

## **NOTICE TO PMSE LICENSEES: RE-ORDERING OF SPECTRUM AT 470-862 MHz**

**Ofcom has sent this letter to you as the holder of a Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE) licence or licences. It contains important information. Please read it carefully.**

As you may be aware, on 17 November, Ofcom published a News Release regarding “The Ofcom Digital Dividend Review (DDR)”.

This can be found at: [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr\\_20051117](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/11/nr_20051117).

It outlines Ofcom’s plans with regard to the process for digital switchover in the UK (the switching off of analogue terrestrial television broadcasts also known as DSO).

DSO will proceed on a regional basis across the UK based on the current ITV licensed regions. It is scheduled to begin in the Border region towards the end of 2008, and completion of the entire DSO process is planned for 2012.

The DSO process may have important implications for your use of this spectrum and your PMSE licence(s). PMSE equipment such as radio microphones and talkback currently use what is known as ‘interleaved spectrum’ in the UHF bands (470 – 862 MHz). Interleaved spectrum is where a frequency used by a transmitter for television broadcasting in one part of the country is effectively unoccupied outside the range of that transmitter in another part of the country. This means that it can be utilised in that area in 8 MHz frequency slots by other spectrum users, such as the PMSE community.

As a result of digital switchover, fewer spectrum channels will be required to provide digital TV transmissions to UK households. This means that 14 of these channels can be released for new uses, with 32 8MHz channels being retained for use for Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting broadcasters.

PMSE users will therefore lose access to these 14 channels as the DSO proceeds across the UK (please see the diagram at the end of this letter illustrating which channels these are planned to be). Interleaving may still be possible in the retained 32 channels and Ofcom are considering the existing PMSE services carefully in planning for the use of this spectrum after digital switch-over.

The Regional Radio Conference (RRC) in May and June 2006 is the forum at which Ofcom will finally agree arrangements with the rest of Europe for the sharing of radio spectrum. It is not until after the conclusion of the RRC that Ofcom’s plans for either retained or released spectrum may be finalised.

It is likely that these changes affecting PMSE licensees will take place as from 2008 when the first phase of switchover begins in the Border region. Ofcom is currently engaged in work to ascertain the exact impact of the planned changes to the spectrum used for programme making, specifically at large events, and to develop a range of options for future arrangements for PMSE.

The main purpose of this letter is to give you notice that your use of equipment in the 470-862 MHz band may well be subject to change, and any licences you have relating to this band may be revoked or varied by Ofcom so the spectrum can be redeployed for new uses. Most immediately, you should take careful account of this risk before making any decisions to invest in equipment for PMSE use in this band. Only in very exceptional cases, where licensees have not had sufficient warning of the details of the changes (including this letter), so that they could deal adequately with any consequences, might Ofcom consider whether, subsequently, some form of assistance may be appropriate. Ofcom would not for example consider any request for compensation in relation to equipment purchased or hired in this band from the date of this letter, except in very exceptional circumstances.

We will, of course, seek to give you as much further and advance notice as possible of the details of any decision to revoke or vary your PMSE licence(s).

Licensees will be contacted later in 2006 with further details of the changes to the band. If you have any queries in the meantime, then please contact myself or my colleague Amanda Houchen in the PMSE team via [pmse@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:pmse@ofcom.org.uk).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Roper', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

**STEVE ROPER**

Head of Deregulation and Contracting Out  
Spectrum Policy Group  
Ofcom

## Outline of band plan for 470-862 MHz

21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	
45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69

	'Digital dividend' spectrum released as a result of the digital switch-over. These channels will become free for new uses which may preclude PMSE.
	Spectrum not available for DTT - 36 is radar; 38 is radio astronomy
	Spectrum assigned to six DTT multiplexes, and resulting "interleaved" spectrum. Ofcom is currently considering basis on which use of interleaved spectrum may be authorised in future.
	Spectrum internationally designated for Broadcasting

Ofcom has recently launched a major project, the Digital Dividend Review, to review the use of both the released and interleaved spectrum after switchover, and how it should be made available for future use. This includes considering carefully future demand from PMSE services, and how this should be taken into account in planning future use of the spectrum. This work cannot be concluded until the UK and other countries have agreed on the planning of spectrum for broadcasting use across Europe, which should occur at the Regional Radio Conference in May-June 2006.

Ofcom then expects to bring forward proposals for future of the affected spectrum in autumn 2006. Ofcom's work will include considering carefully the impact of a likely reduction in the total spectrum available for programme making, specifically at large events, whether alternative spectrum is available, and on what terms.

As part of the process of defining these options, Ofcom anticipates seeking and taking account of the views of PMSE users. We aim to publish detailed proposals for the use of all affected spectrum in late 2006.