



Parcel Delivery Service – Chain Email

It has come to our attention that a chain e-mail has been circulating the internet. It makes reference to the Royal Mail, the City of London Police and Parcel Delivery Services. ICSTIS appreciates that consumers want to find out more information about this alert and have issued the following statement:

During the Christmas period 2005, a number of people across the UK received cards from Parcel Delivery Services (a service run through a service provider called Studio Telecom). When ICSTIS were informed of the content and promotion of this service we invoked our Emergency Procedure - for details click this link - www.icstis.org.uk/service_providers/complaints/default.asp) and removed access to the service (operating on 20 numbers) on 29 December 2005.

We do not believe that this service is operating again and have issued a statement to the industry to reiterate that they fulfill their responsibilities under our Code of Practice and ensure that any premium rate service running on their network abides by our regulation.

If you are invited to call a premium rate number (starting with the dialling code '090') and believe there is a problem with the content, promotion or operation of the service then please call our Contact Centre for free on 0800 500 212. Our staff will be able to look up the number for you and give you any information we have about it. Alternatively, you can check a number yourself at www.icstis.org.uk/consumers/ncd/default.asp

This particular case will be adjudicated on as soon as possible. Until then, all the revenue will remain frozen and will not be passed on to the operator. Until then, we will not have details posted on the website as we need to publish the exact facts and final outcome.

The email you received referred to a £15 charge. This is in fact an urban myth. It is not possible for a £15 charge to be made on connection. We also have a number of measures in place in our Code of Practice to ensure that consumers are protected from unexpectedly high charges. Calls and texts cost a maximum of £1.50 per minute. The particular service referred to in the chain e-mail used a recorded message which lasted a maximum of 6 minutes - making the total cost £9. Under the Code, all service providers must state clearly in promotional material the likely costs for calls to each service (either per minute or total charge inclusive of VAT).

It is worth remembering that the vast majority of premium rate services operate within the ICSTIS Code of Practice and cause no consumer harm. Sadly, a small number do and consumers should always inform us as soon as possible about these companies so we can investigate them in full. To ensure you are protecting yourself, make sure you can recognise which numbers will incur a premium charge on your phone, always read the terms and conditions of promotions you are taking part in and if an offer looks too good to be true then it probably is.

For further information, please visit the consumer section of the website where we aim to answer your questions. www.icstis.org.uk/consumers/default.asp.

For our leaflet 'Are you protected against premium rate scams?' please click: http://www.icstis.org.uk/pdfs_news/prs_protection_factsheet.pdf