

Consultation on a proposal to reform amateur radio licensing – A lighter, electronic licensing process.

Q 1. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a lighter, electronic licensing process? If not, please explain why.

I am concerned that the manner in which a printed –off online document is intended to replace the current licence could lead to forgery, and possible conflict overseas for UK amateurs when they are asked to produce a valid licence. The FCO has a full account of recent events in Greece when UK citizens engaged in plane spotting were accused of spying and subsequently imprisoned.

OFCOM SHOULD SEEK ADVICE BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THIS PROPOSAL.

Q 2. Do you agree with the proposal to issue licences which remain valid for the life of the licensee? If not, please explain why.

Yes, this seems to be a reasonable proposal, subject to the usual conditions regarding conduct and use of the licence etc.

Q 3. Do you agree with the proposal to issue electronic amateur radio licences free of charge? If not, please explain why.

No. My concern about online issue of licences is explained at Q 1. Also, I believe that the issue of a licence, however frequently, should incur at least a minimal charge to cover costs. These costs should not be passed on to the taxpayer.

Q 4. Do you agree with the proposal to apply an administrative charge when processing postal applications for amateur radio licences? If not, please explain why.

Yes. I believe that an administrative charge should be levied to cover the cost of the issue of all licences.

Q 5. Do you agree that WT Act licence exemption for radio amateurs is not currently practical?

Yes. Such exemption is neither practical within the current legislative framework, nor is it desirable under any circumstances.

Q 6. What are your views regarding the possibility of WT Act licence exemption for radio amateurs in the longer term?

As per Q5. I cannot see any possible justification for such a position. Amateur radio is established under international regulations, which require that only *properly licenced persons* are permitted to operate. This is very much in the UK's interests particularly in view of the current climate both in terms of crime and of terrorism.

Ofcom should be cogniscent of the fact that in discussing the control of *signals* those which it sends out are every bit as important !

Q 7. *Is maintaining the existing licensing regime but with an extended renewal period your preferred option ? If so, please state the renewal period that you believe would be appropriate and explain why.*

A lifetime licence could be introduced; but I believe that this should be a proper document, issued once by way of an issue fee.

Q 8. *Do you agree that the current licencing system is over-burdensome ? If not, please explain why.*

NO. The current system is in place to protect radio amateurs, other spectrum users and the general public. There have already been incidents within the UK where essential users of the spectrum have experienced serious levels of interference due to unlicensed activity. The origins of this have sometimes been due to genuine ignorance on the part of the culprits; but in the contemporary world of an ever increasing ammount of communications activity and devices, the regulatory agencies are going to need to be even more *hands on* if the system is to be protected from melt-down. In this regard a bit of common sense goes a long way !

Q 9. *Do you agree with the proposal to apply an administrative charge when processing applications for a Notice of Variation to an amateur radio licence ? If not, please explain why.*

Yes. I think that this proposal is entirely reasonable.