



Now is the time to stop using 084 and 087 telephone numbers

The **fair telecoms campaign** has long been urging businesses to recognise the impact that their ill-considered use of 084 and 087 numbers has on current and prospective customers.

Calls incur a ‘Service Charge’ of up 13p per minute (including VAT) to the benefit of, and chosen by, the company being called. This is however mostly dwarfed by the ‘Access Charge’ of up to 83p¹ per minute (including VAT) to the benefit of the caller’s own telephone company.

This ‘Access Charge’ is set, by call providers, at a single rate for all calls to premium rate numbers, beginning 084, 087, 09 and 118. *(Use of each of these ranges is regulated differently.)*

Cost breakdown examples

These basic examples use the latest stated rates and a **call duration of five minutes**.

Call to	For	Service Charge	Calling from	Access Charge	Call Cost (inc VAT)	VAT	Fee to BT / EE	Earned by called party	
								Amount	% of cost
Hertz Car Hire	Booking or enquiry	7p per minute	EE	83p per minute ¹	£4.50	75p	£3.46	29p	6.4%
National Express	Booking or enquiry	13p per minute	BT	26.12p per minute	£1.96	32p	£1.09	55p	28.1%

The percentages demonstrate that legitimate use of these numbers simply does not make sense.

The remedy

Under a scheme promoted by **Ofcom**, all telephone services providers are able to arrange an immediate switch from a 084/087 number to the equivalent 034/037 number (e.g. 0871 123 4567 becomes 0371 123 4567), including provision of a changed number announcement.

Calls to all 03 numbers are charged on the same basis as calls to geographic (01/02) numbers. In most cases no call charge is incurred, due to use of inclusive calling plans and bundles.

The future

Ofcom has recently closed a consultation on “[The future of telephone numbers](#)”. This has now abandoned an earlier proposal that the 084 and 087 ranges could be ceased.

We firmly believe that if all honest businesses were aware of the effect of using these numbers, their use would cease anyway.

We therefore call on all such businesses to look seriously at what they are doing to their current and prospective customers. They are effectively putting large amounts of money into the pockets of the phone companies, and also the Exchequer, for a relatively minimal benefit.

Very many companies have already moved away from use of these numbers. In some cases they have been compelled to do so by regulation.

We wish to see companies make their own decisions to do the right and sensible thing.

When the 084 and 087 ranges are used only by deliberate scammers, then **Ofcom** will be able to shut them down easily. Premium Rate Services will continue to operate on 09 numbers.

Note

¹ Update: From March 2024 – the EE Access Charge will be 89p per minute