

Number crunching:

- how much does a phone call really cost?

0800, 0870, 090, 020 – there are so many different phone numbers that keeping tabs on how much they cost to call can be confusing. So what do they all mean?

This is a guide to common phone numbers, some of the ways that they are used and the costs of calling them from a BT landline - other providers' prices may vary.

Prices may be lower or higher than the examples quoted below, particularly from mobile phones.

The prices below are indicative only and should not be used as a definitive list of call charges. You should check with your provider before you dial.

As well as a pence per minute rate, most fixed line providers charge a call setup fee to connect the call of 5 to 10p for some calls.

01 and 02 numbers – geographic numbers



These numbers relate to specific locations in the UK and are used for homes and businesses. For example, Huddersfield is 01484, Bath is 01225, Edinburgh is 0131 and London is 020.

How much do calls cost? Calls from a BT landline are typically charged between 1.5p and 4.5p per minute depending on the time of day (plus a call set-up fee) and are included in free call packages. Most providers offer call packages that allow calls free of charge at certain times of the day.

03 numbers - UK wide geographic numbers



Many organisations use 03 numbers as an alternative to more expensive 08 numbers.

How much do calls cost? Calls cost no more than a national rate call (01 or 02) and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way. Calls cost up to 4.5p per minute from a BT landline during the day and are included in free call packages.

030 numbers – not-for-profit organisations



030 numbers are specially designed for not-for-profit organisations, charities and public bodies to offer consumers a single point of contact nationally. The BBC, the Met Police, the RSPCA, local councils, Ofcom and a number of government departments use 030 numbers.

How much do calls cost? They cost no more than calls to geographic (01 and 02) numbers and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes. Calls cost up to 4.5p per minute from a BT landline during the day and are included in free call packages.

07 – mobile numbers



How much do calls cost? Calls to mobiles are charged between 6p and 18p per minute from BT landlines and are not included in free call packages. Call costs from mobiles vary according to the calling plan chosen and are often more expensive than calls from landlines. Calls between mobile phones are often included in free call packages.

070 – personal numbers



These are different from mobile numbers and calls to them are more expensive. They can be used as a “follow me” service where calls are diverted to another number. Some small businesses and sole traders use them to make it easy to manage calls.

Personal numbers are also sold on a one-off basis. For example, if you are buying or selling a used car and you do not want to advertise your private mobile or fixed line number on a website or in a magazine.

How much do calls cost? 070 numbers can cost between 9p and 50p per minute from a BT landline and up to 75p per minute from a mobile phone, depending on the time of day you are calling.

08 numbers

0800 and 0808 Freephone



A number of businesses and organisations use 0800 numbers including some helplines and charities such as Childline.

How much do calls cost? Calls are normally free of charge from fixed lines but charges may apply from mobile phones. The operator must make an announcement before the call is connected telling the caller that they will be charged.

Chargeable 08 Business Rate numbers



These are used by businesses and organisations for sales, enquiry and customer service lines and for some pay-as-you go internet access services. Businesses and organisations generally receive a share of the call charge.

0843 and 0844

How much do calls cost? Calls are charged at up to 5p per minute for BT customers, calls from other providers may vary and cost more from mobile phones.

0845

How much do calls cost? Calls are charged at between 0.5p and 2p per minute depending on the time of day from most BT landlines and are included in free call packages. Calls from other providers may vary and cost a lot more from mobile phones.

0870

How much do calls cost? Calls from BT landlines and some other fixed networks cost no more than a national rate call (01 or 02 between 1.5p and 4.5p) and may count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way. Calls from other fixed networks may vary and from mobile networks will cost a lot more.

Recently some other providers have also included calls to 0845 and 0870 numbers in call packages, making them free at certain times of the day.

0871/2/3



How much do calls cost? Calls cost up to 10p per minute for BT customers but can cost a lot more from a mobile phone. Services provided on these numbers are regulated by PhonepayPlus* to provide additional protection for callers.

Premium rate numbers



09 numbers

09 numbers are mainly used for paid-for services such as competitions, TV voting, horoscopes, chat lines, adult lines, recorded information and professional advice services.

You can bar these premium rate numbers from being dialled from your phone, as you can with other numbers. These numbers are also regulated by PhonepayPlus*.

How much do calls cost? Calls can cost between 10p and £1.50 per minute from a BT landline but can cost more from other networks, and may cost a lot more from a mobile phone.

**PhonepayPlus (previously known as ICSTIS) regulates phone-paid services in the UK. These are the premium rate goods and services that you can buy by charging the cost to your phone bill and pre-pay account. You can find out more information at www.phonepayplus.org.uk*