

Reference: 02038527

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

15 August 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about roaming charges complaints.

We received this request on 18 July 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request

- The number of consumer complaints received by Ofcom relating to roaming charges on mobile phone networks, broken down:*
 - By year (for the past 5 years, or as far back as data allows)*
 - By mobile network provider (e.g., EE, Vodafone, Three, etc.)*
 - By complaint category or issue type (e.g., unexpected charges, bill shock, lack of transparency, etc.)*
- For each of the last five years:*
 - Which mobile network received the most complaints specifically about roaming charges?*
 - A summary of the most common types of roaming-related complaints received.*
- If available, any data on complaints received after the reintroduction of roaming charges post-Brexit (i.e., since January 2021), highlighting any noticeable increases or trends.*
- Any internal summaries, reports, or analysis prepared by Ofcom regarding consumer complaints about roaming charges or international mobile usage issues (redacted if necessary).*

I would prefer the data in a machine-readable format such as CSV or Excel if available.

Our response

This request is too broad and would take a substantial amount of time to fulfil.

Under Section 12 of the FOI Act Ofcom is not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the ‘appropriate limit’. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (‘the Regulations’), and is, for Ofcom, £450. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour, which equates to 18 hours of time. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it.

Our Consumer Contact Team ('CCT') records complaints made by consumers against a list of broad complaint categories such as billing (which includes price of calls – roaming), customer service, contracts etc. However, there is no complaint category specifically for 'roaming charges'. Complaints about roaming charges may fall under multiple existing categories depending on how they were presented by the consumer. For example, a complaint related to roaming charges may fall under the "price of calls -roaming" sub-category but it might fall under other categories depending on the details of the complaint. To identify all complaint information in scope of your request, it would require colleagues to manually review all complaint records held in the time period specified in your request to determine if the context of the complaint covers roaming charges. Given the volume of complaints recorded by CCT¹, Ofcom estimates that it would take over 18 hours to search for and retrieve the relevant complaint information. As such the cost of complying with your request will exceed the appropriate limit. We have therefore been unable to fulfil your request taking into account section 12 of the FOI Act (which we set out above).

To be helpful, we have set out in Table A below the complaint figures for the "price of calls - roaming" category over the past complete 5 years and 2025 to date (up to 11 August 2025) but as explained above, this will not necessarily cover all complaints about roaming charges.

Table A: Complaint figures for 'Price of calls – Roaming' category

| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025* |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Price of calls - Roaming | 14 | 11 | 21 | 30 | 38 | 32 |

You can consider submitting a narrower request, for example by requesting information about a broad category like billing. Should you narrow the request, however, please note that given the nature of information you are after, information may be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act. For example, provider specific complaint information may be exempt under section 44 of the FOI Act, with reference to section 393 of the Communications Act 2003, and internal discussions and analysis may be exempt from disclosure under section 36 of the FOI Act, which relates to the effective conduct of public affairs.

You may be interested in our published statement and consultation on the topic of mobile roaming, which can be accessed via our website [here](#).

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,

Information Requests

¹ In this FOI response ([How many telecom complaints](#)) we explained that there had been: 35,110 complaints (in 2022), 42,825 complaints (in 2023) and 38,441 complaints (in 2024) regarding telecoms.

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).