fair telecoms campaign **news release**

Fair telecoms campaign standing by to support media coverage of the introduction of "UK Calling" next Wednesday

Next Wednesday, major changes to the way that telephone calls are charged, come into effect. As we have campaigned for this essential change, we are working closely with Ofcom to ensure that it is fully and properly understood.

We are standing by to provide all possible support to broadcasters as they prepare for coverage of this most significant development.

Please get in touch to arrange how we and Ofcom (contact Joe Smithies on 0300 123 1795) can best assist you.

Summary

- **All calls to 080 numbers become "free to caller".**

  Mobile companies will no longer be allowed to charge for what have wrongly been called "freephone" calls
  - now this term will be properly used.

- **The two elements of the cost of calls to 084, 087, 09 and 118 (Directory enquiry) numbers are separated**:

  £ **Service Charge** - to the benefit of the organisation called
  - always the same rate for each number.

  £ **Access Charge** - retained by the caller's telephone company
  - the same rate for all "unbundled" calls from each phone.

  Premium Rate Service providers have previously had to give only the cheapest example of a total call cost.

  The new requirement is to show what they actually take - and this now covers 084 numbers also.

  ***The phone companies also now have to come clean on the constant amount they take**. Previously they set whatever total rate they wished for each type of number.*

See "Clear Call Rates for Everyone" -
more detail from ourselves and Ofcom is given overleaf ...

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The Ofcom briefing

Telephone timeline

14 February 1876 – Alexander Graham Bell files his patent for the electric telephone; the first phonecall is made four weeks later

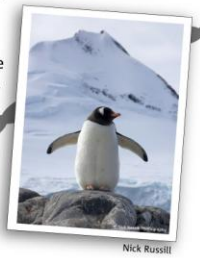
1924 – The famous red telephone box is designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott as part of a competition by the Post Office

1937 – The 999 emergency services line is set up, after a fire in London's West End

1963 – First push-button telephone introduced

1984 – 'I Just Called To Say I Love You' becomes Stevie Wonder's only solo, UK number-one single and tops the charts for six weeks

1985 – Ernie Wise makes the first UK mobile phonecall



1999 – Experts from NASA help co-ordinate the first ever phone call between the north and south poles

1997 – Nokia launches the 6110 model, the first phone to come with the popular 'Snake' game pre-installed

2001 – The nouns 'mobile phone', 'smiley face' and 'emoticon' are entered into the Oxford English Dictionary

2003 – 3G mobile services are launched

2007 – A text message is sent from 29,029 ft up on the summit of Mount Everest, the highest recorded altitude for a text message sent by a land-based mobile phone

2011 – Michael Phillips of South Carolina, USA is awarded the GWR for the largest collection of novelty telephones, 1,135 in total!

2013 – 93% of UK adults own or use a mobile phone and the number of UK landlines reached 33.4 million

1 July 2015 UK CALLING
CLEAR CALL RATES FOR EVERYONE

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News Release
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Ofcom

11 June 2015

Telephone charges made simpler next month

- **UK callers spend £900 million on service numbers**
- **Prices to become clearer in major changes, affecting 175 million numbers**
- **Freephone to become free from mobiles**
- **Look out for UK Calling information – ukcalling.info**

Millions of telephone users across the UK will benefit from clearer call charges being introduced next month by Ofcom.

From 1 July, landline and mobile charges will become clearer for calls to numbers starting 084, 087, 09 and 118, while Freephone will become free from mobiles.

People use these 'service numbers' every day for finding out information, contacting a business or helpline, or using competition, directory-enquiry, entertainment and voting services.

Every year, callers in the UK spend a total of 250m hours calling these service numbers, spending around £900m between them, according to Ofcom research.

Until now, callers to these numbers have not generally been told by the service provider how much they will be charged.

But prices will become clearer on telephone bills, in marketing and in advertising from 1 July, under changes known as UK Calling.

From 1 July, charges for service numbers will be made up of an 'access charge' going to the phone company, plus a 'service charge' set by the company or organisation being called.

Phone companies will be responsible for setting their access charge, making it clear to consumers on their bills and informing new customers of the charge when they sign up to a contract.

Separately, the service provider – the party being contacted – will specify its service charge wherever it advertises or communicates the phone number.

So consumers will be able to understand the exact cost of making the call by adding the access and service charges together. They will also be able to compare the prices of different service providers more easily, and also choose a provider with a competitive access charge when signing up to a new landline or mobile deal.

What callers will see

Currently, callers are given information such as:

> *"Calls cost xp per minute from a BT landline. Calls may vary from other landlines and calls from mobiles may cost considerably more."*

Under the new system, the cost of calls will be explained in a simpler format such as:

> *"Calls cost xp per minute, plus your phone company's access charge."*

Freephone will mean free

Also as part of UK Calling, from the start of next month Freephone numbers (beginning 0800 and 0808) will become free for consumers to call from mobile phones, just as they generally are from landlines.

Sharon White, Ofcom Chief Executive, said: "Next month we'll see the biggest changes to telephone calls in over a decade. Together we spend around £900 million a year on these calls, so it's important that people understand the cost before they pick up the phone.

"From 1 July, callers will be able to see how much they're paying and where their money is going. The website ukcalling.info has more information on the changes, and what they mean for you."

ENDS

Some further comments from the *fair telecoms campaign*

ft This change has helped to **compel very many organisations to move away from use of 084/087 numbers**, as they could not face admitting to (or could not be allowed to be seen to be) imposing a **Service Charge** on callers.

There are however some who continue to use 084/087 numbers "improperly" or in direct breach of regulations.

ft At last, the **03 number range** - a non-geographic number at the same cost, if any, of calling a geographic (01/02) number - **is gaining widespread use** and thereby better understanding. 034/037 numbers permit an easy and swift migration path from the equivalent 084/087 numbers.

Many of those who face increased costs as a result of using 080 numbers (which now become more expensive) would be best advised to move to 03 numbers, as very many of their callers would pay nothing for the call anyway - because it is covered by their inclusive package. We believe that **080 numbers should only be used in those cases where it is imperative that no caller pays for the call**. Telephone companies profit from every call to a 080 number - but not from inclusive calls to 03 numbers!

ft Despite the fact that number ranges such as 0845 and 0870 are no longer used by government departments and customer helplines (as a result of regulatory and policy changes), **some telephone companies intend to still include calls to these numbers as inclusive** in call packages.

We strongly oppose this approach of collecting **Service Charge**s from all package subscribers, whether or not they call these numbers, as this is unfair, and it undermines the clarity desired from the changes. (There may be sinister reasons why telephone companies who provide these numbers to businesses may wish to disguise the impact of the **Service Charge**.)

ft We are keen to highlight the fact that, whilst greater transparency is being seen here with "Service Numbers", **many callers are paying excessively high "Penalty Charges" for calling ordinary numbers** outside the terms of the call inclusive package, which forms part of every telephone service contract. The naming and marketing of these packages leads many not to subscribe to that which is most appropriate for their needs, as a result of which they end up paying far more for their telephone service than they should.