them.
- To eliminate use of 070 numbers for “premium rate” services, where they currently exist without the appropriate clarity regarding declaration of call charges.
- To eliminate use of 070 numbers for what are explicitly scams, due to an improper relationship between the provider and user of the service.

We have repeatedly argued that use of 070 numbers by Hospedia and others for inbound calls to hospital bedside phones, although currently explicitly tolerated by Ofcom, is wholly improper. We are delighted that Ofcom has now changed its view.

If Hospedia and others wish to continue the present business model of partly funding services by the imposition of premium charges on inbound calls, this must be achieved through the proper and equitable, albeit expensive, mechanism of using “premium rate” (09) numbers.

Since the standard mobile networks became accessible to hospital patients, the notion of any form of premium charge for telephone contact with hospital patients became redundant. We believe that hospital patients should all have access to mobile phones, subject to rules of courtesy regarding their use (as applicable universally), by one of the following means:

- 1. Their own personal mobile phone.
- 2. A (possibly old) handset lent by a friend, or relative equipped with a PAYG SIM.
- 3. We have been seeking to encourage Leagues of Hospital Friends to launch a scheme whereby patients without access to a mobile phone could be lent one, from a pool of handsets donated by Friends and supporters. These could be supported by PAYG SIMs, potentially supported by talktime offered by mobile networks as a charitable donation.

The **fair telecoms campaign** fully supports the Ofcom proposals but offers the following additional comments on their successful implementation:

**ft** It is vital that telephone services providers follow the logic of the forthcoming provisions by treating all calls to 070 numbers in the same way as calls to standard mobile numbers. If not, then Ofcom should consider regulatory requirements similar to those which require charges for calls to 03 numbers to be the same as those for calls to 01/02 numbers.)

**ft** All responsible organisations should recognise the rectitude of what Ofcom proposes to enforce by regulation and begin their migration away from use of 070 numbers immediately, rather than waiting to be compelled to do so.

