



Charity's debt helplines cost 62p a minute

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RUI VIERA/PA WIRE

Citizens Advice has been accused of hypocrisy for charging up to 62p a minute to callers seeking financial advice.

An investigation by the Fair Telecoms Campaign found that at least 19 branches of the charity, some in the country's most deprived areas, are using premium rate phone numbers. The 0844 numbers can cost mobile phone users more than £12 for a 20-minute conversation and raise 7p a minute for the charity. The campaign's David Hickson told the *Daily Mail*: "This is a scandal since those likely to dial these numbers are often in need of urgent, detailed and often lengthy advice over the phone."

The Labour MP Steve McCabe, a member of the work and pensions select committee, added: "I'll be asking the chairman of the committee to authorise an inquiry into this heinous activity."

The charity said it removed premium rate numbers from its national helpline two years ago and that it was working with branches, which are separate entities, to help them to make the switch.

