

Sarah Evans
Consumer Policy Manager
Ofcom.
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
LONDON, SE1 9HA

Dear Ms Evans

Additional Charges consultation

I find BT's decision last year to impose penalty charges (a 'process' for subscribers who prefer not to allow it direct access to their bank account) unacceptable. From your consultation paper it appears that Ofcom believes that greater clarity is all that is required: the subscriber will then be able to make 'effective choices'. It seems to me that some choices are likely to be lost altogether, or be severely penalised, however clearly they are explained. Ofcom will not intervene to preserve them.

That BT started its new scheme as Ofcom began its investigations is more than a coincidence. It is equally likely, though, that BT was simply ahead of any recommendations you might make – and more likely, confident that whatever your recommendations are they will make the way it carries on.

At the risk of simply adding my voice to many others I would like

1. BT's various 'Plans' are far from transparent, making any comparison between them and with those of other providers unnecessary. Various discounts and special offers seem designed to draw in customers more expensive – and less suitable – options with the spur of the moment will somehow 'save' by transferring.

I should add at this point that I have been trying since the beginning of the year to obtain information from BT about its Light User scheme, but without success. There is no response other than a series of form letters extolling the benefits, for example, of paying by direct debit and the penalties I will incur if I don't. I am making a formal complaint about this but have enclosed a copy of my most recent letter to the Customer Service Director for your information.

It seems to me that BT is quite simply a mess, but a profoundly cynical and dishonest mess. Its procedures are opaque rather than transparent; its charges are unjust and unfair (and confused); and its attitude towards its subscribers is duplicitous at the least.

It is, indeed, a good example of a big, powerful organization ripping off its customers. Like many others on the receiving end I look to Ofcom to bring it to heel.

Yours sincerely