

Reference: 01413330

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Information Rights Advisor
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24 February 2022

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to unlicensed radio stations in London between January 2015 and January 2022. We received this request on 27 January 2022 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOI Act”).

Your request

You asked for the following information:

- 1. Number of raids carried out on suspected unlicensed radio stations in London each year, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
- 2. Number of raids on unlicensed radio stations in London which resulted in seizure of equipment between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
- 3. Number of prosecutions against individuals related to unlicensed radio stations, in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
- 4. Number of transmitters taken down in London related to unlicensed radio stations between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
- 5. Number of complaints or allegations made by the public, or by license paying broadcasters, regarding possible unlicensed radio stations in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
- 6. Cost of enforcement action regarding unlicensed radio stations in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and, if possible, by London borough.*

Our response

We have responded to each of your questions in turn below. Due to Ofcom’s data retention policy, we no longer hold the requested from 2015. We are therefore only able to provide information from August 2016 onwards, unless otherwise stated. We also note that with the exception of question 3, Ofcom does not record the requested data broken down by London boroughs.

1. *Number of raids carried out on suspected unlicensed radio stations in London each year, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*
2. *Number of raids on unlicensed radio stations in London which resulted in seizure of equipment between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*

We have interpreted your reference to “raids carried out” as a reference to where a search warrant is executed at a property containing part or all of an illegal broadcast station. The relevant numbers by calendar year are as follows:

Year	Number of raids	Number of raids resulting in seizure of equipment
2016	3	3
2017	3	3
2018	6	6
2019	4	4
2020	1	1
2021	0	0

3. *Number of prosecutions against individuals related to unlicensed radio stations, in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*

We have provided the information requested broken down by London borough, as we do hold this information in that form:

Year	Number of Prosecutions	London Borough
2016	1	Dartford
2017	5	Merton
		Merton
		Tower Hamlets
		Tower Hamlets
		Tower Hamlets
2018	1	Southwark
2019	0	N/A
2020	1	Ealing
2021	0	N/A

4. *Number of transmitters taken down in London related to unlicensed radio stations between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*

Year	Number of transmitters
2016	16

2017	71
2018	85
2019	36
2020	39
2021	46

5. *Number of complaints or allegations made by the public, or by license paying broadcasters, regarding possible unlicensed radio stations in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and London borough.*

Year	Number of complaints or allegations made by the public
2016 ¹	16
2017	16
2018	59
2019	119
2020	49
2021	36

6. *Cost of enforcement action regarding unlicensed radio stations in London, between January 2015 and January 2022, broken down by year and, if possible, by London borough.*

We do not hold this information in the form requested. There are various categories of costs that contribute to the overall cost of enforcement action, for example: the hours of work by various individuals and teams within Ofcom, cost of vehicles and travel, equipment used, solicitor's costs, forensic costs, or transcription services. We do not hold the aggregate of these costs for either individual enforcement cases, or enforcement cases as a whole.

If you have any queries, then please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Scott

¹Please note that we only hold information within the scope of this question from May 2016 onwards, due to a change in our internal complaints management system.

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF