

6th, March, 2008.

Re: BT Pricing/Direct debit Payments.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Firstly, I am writing on behalf of my 85 year old mother. She has been a BT customer for over 35 years now and has always paid her bills, with cash, on time. Her only income is from her State Pension which she receives as a Girocheck, and which she cashes weekly at her local Post Office. She does not have a bank account.

Her main grievance is that she has had to pay an extra £1:50 per quarter for the last year or so, because she is unable to pay by direct debit. She feels that she is being penalised by BT for her loyalty and past prompt payment of her bills and wants to know if it is right for them to do this and treat her in this way?

Recently, she received a letter from BT giving information on changes to their Calling Plans and this is her second cause for complaint. Quite simply, she does not understand it. In the letter, there are several references to web pages that she can view for further information. Unfortunately, she does not possess a computer and is never likely to. All she wants is a simple letter giving her the cost of her calls and line rental at the moment and the future cost in the proposed Call Plans. This could have been done quite easily in tabular format, but BT decided to write a very confusing and incomprehensible letter to her and, presumably, all their other customers. The letter also refers to a discount for paper free billing. However, many elderly people, who would probably benefit most from the saving, do not possess computers and cannot take advantage of this offer. It seems BT are intent on hitting the vulnerable people most, which I consider to be outrageous.

In summary, my mother feels she is being both exploited and penalised by BT because she is elderly, does not have a bank account and does not own a computer, something she resents because of her loyalty to them over all the years. She has no objection to being penalised, if she pays her bill late, but wants the extra fee for punctual cash payments stopped.

Secondly, speaking personally, I pay my bills electronically and I fail to see why I should be charged £1:50 per quarter by BT for doing this, as they do not have to collect the money. Furthermore, with the banks changing their systems in May to ensure faster electronic payments, this extra charge makes even less sense and I object to this payment.

I trust you will look into all the matters detailed above and force BT, and other companies, to change their policies on bill payments and produce clearer documentation.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. F. Spencer

P.S. BT's web pages mentioned above are a nightmare to navigate and also need simplifying.