

**Happy New Year** – we hope that this new year brings peace and happiness to all our clients and lots of new funding for both devices and professional support services!

## **Carriage charges and labour rates**

We, like all businesses, have been hit with increasing costs over the years, but two of those cost increases that we have not passed on to our clients relate to carriage costs and labour.

The cost of **carriage** has risen steadily over the years, yet we have not increased our basic £14 charge in the UK since we started in 1998 – 10 years ago! In fact, we have absorbed all the extra costs involved and now find we are charging considerably less than what it costs us. Indeed, we charge no carriage costs on loans, new product deliveries or repairs under warranty or extended warranty – unlike some other companies – and we intend to continue that service.

However, carriage charges on repairs not covered by warranty or extended warranty should reflect the actual cost, and therefore these charges are being increased. For mainland UK pick ups and deliveries, the cost will increase to £18 each way with effect from February 1st.

Unfortunately, for Ireland, the cost increases have been greater due to air transport charges and increased fuel and duty costs. Again we have absorbed these costs for many years but must now increase our charge to better reflect what it actually costs us. For shipments from Ireland we will be charging €14 each way, with effect from February 1st. In reality these cost increases still do not cover the actual costs levied to us, but will at least help off set these charges.

At the same time we will be reviewing both the carrier we use, to see whether we can find an alternative, lower cost carrier, and also whether there are better and lower cost alternatives especially for Ireland, where the increase is greatest. As an alternative to the “pick up” costs, we are perfectly happy to receive repairs through you own carriers, as long as you advise us of what you are sending in, and through whom, so we can keep a track and advise you if it does not arrive.

In terms of the cost of labour, that too has increased, albeit not at the same rate as the carriage costs, but again we have absorbed these increases over the last 10 years rather than increase our charges. However, we must now set the hourly labour rate at £40 per hour, with effect from February 1st – an increase of £5.

We are sorry that we have had to make these changes but we are sure you will recognise that we have done all we can to keep our costs as low as possible for as long as possible, even to the extent of charging less than what it costs us in terms of both carriage and labour.