

Reference: 1-317359018

8 March 2016

Julia Snape  
Information requests

[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

### Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information regarding guidance and procedures used by Ofcom investigating staff which was received on 17 February and has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

Please find below our response to each of the questions you asked.

*1. all OFCOM guidance that is issued and used by OFCOM investigating staff including DEO, SMC etc concerning complaints made by amateur radio operators particularly relating to potential VDSL, broadband, internet interference etc.*

There is no specific guidance relating to the areas mentioned.

*2. all OFCOM procedures that are issued and used by OFCOM investigating staff including DEO, SMC etc concerning complaints made by amateur radio operators particularly relating to potential VDSL, broadband, internet interference etc.*

In determining the level of service we provide to complaints of harmful interference Ofcom does not distinguish between individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups, we prioritise our response by assessing the impact. There are therefore no specific procedures relating to the area mentioned. The SMC will, when interference is reported, provide advice and assistance and explore the nature of the interference being experienced, establish if it's harmful and the impact. Please see following standard table used to establish the priority of the response:

Table 1: Prioritisation

Priority	Impact of Harmful Interference	Alternative comms available?	Initial visit target	Resolution target
	<b>Note:</b> Interference must meet the definition of 'harmful' in all scenarios.			

1	Immediate threat to safety of life	No	8 hours	2 calendar days
2	Immediate threat to safety of life	Yes	18 hours	3 calendar days
3	Risk to safety of life (no immediate or significant impact)	Yes	2 working Days	6 working days
	Significant impact on essential services or business system	No		
4	Significant impact on essential services or business system	Yes	5 working days	20 working days
	Impact on essential services or business	No		
	Significant impact on multiple citizens/consumers.			
5	Essential services or business systems degraded.	No	15 working days	40 working days
	Impact on essential services or business	Yes		
	Impact on multiple citizens/consumers or significant impact to an individual citizen	Yes		
6	Impact on other Wireless Telegraphy not covered by above categories	N/A	no target	60 working days
	International ITU cases	N/A		120 working days
Reports not falling into above prioritisations may be recorded as 'intelligence' for trend analysis and used to instigate future proactive investigations.				

3. a list of all the "stock" answers and questions that OFCOM investigating staff including DEO, SMC etc are instructed to use concerning complaints made by amateur radio operators particularly relating to VDSL, broadband, internet etc.

There are no stock answers as each case is treated on its individual merits. However, there are standard terms and conditions that are required if we are to investigate further. Please see the following example letter.

*“Dear Mr xxxxxxxxxxxx,*

*As discussed earlier by telephone.*

*Ofcom can investigate the interference to your radio system under our commercial charging terms.*

*The terms are that if we find the problem is within your own radio system or from something which we consider to be under your or the user's control then we will charge for the investigation at £92.14 + VAT per man hour used.*

*If the source of the problem is external to the above there is no charge.*

*We also require the full name and address of your organisation for our records and the correct address for any billing that may result from the investigation if it is different.*

*If we do not receive a reply to this email within 5 days we will assume you do not wish to proceed and the case will be closed.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Duty Engineering Officer*

*OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS”*

*4. a list of key performance indicators (KPI's) or by what other name that is used by OFCOM concerning interference cases raised by amateur radio operators that indicate number's raised, closed, classification type and whether or not resolved and the causal factor in the timeframe covering 2015/2016.*

Please see the table under question 2 for KPIs. The following is a breakdown of complaints raised by amateur radio operators that have been closed since the beginning of 2015:

**Closed 230 cases with the following closure reasons:**

Advice given 54

Outside Ofcom remit 22

Failed triage due to lack of information 49

Failed triage due to Ofcom terms and Conditions declined 7

Harmful Interference resolved 29

Harmful Interference not resolved 24

Intelligence acted upon 2

Intelligence noted 6

Interference not harmful 9

No evidence of interference 15

Nuisance resolved 5

Blank 8

**And the source of interference where harmful interference resolved:**

Power supply 7

LED lighting 3

Spurious output from Commercial radio communication system 1

TV amplifier 2

Interference stopped before source located 5

Duplicate case 1

Faulty light switch 1

Faulty set top Box 1

Solar PV inverter 2

Faulty HDMI cable 1

Washing machine 1

Power distribution fault 1

VDSL issue corrected by BT 1

Faulty Wi-Fi router 1

Resolved by complainant 1

*5. a list of all OFCOM investigating staff officers training records indicating pertinent training to investigating VDSL, Broadband or Internet harmful interference.*

We are unable to release officers' training records as this is exempt from disclosure under section 40 of the Act. This relates to personal information and provides that such information is exempt for the purposes of the Act.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

If you have any further queries in relation to this letter, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Julia Snape

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:

Graham Howell  
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