



**To: Dr David Geddes, Director of Primary Care  
Commissioning - NHS England**

Dr Geddes

- [Revised NHS GP contracts prohibited new or continuing use of 084 telephone numbers in 2010.](#)
  - [You signed a letter seeking belated compliance with this requirement in November 2013.](#)
  - [We published a list of 183 practices promoting these numbers on NHS Choices in April 2015.](#)
  - [We now find at least one of these declaring the “Service Charge” that applies from 1 July 2015.](#)
- We trust the clinical skills of every GP to be deployed in the best interests of each patient.
  - Parliament sets the terms under which these are delivered in our National Health Service.
  - These terms currently include adherence to the principle of not imposing charges on patients.
- ? **By when can we expect GP practices to respect this, and comply with their contracts?**

In your draft of a letter from Area Teams to GPs of November 2013 you wrote - **“Your Area Team will be in touch to understand your plans for swiftly moving away from the use of 084 numbers”**. The word “swiftly” is now seen to have meant ‘with less haste than within 18 months’, whereas I proposed 4 months as more than adequate, and the original contract revisions allowed only 12..

We understand that, with effect from 1 April 2015, NHS England Area Teams have now been abolished and, in most cases, responsibility for enforcement of the terms of the GP contract has been devolved to the GP-led Clinical Commissioning Groups - **“within a transparent and robust framework for managing conflicts of interest”** ([as advised by your colleague Ian Dodge](#)).

We are keen to hear your confirmation that this ‘framework’ will ensure there is no impact on the effectiveness of proper enforcement of compliance with the terms of contracts between independent GP practices and our NHS. We must however voice concerns over whether this enforcement was ever adequate, as non-compliance has been evident throughout the last 5 years!

David Hickson

**fair telecoms campaign**



**David Hickson**