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Public Health
Wales

Freedom of Information request to Public Health Wales

FOI Reference:	FOI 530
Date request received	29th November 2020
Date information is due to be sent	30th December 2020

Information Requested:

With the ongoing installation and deployment of 5G WIFI technologies across Wales, can you please advise on:

1. What advice PHW has provided to the Welsh Government, Local Authorities and Local Health Boards on the public health and public protection implications of widespread and long-term human exposure to the non-ionizing radiofrequency radiation inherent in 5G WIFI technologies?
2. What peer-reviewed scientific evidence PHW is using to determine the safety of the use of 5G in Wales in terms of long-term human exposure to the non-ionizing radiofrequency radiation inherent in 5G technologies?

Information provided for the answer:

Thank you for your recent request.

Public Health Wales and Welsh Government are guided by Public Health England (PHE) as the UK expert advisors on the public health aspects of exposure to radio waves. PHE publishes a range of information and advice including comprehensive scientific review reports and statements, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields>.

This material supports the view that exposures from mobile phone base stations and other radio technologies in the environment are small in relation to internationally agreed guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and are not expected to pose a hazard to the public. This includes 5G where the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines. ICNIRP guidelines were last revised in 2020 and are based on major reviews by the World Health Organization (2014), the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (2015, 2016, 2018), the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (2015), as well as individual studies identified following those reviews. They account for new technological developments such as 5G.

As advisers to the UK Government, including Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, PHE publishes comprehensive reviews of the scientific evidence relevant to radio wave exposures and health from time to time. The most recent PHE-backed review was undertaken by its own independent expert Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR) and published at the end of April 2012. The AGNIR report considered whether there was evidence for health effects occurring in relation to exposures below the ICNIRP levels. The overall conclusion was that, although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence that radio wave exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children. The AGNIR report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radiofrequency-electromagnetic-fields-health-effects>. Further information about AGNIR and its reports, as well as other UK expert committees with an interest in non-ionising radiation, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/advisory-group-on-non-ionising-radiation-agnir>.

PHE is also a collaborating centre in the World Health Organization's International EMF Project. The WHO states that the main conclusion from its own reviews is that EMF exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP international guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health. The WHO is in the process of carrying out its own authoritative review and health risk assessment of radio frequency EMFs and PHE will consider this review carefully when it is published: www.who.int/peh-emf/research/rf_ehc_page/en/. PHE keeps emerging scientific studies worldwide under review and supports the scientific processes and officially mandated organisations described above.

Public Health Wales agrees with PHE and our current position (2019) can be found at <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/environmental-public-health/radiation1/radio-waves/>.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of the decision, you should

write to the Corporate Complaints Manager, Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 3, Number 2, Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Trust. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner for Wales

2nd Floor
Churchill House
Churchill Way
Cardiff
CF10 2HH

Telephone: 029 2067 8400

Email: wales@ico.org.uk