



Revocation of the 2 GHz Mobile Satellite Services Regulations

Summary of Responses to the Consultation on the Revocation of the SI 2010/672 “The Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services (European Union) Regulations 2010”, Government Response, and Post Implementation Review

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Foreword / Introduction

In 2010, the UK implemented SI 2010/672 (“The Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services (European Union) Regulations 2010”, the “2010 Regulations”)¹ to authorise two Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) operators to use spectrum in the 2 GHz band, aligning with EU-wide decisions at the time. These licences are due to expire on 13 May 2027, and once they do, the 2010 Regulations will no longer serve a purpose.

The Regulations currently include provisions related to monitoring compliance and offence rules, which could restrict future use of the spectrum after the licences expire. Revoking the Regulations will enable Ofcom to authorise use of the 2 GHz band under domestic law after 13 May 2027, without affecting the rights of current licence holders.

Government consulted on the revocation of the 2010 Regulations between 7 November 2025 and 5 December 2025. The consultation sought stakeholder input to understand potential impacts and identify any provisions that should be retained. This approach aligns with government consultation principles and the Smarter Regulation programme, ensuring transparency and proportionality.

This document provides a summary of stakeholder responses to the Government’s consultation on revoking the 2010 Regulations, explains the government’s decision and rationale, and includes a Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the original regulations. The PIR reviews the purpose of the regulations, how they have been implemented, and whether they achieved their intended outcomes.

This document further sets out our next steps in removing the 2010 Regulations from the statute book. The policy decision on the future use of the 2 GHz band after current licences expire remains the responsibility of Ofcom as the UK’s independent regulator.

¹ [The Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services \(European Union\) Regulations 2010](#)

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General information

Background to the proposed revocation of the 2010 Regulations

The 2010 Regulations were implemented to authorise two MSS operators (Inmarsat Ventures Limited and Solaris Mobile Limited, now Echostar) to use spectrum in the 2 GHz band, in line with EU decisions at the time. Specifically:

- Decision 626/2008/EC² of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 June 2008 on the authorisation of selected applicants to use radio spectrum within the 2GHz band for the operation of mobile satellite services in the European Union (“the EU Decision”).
- Decision 2009/449/EC³ of the Commission of 13 May 2009 which confirms the two selected applicants of mobile satellite services (“the Commission Decision”).

The EU and Commission Decisions gave Inmarsat Ventures and Solaris Mobile permission to provide Mobile Satellite Services (MSS), which are telecommunications services delivered via satellites to mobile terminals, enabling voice, data and broadband connectivity in areas beyond terrestrial network coverage.

This permission applied to specific parts of the 2 GHz band (1980 to 2010 MHz for sending signals from Earth to satellites and 2170 to 2200 MHz for receiving signals back from satellites). The 2010 Regulations gave legal basis to Ofcom to grant authorisations to these companies to operate MSS services for 18 years, which will expire on 13 May 2027. It also made provision incidental to the authorisations, for example, to ensure the monitoring of compliance of the selected applicants with the conditions of the authorisations.

The 2010 Regulations were subsequently amended by the Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services (European Union) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/174) “the 2013 Regulations”⁴, which implemented Commission Decision 2011/667/EU⁵. This Decision established a coordinated enforcement regime across the EU for MSS common conditions, ensuring compliance and harmonised penalties. Later, consequential amendments were made by the Radio Spectrum (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/1385), “the 2018 Regulations”⁶, to correct deficiencies arising from EU exit, maintain legal continuity, and update references to EU legislation.

If the 2010 Regulations remain in effect, it would be an offence for anyone, including the current licencees, to transmit in the band for mobile satellite service after licence expiration. This is because Regulation 2(1) makes it an offence for anyone to use the 2 GHz MSS band without an authorisation and Regulation 4(2) makes it a condition that the authorisation to the two operators expires in May 2027.

² [Decision - 2008/626 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

³ [Decision - 2009/449 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁴ [The Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services \(European Union\)\(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

⁵ [Decision - 2011/667 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶ [The Radio Spectrum \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2018](#)

Given that on the expiry of the authorisations in May 2027, the 2010 Regulations would no longer serve any purpose, revocation will ensure that the legal framework governing the 2 GHz band remains effective after the expiry, allowing Ofcom to continue authorising use of this spectrum solely under domestic law, specifically the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 (WTA 2006)⁷. Ofcom, as the UK's independent spectrum regulator, is responsible for managing the use of radio spectrum and is already considering future options for the band. Ofcom published a Call for Input⁸ in June 2025 as part of their future assessment and decision.

Two Post Implementation Reviews have been carried out since the regulations came into force. These reviews are required under government policy to assess whether regulations remain effective, proportionate and fit for purpose. The first review, in 2018, concluded that the regulations were achieving their intended purpose, with both designated operators developing or deploying compliant services. The most recent review, completed in 2025 and included in the annex to this document, confirmed that compliant services were being operated and the objectives of the regulations had been met. It also noted that the exclusivity period will end in May 2027 and that any decision on the future use of the band should be taken by Ofcom under its existing regulatory powers.

Summary of Responses

Consultation details

The consultation ran from 7 November to 5 December 2025 and invited stakeholder views on the proposed revocation of the 2010 Regulations, and included four questions, covering:

- Agreement with the proposal to revoke the 2010 Regulations
- Whether any provisions should be preserved or restated in another form
- Potential impacts of revocation on stakeholders or the wider sector
- Any other relevant evidence or views on the future use of the 2 GHz band

Overview of respondents

The consultation received eight responses: seven from satellite operators and one from a member of the public. Three respondents submitted confidential responses, and Plan S Satellite and Space Technologies provided a partially confidential response. The remaining four non-confidential respondents were:

- Lynk Global, Inc.
- OQ Technology
- Sateliot IoT Services (Sateliot)
- Starlink Services UK Ltd

⁷ [Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006](#)

⁸ [Call for Input: Future use of the 2 GHz MSS band](#)

Overall support for the revocation of the 2010 Regulations

Seven respondents strongly supported revoking the 2010 Regulations, noting that without this change, lawful use of the 2 GHz MSS band would be restricted after May 2027. They emphasised that revocation is essential to keep the UK's legal framework fit for purpose and allow Ofcom, as the independent regulator, to set future authorisation arrangements aligned with UK policy priorities, technological developments and market demand. Respondents highlighted that continued application of EU-derived provisions could block new licensing models and hinder innovation and market entry.

Views on retaining or amending provisions

Seven respondents did not see a need to preserve or restate any provisions in domestic law. They considered key regulatory principles, such as transparency, proportionality, non-discrimination, effective enforcement and rights of appeal, to be already embedded within the UK's legal framework, particularly through the WTA 2006, the Communications Act 2003 (CA 2003) and general administrative law.

However, one respondent did not agree with revoking the secondary instrument and instead suggested retaining the 2010 Regulations 2(1) and 13. Regulation 2(1) prohibits use of the 2 GHz MSS band (1980 to 2010 MHz and 2170 to 2200 MHz) without Ofcom's authorisation, while Regulation 13 permits the use of Complementary Ground Components (CGCs) to support MSS. The same respondent also expressed a preference for keeping the Statutory Instrument with amended dates, postponing revocation until Ofcom's licensing plans for the band have been published and consulted on.

Ofcom's role in future decisions in the 2 GHz MSS band

Seven respondents flagged the potential of the 2 GHz MSS band to provide a wide range of communication services, such as direct-to-device services, and the importance of an internationally harmonised approach to spectrum allocation.

Respondents agreed that Ofcom's powers under the WTA 2006 are sufficient to set future authorisation arrangements in line with UK policy priorities, while remaining flexible to technological developments and market demand. They also stressed that international alignment is essential to achieve economies of scale.

Government response and next steps

The government welcomes the broad support for revoking the 2010 Regulations and appreciates the useful information provided on potential future uses of the band for satellite services. We agree with respondents that Ofcom, as the UK's independent regulator, is well placed to decide on the future use of the band in the UK in line with existing UK legislation, specifically the Wireless Telegraphy Act (2006), which provides an adequate framework for future authorisation arrangements.

We have considered the request to retain two provisions from the 2010 Regulations and to keep the Statutory Instrument with amended dates, postponing revocation until Ofcom has made decisions on the future use of the band after the current licences expire. We recognise the importance of providing clarity and transparency so businesses can plan effectively. However, we do not consider it appropriate to delay or retain these provisions, and believe revocation remains the most effective way to provide certainty and avoid legal uncertainty.

The 2010 Regulations were preserved as secondary assimilated law under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (REUL Act). Section 14 of the REUL Act allows ministers to revoke or replace most retained or assimilated law, but this power lapses after 23 June 2026. If the Regulations remain in force beyond that date, Ofcom would remain bound by them without any mechanism to revoke, creating a grey area that could restrict future flexibility. Additionally, if the 2010 Regulations were to remain in effect, it would be an offence for any person, including current licencees, to transmit in the band after 13 May 2027. This means that postponing revocation until Ofcom has consulted and designed a new licensing framework is not feasible.

The 2010 Regulations and their associated provisions were designed to implement EU decisions for specific operators under time-limited licences. Once these licences expire, retaining these provisions would serve no practical purpose and could create unnecessary regulatory complexity. Ofcom will continue to regulate spectrum use under domestic law, ensuring that any future use of the 2 GHz MSS band is authorised and managed to prevent harmful interference and maintain flexibility for new services.

Specifically, Regulation 2 prohibits use of the 2 GHz MSS band without authorisation from Ofcom. This was required under the EU framework to prevent harmful interference during the licence term. However, Ofcom has robust powers under the WTA 2006 to prohibit unlicensed transmissions and enforce compliance. Regulation 13 permits the use of Complementary Ground Components (CGCs) to support MSS, reflecting EU Decisions. Retaining this provision would unnecessarily tie the UK to outdated requirements. Ofcom can consider CGCs under domestic licensing arrangements, providing flexibility without imposing legacy EU obligations.

Against this backdrop, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology will therefore proceed with drafting and laying the secondary legislation to revoke the 2010 Regulations. The revocation will take effect from 14 May 2027, ensuring continuity for current licence holders until expiry. We note that Ofcom intends to consult on future options for the band, and

operators will be invited to provide views before any decisions are made.

Annex: Post Implementation Review

Title: The Authorisation of Frequency Use for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Services (European Union) Regulations 2010	Post Implementation Review
PIR No: DSIT003(PIR)-26-DTI	Date: 22/12/2025
Original IA/RPC No: 3906-3912	Type of regulation: EU
Lead department or agency: DSIT	Type of review: Statutory
Other departments or agencies: Ofcom	Date measure came into force: 22/02/2013
Contact for enquiries: spectrum@dsit.gov.uk	Recommendation: Repeal
	RPC Opinion: N/A

1. What were the policy objectives of the measure?

To establish a harmonised regulatory framework for the use of the 2 GHz band for mobile satellite services (MSS) in the UK until May 2027. This regulation implemented two EU decisions, one to grant exclusive access to MSS frequencies and the second selecting the satellite operators. This was intended to enable the development of innovative satellite services by choosing two providers (Echostar (formerly Solaris) and Inmarsat), setting service conditions and milestones, and introducing proportionate penalties for non-compliance for the duration of that term to give the designated providers sufficient certainty to develop services.

2. What evidence has informed the PIR?

Evidence includes the 2010 impact assessment (setup and annual costs for operators), Ofcom's enforcement records (Compliance Notices issued by Ofcom in 2015, Requests For Information in 2018/19), and confirmation from Ofcom that both operators discharged their obligations by 2020.

3. To what extent have the policy objectives been achieved?

The regulations enabled early use of the spectrum that delivered economic benefits by supporting connectivity, innovation, and services such as in-flight broadband, which improved passenger experience. These regulations also supported growth in the UK MSS ecosystem and one of the licence holders, Viasat, has established its International Business Headquarters in London. Both authorised MSS operators have provided compliant services – Inmarsat's in-flight connectivity services, Echostar's internet of things and mobile connectivity services. The spectrum award has enabled cross-border compatibility, with services operating as intended across the UK and Europe. While this has been effective for the period until May 2027, revocation of the relevant secondary legislation is being considered once this period ends to enable Ofcom to decide on the future use of the band using its powers under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006.

Sign-off for Post Implementation Review: Head of Analysis and Minister

I have read the PIR and I am satisfied that it represents a fair and proportionate assessment of the impact of the measure.

Signed: ***Nicky Agius***

Date: 05/01/2026

Further information sheet

Please provide additional evidence in subsequent sheets, as required.

4. What were the original assumptions?

These regulations were implemented when the UK was a member of the European Union (EU). It was considered that regulatory certainty and internationally harmonised approach would enable investment and service delivery, and that economic benefits to EU and thus UK consumers would depend on operators meeting their obligations. The assumption was that regulation was needed to provide operators with the certainty required to develop and deliver services and this was best achieved through exclusive access to MSS frequencies. The two specific providers were selected in 2009 from four applicants; they were successfully able to demonstrate to the European Commission their viability and evidence their planned development and deployment of satellite services in the selected spectrum.

5. Were there any unintended consequences?

Enforcement actions were resolved successfully, as stated in Ofcom's confirmation of compliance (2020). Both operators responded to Ofcom requests for further information to confirm they were in the process of deploying compliant services, and no significant issues have arisen since.

However, the term of the licences under the regulations ends in May 2027 and the Statutory Instrument implementing the regulations must be formally withdrawn from this date to prevent unintended regulatory and legal uncertainty.

6. Has the evidence identified any opportunities for reducing the burden on business?

The regulation provides clarity on spectrum use and operator designation, reducing uncertainty and administrative burden. The fee structure is straightforward, and penalties ensure compliance without excessive burden on operators. No changes to this would significantly reduce the burden before the end of the licence period specified.

Beyond May 2027, revoking the 2010 Regulations and enabling Ofcom to allocate the spectrum in line with its existing duties and powers under Wireless Telephony Act 2006 will provide a more streamlined and less burdensome regulatory environment.

7. How does the UK approach compare with the implementation of similar measures internationally, including how EU member states implemented EU requirements that are comparable or now form part of retained EU law, or how other countries have implemented international agreements?

The UK approach mirrors the EU's 18-year allocation and implementation framework. The regulatory model has withstood legal challenge (2021 European Court rejected a challenge that the original award was intended for cellular services). Services from both providers operate in other EU jurisdictions. The EU ran a consultation from May-June 2025 to ascertain market demand and potential options for how to manage the spectrum following the end of the 2027 term. This also reflects the UK approach. Ofcom published a Call for Input in July 2025 to establish industry's view on how to most effectively utilise the spectrum post-2027. It is intended that post revocation of the 2010 Regulations, Ofcom will decide on the future allocation of this spectrum with due consideration for international developments, in line with its duties including ensuring efficient use of spectrum. Ofcom's consultation on the Plan of Work for Financial Year 2026/2027 notes that Ofcom expects to publish a statement on the future authorisation approach for the 2 GHz MSS band by Q4 2026/2027.