

**Response of the Health Protection Agency to
Ofcom Consultation on Proposed Variation of 3G Licenses
(Closing date 19 March 2010)**

Concerns about exposures to the radio waves from mobile phone base stations were highlighted and addressed in the May 2000 report from the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP).

www.iegmp.org.uk

A range of measures were recommended in the IEGMP report to which government and industry responded, as described in the Mobile Phones and Health 2004 report available from the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1254510624582

HPA considers that this small (factor of 4) increase in maximum emitted power is likely to cause some heightened concern about exposures, which should be addressed sympathetically and in line with the IEGMP recommendations.

Among the measures recommended by IEGMP was the setting up on an Audit of exposures from base stations and this has now been conducted by Ofcom for a number of years, leading to a valuable database of exposure levels at sites where people have asked for measurements.

Ofcom states in the consultation document that

“It will remain a requirement for all installations to comply with the maximum permitted emission levels set by the International Committee for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Ofcom’s measurement of representative samples of cellular base stations has demonstrated that, even in the vicinity of cellular masts, measurements are consistently found to be below, and in the majority of cases very significantly below, these levels. The size of power increase being proposed in this consultation is unlikely to affect significantly this position in relation to ICNIRP.”

HPA agrees that this small increase in maximum licensed power should not alter the fact that exposures at locations to which the public normally have access near base stations are well within the ICNIRP guidelines. HPA also considers the Audit offers an appropriate vehicle to respond to concerns about exposures at these higher power sites and recommends that Ofcom prioritises any requests for measurements at such sites.