

From: Mark Stephens  
Sent: 02 May 2006 11:11 AM  
To: NumberingReview  
Subject: Safeguarding Use of Numbers

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Dear Ofcom:

I am writing this email to express my disgust with the current phone number situation that forces citizens of the United Kingdom to dial premium rate 0845 and 0870 numbers for basic communication with banks, companies and local services.

This system of premium rate phone numbers is simply a way for companies to claw back more and more money from the average person, and I think it should be completely and utterly changed.

Today I called my local bank, which uses an 0870 number, and also the Hoover Company to inquire about fixing a broken handle on my fridge/freezer, and they wanted me to use another 0870 number, and it is infuriating to say the least. Fortunately, there is a website, "say no to 0870.com" that allowed me to bypass the premium rate numbers and still contact both my bank and the Hoover Company and accomplish my business for the day. When I discovered that I could bypass these premium rate numbers, I was even more furious because it made me realize that these 0870 and 0845 numbers were simply a sneaky way to grab more money out of our pocket.

This should be stopped at once!

In the United States, when one needs to contact their bank, company or public utility authority, they offer "free" 0800 numbers as standard which are paid for by the company that is supplying the service. Ironically, companies here in the UK also offer free calls to anyone located outside the UK, but force the rest of us to pay these ridiculous charges for the same call.

Please do something to stop this once and for all!

Mark Stephens