

Ofcom Consultation

British Entertainment Industry Radio Group (BEIRG)

Spectrum Review

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Response

BEIRG is a non-profit making organisation which represents users of radio spectrum in the Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE) sector. BEIRG's members are involved in the production of all areas of television content and live performance, at national, regional and local level.

PMSE use is currently permitted in the 1785MHz-1800MHz band and JFMG are set up to license use of the band. This band is de-regulated or licence exempt for many European countries. Consequently it could increasingly be an asset for touring shows and TV news crews were use not restricted by the requirement for a fixed site coordinated licence.

BEIRG believes that access to 1785-1800Mhz must be retained and preserved for future PMSE use. BEIRG is extremely concerned that policy makers seem intent to clear PMSE use from UHF spectrum, and believes that future spectrum planning needs to take into account the needs of PMSE users. Any future planning for frequencies above 1.4GHz must take into account the changes in other areas of spectrum, the consequences of these changes, and the services, which in the future may require access to frequencies above 1.4GHz.

The PMSE sector is a key component of the British entertainment industry, which contributes at least £15 billion annually to the UK economy. The sector relies upon clean, interference-free spectrum access to operate wireless equipment such as microphones, in-ear monitor systems, talk back and instrument systems. Theatres, film, broadcasting and live sports events all rely on PMSE equipment for production of their content, but it is important to note that this type of equipment is used in many other industry sectors, not just the entertainment industry. Any changes that Ofcom plans to make regarding the PMSE sector's spectrum access must be very carefully considered with respect to the impact that it would have on the UK economy.

A lack of spectrum provision will severely restrict the operation of theatres, live music events, outside broadcasts and conferences, and many other events. Any removal of PMSE's access to 1785MHz-1800MHz band would render PMSE equipment designed to operate in this part of spectrum redundant. BEIRG believes that Ofcom should coordinate this consultation with all other relevant consultations which are currently underway with regard to any spectrum to which PMSE currently has access, to ensure that a cohesive, non-damaging to existing services spectrum policy is developed. Particularly relevant to PMSE's future spectrum use is the current consultation "Securing long term benefits from scarce spectrum resources – A strategy for UHF bands IV and V" which closes on the 7th June 2012.