

Reference: 01994617

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

3 June 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about pirate radio seizures since 2015.

We received this request on 6 May 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request

Details on the number of pirate radio stations that have been seized, shut down, or otherwise subject to enforcement actions by Ofcom (or in collaboration with other agencies) from 2015 to the present.

If available, I would also appreciate a breakdown by year and region.

Our response

Please note that we only hold the information requested for 7 years, in line with GDPR and data retention policies.

Tables A and B below show the breakdown of illegal broadcaster equipment seizures and other enforcement operations undertaken by Ofcom to disrupt illegal broadcasters. Please note that from 2022/23 we changed how this information was recorded to improve the quality of data captured; therefore, the numbers for the two periods of 2018/19 to 2021/2022 and 2022/23 to 2025/26 YTD are not directly comparable.

Table A: Overview of equipment seizures / other enforcement operations (FY 2018/19 - 2021/22)

Fiscal year	Equipment seizures	Other enforcement activities	Total
2018/2019	29	125	154
2019/2020	9	68	77
2020/2021	13	51	64
2021/2022	Not recorded	39	39
Total	51	283	334

Table B: Overview of equipment seizures / other enforcement operations (FY 2022/3 -)

Fiscal year	Equipment seizures	Other enforcement activities	Total
2022/2023	32	22	54
2023/2024	38	20	58
2024/2025	32	28	60
2025/2026 YTD	2	1	3
Total	104	71	175

Regarding the breakdown of year and region, please see Table C below. Due to system limitations this is not captured for every illegal broadcaster and will therefore not perfectly match the above tables. The quality of the data is more accurate for 2022/23 onwards.

Table C: Breakdown by year and region (FY 2018/19 -)

City / Area	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YTD	Total
Barking	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Basildon	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Birmingham	1	1	1	3	10	7	16	0	39
Borehamwood	1	1	0	3	1	2	4	0	12
Boston	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Brighton	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	4
Bromley	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Cannock	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chatham	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Chelmsford	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Croydon	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Dudley	0	0	0	2	3	4	1	0	10
Erith	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	6
High Wycombe	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Leeds	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Leicester	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Little Wenlock	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
London	29	14	15	20	25	20	23	0	146
Manchester	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	4
Markfield	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Newcastle-Under-Lyme	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2

Northampton	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Nottingham	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Romford	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Rowley Regis	0	0	4	3	0	0	1	0	8
Sheffield	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sunderland	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sutton	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Tipton	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	6
Westerham	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wolverhampton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Worthing	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	5

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](#).