

21<sup>st</sup> December 2009

Dear Colleague

**Re: The use of 084 Numbers - Directions to NHS Bodies**

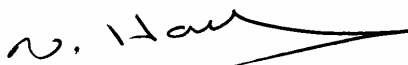
Following a public consultation on the future use of 084 numbers in the NHS, the Department announced on September 14<sup>th</sup> that it would be prohibiting the use of telephone numbers which charged the patient more than the equivalent cost of calling a geographical number to contact the NHS. Further information and the findings of the consultation can be found at:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/DH\\_105089](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/DH_105089)

As a result of the consultation, Directions to Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, and to Special Health Authorities and NHS Trusts in England (with the exception of NHS Direct NHS Trust) have been issued today (21<sup>st</sup> December), which instruct those organisations not to use contact telephone numbers which have the effect of the patient paying a premium above the cost of a call to a geographical number. A copy of the Directions accompanies this letter for your information.

These Directions do not prohibit an organisation from using specific number ranges for the purpose of contacting NHS services. Organisations remain free to use non-geographical number ranges such as 084, providing that patients are not charged more than the equivalent cost of calling a geographical number to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Hall', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nick Hall  
Deputy Director