fair telecoms campaign **news release**

Upcoming rip-off alert - 1 October 2019
Change to charges for calls to 070 numbers

070 numbers (which look like mobile numbers, whilst being charged differently) have been used to deceive and rip-off callers for many years.

After a number of false starts, **Ofcom** has finally resolved the issue. It gave advance notice of this change on 1 October 2018 - see Final Statement: Review of the 070 number range.

With effect from 1 October 2019, the wholesale cost of calls to all 070 numbers will drop to the same as that for ordinary mobile numbers.

One significant rip-off will end

070 numbers are currently used for calls to hospital bedside phones, by companies such as **Hospedia**. This undeclared premium charge has been earning the provider in the region of 40p per minute (excluding VAT), whilst callers pay between 50p and £1 per minute to make the call.

This income of around 40p per minute will end on 1 October 2019. Will another rip-off replace it!

We have been trying to discover what **Hospedia** (and others) will be doing to recover this lost revenue, e.g. switching to use of properly regulated 'Premium Rate Service' numbers with a declared premium charge. Unfortunately we have received no response to our enquiries.

Another rip-off may begin

Whilst the new regulation is of what is paid by telephone companies connecting calls to 070 numbers, there is no guarantee of them passing on this saving, by reducing the rates they charge.

Ofcom expects that the change "*... will allow phone companies to price calls to these numbers or include them in call allowances in the same way that they do for calls to mobiles*". **Ofcom** has however had its expectations disappointed in the past!

The **fair telecoms campaign** argues that any telephone company which does not start charging for calls to 070 numbers in exactly the same way as calls to regular (07) mobile numbers, no later than 1 October, is starting a new rip-off.

Notes to editors

ft We have received no response to enquiries about what **Hospedia** will do. These were made to **Hospedia** itself and to the 6 NHS Trusts which endorse its services through approved use of their logos on its website - see the Hospedia website, as pictured below.

ft We have received no response to enquiries about forthcoming changes to call charges for 070 numbers from the following telephone service providers - **BT, EE, Lebara**, **Lycamobile**, **O2**, **Phone Co-op**, **Plusnet**, **Post Office**, **Sky Talk**, **Three**, **Utility Warehouse**, **Virgin Media**.

Talk Talk has confirmed that it will not meet Ofcom's expectation, but will charge for calls to 070 numbers in the same way as non-inclusive calls to ordinary mobile numbers.

Vodafone has confirmed that it will meet Ofcom's expectations in full.

David Hickson

Friday, 27 September 2019