

Mobile & Auctions team
Ofcom
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Proposals for the award of 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz spectrum

The Ramblers is Britain's walking charity, working to safeguard the footpaths, the countryside and other places we go walking, and to encourage more people to take up walking. With around 120,000 members and 500 local Groups across Great Britain we represent the interests of a wide range of individuals and communities.

The Ramblers welcomes Ofcom's plan to ensure widespread availability to mobile broadband services by maintaining a four-player market in the 4G spectrum auction.

These proposals represent a significant step forward to ensuring that walkers can benefit from better broadband coverage. Rural broadband coverage is of increasing importance to our members, an increasing number of whom now use mobile technology as a navigational aid alongside map and compass.

Increased coverage in rural areas should boost the availability of access to emergency services when they are required. We thank Ofcom for the work already done to improve the accessibility of the emergency services for walkers by mandating cross network 999 access. A competitive market will further stimulate network expansion and lower prices. This will especially benefit rural communities where broadband availability and choice is often limited. Whilst we welcome Ofcom's proposals to apply a 95% coverage obligation on one of the 800MHz licences we would ask Ofcom to consider increasing this.

We are aware that spectrum allocation is a contentious issue. We nevertheless recommend that Ofcom gives due consideration to what spectrum allocations are required to maintain the competition necessary for improved network infrastructure in rural areas.

Yours sincerely

Simon Barnett
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