

Reference: 01772338

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

7 February 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about 5G rollout risk assessments.

We received this request on 31 January 2024 and we have considered your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ('the EIR').

Your request

Please provide the risk assessments that have been done in relation to 5G rollout in the community showing the risks to various age groups

Our response

We do not hold this information.

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

Ofcom is not a public health body and does not have medical or health expertise. We do not hold any studies relating to potential health risks of EMF exposure.

In the UK, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) takes the lead on public health matters associated with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (EMF) and has a statutory duty to provide advice to Government on any health effects that may be caused by exposure to EMF. UKHSA publishes information on the possible health effects of EMF exposure on its [website](#).

UKHSA's main [advice](#) is that EMF levels should comply with the internationally agreed levels in the [ICNIRP Guidelines](#). These Guidelines cover frequencies between 100 kHz and 300 GHz and therefore cover all current and planned future use for mobile telecommunications in the UK (including new 5G services).

Published advice from UKHSA and other internationally recognised health bodies including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) support the view that EMF exposure below the limits recommended in the [ICNIRP Guidelines](#) do not appear to have any known consequence on health. In relation to 5G, UKHSA have said that *"the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health"*.

Ofcom's role is to authorise and manages the use of the radio spectrum in the UK, including the spectrum used to deliver 5G services. We issue licences and set conditions for the use of spectrum without a licence. Further information on our role in relation to EMF 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 new technologies such as 5G. In 2021, following public consultation, Ofcom decided to include

[a new 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 [the ICNIRP Guidelines](#) for the protection of the general public. This is consistent with advice from [the UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA).

Ofcom carries out unannounced tests of EMF levels 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. All [measurements](#) to date over many years have shown that EMF levels are well within the internationally agreed levels in the ICNIRP Guidelines. However, we recognise that there is a lot of public interest in this issue and we will continue to carry out EMF measurements as 5G rollout continues, and publish these on our website.

I 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](#).