

Reference: 01834330

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

26 June 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about non-ionizing radiation levels of two masts.

We received this request on 6 June 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Your request

"I was hoping that you could help me to get an approximate idea of the non-ionizing radiation levels of two masts in close proximity of each other (34m). I am aware that there is interference between masts if they are closer than 30m to each other but am unclear of the impact if under 40m. I believe that recommendations are slightly different in Scotland (55m?).

My second question is how often are the transmitters and radiation levels checked and by whom? And can the public access this information?

How much effort is considered reasonable in relation to using existing sites and sharing masts?

I am not anti-5G at all, but do feel that the masts should not all be in the same area due to the impact on the same families.

Any advice or guidance would be truly appreciated."

Our response

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

Ofcom authorises and manages 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 (also referred to as non-ionising radiation) 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 technologies such as 5G. In 2021, following public consultation, Ofcom decided to include [a 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.

Our licence condition does not specify a minimum distance between radio transmitters. Rather, it is for the licensee to undertake calculations or measurements (or other approaches as set out in our

[EMF Guidance](#)) to ensure that the ICNIRP levels are not breached in areas where members of the general public may be present.

In answer to your second question, Ofcom has an ongoing programme of measurements 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. We publish these [measurements](#) on our website. All measurements to date over many years have shown that EMF levels are well within the internationally agreed levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines.

We also provide a chargeable service where individuals can request Ofcom to carry out EMF measurements near mobile base stations. Further information is available [here](#).

There may be planning rules related to the specific placement of masts or re-use of existing masts – however, 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.

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,

Information Requests

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](#).