

Reference: 1931833

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

8 January 2025

## Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the future of mobile network operators in the UK.

We received this request on 9 December 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 request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding Ofcom's plans and considerations for mobile network operators in the UK, particularly in light of the recent approval of the merger between Three and Vodafone, which will reduce the number of mobile operators in the UK from four to three.*

*Historically, the UK mobile market has seen a reduction in the number of operators over the years. Following the merger of Orange and T-Mobile, the number of operators dropped from five to four, and with the recent merger, the market will now be reduced to three. I am interested in understanding whether Ofcom has any plans or ongoing initiatives to allow a new mobile operator (or mobile operators) to enter the UK market, considering the significant shift in market dynamics caused by these mergers.*

*Specifically, I would like to request any documents, plans, or communications that outline Ofcom's approach to maintaining competition in the UK mobile market, particularly in relation to the impact of the Three/Vodafone merger and the overall reduction in operators. Additionally, any discussions on the potential for a new operator to enter the market or other actions aimed at preserving competition would be of interest.*

### Our response

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We do not hold any information in scope of your request.

Whilst Ofcom is the regulator for the telecommunications sector in the United Kingdom, our role in relation to competition matters is limited and does not extend to regulating mergers of the kind you describe. However, the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) plays a central role in merger control in the United Kingdom and recently published its report on the Three/Vodafone matter that you refer to in your request.

However, we provide the following general information which you may find helpful.

In our December 2022 publication we set out [Ofcom's future approach to mobile markets and spectrum](#) which includes our view on our approach to market competition, and in particular on future mobile consolidation (para 5.31-5.34). This also provides useful context on the market.

More generally, we continue to take steps to monitor the market in a way that allows us to discharge our duties effectively. Here are some of our recent publications on this theme:

Telecoms markets including Mobile:

- [Pricing trends for communications services 2024: Interactive report](#)
- [The Communications Market 2024](#)
- [Connected nations 2024](#)

Mobile specific:

- [Monitoring Consumer Outcomes in the Mobile Sector: Research report 2024](#)
- [Mobile Matters 2024](#)

For further information on the mobile market and its competitiveness it is worth looking at the recent Competition Market Authority's merger final report regarding the Three/Vodafone matter that they published on 5 December 2024.

Although we have no immediate plans to update our approach to mobile markets, any future plans to do this will be made clear in Ofcom's 'plan of work' which is published annually (e.g. [2025/2026 consultation](#)).

We hope this information is helpful. 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](#).