

I have learned that your new organisation has been approached about the iniquitous charges made by an increasing number of companies for the privilege of telephoning them.

I have read the 'saynoto0870.com' website and I certainly agree with virtually all it says (always excepting the frequently bad English grammar and spelling included in it!).

I have an example this very day. The Utility Warehouse provides all my gas, electricity internet, broadband and phone call services. As part of this deal I receive free phone calls. Oh no, these always except 0870, 0871 and similar numbers, to which more and more companies are migrating these days. So I still have to pay about £5.00 per month for these calls, so my saving on 'free' calls is very much curtailed.

And guess what? Their own number is 0871 222 7777, so when I have to ring up even to use the automatic system for sending monthly meter readings it will cost me probably 15p + VAT!

It also means that, if I have a query or complaint I have the even greater privilege of paying Utility to do so! As a result, what do they do? They have insufficient staff to answer calls in reasonable time and they keep me waiting for anything up to 20 minutes so that I have paid £1.17 *before I have even spoken to anyone!* Thus it is in the company's interests to pay fewer people to provide adequate service and receive a far greater income into the bargain. Wouldn't anyone go for an 0871 number on this basis?

Of course, this is just one example from today, but it happens all the time with hundreds or thousands of other unprincipled and unscrupulous companies. How can you possibly claim that this system is reasonable? It is outrageous!

I hereby register this as a formal complaint with you and reserve the right to follow the increasing numbers of people who are going to the Ombudsman to see what can be done about it.

D J Woodward