

To whom it concerns,

I am responding to this consultation on proposals on changing non-geographic numbers.

**0500, 0800 and 0808 numbers as well as free-to-page numbers:**

Should be free to call from all UK landlines, as in BT, Cable and Wireless Worldwide, Thus, Virgin Media Telewest, Virgin Media NTL, Cable and Wireless Access, Easynet(Sky), TalkTalk/Opal, Manx telecom, Cable and Wireless Sure communications, Kingston Communications etc... Residential and business customers pay telephone line rental of up to £14.75 in some cases before any call charges, calling features and call packages and should therefore be reasonable to ensure landline phone providers never charge for freephone numbers.

Payphone providers BT, Premier Managed Payphones and Spectrum Interactive offer free access to freephone numbers as they receive revenue as part of the payphone access charge scheme which was extended to non-BT operators in the late 90s. This should remain the case and if possible maybe increase the current rate from 8.5p per minute to 9.79p per minute as payphone usage from cash and chargeable calls has dropped but may increase in the future depending on how reliable mobile phones remain. One problem is the fact that if a payphone company is not able to get the payphone access charge, then they usually restrict access to freephone numbers, this is the case when they do not use BT wholesale lines, sometimes for operational reasons. Patientline is one example whose hospital payphones maybe connected to a VoIP provider who is unable to collect this revenue for Patientline, therefore they have blocked access completely from some payphones. Another is Infocus Public Networks which used to be Infolines and Interphone, they now use a mobile network for its street public payphones and since mobile networks charge for these calls, Infocus charge a rate to the user of there payphones. As so when they did used to use BT wholesale lines, they allowed the free access.

Mobile phone providers, now I have to actually agree with there idea for charging for calls to these numbers, they have invested a lot of money on the roll out of there networks as well as 3G and soon 4G licences. They also have to pay for leased lines which freephone calls are routed down and they also do not get much revenue from pre-pay Pay As You Go users and by forcing them to offer free access, the UK could see a substantial lack of investment on mobile telecommunication. If users want free access, then they can still use the 45,000+ BT Telephone boxes or 2,000+ Spectrum Interactive telephone boxes which are widely available across the UK. However I do feel that certain mobile phone providers are charging excessive rates for these calls and in particular Everything Everywhere, on it's T-Mobile service, they no longer warn users that there is a charge for freephone numbers and in fact the cost of calling freephone numbers is more than the price of calling Australia from a BT line. 40p per minute is very excessive and have no warnings. Vodafone did a 3 month promotion offering access at 7p per minute to freephone numbers, it has now gone back to its normal price of 14p per minute. Vodafone have a much more reasonable price structure for this type of call. Vodafone also offer for an additional £2.50 on Pay Monthly plans to offer all 08 numbers as inclusive calls.

**0843, 0844, 0845 and 0870 numbers:**

These numbers should remain the same as they are, WARNING! If revenue share is

withdrawn from 0843,0844 and 0871 numbers, then a disastrous result in businesses will migrate to 090 numbers which will cost a lot more to consumers, even worse, some companies may withdraw customer call centres and just have online customer service by email or just a list of frequently asked questions. The cost of calling these numbers from mobiles however does need to be looked at as Everything Everywhere is charging up to 40p per minute for these calls. Virgin Media now charge 10p per minute for 0845 and 0870 numbers plus a connection charge and call charges are rounded to the next minute which is very expensive for a landline service.

### **09 numbers:**

These numbers should also remain the same, however as these are charged usually higher than from a non-BT landline or mobile, a recorded message should be played each time they are called explaining that special rates will apply.

### **118 numbers:**

The pricing of these numbers is outrageous in terms of organisation. You never know how much you are paying with these numbers, under the old 142,192 and 153 system, it was 60p per minute. And was provided by just 3 or 4 companies mainly BT, Cable and Wireless, Opal Telecom and Jersey Telecom. It has become so disorganised and I personally never know how much I am paying. The cost of calling 118500 from BT on a BT line was 25p per call plus 30p per minute now it is 30p per call plus £1.10 per minute which is extremely expensive and the cost of calling this number from other lines and networks is much higher but there is no information available anywhere. Cable and Wireless Worldwide directory enquiries on 118099 was 35p per call only back in 2003, now there is no information advertised anywhere and it is definitely not 35p per call anymore especially from mobile phones. Therefore, I suggest that mobiles and landline operators play a recorded announcement of the actual cost of the call and if this is not possible, I suggest that Ofcom gets rid of the six digit directory enquiry numbers and bring back the old system but to avoid confusion instead of using the old numbers, just have 118 as a directory enquiry number, the caller will be connected to the network operators directory enquiry service or a nominated directory enquiry service if they do not have their own.