

fair telecoms campaign

news release 🧃

Fair Telecoms Campaign celebrates a further success -Two major banks to stop using 084 numbers

Background

On Saturday 12 October I commented on use of 084 telephone numbers in the **financial services sector** on <u>BBC Radio 4 Money Box</u>,

"We hope that the principle of not charging customers to make enquiries by telephone will be accepted by the well mannered people in the financial services sector and this barrier to complaining will also be removed." (Not a verbatim quote)

This was with reference to regulations banning use of expensive telephone numbers for **customer complaints and enquiries in other sectors**, which will be announced shortly by BIS. (See "<u>Rip-off customer support numbers banned</u>".)

New enforcement action to ensure compliance with a ban on use of 084 telephone numbers by **NHS GPs in England** was <u>announced on Monday 4 November</u>.

Severe criticism of use of 084 telephone numbers by **the government** came in a report from the Public Accounts Committee published on Monday 11 November. This received extensive media attention. (See <u>Telephone Tax - Dialight Robbery - to end in 12 months</u>.)

News for Sunday 17 November

Two major banks to stop using 084 numbers



Barclays has confirmed that it will now "ensure that no customer need dial a premium or high rate number simply to speak to us".



NatWest and RBS are "offering customers basic rate 0345 numbers for general enquiries and a freephone number for complaints by the end of November."

We expect other financial services organisations to join in this effort.

I hope that any sense of irony in my comments on Money Box can now be dismissed. As the **fair telecoms campaign**, we are delighted to see organisations recognise the points we have to make and adopt our suggestions without the need for regulation or legislation.

Regrettably, it is however often necessary for regulatory intervention and we will continue to press for this, to ensure that all are bound to comply with proper and equitable standards.

We welcome the power that Which? has now added to our campaigning through its "Costly Calls Campaign". There need be no shame in leaping aboard a rolling bandwagon to add extra impetus.

We are working closely with **Which?** on the detailed action being taken to achieve our shared objectives and in the focus of policy.

David Hickson 🧖

Sunday, 17 November 2013