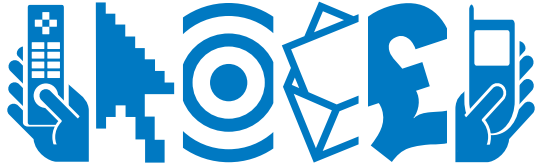


A SHORT GUIDE TO WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

REGULATING TO BUILD CONSUMER
TRUST IN PHONE-PAID SERVICES



This leaflet explains who we are and what we do. If you cannot find the information you are looking for, please contact us using the details given on the back cover. Further information about our work can also be found on our website: www.phonepayplus.org.uk.

ABOUT PHONEPAYPLUS

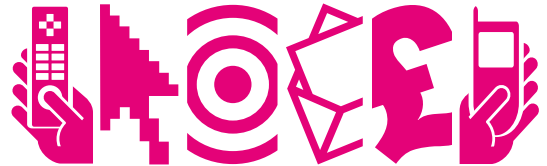
PhonepayPlus is the organisation (previously known as ICSTIS) that regulates phone-paid services in the UK – the goods and services that we can buy by charging the cost to our phone bills and pre-pay phone accounts. The money paid by users for these services is shared between the phone network carrying the service and the organisation(s) providing the content.

We focus on pre-empting and preventing problems – the key, we believe, to effective long-term consumer protection. We regulate services using our Code of Practice. This sets out the rules with which all providers of phone-paid services must comply. Among other things, we require:

- clear and accurate pricing information
- honest advertising and service content
- appropriate and targeted promotions

You can find the full Code in the [publications & alerts section](#) of our website.

We investigate complaints about phone-paid services. Where we decide that our rules have been broken, we can fine the company responsible, bar access to its services and even bar the individual behind the company from running other services under a different company name. Our investigations and adjudications service is free to consumers and fully independent.



PHONE-PAID SERVICES AND HOW TO RECOGNISE THEM

Phone-paid services offer some form of content that is charged to your phone bill or pre-pay phone account.

Services can be accessed by landline or mobile phone, fax, interactive TV (for example, by using the red button on the remote control) and PC (for example, in e-mails or on the internet).

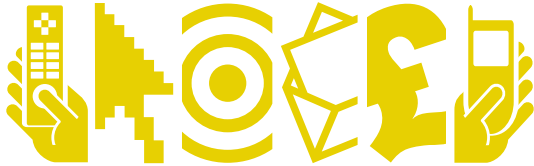
Typical services include:

- helplines (for example, for computer problems)
- competitions
- mobile ringtone and logo downloads
- TV voting (such as *Big Brother* and *The X Factor*)
- news and sports alerts
- charitable giving
- interactive games
- information (for example, traffic updates)
- adult entertainment
- directory enquiries

Most services are advertised on either 09 dialling codes or, in the case of text services, four or five-digit short code numbers followed by a descriptive key word (for example, 11111 VOTE). Services offering adult entertainment must only be advertised on 0908, 0909 or 098 numbers and on mobile short code numbers beginning 69 or 89. Directory enquiry services are advertised on six-digit numbers beginning 118.

In some instances, such as interactive TV where you make 'calls' by pressing the red button on the remote control, the phone number may not be shown. However, it should be made clear to you what the charge is and that it will appear on your bill.

From early 2008, we will also regulate all services offered on 0871 numbers.



THE COST OF PHONE-PAID SERVICES

Calls vary in cost depending on the type of service you use and the way in which you access it (for example, landline or mobile phone). Below, we have outlined basic call cost information. More detailed information is available in the [number ranges and charges](#) section of our website.

Landline charges

Calls to 09 numbers from landlines vary in cost from 10 pence per call to £1.50 per minute. These charges apply when calling from a BT landline and are subject to a set-up fee of up to 6 pence per call from residential lines. Calls to 0871 numbers cost up to 10 pence per minute from landlines. Other providers may also impose set-up fees so please check call costs with your own phone network.

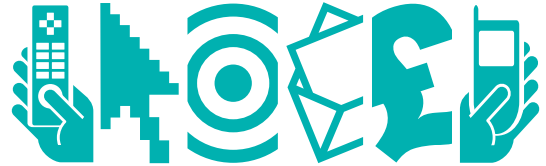
Mobile charges

Calls to 09 or 118 numbers from mobiles will vary in cost depending on your phone network. However, they will generally cost more than the advertised landline rate. Please check call costs with your own phone network. Calls to 0871 numbers cost up to 35 pence per minute from mobiles.

Text services on mobiles (for example, TV voting) will be charged at a fixed rate (for example, 25 pence per text) plus your usual standard network charge.

Many text services (for example, football goal alerts) work on a 'reverse-billed' basis. This means that you will be charged for receiving texts rather than paying to send them. The cost of these services will again vary depending on which network is being used and if the services are sold on a subscription basis.

Typical costs for a single text message received range from 25p to £1.50. If the service is subscription-based, companies offering these services must make this clear to you, as well as the cost per text, how many texts will be received and how you can end the service by sending the word STOP.



THE COMPLAINTS WE CAN HELP YOU WITH

As a general rule, we can only deal with complaints about services operating on 09, 118 and mobile short codes. No matter how services are advertised or accessed, or who is complaining, we accept complaints about:

- the promotion of services (for example, unclear call costs or misleading claims)
- the content of services (for example, offensive content or being kept on the service too long)
- the overall operation of services (for example, failure to send competition prizes or, in the case of text subscription services, failure to end the service when the user has sent the word STOP)

We will, however, accept complaints about premium rate-style services found to be operating on incorrect numbers. For example, some companies try to run revenue-sharing services on 070 numbers, which is not permitted.

THE COMPLAINTS WE CANNOT HELP YOU WITH

We don't investigate why companies use certain phone numbers or how they share their revenue. In addition, we don't investigate complaints about services offered on:

- UK area dialling codes (for example, 020 for London)
- freephone 080 numbers
- 084 numbers
- 0870 numbers
- 07 mobile numbers
- a credit card-payable basis

If your complaint is not one that we can deal with, we will always try to direct you to the organisation most relevant to your complaint.



HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you simply want to check a number on your bill, you can save time by using the [number checking service](#) on our website. As well as identifying the service operating on the number and the company providing it, the number checker will let you know whether the service is under investigation for any reason and of any action we are taking.

If you want to make a formal complaint about a service, you can either:

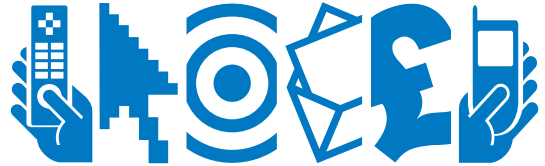
- complete the [online complaints form](#) on our website, or
- call our free helpline on [0800 500 212](#) (8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday), or
- write to us at PhonepayPlus, [FREEPOST WC5468, London SE1 2BR](#)

The more information you can provide from the outset about your complaint (for example, the full phone number used, and where and when you saw it advertised), the quicker and more thorough any investigation we carry out will be.

We aim to resolve all complaints quickly, effectively and consistently. If your complaint is one that we can deal with, we will let you know. We will also let you know of the outcome of the case.

Our standard investigations usually take between eight and 12 weeks. However, this is subject to change depending on the complexity of the case and the amount of evidence that we need to examine. The length of an investigation can also be extended if the company concerned requests a hearing to discuss its case.

More detailed information about we handle complaints is available in the [how to complain](#) section of our website. We consider all relevant factors when deciding whether to impose a sanction, including the scale of the harm caused and the company's breach history.



OUR POWERS

When we uphold a breach of our Code, the company responsible must immediately amend the service and/or its promotional material so that it complies with the Code. In most cases, companies found in breach of the Code will be charged to cover the cost of our investigation.

We also have the power to impose the following sanctions:

- formal reprimands
- making companies come to us for prior approval
- ordering companies to pay full refunds to complainants
- imposing fines
- barring access to services
- banning named persons from operating services

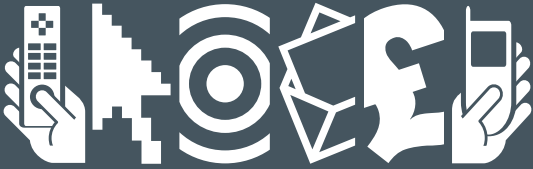
GETTING YOUR MONEY BACK

You should always speak to your own phone network in the first instance to discuss any problems with your bill. As we do not regulate phone bills, we cannot insist that your phone network suspends payment of any disputed items. We can only order a provider of a phone-paid service to pay you a refund once we have completed an investigation and where we have ordered a refund to be paid as a sanction.

If you are in dispute over your bill, please ask your phone company for details of its ombudsman service.

If you suspect that calls have been made to services without your permission, you should contact your phone company to discuss your bill. If it can be shown that your phone has been used without your permission to call certain types of service – basically live/recorded chat and live tarot services – we may be able to help you obtain compensation.

To prevent unauthorised calls being made from your phone, you should ask your phone company for details of 'call barring'.



OUR TOP TIPS

As the regulator for phone-paid services, our vision is that anyone can use these services with absolute confidence. Most phone-paid services are run responsibly and don't cause concern. However, we want to know about problems so that we can stamp out bad practice. We also want you to be vigilant – follow these simple tips and enjoy using services with confidence:

- Know how to recognise phone-paid services by the numbers they use.
- Always read the terms and conditions in any advert. Once you've seen how a service works and what it will cost, then make up your mind about taking part.
- Be wary of 'free' offers or seemingly fabulous prizes. If something looks too good to be true, it probably will be!
- Never respond to unsolicited adverts – legitimate companies don't promote their services this way. To stop receiving many unwanted calls, register your phone numbers with the Telephone Preference Service (www.tpsonline.org.uk).
- If you've signed up to a text subscription service but want to quit, simply send the word STOP to the service number.
- Keep an eye on your phone bill – talk to your phone company if there are charges you don't recognise.
- Visit www.phonebrain.org.uk, our fun and interactive website for children and young people.
- Share these tips with your children and anyone else who uses your phone.



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www.phonepayplus.org.uk

www.phonebrain.org.uk