

Reference: 01586494

Information Requests  
[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

14 April 2023

### Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to the mobile masts near your home. We received this request on 20 March 2023. We have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the “EIR”).

### Your request

You asked:

*I would like to find out if an EMF radiation survey has been done on the mobile mast that is close to my home as I am concerned for the safety of my family.*

*Could you please let me know:*

- 1. Have any safety surveys have been done at ground level for the towers listed below*
- 2. What information is held about these two towers.*

### Background

It may be helpful for me to first provide some background on our role in relation to radio spectrum and electromagnetic fields (EMF).

Ofcom is not responsible for setting EMF exposure levels and does not authorise or control the physical telecommunications masts or towers; rather, we authorise and manage the use of the radio spectrum in the UK, including the spectrum used by mobile network operators (MNOs). We issue licences and set conditions for the use of spectrum without a licence. Further information on our role in relation to EMF is available on our [website](#) (see also our [General EMF queries](#)).

In recent years, some people have raised concerns around the safety of EMF emissions, particularly from new technologies such as 5G. In 2021, following public consultation, Ofcom decided to include [a new condition in spectrum licences](#), requiring licensees to ensure that their use of equipment (operating above a certain power) complies with the internationally agreed EMF levels in [Guidelines](#) issued by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) for the protection of the general public.

This is consistent with advice from the [UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA), which is responsible for public health matters associated with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (EMF), or radio waves. UKHSA's main advice is that EMF levels should comply with the internationally agreed levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines. On its website, UKHSA notes that "expert groups have examined the accumulated body of research evidence at national and international levels. Their conclusions support the view that health effects are unlikely to occur if exposures are below ICNIRP's internationally agreed guideline levels."

The ICNIRP Guidelines cover frequencies between 100 kHz and 300 GHz and therefore cover all current and planned future use for mobile telecommunications in the UK (including new 5G services). In relation to 5G, UKHSA have said that "*the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health*".

Ofcom carries out unannounced tests of EMF levels around radio transmitters, including mobile phone masts, and can take [enforcement action](#) against spectrum licensees if they produce EMF at levels above those set out in the ICNIRP Guidelines. All [measurements](#) to date over many years have shown that EMF levels are well within the internationally agreed levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines. However, we recognise that there is a lot of public interest in this issue and we will continue to carry out EMF measurements as 5G rollout continues, and publish these on our website. We also provide a service where individuals can request Ofcom to carry out EMF measurements near mobile base stations. Further information is available on our website [here](#).

Ofcom has no involvement in the planning process for physical structures such as masts, buildings etc that may host radio equipment, or in the enforcement of planning law. This is a matter for local planning authorities. The responsibility for planning policy falls to the DLUHC – [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#). In particular, Section 10 (paragraphs 114–118) of MHCLG's National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) outlines the planning criteria for communications infrastructure in England.

There are also [codes of practice in England and Wales](#) which explain that MNOs are committed to compliance with internationally agreed levels of exposure to electromagnetic fields. These codes also require MNOs to sign a declaration (sometimes referred to as an "ICNIRP Certificate") to self-certify that installations at a new site or changes to installations at an existing site comply with the public exposure levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines. Further information on [Masts and planning](#) is available on our website.

## Our response

In response to your specific questions:

1. *Have any safety surveys have been done at ground level for the towers listed below*

We have checked our records and can confirm that we have not carried out EMF measurements at the two towers (masts) mentioned in your email.

2. *What information is held about these two towers.*

As the communications regulator we collect information, which includes information supplied by UK mobile network operators about mobile base stations, to assist with our Connected Nations and Infrastructure Reports. These reports are published annually on our website [here](#). These reports provide consolidated data on mobile networks and do not report on individual masts. As noted above, we do not hold specific information on the EMF levels around the mobile masts that you have highlighted.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any queries, then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

## Information Requests

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](mailto: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