



New BT prices highlight the importance of the hidden rip-off

As well as joining widespread criticism of the above-inflation price increases that BT will apply from 1 December, the **fair telecoms campaign** highlights a rip-off that will continue - and grow.

Everyone has inclusive calls - for when they use the phone

Many **BT** customers fail to select the correct call plan to meet their needs.

Every call plan comes with unlimited inclusive calls to ordinary (01, 02 and 03) numbers for the times when the customer uses the phone to make calls.

In addition to the line rental (**£15.99**, increasing to **£16.99**) the plans include unlimited calls to ordinary numbers as follows:

- I. Weekends only - **No charge**
- II. Evenings (after 7pm and before 7am) and Weekends - **£2.00**, increasing to **£2.12**
- III. Anytime - **£7.00**, increasing to **£7.45**

The above rates are all as quoted, per month.

There is a penalty charge for ordinary calls at other times

The charge for a non-inclusive weekday daytime call to an ordinary (01, 02 or 03) number is:

- + a setup charge of **15p** per call, increasing to **15.97p**
PLUS
- + **9p** per minute, increasing to **9.58p** per minute

A single 10-minute weekday daytime call to an ordinary number costs **£1.05**, increasing to **£1.12**.

This is far more than half the **weekly** cost of the Anytime Calls Plan: **£1.61**, increasing to **£1.72**.

Anyone who makes (at least the equivalent of) 1 10-minute call and 1 5-minute call per week to ordinary numbers should select the Anytime Calls plan.

Who is being ripped off?

Research recently undertaken by **DWP** suggested that **5 million DWP claimants** (around 30%) - the vast majority of them pensioners - are **BT** customers who do not benefit from inclusive calls to ordinary numbers whilst its offices are open (typically Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm).

Any BT customer who is paying more than £1.61 per week (at present) for calls to ordinary numbers is being ripped-off. As prices increase, the scale of the rip-off increases.

Customers of other telephone companies may be in a similar position, but one would expect BT to benefit most of all from those who do not invest a lot of time in shopping around and checking they are on the best deal. BT is also in an exceptional position because it cannot currently make money on calls to premium rate (084/087/09) numbers - this restriction will be removed in 2015.

Without further research, one cannot say exactly how many are paying penalty charges for calls to ordinary numbers, and whether they may have chosen to do so. The DWP has offered a clue, but BT knows exactly how many and is in a position to advise them (as are other phone companies).

Please [get in touch](#) for further information and comment.

(One may construct various patterns to see who is being ripped-off - we will be happy to help.)

David Hickson



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