

Access to Public Information Request

Date of receipt: 11th June 2020

Date of response: 2nd July 2020

Access to Public Information request: 5G

Request for information:

Further information sought following an earlier Access to Public Information Request, namely:-

- Information regarding conspiracy theories related to COVID-19;
- With regard to the issue of 5G, and what was stated in respect of having “reviewed published research,” could you please provide information on what this research was?
- Have the individual members of the Health and Social Care read this research and are they aware of what it has and has not covered?
- Are the Committee aware that the research on 5G has not been for an extensive time period, and has not involved 24/7 exposure from radiation waves to humans, animals and plants?
- Are the individual Committee members also aware of those countries, and indeed some towns in the UK, which have stalled on the roll out of 5G?
- The response stated that the Committee had “full confidence in the integrity and rigour of this advice,” but surely the Committee sees that stating that in the context such limited research and only being able to state that “there is insufficient evidence of adverse health or environmental effects of electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation, hardly meets the standard of public health safety which you are responsible for?
- Will the Committee review the advice and research carried out for Public Health England on the issue of 5G and put this out to independent scrutiny?

Response (provided by the Committee *for* Health & Social Care):

The World Health Organisation, national governments and scientific experts across the globe have categorically sought to correct misinformation that has circulated on the internet linking COVID-19 and its spread to 5G technology. Such claims are biologically and

physically impossible. COVID-19 cannot spread through mobile networks or wireless technology but spreads instead through infected respiratory droplets or by contact with contaminated surfaces.

The Director of Public Health considered a range of published research studies in reviewing the safety of electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation connected to the use of 4G, 5G and WIFI technologies. It was noted that the World Health Organization International Agency Research on Cancer (IARC) classified EMF as 'possibly carcinogenic' (Group 2B) in 2014 following examination of a large number of peer reviewed studies. This low classification reflected the limited reproducible or reliable evidence of carcinogenicity in humans and animal experiments.

While some primary research articles have claimed a direct link between EMF and cancer or DNA damage, these frequently have significant methodological flaws such as using very high doses of EMF radiation, or have not been found to be reproducible. A number of specific studies were also considered, including the 10 year National Toxicology Programme study funded by the US Government to determine the effects of long-term 2G and 3G exposure. The Director of Public Health considered the breadth of information available at this time and concluded that there was no conclusive evidence of adverse health effects from the electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation connected to the use of 4G, 5G or WIFI technologies.

The Committee has not read the wide ranging source material considered by the Director of Public Health in her review but has discussed the research at length with officers and are aware of the contents.

The Committee is conscious that 5G is a new technology and therefore there is limited direct evidence to evaluate. Steps have been taken to evaluate similar technologies with longer histories of use, with an associated review of the differences between 4G and 5G technology with a view to understanding the possible similarities and differences in their likely effects, if any, on human health. Many of the reviews on similar technologies include long-term exposure.

The Committee is aware that 5G has been slowed or halted in other jurisdictions for various reasons including security concerns, the aesthetics of mobile phone masts in historic sites and in a very small number of cases potential health concerns.

The Committee is aware of Public Health England advice and will keep this under review. In October 2019, following a new study on 5G technologies, Public Health England advised that even with the addition of 5G to a network, overall exposure of radio waves remain low and therefore should have no consequence for public health. There is no intention to commission independent scrutiny of this already independent assessment. It should be noted that the Committee *for* Economic Development is due report back to the Assembly on 5G technology later this year.