



## Frequently Asked Questions – BA Telemetry

- **What is happening with BA Telemetry and 4G mobile broadband?**

*CFOA has recommended that FRS, who use a telemetry component with their breathing apparatus, take short-term and long-term measures to manage potential interference from new 4G mobile broadband technology that will soon be introduced. These measures include a 're-tune' of existing telemetry equipment at the same time as securing an alternative dedicated frequency, with any associated changes in equipment.*

- **Why is this happening?**

*Following Digital Switchover<sup>1</sup>, the Government has directed Ofcom to auction some of the UK's spectrum to facilitate the roll out of 4G – the next generation of mobile broadband. 4G will benefit the UK by providing greater national coverage, especially in rural areas, that will allow many more people to connect to online services using a greater range of mobile devices.*

- **Will 4G put firefighters at risk?**

*No. CFOA has been looking at the 4G issue from an early stage in the process to make sure firefighter safety remains the highest priority.*

- **Is Ofcom or the Government selling off FRS frequencies?**

*No. Ofcom has been instructed by the Government to auction licences of the band that is **adjacent** to the one that FRSs use for BA telemetry. However, emissions from user equipment in the adjacent 4G band could cause interference into the emergency service band where BA Telemetry currently operates. For this reason, Ofcom is supporting FRS to take measures to manage potential interference from this new mobile technology.*

- **How do we know that the best interests of firefighters are being addressed?**

*CFOA's primary concern has been to make sure that FRS safety is not compromised and that FRS get the best outcome possible. Both the short and long-term measures have been endorsed by CFOA and DCLG following months of in-depth research and consultation supported by Ofcom. Those consulted include key individuals and committees from Fire and Rescue Services, DCLG, the FBU and the Health and Safety Executive.*

- **Will any new FRS equipment be as good and reliable as our current kit?**

*CFOA has been working closely with suppliers from the beginning of this process. Any new equipment will need to satisfy CFOs' primary concern, which is the safety of operations. CFOA is*

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.digitaluk.co.uk/what\\_and\\_why](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/what_and_why)

also making the most of this opportunity by working to update user and technical guidance for BA telemetry.

- **Why isn't the purchaser of the adjacent 4G spectrum managing interference?**

*That isn't practicable in this case because the interference risk arises from 4G consumer equipment that is compliant with all relevant standards. Instead, Government is addressing this issue by facilitating and funding the solution.*

- **Will the Government pay for the measures to be implemented?**

*Yes. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will fund any justifiable costs associated with the measures identified to manage potential interference resulting from the introduction of 4G services*

- **Has the auction been "delayed"? If not, at what point will there be a risk of interference from 4G services?**

*The anticipated timing of the auction has not been delayed. In Ofcom's announcement in January 2012, they said that, according to their provisional timetable, they could begin the auction (with the submission of applications) in Q4 2012. This is still the timetable they are working to. Bidding will take place in Q1 2013 and licences issued shortly thereafter.*

*There is a risk of interference into BA telemetry from the point at which the licences are issued. From that point, the 4G operators will be able to start using the spectrum (for example to test equipment or run consumer trials) and handsets or equipment with similar characteristics which therefore may be in use at any location.*

- **What about FRS that are waiting to buy telemetry?**

*Following the January 2011 Ofcom letter we recognise that:*

- *some FRS have put their planned procurement of BA telemetry on hold, and*
- *others have postponed the upgrade option for BA telemetry as they come to the end of their current contracts.*

*Those FRS will need to consider their individual upgrade paths and whether to retune their BA Telemetry in the short-term, or wait until the final frequency has been agreed and equipment is available.*

*Further information and support is available to any FRS that may be affected in this way, please contact Paul Evans ([paul.evans@esfrs.org](mailto:paul.evans@esfrs.org)) in the first instance to discuss your concerns.*