

Response From Mr Mark Seaden

Hi,

I'd like to make the comment that, although normally I do not agree with over regulation of industry, the truth is that many companies who use 0870 numbers for customer services calls such as complaints, technical support or other such functions do charge up to 8p/minute for such calls.

Paradoxically, this means that the longer customers wait in a queue (now almost mandatory for most companies), the more profit a company makes from the customer's call, provided that they choose to remain on hold. But with many cases that companies are now withdrawing direct e-mail communication with customers for many purposes, often these 0870 numbers are (often deliberately) the only alternative, and so many people feel - as long as they need to contact the company for any reason - that they don't have any other means.

Some insurance companies, for example Churchill, will have 0845 numbers for their sales lines, and 0870 (profit making) numbers for their claim lines so that they make at least some many back on any potential successful claim.

Whilst some companies claim that they do not 'profit' from such numbers, many have been provided with free switching equipment in return for using the 0870 number, which the telecoms provider then profits from.

Hope this helps with OFCOM decisions.

Many thanks

Mark Seaden