

Reference: 01704787

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

15 November 2023

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning high frequency (shortwave) fixed stations. Your request was received on 23 October 2023 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Your request & our response

I am researching the system and regulations related to High Frequency(shortwave) fixed stations, especially digital shortwave fixed stations in the UK. I would like to find the following information and would you be able to inquire about the situation. It would be greatly appreciated if you also provide us with the location of the website containing the information.

1. Do you have the High Frequency(shortwave) band fixed station using a digital system in the UK?

We have interpreted your request as relating to shortwave (HF) broadcasting transmitting stations. There is one HF broadcast transmitting station in use in the UK, at Woofferton. Most HF services broadcast from that transmitting station use analogue AM modulation, although a daily BBC World Service programme transmitted at Woofferton from 04:59 to 07:00 UTC uses the Digital Radio Mondiale digital modulation system.

2. Necessary matters and technical standards for obtaining a High Frequency fixed station license (whether it is analog or digital)

The BBC has historically broadcast its World Service using shortwave frequencies from the UK, and continues to do so through its transmission contractor Encompass, that owns and operates the Woofferton transmitting station. Encompass holds a licence under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 that authorises it to transmit signals for the purpose of providing broadcasting services in sound only, primarily on behalf of the British Broadcasting Corporation ("BBC"). Similar services may be carried on behalf of other broadcasters, consistent with provision for the BBC remaining the primary purpose.

Regarding technical requirements, the licence specifies only the frequency ranges that may be used, and that compliance with relevant parts of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio

Regulations is necessary. The licence does not stipulate whether transmissions need to be analogue or digital.

Other than the licence held by Encompass for the purpose set out above, Ofcom does not offer new licences authorising the use of shortwave frequencies for broadcasting to other organisations.

3. Wireless station specifications specified when obtaining a High Frequency band fixed station license (whether it is analog or digital)

As I have explained in response to the previous point, Ofcom does not offer new licences authorising the use of shortwave frequencies for broadcasting.

4. Could I search the licensing status, including location, license issued date, and use for each licensee of the High Frequency(shortwave) band fixed station (whether it is analog or digital)

The current licence held by Encompass was issued on 18 September 2018. The High Frequency Coordination Conference's (HFCC) website contains details of the frequencies and services provided by the various organisations associated with broadcasting services carried on shortwave which you may find useful. The HFCC website also has listings for the BBC: [B23 Schedule of BBC \(hfcc.org\)](https://www.hfcc.org/b23-schedule-of-bbc) and Encompass: [B23 Schedule of ENC \(hfcc.org\)](https://www.hfcc.org/b23-schedule-of-enc). You can search each of those sheets for the Woofferton transmitter.

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

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF