

Reference: 01544660

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11 January 2023

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning masts in South Oxfordshire. Your request was received on 12 December 2022 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Your request & our response

South Oxfordshire District Council have told me that this Freedom of Information Request re high levels of radiation in Wallingford and at the Animal Sanctuary Stadhampton is your responsibility. Please could you reply asap. You are required to switch off these masts in order to stop the torture to people and animals in my near locality from radiation.

It may be helpful for me to first provide some background on our role in relation to radio spectrum and electromagnetic fields (EMF). Ofcom 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 the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Guidelines 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." 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.

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 [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#). (DLUHC). 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 self-certify that installations comply with the public exposure levels guidance set by ICNIRP. Further information on [Masts and planning](#) is available on our website.

Below, I provide a response to your additional questions:

On the installation of 5G equipment at Meadowside, Wallingford, at Watlington Road Stadhampton OX44 7UB that is radiating the Animal Sanctuary with 5.000 milliwatts per square metre, and the LED Streetlights at Stadhampton, please confirm the environmental and health impact analysis for the installation

We do not hold this information. As explained above, Ofcom carries out testing of EMF levels near to radio masts. While Ofcom has not performed tests on every radio mast in the UK, it has performed tests on many hundreds of masts at locations across the UK and all measurements to date have shown that EMF levels are well within the internationally agreed levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines.

A light emitting diode (LED) is a commonly and widely used semiconductor device for producing an output of visible light. It is not a radio device. Ofcom is not involved in the regulation of LED streetlights.

Provide insurance details for radiation exposures and harm against the person.

This is not a matter for Ofcom. Therefore we do not hold this information.

Provide structural integrity data report for the installation and the product insurance for structural integrity, fire and fatigue collapse

This is also not a matter for Ofcom. Therefore we do not hold this information.

Provide details of the self certification certificate from the installers with ICNIRP guideline showing radiation output levels from each radiation transmitter in dBm or watts to confirm compliance with the self certification that the council have allowed

We do not hold this information. As explained above, MNOs are required in codes of practice for England and Wales to self-certify that installations comply with the public exposure levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines. However, these declarations of ICNIRP compliance are submitted to local planning authorities, not to Ofcom.

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. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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