

Dear David, Mark, and Nick

As the CEOs of the UK's leading mobile networks, I believe we should work together to tackle what is our industry's biggest perception challenge: customers' expectations concerning coverage and signal quality.

Coverage is top of the agenda across the UK – particularly in rural areas. So we're calling on the industry to be 'clear on coverage', and we have four goals:

1. End the use of population coverage claims in isolation
2. Regular updates to local coverage statistics, along with data speeds, to help customers understand what they can expect from their operator
3. Make Ofcom the ultimate home of comprehensive and truly independent testing of all our networks
4. Work with Ofcom to provide consumer advice on the role of devices in network experience

1. Population coverage

Bigger numbers look better to customers. And the industry has long made population coverage the benchmark for success, setting population-driven coverage obligations as recently as 2013.

In the UK, 90% population coverage can be achieved with only 40% geographic coverage. It's obvious which number will be used in the marketing. All mobile operators do it, but leading with population coverage alone has to stop.

And the coverage has to be relevant to customers' lives. From streaming music, to making video calls, our customers use their smartphones wherever they go and tell us loud and clear that a 4G signal is no longer a 'nice to have'.

So we're going to deliver 4G to as many places as possible, and end talking about population coverage without reference to geographic coverage in all our channels from January 2017.

2. Local coverage reporting

Customers need to be able to find a clear picture of the coverage in the places that matter to them.

From January 2017, we're going to make county-level geographic coverage statistics available to our customers. And we're also going to provide coverage data for the UK's busiest roads.

Showing coverage alone is not enough to demonstrate the customer experience, so we're going to share network speed data as well, so consumers know what to expect.



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3. Independent testing

I have always supported independent testing of networks. It's a great way to keep competition at its peak, and to keep all our network investments at the remarkable level they've been this past decade.

But what started out as being useful for customers is now adding to the overall confusion.

Different testing companies can produce completely different results in the same week, and the end result is the customer doesn't win.

Ofcom already captures performance in urban centres, and its work on service quality is a great step forward to gathering more useful and regionally relevant data for customers.

We want all mobile operators to aid Ofcom to take the lead on testing mobile network coverage and experience, and collectively fund it to do so properly.

4. Network experience

To make sure that every aspect of mobile experience is addressed, I'm also offering to work with Ofcom in producing consumer advice on the role their handset plays in connectivity.

This could include Ofcom giving independent guidance on device choice based on radio performance and specific capabilities, or offering advice on how consumers can get the best from the device they have.

I've written to Sharon White to propose all of the above.

We want the mobile industry to start doing the right thing, and be clear on coverage.

I hope you'll agree to meet with me and with Ofcom to talk through these requests, and take a big step towards giving consumers the transparency on coverage and performance that they deserve.

With thanks,

Marc Allera

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