



The end of the 084 telephone number rip-off

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Ofcom has today [announced details](#) of new regulations that will end the present rip-off on 084 telephone numbers.

This will be achieved by introducing the “**Unbundled Tariff**”.

- Users of these numbers will be required to declare their “**Service Charge**”
- Telephone companies will be compelled to add only a simple common “**Access Charge**”
- Further **Consumer Protection Regulations** to limit the use of these numbers will follow

Transparency will not prevent improper charges, but it will make them visible.

Those who wish to continue to benefit from a subsidy of up to 7p per minute on calls to 084 numbers may be able to do so, subject to the additional Consumer Protection Regulations that will be announced separately by **BIS**. They will however be required to declare this charge - see below.

We believe that very many current users of 084 numbers will be unwilling to declare their charge for contacting them by telephone - even though it has been place for some time.

The Consumer Protection Regulations, which will be announced later but implemented at the same time, will prohibit Service Charges in some cases. This will make it more difficult for those who will escape the terms (e.g. **NHS providers, DWP, Citizens Advice**) to justify their position.

The “unbundled tariff” is part of the **Ofcom** project - “[Simplifying Non-Geographic Numbers](#)”. It will apply also to clarify the position with calls to **Premium Rate Service** numbers. Other provisions will ensure that **all calls to 080 numbers become free**, including from mobiles.

Detailed Briefings

The following briefings cover the implications of the announcements, addressing specific cases:

- [Examples of Service Charge Declaration](#)

These graphic pieces illustrate how the form of statement suggested by **Ofcom** may be applied to a number of interesting cases. This is contrasted with the words used at present.

- [32 of the Top 50 Companies for Customer Services](#)

This briefing identifies 32 companies who have been found to provide a “**Top 50**” standard of customer service by telephone, **for a fee** - see [Top 50 Members List](#).

- [Effect on NHS providers using 084 numbers](#)

We identify how a longstanding problem will now be readily resolved.

- [Possible exclusions from the Consumer Protection Regulations](#)

The EU Directive from which the measures are derived allows certain sectors to be excluded from the provisions which prohibit use of “non-basic-rate” telephone numbers for customer complaints and enquiries. We identify examples in each of these sectors, to press the case for maximum inclusion when the regulations are drafted.

Further briefings will be added later to cover the fine detail of the **Ofcom** regulations.

