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Email: [information.rights@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:information.rights@ofgem.gov.uk)

Date: 11 August 2021

Dear Chris,

**Request reference number: FOI2021/00801**

Thank you for your email of 27 July in which you requested the following information:

*"My enquiry is for the information you hold on certain aspects of connecting SMART meters to a Wide Area Network. It focusses on meter installation in houses, and houses in Wales. I would like to find data which is quantitative and shows regional variations. I am happy to receive information by email or through downloads.*

*What proportion of properties in Wales are expected to be linked through a MESH system rather than a direct cellular connection? How many properties are involved? What is their geographical spread?*

*Looking at the UK as a whole, what local density of housing and SMART meter take up is needed to make a MESH system work? Following on this, what information do you have about the effectiveness of MESH systems in rural areas with isolated properties?*

*What proportion of SMART meters in Wales have been fitted with external aerials."*

We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA").

Following a search of our records, we have determined that Ofgem does not hold the information you have requested. Nevertheless, we have provided some information below which you may find useful.

**Advice and assistance**

The Data Communications Company (DCC) linked below, provides the centralised smart metering communications infrastructure across Great Britain, to send and receive information from smart meters. The signal coverage for smart meters is provided via the Smart Metering Wide Area Network (SM-WAN)

<https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/>

The DCC operates under the conditions of the Smart Metering Communications Licence, which has been granted by the government and is regulated by Ofgem. Ofgem's role includes monitoring of the Data Communication Company's (DCC) compliance with their licence obligations, as well as an annual price control. However, Ofgem does not have a direct role in delivering WAN coverage and/or determining the appropriate WAN technologies in different regions of Great Britain.

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/smart-meter-communication-licence>

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/dcc-price-control-decision-regulatory-year-201920>

For the purpose of delivering WAN coverage, Great Britain has been split up into three regions which are defined by Distribution Network Operator (DNO) regions; South, Central and North. Wales is included in the Central Region. In each region, DCC have sub-contracted a Communications Service Provider (CSP) to provide the WAN. The south and central regions are serviced by Telefonica using Cellular and Mesh solutions. The north region is serviced by Arqiva using long-range radio technology.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, WAN coverage in the central region has reached 99.25%.

Citizens Advice have a smart meter checker which can tell consumers what type of smart meter they have in their home and whether it is working in smart mode, which you may find of interest. For further information on premises which are exempt from the WAN, see DCC's 2021 Statement of Service Exemptions.

<https://smartmetercheck.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

[https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/media/6376/dcc\\_statement\\_of\\_service\\_exemptions\\_2021-v10.pdf](https://www.smartdcc.co.uk/media/6376/dcc_statement_of_service_exemptions_2021-v10.pdf)

For further queries on the WAN network, you may consider contacting the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy ([BEIS](https://www.beis.gov.uk)), who is responsible for developing policy for the smart meter rollout, at [enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk).

Individual consumers can contact their suppliers, who, using data provided to them by DCC, should be able to advise their customers on when they can expect to become eligible for smart metering.

## **Your Rights**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. You must contact us for a review no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter. If you require an internal review, please contact us at [information.rights@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:information.rights@ofgem.gov.uk) or by writing to us at 10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU.

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

<http://www.ico.org.uk/>

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

**Shannon Convery**  
**Information Rights and Correspondence Officer**