

Reference: 572219

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Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information where you asked about Ofcom's Mobile and Broadband Checker data.

This was received by Ofcom on 15 August and it has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You asked:

I am getting in touch to formally request the underlying datasets for the Mobile and Broadband Checker.

I have two uses for it.

1) I want to set up an Internet Service Provider and would like to primarily locate the least and best-served areas to locate the service.

2) I run a geospatial website www.ukcrimestats.com - which tracks crime, property transactions and energy data by postcode. I would like to complement this with connectivity metrics.

At the moment, I can check one postcode at a time. I would like to receive a list of 1.6 million postcodes and their connectivity options.

The latest open data files in relation to Ofcom's Mobile and Broadband Checker data are available on our website¹ and include the following on broadband coverage:

- Fixed broadband census output area coverage
- Fixed broadband local authority coverage
- Fixed broadband postcode coverage

They also include files on mobile local authority coverage.

Mobile coverage information used in the online mobile checker is not held by Ofcom at the postcode level. Instead we provide a grid-based dataset for the UK to an appointed third-party supplier. The supplier is contracted under licence to use a postcode conversion table that translates the address

¹ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-update-spring-2018>

entered by the user to its approximate grid co-ordinate. This is then used to provide mobile coverage information at that approximate location. In order to produce postcode-level information, we would need to develop a specific and original methodology to do so.

We recognise the benefit of widely available information on UK connectivity. We have been engaging with the public, through our Innovation Days in partnership with the Open Data Institute, to understand how data could be of benefit were it to be published in different forms. However there are sensitivities involved given that the data is provided to us by third parties. Requests such as this are constructive in understanding use cases for making UK connectivity data more widely available. Please find more information about this work on our website². If you would like to keep in touch with specialist colleagues on this, as our work to release more data develops, please contact open.data@ofcom.org.uk.

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,

Jerin John

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

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 undertaking 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:

Jacqui Gregory
The Secretary to the Corporation
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

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. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/innovation-day>