

Countryfile has launched its 2013 Calendar, which is
*“Sold on behalf of the BBC for Children in Need by Hallmark
 Consumer Services ... phone our order line on 0844 811 7044”*

Pudsey gave up 084 numbers in 2008

After extensive campaigning in 2008, BBC Children in Need replaced its 084 telephone numbers with the 034 equivalents. This ensured that callers paid only the cost (if anything) of a call to a geographic number to donate or request a fundraising pack.

It appears that something has gone badly wrong. Callers to 0844 811 7044 pay a premium Service Charge of around 5p per minute to the operator of the order line, plus a premium Access Charge of up to 35p per minute to their telephone company.

([This clip](#) on the Countryfile website announces the number.)



New regulations

As part of its new regulations to “simplify non-geographic numbers”, Ofcom will shortly be announcing a requirement to always state the Service Charge included in the cost of calling any 084 number. There is no current requirement to hide this charge, although many do!

If the BBC chose to follow Ofcom's suggested format (see [this example](#)), before it was compelled to do so, it would look something like this:



Is Pudsey happy with agents imposing service charges?

If Hallmark Consumer Services is content to levy a Service Charge on callers to its order lines, in the knowledge that telephone companies will add their own premiums, then that is matter for it to decide. We understood that Pudsey wanted to stay away from this practice.

The **fair telecoms campaign** argues that Service Charges (applied whenever a 084 number is chosen) should only be imposed in very particular circumstances - **not by Pudsey!**