

Reference: 1910499

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

19 November 2024

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about data on Local Exchanges and internet connection at postcode level.

We received this request on 23 October 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

### Your request

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*I am writing to you regarding OFCOM data on Local Exchanges (LEs).*

*Professor Nardotto (in cc) and I would like to use data on LEs' catchment area to conduct a research project on the impact of internet access on children's outcomes.*

*As you probably know, Professor Nardotto used these data before for other projects. We would be extremely grateful if you could grant us access to those same data to conduct a new piece of research.*

*Also, if we are not mistaken, you have started to collect data on the quality of the internet connection at the postcode level. If so, could you please allow us to use these data as well?*

*We look forward to hearing from you. We are happy to provide more details on our project if useful.*

### Our response

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It is worth noting that many operators offering gigabit-capable networks across the UK do not use Openreach/BT exchange facilities, so Connected Nations coverage information at [Census Output](#) area for example, may provide a more general view of network availability.

Performance (actual speed) information at Census Output area level can be found here:

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/multi-sector/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2023/data-downloads/202305\\_fixed\\_output\\_area\\_performance\\_r01.zip?v=194395](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/multi-sector/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2023/data-downloads/202305_fixed_output_area_performance_r01.zip?v=194395)

We do hold exchange information and property information as part of our Connected Nations reports, however, we consider that disclosure of this information is exempt under the FOI Act. In particular, 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.

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](#).