



Response to stakeholder enquiry on consultation proposals

Update for information

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1.1 On 16 March 2012, Ofcom received an enquiry from a stakeholder seeking clarification on certain aspects of the **second consultation on coexistence of new services in the 800 MHz band with digital terrestrial television**. In accordance with standard Ofcom practice, our response to this enquiry has been published on the Ofcom website to make it available to all potential consultation respondents. The stakeholder expressed a preference to remain anonymous.

1.2 The questions asked and our responses are shown below.

- *Does the same DTT filter work regardless of the type of installation - i.e. standard, communal and amplifier - or are different filters required for the different types of connection?*

We would expect two different filter types to be required, one for domestic installations (which covers both standard and domestic amplifiers) and another for communal systems. In practice, there could be a range of filter models offering different cost and performance characteristics within these two types. The communal system filter is likely to be a larger and more expensive design but a single filter is used to mitigate interference for all households in the communal system. For domestic installations, there may be instances in which a standard domestic filter does not resolve interference to a domestic amplifier, and in this case a better-performing filter may be the best solution.

- *If different filters, then which filter will potentially affected households actually receive - in other words, is there a chance that households with communal aerials and amplifiers do not receive the filter they require, and therefore have to incur costs in acquiring filters even for their primary sets?*

The Government's decision on consumer support is that one filter will be provided per household to households affected by interference and that, where this does not mitigate the interference, additional support (e.g. platform change) will be provided at no extra cost to the consumer. MitCo will need to ensure that consumers receive the right kind of filter, but it will remain the responsibility of the consumer to install the filter.

- *In terms of the installation, Appendix E of the Essential Research report sets out the fitting instructions, but for clarification, do the same filter fitting instructions apply for people with communal aerial systems - i.e. if a consumer lives in a flat with a communal aerial, can he/she mitigate interference by fitting a filter between my TV set and the aerial socket in my living room, or does the filter need to be installed close to the communal aerial itself?*

In communal aerial systems a single (large) filter needs to be installed between the aerial and the amplifier used to distribute the signal around the system. This will most likely be located in a loft or in a box on the roof or outside the building.

- *Appendix E states that, in households where there is an amplifier, the filter needs to be installed at the amplifier itself. But what would happen if a consumer with an amplifier (say in the loft) were to install the filter at the aerial cable in (say) the living room, rather than into the amplifier directly - would this or would this not mitigate interference?*

Where an amplifier exists it is always advisable to connect the filter to the amplifier input (i.e. between the aerial and the amplifier). Although installing a filter between the amplifier and the TV may help in a small number of cases, it will not be effective in the vast majority of cases. Installing the filter in the wrong place will not cause damage to any equipment – it's just that it may not help solve the interference problem.

- *The Essential Research report appears unclear about the extent to which the research actually measured the ease of installation in communal aerial and/or amplifier households - the sample description doesn't seem to break the sample down between types of household, so it is unclear whether the figure of 97% ease of installation applies to all households, or simply to households with standard domestic installations. Did the sample include the full range of installation types, and is it possible to break the results down accordingly?*

No communal systems were included in the Essential research. Households used either standard domestic installations or domestic installations with amplifiers; in their responses, participants were asked to note whether they had an amplified system. Nine households (6% of respondents) identified themselves as having amplifiers – see p.52 of the research report. Given this sample size, splitting out the results for amplifier households would not give any conclusive outcomes.