

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Jonathan

Surname:

Melnick

Representing:

Self

Organisation (if applicable):

Email:

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Question 1: Do you agree that it is helpful and appropriate for Ofcom to issue guidance on the application of the Regulations to consumer contracts for communications services?:

Yes.

Question 2: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed guidance regarding core terms and transparency?:

Yes.

Question 3: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed guidance (including any administrative thresholds we have set) on non-core terms to which we apply the test of fairness?:

Yes

Question 4: Are there any other issues that are covered by the Regulations which Ofcom should give guidance on?:

Additional comments:

Like many others I feel particularly aggrieved by the additional £4.50 per quarter charge for not paying by Direct Debit. Personally I don't like Direct Debits and would prefer to pay by cheque, standing order, etc. I will pay by Direct Debit for certain services where I have to pay a fixed amount each month although I still do not like doing so. I do not wish to do so where the amount to be paid is variable, such as my BT bill.

I do not consider the £4.50 charge to fairly represent BT's charges for other payment methods. Assume for a moment that 1 million customers choose not to pay by Direct Debit (an arbitrary figure). Can we really be expected to believe that these transactions cost BT £18 million per year to process?

I asked BT for a breakdown of their costs for processing each time of transaction, which they conveniently ignored in my complaint, yet took the time to remind me to pay my bill on time, which I do anyway.

I suspect that this charge has more to do with the costs of covering non-payers rather than the costs of processing payments. If so, the simple fact is that BT have remedies against those people. They should not use this as a cover to reduce the losses incurred by bad payers or to recoup their administrative costs.

It seems bizarre that a company can charge a customer not only for the service but for the ability to pay their bill. This is a cost of doing business and those costs should be borne by the business, not by the consumer.

BT tried to justify this to me by saying it's cheaper than other companies. Frankly, that means nothing. I deal with many other companies that do not charge me for paying by cheque or other method and if I did deal with such companies my attitude would be much as it currently is towards BT.

Finally, at no point do I ever remember BT even advising customers of the charge. I don't doubt that they do, presumably in amongst all the junk they send with the bill, that ends up in the bin where it belongs. Perhaps they could have advised existing customers by having something clear and visible on a bill prior to bringing in this change.