

**The “People’s Millions” -
donated to the telephone companies**

For three days, starting today, the **Big Lottery Fund** (People's Millions) and **ITV** are urging us to vote for local community projects to receive a share of National Lottery funding. See [The People's Millions](#).

Premium Rate Service telephone numbers (beginning 0871 62) are being used, with the final digits indicating the chosen project.

Calls to these numbers cost 11p from most landlines, with what remains after VAT has been extracted being passed on to fund the voting operation. From mobiles however, the same amount is passed on, but the mobile companies retain the (VAT exclusive element of the) **additional 24p they charge for the call**.

The typical cost of a mobile call is 35p per minute, with a minimum of one minute. The highest for the leading providers is **EE at 40p**. Around 50% of non-business telephone calls are made from mobiles.

Charities, government departments and businesses should not use this type of number (e.g. **the People’s Millions helpline: 0845 0 10 11 12**), unless they can justify imposing a charge on the caller. Even when a charge on the caller can be justified, the additional revenue taken by the phone companies must be considered.

Calls to 0845 0 10 11 12 yield a subsidy equivalent to **2p per minute** to the **Big Lottery Fund** - **EE** callers pay **45p per minute** to call this number.

Ofcom is proposing that the two components of these call charges be "unbundled", so that callers can see exactly where their money is going. Under regulations expected to be announced shortly, the “Access Charge” and “Service Charge” elements will be declared separately.

EE is leading opposition to this proposal from the telephone companies.

One might wonder how much it and its competitors will be making out of the generosity of the British people over these three days.

