

To: Ofcom Response

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Chairman: **Richard Warren** · 8 Foxhouses Road · Whitehaven · Cumbria · CA28 8AF
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Dear Sir,

Re: Consultation Response to Applying spectrum pricing to the Maritime and Aeronautical sectors

Mountain Rescue has worked extremely hard over the past 20 to 30 years developing a robust networked radio communication system, ensuring hill walkers and climbers who suffer unfortunate accidents or become lost are provided with the best possible rescue service from the voluntary rescue teams, dedicated to saving life and alleviating distress.

Mountain rescue's current arrangement may not be perfect, but we now have, for the first time, an equitable share (between Aviation, Maritime and Land SAR) of nationally cleared channels that can be developed with Land-SAR as the priority. It would therefore be most unfair and a serious backward step if the small but important allocation, was returned to where we were a few years ago. It is for the public good that we retain an allocated, fairly independent, reliable and diverse communications method for the foreseeable future. There has been discussion on use of Airwave but this is very expensive and for SAR, its coverage and bandwidth at the edges is inadequate for our needs.

The Lake District is the busiest region within the country with over 400 rescues each year. The 12 Lake District teams drawing on over 450 team members cover these rescues. Most rescues are undertaken in very inhospitable conditions where radio communication is key to both the safety of the casualties and that of the team members themselves. All teams are charities in their own right with no government funding. They are run by highly trained, professional but unpaid volunteers. It costs around £50,000 to cover the operational costs of each mountain rescue team and every penny has to be raised through fundraising and donations from the people we rescue and the general public.

Chairman Richard Warren 8 Foxhouses Road Whitehaven Cumbria CA28 8AF Tel 01946 62176	Secretary Vacant (Contact Chairman)	Treasurer Richard Longman The Croft Nethertown Road St Bees CA27 0AY Tel 01946 823785	Incidents Officer Ged Feeney 57 Castlesteads Drive Carlisle Cumbria CA2 7XD Tel 01228 525709	Assist. Secretary Will Scott 34 Sands Road Ulverston Cumbria LA12 9PR Tel 01229 463448
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The consequences of losing allocated channels will be serious, particularly as most of our teams use their individual radio frequencies to run the GPS tracking that has been developed by mountain rescue for use by search and rescue teams. This system enables the location of all team members to be plotted real-time on mapping software with this knowledge shared across a web-base platform so that all teams can benefit. This is of real value to incident managers and any reduction in available frequencies will prevent this system from working to its full abilities and will reduce the safety cover for team members on an incident with potential significant consequences.

In addition to mountain rescue incidents, the teams are increasingly being asked to provide key roles within UK resilience. Examples include Greyrigg train crash, swift water rescue response, flood response and winter support to the Ambulance Service. For major incidents such as Greyrigg and the Carlisle floods dedicated radio communication was essential and indeed at the Carlisle floods the mountain rescue radio network provided the only '999' capability due to other systems failing.

In summary, therefore, we in the Lake District would ask that any proposal that diminishes the quality and effectiveness of the service is withdrawn and any suggestion for charging must recognise the contributions made by the voluntary sector and for those that receive no public funding i.e. mountain rescue, 100% discount is granted on any fees.



Richard Warren
Chairman LDSAMRA

On behalf of the 12 Member Teams

Cockermouth MRT
Coniston MRT
Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit
Duddon & Furness MRT
Kendal MSRT
Keswick MRT
Kirkby Stephen MRT
Langdale/Ambleside MRT
Penrith MRT
Patterdale MRT
Search and Rescue Dog Association (Lakes)
Wasdale MRT