

Reference: 01946704

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

11 February 2025

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning terrestrial TV transmitters.

We received this request on 16 January 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

### Your request & our response

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*Who is the operator, and is responsible for the terrestrial TV transmitter in Thornhill, Dumfriesshire?*

The operator of the Thornhill transmitter is Arqiva Ltd, who (in relation to digital television at this site) provide transmission services on behalf of the BBC, BBC Free To View Ltd, and Digital 3&4 Ltd. These latter three organisations are licensed to provide Digital Terrestrial Television services and they subcontract the transmission of their services to Arqiva.

*Who is the operator, and is responsible for the terrestrial TV transmitter in Caldbeck, Cumbria?*

The operator of the Caldbeck transmitter is Arqiva Ltd., who (in relation to digital television at this site) provide transmission services on behalf of the BBC, Digital 3&4 Ltd, SDN Ltd, Arqiva Muxco Ltd. and Comux UK Ltd.

*What representations have Ofcom made to the said Thornhill operator regarding the upgrading of this terrestrial tv transmitter, and when were these representations so made?*

As part of the UK-wide digital TV switchover process (which took place between 2007 and 2012) Ofcom required all TV relay transmitters, including Thornhill, to be converted to transmit the three digital TV multiplexes which contain the main UK ‘public-service’ television channels. Ofcom has made no other representations in respect of the Thornhill transmitter specifically.

*As you are aware, the service from the Thornhill transmitter is far inferior to that from the Caldbeck transmitter, and due to topography and despite advances in tv aerial technology, this is only resolvable by improved transmission.*

*I note that much of rural Scotland is similarly disserved. What is the Ofgem policy on this issue?*

We presume that you meant Ofcom’s policy, not Ofgem’s policy here.

It is the case that TV relay transmitters such as Thornhill carry fewer channels than primary transmitters such as Caldbeck. This is because only the public service broadcasters (BBC One, BBC

Two, ITV/STV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) are required by Ofcom to provide near-universal coverage of their channels via the terrestrial TV (Freeview) platform. The additional Freeview channels which are carried at primary transmitters (including Caldbeck) are provided on a solely commercial basis, and Ofcom cannot require the operators of these services to extend their networks to operate from additional transmitters.

Approximately 98.5% of UK households are predicted to be served by the public service broadcaster multiplexes, and around 90% of UK households are predicted to be served by the additional commercial multiplexes.

*Finally. I note that the statutory Communication Regulator in 2024 provides no email contact address, save for matters relating to the Welsh language. If it is possible for this purpose, why are the greater majority, including in Wales, denied this facility by Ofcom?*

On our website we show various ways to contact Ofcom, including telephone numbers, online forms, via social media, and email addresses for specific departments (including licensing, information requests, etc.).

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](#).