

All,

It has come to our attention that several communications providers are displaying information about the cost of calling service numbers (e.g. 084, 09 and 118) on their websites and in other published material which we consider is inconsistent with the regulation for the use of these numbers which came into effect from 1 July 2015.

By way of reminder:

With effect from 1 July, the cost of calling service numbers is made up of two parts:

- An **Access Charge**: The part of the call charge that goes to the communications provider, charged as pence per minute, and
- A **Service Charge**: The rest of the call charge, chosen by the Service Provider from a range of service charge points.

Calls to 0800 and 0808 numbers also became free from mobiles on this date.

Communications providers are required;

- to set a single Access Charge for all service number calls, irrespective of variations in the service charge between numbers; and
- to publish their Access Charge in a way that is prominent and readily accessible to customers. This requirement applies to:
  - o the company's website;
  - o its published price lists;
  - o on bills and;
  - o in any advertising and promotional material which refer to call pricing.
- To charge the service charge set for a given number range by the range holder

We have noted that a few providers are currently doing some, or all, of the following:

- Not including their Access Charge on their website as part of their rates;
- Charging different Access Charges for different service numbers, in some instances varying the charge dependant on the Service Charge for the number;
- Providing information that implies that calls to 0800 and 0808 numbers are still charged for;
- Displaying other out-of-date call charge information based on pre-July charging structures

We consider these actions are likely to be inconsistent with the requirements of General Condition 17 and would recommend that communications providers take urgent action to ensure that the information that they are displaying and the charges that they are setting are compliant with these rules. Communications providers should be aware that Ofcom can impose penalties of up to 10% of relevant turnover for breaches of these regulations.