

Reference: 523809

Jerin John
Information Rights Adviser
Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

28 February 2018

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 January 2018 addressed to Sharon White, which contained a request for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act):

“confirmation, in accordance with Freedom of Information legislation, how many other broadcasters outside of the That’s TV group are being asked to sacrifice 10 per cent of their broadcast coverage as a result of Clearance”.

We have considered your request under the Act. We have taken it to refer to other local TV licensees and also multiplex operators.

As you know, clearance planning is an ongoing process and the information we hold is therefore based on predictions. Based on version 7.026 of the Clearance Plan, no local TV licensees outside the That’s TV Group are predicted to experience a 10% reduction in coverage post-clearance. However, other local TV licensees will nonetheless experience changes to their coverage area. For example, coverage is predicted to reduce by 2-6% in four locations held by other local TV licensees and by up to 2% in three other locations.

At the multiplex level, overall coverage is broadly maintained across the UK, including the local TV multiplex. However, coverage of individual transmitters within the multiplex networks will be affected. A number of transmitters serving the PSB multiplexes and the commercial multiplexes are predicted to lose 10% or more of their coverage.

In most of these cases, there is either overlap coverage from other transmitters that could provide an alternative service for any affected viewers, or the losses are restored at the 95% time planning threshold which means that few viewers are likely to notice a change in reception in practice. The position of individual local TV licensees is slightly different, in that the local TV multiplex does not generally have overlapping transmitter coverage. As a result, individual location losses are more noticeable than for the UK-wide multiplexes. Even so, many of the predicted local TV reductions are significantly smaller at the 95% time threshold which, as above, suggests that many of those predicted to “lose” the service are unlikely to notice a difference in reception quality.

We have noted the other points you made in your letter of 31 January 2018 and will respond to you on those separately.

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:

Steve Gettings
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