

# HomePhone



## Post Office HomePhone<sup>®</sup> Code of Practice



# Post Office HomePhone® Code of Practice for Fixed Line Telecommunication Services including Premium Rate Services and Number Translation Services

At Post Office Limited we aim to make our customers central to everything we do. The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that we follow best practice when dealing with our customers. We hope you find this Code of Practice useful in explaining how we go about providing fixed line telecommunication services.

The Code of Practice does not affect your legal rights. Nothing in this Code of Practice forms part of the agreement between you and us.

## 1. About the Post Office HomePhone® service

The Post Office HomePhone® service is provided by the Post Office® and is a line rental and calls service. Post Office Limited rents its lines from Fujitsu and British Telecommunications (BT) and then on-rents to its customers. Therefore the service allows customers to rent their telephone line from Post Office HomePhone®. This means that our customers will receive one bill for line rental and calls from us.

## 2. How to contact us

Our customer service agents are happy to help you with all your queries. You can call the Customer Care Line between 7am and 11pm, 365 days a year.

Post Office® Telecom Services  
Selectapost 58  
Sheffield  
S97 3GQ

Email: [support@pobroadband.co.uk](mailto:support@pobroadband.co.uk)

Tel: **0345 600 3210** (calls may be recorded, monitored and used for training and compliance purposes).

[www.postoffice.co.uk/telecoms](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/telecoms)

## 3. Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone®

Post Office HomePhone® is a line rental and calls service. Customers can order the Post Office HomePhone® service online at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone) or by telephone on **0345 600 3210**. There is no minimum agreement term and customers can cancel the Post Office HomePhone® service at any time by providing 15 calendar days notice to the Post Office® that they would like to terminate their service. Additional details about the Post Office HomePhone® service and how customers can obtain the service can be found at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone).

Alternatively, customers can obtain details by calling **0800 092 0500**.

### 3.1. Pricing information

Pricing information and the Terms and Conditions for the Post Office HomePhone® service can be found at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone). Alternatively, customers can obtain the pricing information and the Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone® by calling the Customer Care Line on **0345 600 3210**.

### 3.2. Contract conditions

The Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone® are sent to all customers along with their Welcome Guide and can also be found at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone) by clicking on the Important Information link. Alternatively, customers can obtain the Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone® by calling **0345 600 3210**.

## 4. Billing

For Post Office HomePhone®, we will send you a bill monthly or quarterly for line rental, calls and any additional features you have on your line. If you also take our broadband service, your billing frequency may vary dependent on your payment method. Line rental is charged in advance, and calls and features are charged in arrears.

You will receive your first bill for advance line rental shortly after your service is activated.

You can pay your bill through a variety of ways; at any Post Office® branch, by debit card over the phone, by Direct Debit, by sending us a cheque or using our Budget Payment Card.

If you have any queries about your bill, you should call our Customer Care Line on **0345 600 3210**.

If you fail to pay your bills in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone® we may bar any outgoing calls or disconnect your service and pursue the debt through a debt recovery agency.



## 5. Premium rate services (PRS)

Premium rate services are identified by dialling codes that typically begin with 09 and 089. They are charged at a higher amount than normal calls. Premium rate services can be accessed through a landline, a mobile, a fax or by a personal computer.

The types of services typically offered through PRS lines are: TV voting lines (such as the X Factor), phone chat, information services (such as weather and traffic reports), adult entertainment, technical help lines (such as broadband) and competition lines.

Directory enquiries services with numbers starting 118 are also classed as premium rate services.

The following provides some more detailed information about premium rate services.

### 5.1 The price of premium rate services

The price of calling premium rate services depends on the number dialled. A complete list of all the prices to premium rate numbers can be found in our price list. The price list and the Terms and Conditions for Post Office HomePhone® are available on our website at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone). Alternatively, customers can obtain this information by calling the Customer Care Line on **0345 600 3210**.

### 5.2. Why premium rate services are more expensive to call

Most premium rate service numbers operate on a 'revenue sharing' basis. This means that most of the cost of making a call to a premium rate service is paid to the service provider, which is the company or agency providing the content or services. The rest of the revenue from the call is shared with the 'originating' telephone company; for example, the Post Office® through Post Office HomePhone®; and the telephone company that carries and 'terminates' the call on behalf of the service provider, e.g. BT.

### 5.3. Disputing a call to a premium rate service on your bill

If you feel that the premium rate call was not made from your telephone line then you can contact us via telephone on **0345 600 3210** to ask us to investigate the matter further. However, whilst you may not have personally been aware of someone in the household making the premium rate call, it is most likely that someone has. The registered Post Office HomePhone® customer is responsible for all calls that are made from their fixed line phone and if you suspect there is a danger of unauthorised calls being made from your line we recommend you use the call barring services, details of which can be obtained by calling **0345 600 3210**.

## 5.4. The role of PhonepayPlus

PhonepayPlus ([www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk)) is the industry-funded regulatory body for all premium rate charged telecommunications services. They regulate premium rate services in their entirety – their content, promotion and overall operation – through a Code of Practice.

One of the roles of PhonepayPlus is to protect consumer interests in the event of cases of abuse or scams involving PRS calls. Ofcom's role in the premium rate regulatory regime is to provide statutory support to the work of PhonepayPlus.

PhonepayPlus set and maintain standards and, as appropriate, requirements for the content, promotion, marketing and provision of premium rate services. They also investigate and adjudicate upon complaints relating to the content, promotion and marketing of premium rate services and can issue directions to ensure they stay within the Code of Practice. PhonepayPlus also administer a system for the payment of claims for compensation for unauthorised use of live services.

PhonepayPlus investigate complaints, and have the power to fine companies and bar access to services if the Code of Practice is breached. It can also bar the individual(s) behind a company from running any other premium rate services under any company name on any telephone network for a defined period.

Additionally, PhonepayPlus may also order a company to pay you a refund once they have completed an investigation into a case of abuse or scam involving PRS calls and where they impose redress as a sanction. The service PhonepayPlus provides is free of charge to consumers and fully independent.

### 5.5. Finding out which service provider is responsible for a PRS number

Customers can use the PhonepayPlus website, [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk), to find out certain details about a particular premium rate number, such as the content of service, the price, and which service provider provides the service, including contact details for these service providers. If the service provider is currently under investigation the facility on the website will also tell you this.

Alternatively, the customer service agents on our Customer Care Line can access this service on your behalf and provide the available details. For this assistance, contact us by telephone on **0345 600 3210**.

### 5.6. Making a complaint to PhonepayPlus

If you are concerned about a premium rate service you can make a complaint to PhonepayPlus. You can do this in several ways:

- by using their online complaint form at [www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk)
- by calling their free helpline on **0800 500 212** between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.



### 5.7. Seeking a refund for premium rate charges

As well as the services offered by PhonepayPlus, if you have a dispute about your charges for premium rate services, that cannot be resolved with Post Office HomePhone®, you can contact Ombudsman Services: Communications, the industry ombudsman of which we're a member. They can investigate the matter further for you. Further information about how to contact Ombudsman Services: Communications can be found in section 10 of this Code of Practice.

### 5.8. Industry problem of premium rate deception

Within the telephony industry there is a recognised issue whereby Internet dial-up connections are being diverted to premium rate numbers without the owner's knowledge. The issue, known as "premium rate deception" is where a customer with a dial-up internet connection is viewing premium rate content – such as music, film or adult material – and is switched to a premium rate or international number without their knowledge or consent. This results in very high phone bills for the customer. It doesn't affect broadband customers.

Our network provider is working closely with PhonepayPlus and the Office of Communications (Ofcom) on your behalf to tackle this problem. When premium rate numbers that are deceiving customers are identified we take all possible steps to ensure that customers are unable to connect to these numbers again.

Below is some information about how to protect your computer against this industry-wide problem. Please take some time to read this information and ensure that you have protected yourself. In the meantime, if you discover any instances of this deception, please contact us immediately on our Customer Care Line, **0345 600 3210**.

### 5.9. How to protect yourself from premium rate deception

There are two ways in which premium rate deception can occur:

- your internet dial-up connection is switched to premium rate or international numbers without your knowledge or consent
- you visit a premium site but are not warned about the high cost before entering.

Computers with dial-up Internet connection are vulnerable to this because your connection to the Internet can be changed without your knowledge and it is difficult to detect.

Premium rate deception usually occurs when you are browsing a premium rate content website – for music, films and adult material, for example. Usually, when you access one of these sites a message should appear asking you to install software in order to download material from the website at an explained additional cost.

If you're not warned about this, you could run up very high phone bills without realising it.

Broadband users aren't affected by this problem, as long as you have disconnected the Internet modem from your phone socket and don't use this modem to make fax or voice calls.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself against premium rate deception.

- **Browser settings:** It's very important to ensure that the browser on your computer is left at the default security setting. By doing this, you'll receive adequate warnings when something is attempting to install dialler software without your knowledge or consent.
- **Keep up to date:** Make sure that your operating system is regularly patched with the latest upgrades from your software's manufacturer. For Microsoft Windows users please visit <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com> to ensure your PC settings are up to date.
- **Get protection:** Your PC should have some form of antivirus software and firewall, which should be updated on a daily basis. Some of these anti-virus packages will even detect rogue diallers. To find out about your software's capabilities, contact your PC supplier.
- **Consider call barring these numbers:** We can help by putting a bar on all premium rate and/or international numbers on your phone line.
- **Report the premium rate numbers:** Email us at [Support@pobroadband.co.uk](mailto:Support@pobroadband.co.uk) and tell us the numbers you are concerned about.

### 5.10. How to bar access to premium rate services

We offer the facility to bar access to premium rate numbers, which will stop anyone from making calls to 090 or 091 numbers. If you wish to have this type of barring applied to your line, contact our Customer Care Line on **0345 600 3210**.



## 6. Number Translation Services (NTS)

Number Translation Services are calls to numbers identified as 'special services' starting with the 08 prefix. This has been identified within the National Telephone Numbering Plan, which is the Ofcom register for telephone numbers. This includes numbers such as 0845 and 0870, 0800 (and the 0500 free phone numbers). Not included are calls to 0844 04 'Surftime' and 080899 flat rate internet access.

The call rates for NTS calls can be found in our price list. We will give the same prominence to the price of NTS calls as we do for all our other call rates. The price list is available on our website at [www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/homephone). Alternatively, customers can obtain a free copy by calling the Customer Care Line on **0345 600 3210**.

Whenever we refer to call pricing in our marketing material, we include our maximum NTS call prices as well as clear reference to where you can find a complete set of our charges for NTS calls.

If you are a new customer to Post Office HomePhone<sup>®</sup>, we can provide you with a complete set of prices as above. We will also give you a clear reference to where, on the website and in published price lists, the complete set of NTS call charges can be found.

We also endeavour to make clear in our marketing materials whether any of our special offers and discounts apply to NTS calls. In particular, Post Office HomePhone<sup>®</sup> has a discount offer of 10% for calls to ten numbers nominated as "Loved Ones".

## 7. Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and the Fax Preference Service (FPS)

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) helps you to make sure your telephone number is no longer available to organisations, including charities and voluntary organisations who may telephone you with offers and information you do not wish to receive.

If you are receiving unsolicited tele-marketing calls and do not wish to receive these, you can register with the telephone preference service. You can register online at [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk) or by telephone on **0845 070 0707**.

The fax preference service allows you to register fax numbers on which you do not wish to receive direct marketing material. You can register for the FPS online at [www.fpsonline.org.uk](http://www.fpsonline.org.uk) or by telephone on **0845 070 0702**.

## 8. What happens if you have a fault with your PostOffice HomePhone<sup>®</sup> service

You can report faults to our Customer Care Line, 365 days a year. You should report faults to us on **0345 600 3210**.

Faults can occur on the telephone you are using or that of the person you are trying to call, the network we use for carrying our calls with Fujitsu or BT's network.

When you report your fault, we will ask you to perform a few simple checks to help us establish the cause of the problem. If the fault is with our partner, we will work with their fault repair agencies on your behalf.

## 9. What to do if you are unhappy with the service you receive from Post Office HomePhone<sup>®</sup>

If you have any complaints in connection with your Post Office HomePhone<sup>®</sup> service, you should initially complain to the HomePhone Customer Care Line. They will try to resolve the complaint instantly, or at least within 10 working days. The address for correspondence is:

Post Office<sup>®</sup> Telecom Services  
Selectapost 58  
Sheffield  
S97 3GQ

Tel: **0345 600 3210** (calls may be recorded, monitored and used for training and compliance purposes). If you are not satisfied with the resolution offered you should request for the problem to be escalated to the Customer Care Line Manager for resolution.

## 10. Independent dispute resolution through Ombudsman Services: Communications

Ombudsman Services: Communications is an independent dispute resolution scheme. If following escalation of a problem within Post Office Limited, we cannot come to a mutual agreement, we will issue a "deadlock" letter to advise you of the final outcome of our enquiries, which will allow you to contact Ombudsman Services: Communication if you wish.

Alternatively, if your complaint is not resolved within eight weeks you have the right to contact Ombudsman Services: Communication without a deadlock letter.

Ombudsman Services: Communication contact details are as follows:  
Ombudsman Services: Communications  
PO Box 730  
Warrington  
WA4 6WU

Telephone **0330 440 1614**

Textphone: **0330 440 1600**

You can also make a complaint on their website:

[www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)



## 11. How to obtain additional copies of this Code of Practice

You can obtain additional copies of this Code of Practice in the following ways:

by request in writing to:

Post Office® Telecom Services  
Selectapost 58  
Sheffield  
S97 3GQ

Or by visiting [www.postoffice.co.uk/telecoms](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/telecoms)

Or by calling **0345 600 3210**

This Code of Practice is also available free of charge in a different format (e.g. Braille or large print) for customers who are visually impaired. To request this, customers can contact us by phoning **03457 22 33 44**, or by text on the Post Office® textphone number **03457 22 33 55**. Calls to these numbers are charged at local rates.

## 12. Useful contacts

Ofcom Contact Centre  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA

Telephone: **020 7981 3040** or **0300 123 3333**

Fax: **020 7981 3333**

Textphone: **020 7981 3043**

Email: [contact@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:contact@ofcom.org.uk)

[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

PhonepayPlus  
Fourth Floor  
Clove Building  
4 Maguire Street  
London SE1 2NQ

Telephone: **020 7940 7474**

[www.phonepayplus.org.uk](http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk)

Ombudsman Services: Communications  
PO Box 730  
Warrington  
WA4 6WU

Telephone: **0330 440 1614**

Textphone: **0330 440 1600**

[www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)

Post Office Limited Registered Address  
Post Office Limited is registered in England and Wales under registered number 2154540 and its address is:  
148 Old Street

London  
EC1V 9HQ

This information is correct as at June 2014.

