Sunday, 02 March 2008

To: Sarah Evans
Consumer Policy Manager
Ofcom

Re: Additional Charges – Consultation

I note form the Ofcom review of additional charges that no mention of is made of standing order payments & I would like to see this method of payment considered as part of the review.

Companies have told me on numerous occasions that there is no difference between standing orders and direct debits. I am informed of this fact so that they can justify their comments preferring direct debit.
My response is that if that is the case then I cannot see why I should be treated differently for electing to make payment by standing order.

Whilst it would be fair to say that I do not actually know the difference in cost, I would be very much surprised that standing order costs far exceed direct debit processing costs as both methods are broadly similar and automated.

I pay a set amount each month to BT with the remainder paid by cheque on receipt of the bill.

I do not accept the company's argument that my method of payment means that I'm likely to end up not paying at all.

It is unfortunate that on rare occasions I do overlook to make payment promptly. If so, then should they have to incur costs in chasing up the late payment then I expect to be charged the TRUE cost of the computer generated letter plus postage. Even then I have my reservations, after all it's a two way street – they have my payments in advance & therefore are earning bank interest off of that money. Most recently my last quarterly bill included a £7.50 late payment charge. I took issue with this & contacted BT only to find that BT had not followed their own procedures in applying late payment charges, & subsequently repaid the amount to my account.

I understand that companies have to deal with bad debt and non-payment, but I consider that I am being unfairly

treated for my chosen method of payment & the occasional
late payment where I would expect a company with a £6
billion annual profit to show a little latitude befitting a
company of such status.

T. Stockman