

Reference: 1921250

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

2 December 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the UK's telephone network.

We received this request on 11 November 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

"I am seeking access to detailed historical data on the topology of the UK's telephone network, specifically the locations of Local Exchanges, their catchment areas and timing of ADSL enablement across regions. Several academic studies have leveraged this data to assess the effects of broadband rollout in the UK, particularly through discontinuities in access related to proximity to Local Exchanges.

I would be very grateful for any guidance on how to obtain access to this data or related datasets available for research purposes".

Our response

Current historic broadband coverage information is available on our Connected Nations website – [Connected Nations and infrastructure reports - Ofcom](#). Older reports or data is available on the National Archives website:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20200803095351/https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research>

Please note that the UK's telephone network comprises multiple Communications Providers, many of whom do not use incumbent infrastructure (e.g. Local exchanges) to provide broadband services.

We are unable to disclose specific incumbent infrastructure (Local exchange) data as we consider this is exempt from disclosure under section 44 of the FOI Act. This exemption provides that information is to be withheld if its disclosure is prohibited under other legislation – in this case section 393(1) of the Communications Act 2003 (the Act). Section 393(1) of the Act prevents us from disclosing information about a particular business, which we have obtained in the course of exercising a power conferred by, among other legislation, the Act, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Act is met, neither of which apply here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption under the Act and does not require a public interest test.

We 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,

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Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).