

Reference: 00914360

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Information Rights Advisor
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Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information in relation to 2G infrastructure.

We received this request on 7 May 2020 and have considered it under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“the EIR”). The information sought is information relating to the environment and such information should be processed in accordance with the EIR rather than the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked:

I would like to request information concerning the 2G network in the UK. There seems to be no official / concrete data available as to when the UK plans to shut down 2G, that’s why I’m making this inquiry with you.

I represent a company that manufactures vehicle security / tracking equipment and all of our current products rely on 2G modems. Our products carry a 5 year warranty, therefore it is important for us to know how long 2G will be available in the UK and at which point we should stop offering our 2G based products.

Also, I would like to inquire as to HOW the termination of 2G is expected to happen i.e. will the network be shut down at once in all areas of the UK or is it set to happen gradually (decreasing coverage from area to area), and if it’s the latter – when is it set to begin?

Mobile Network Operator (MNO) spectrum licences are liberalised in terms of technology in order to allow operators freedom to optimise their use of spectrum. They do have certain [coverage obligations](#), including for voice coverage, but these do not require the MNO (i.e. EE, Vodafone, O2 and Three) to deliver or maintain a service via any specific technology or spectrum. It would be a commercial decision for the MNO whether or when to introduce a newer technology to serve any area, managing the possible effects of such a change for its customers, including any commitments it had made to support legacy systems or technologies.

Ofcom has recently set up a project to consider the impact of switching-off the 2G/3G infrastructure in the UK. This project is currently in its preliminary ‘fact seeking’ phase and we are not aware of any announcements by MNOs regarding the timescales of their potential 2G/3G switch-off.

However, we are aware that 2G/3G still has a variety of uses such as smart meters, eCall systems and the example you have mentioned in your request. Going forward with this project, we will keep in mind the needs of consumers, businesses and service providers.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Jessal Visavadia

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:

Corporation Secretary
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