



BBC Rip Off Britain Live 15 May 2017

This briefing highlights, and comments on, some elements from this broadcast on 15 May 2017 – [Rip Off Britain 2017 Live – Episode 1](#). Rough timings of relevant points appear below [mm:ss].

Cost of calling 118 numbers

We are delighted that BBC One has joined in the national coverage which we have brought to this issue, through newspapers and radio broadcasts – see our recent [news](#) and [radio](#) appearances.

The presentation of the detail of the costs was however a little confused. Callers always pay an ‘Access Charge’ (of up to 55p per minute) to their own telephone company – sometimes this was mentioned, at other times it was omitted. This is in addition to the ‘Service Charge’ (taken from an [Ofcom-approved](#) list of price points) which is selected for each particular 118 service.

The Service Charge can be set in one of four ways:

- £ Pence per call
- £ Pence per minute
- £ Pence per call + pence per minute
- £ Pence including the first minute + pence per minute thereafter

There was some confusion between the latter two, including failure to present some charges in the proper form. This even led to the incorrect suggestion that the maximum ‘Service Charge’ is £23.97 for the first minute; the correct figure of £15.98 is quite high enough to raise alarm!

This was combined with confusion between the number of different 118 services (423) and the number of different providers (196 at Level 2 and 94 at Level 1). [07:40]

Some mention was made of the scam of promoting Directory Enquiry services through messages on unused geographic numbers – intended to catch out those who misdial [06:25]. It is likely that this may have played a part in some of the case studies that were featured [03:42] [10:57], however this was not brought out. See [this story in the Sun](#).

CLI Spoofing

It is of great concern to the **fair telecoms campaign** that telephone companies themselves place too much reliance on the value of CLI, and even encourage customers to do the same. There is no system in place to verify the integrity of CLI. Whilst efforts to develop such a scheme are ongoing, we believe that full implementation for consumers will probably be around 10 years away. By this time the use of IP technology, to which certification is suited, may well have gained sufficient ground for it to be only implemented in that environment.

We argue that whilst there are benefits to use of CLI in helping to recognise callers, it should be stressed that it can have no place in providing assurance as to the identity of the caller [41:50].

Bank scams

We have expressed our concerns about use of outbound calling by the banking industry. See [this open message](#). Proper procedures and strict protocols being advised to consumers is essential. Adoption of such protocols could avoid cases such as that featured in the show [31:43].