



PRESS RELEASE

New campaign urges Ofcom to curb BT's dominance of the mobile sector

MakeTheAirFair asks the public to #TellSharon and stop takeover of the airwaves

A new campaign is calling on UK consumers to join the fight to ensure more choice and better quality in the mobile sector and curb BT's dominance.

Three UK, TalkTalk, CityFibre, Federation of Communication Services, Gamma and Relish have come together as [MakeTheAirFair](http://MakeTheAirFair.org) to call on Ofcom to make sure no one mobile network can own more than 30% of the UK's vital mobile airwaves (known as spectrum).

This will mean that all mobile consumers, regardless of their network provider, benefit from more choice, improved performance, faster speeds and lower prices.

Spectrum has the single biggest impact on a network's ability to offer a fast, reliable mobile service at a price that consumers can afford.

Ofcom and its Chief Executive, Sharon White, recently asked for views on how the next batch of mobile airwaves should be sold off. Supporters will be able to #TellSharon they want better mobile by visiting MakeTheAirFair.org.

UK consumers are already faced with rising prices and patchy coverage. This will get worse with consumers facing the misery of poorer service and increasing costs, unless Ofcom acts to address the imbalance at the next auction which is due to take place next year.

In the whole of the developed world, only Thailand and Malaysia have a larger imbalance of the airwaves amongst mobile operators compared to the UK. BT and Vodafone own almost three quarters of available airwaves.

65% of UK consumers want a cap on how much one company can own of a resource used for a public service, according to a survey carried out by Three and YouGov.

The campaign will see Ofcom's CEO Sharon White transformed - across various advertising channels - into a mobile superhero and the nation's consumer champion with the power to protect competition.

Campaign Statements:

Dave Dyson, CEO at Three UK, said: "The UK mobile market is broken at a critical time when it should be leading and not lagging almost all other developed countries. Ofcom must prove it is on the side of consumers and apply a 30% cap on total spectrum ownership following next year's auction.

"Spectrum is a national asset that should benefit every citizen. If it's all controlled by one or two massive businesses then you can't have effective competition and everyone loses out. This is the moment for the British public to stand up and fight for real choice and better mobile services."

Mark Collins, director of strategy and public affairs at CityFibre, added: “We are at a critical point in determining the future of the UK mobile market. With growing investment in the next generation of mobile network infrastructure, the time is right to protect the viability of that competitive market.

“As a challenger in our market, CityFibre is wholly aligned to the change this campaign seeks to achieve. The regulator must ensure that the upcoming auction is designed to improve services for all.”

Chris Pateman, CEO at the Federation of Communication Services said: “In every other market, business people are used to having a choice of good services from a variety of suppliers. We owe it to Government and business to deliver real choice and proper competition for the high quality voice and data connections upon which they rely to trade in the modern world.”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

Make The Air Fair is calling for a 30% cap on the total amount of airwaves that any one operator can own after the auction.

In the whole of the developed world, only Thailand and Malaysia have a larger imbalance of the airwaves amongst mobile operators when compared to the UK: BT has the largest proportion of all available mobile spectrum with 42%. Vodafone has 29%, Three has 15% and O2 has 14%.

The campaign calls on Ofcom to put a limit in place so that no one network can own more than 30% of the useable mobile airwaves post-auction.

A 30% cap post-auction will deliver:

- Genuine choice of mobile networks offering competitive prices and great coverage
- A mobile industry that ensures that the UK is at the forefront of new technologies like 5G and get the associated economic benefits
- Better speeds for all mobile customers to support our nation’s digital economy
- More choice for consumers through a healthy MVNO sector

About Make the Air Fair

The campaign is founded by Three UK and supported by TalkTalk, CityFibre, the Federation of Communication Services, Gamma and Relish.

About the Survey

Three and YouGov conducted a survey into consumer attitudes towards service providers. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2171 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 17th - 18th October 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

Contact details and more information

Visit: www.maketheairfair.org, Email: media@maketheairfair.org or Call: +44 7460 679157