

Reference: 2120912

Information Requests
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14 January 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Shetland-based complaints.

We received this request on 12 December 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request and our response

1. How many complaints has Ofcom received from people with a Shetland postcode (ZE) over the past five years?

32.

2. Provide a breakdown of the reasons for complaint of those from Shetland. i.e. mobile phone signal, internet connectivity, etc.

We hold information on the exact reason/s given by the complainants however we consider that this information is exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act.

In particular, these reasons would relate to a provider and as such we consider that the information would be exempt from disclosure under section 44 of the FOI Act. Section 44(1)(a) of the FOI Act exempts disclosure of information if its disclosure is prohibited under another enactment. Ofcom is prohibited under section 393 of the Communications Act 2003 ('the Communications Act') from disclosing information about a business which we have obtained in the course of exercising a power conferred by the Communications Act among others, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which applies here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to a public interest test.

Additionally, given there were small number of complaints, and this related to a small region/location, it might be possible to identify who the complainants were if we give the exact reasons of the complaints. We therefore consider that disclosure of some of the information may be exempt under section 40(2) of the FOI Act. This provision states that personal information about persons other than the requester is exempt where, among other things, its disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. This includes the principle that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully.

3. How many complaints had there been about mobile phone providers from people with Shetland postcodes? Please detail how many complaints were made about each mobile phone provider.

Of the 32 complaints mentioned in response to question 1, 4 are categorised as mobile. While we do hold information about the breakdown, we consider that disclosure of this information is exempt under section 44 of the FOI Act, which we have set out above.

4. How many of these complaints have been resolved?

We do not hold this information.

The complaints we receive are registered on our system and used to help us continue our monitoring of the communications industry and take action where appropriate – we do not become involved in individual disputes. Where a customer has complained to their provider and their complaint is not resolved within 8 weeks or their matter reaches a deadlock, they can take their complaint to an Alternative Dispute Resolution body - see here [Making a complaint and using ADR schemes](#) for more details). With this in mind, we would not be aware of how many of the complaints we logged were later been resolved.

5. How many complaints were received about internet connectivity issues over a five year period from people with a Shetland postcode?

9 complaints are recorded on our system under the category internet. Please note, we do not have a category that covers internet connectivity. You may wish to re-submit this FOI question with additional information explaining what you mean by internet connectivity and we can consider this under the FOI Act.

6. How many of these complaints related to the disruption to and maintenance of the Shefa 2 subsea cable?

We can neither confirm nor deny whether the complaints related to a particular business or provider. By virtue of section 44(2) of the FOI Act, the duty to confirm or deny holding information does not arise if the confirmation or denial that would be given in itself reveals information that falls under the exemption in section 44(1) of the FOI Act. Section 44(1) of the FOI Act provides that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. The enactment that prohibits the disclosure of this information is section 393(1) of the Act. Under this section, we are prohibited from disclosing information with respect to a particular business (such as Shefa) that has been obtained in the exercise of our regulatory functions, unless that business consents or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, neither of which are likely to apply here. Section 44 of the FOI Act is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to the public interest test.

7. How many complaints have been raised in relation to a smart meter implemented at a house in Shetland which was unable to connect to the internet?

Given that this relates to a smart meter it might be that the energy regulator might be better placed to answer this question. We do not have a category for this but see our response to question 5 above.

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](#).