

Reference: 01407402

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Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning various data on amateur radio.

Your request was received on 14 January 2021 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Your request

You asked:

Could you please provide me with data on each of the points listed below? For each point, I would like data for each year going back as far as 2000. However, if such data is not available, I would happily accept data only for recent years.

- * Number of UK amateur radio licensees, by category (Foundation, Intermediate, Full)*
- * Number of UK amateur radio stations.*
- * Number of call signs issued by Ofcom.*
- * Number of illegal radio stations identified by Ofcom.*
- * Number of violations of UK radio laws (Communications Act 2003 and Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006)*
- * Number of regulatory actions taken by Ofcom in response to non-compliance with the aforementioned UK radio laws.*
- * Number of UK radio interference cases.*
- * Number of UK radio interference cases caused by amateur radio.*

Our response

Whilst we do hold information in scope of your request, we note that some of our records within the scope of your request have been deleted in line with our record retention policy. As a public body, Ofcom is obliged by law to manage its records effectively and to retain them only as long as necessary to meet business needs and statutory requirements. Case records are kept for between 3 and 7 years. Ofcom took over spectrum responsibilities in 2003. Any historic information may be found on the Radiocommunications Agency website in the [National Archives](#).

Turning to the records that we do still hold, we consider that a considerable amount of time would be required to locate, retrieve, identify and extract the information specified in your request. Your request seeks a broad range of information that would have been generated across different teams within Ofcom, including spectrum licensing and compliance, and relate to various issues in connection with Ofcom's role in managing radio spectrum in the UK.

Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the "appropriate limit". The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the "Regulations"), and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour, which equates to 18 hours of time.

We estimate that it would take over 18 hours to identify and extract the information you requested due to the volume of licences and spectrum compliance cases Ofcom has conducted during the significant time period you have requested, and the time it would take for Ofcom to search through this. This would still be the case if we were to narrow the request to information in recent years only. We have therefore decided to refuse your request under section 12 of the FOI Act.

To be helpful, we publish data in our [annual reports and plans](#) on our website, dating back to 2003, where you can find many of the answers to your questions. Our annual reports provide data on total interference complaints received, penalty notices issues and prosecutions for criminal spectrum activity. The appendices to our annual reports also provide information about licences. If you cannot find the answers to your questions and you wish to consider submitting a narrower, more focused request, we would be happy to consider this under the FOI Act. For example, you could identify specific years and a specific data points in our annual reports that you are interested in, or a narrower subset of issues. Please note that should you decide to make a further request for information, the aforementioned appropriate limit or other exemptions may apply.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Zach Westbrook

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF