

Our Reference: 20110136  
Your Ref:

31 January 2011

John Hayes MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Hayes

**Re: John Petters, 218 New House Farm, Hospital drove, Long Sutton, Spalding, Lincs, PE12 9EN**

Thank you for letter to Ed Richards dated 24 January, regarding your constituent Mr Petters and his concerns about Power Line Technology. Mr Richards has asked me to reply.

You will recall that I wrote to you in September 2010 in response to concerns raised by Mr Petters. We have investigated those concerns, and our view remains that:

- All electrical and electronic products sold in the UK must comply with the Electromagnetic Compatibility Regulations 2006 (the EMC Regulations) which are based on a European Directive. The person who places products on the market must ensure that the products comply with the Regulations and are marked accordingly.
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is responsible for overseeing the EMC Regulations. Enforcement powers have been delegated to local Trading Standards offices and to Ofcom where there is a radio spectrum protection or management issue..
- In some cases the manner in which the equipment has been installed or is operated can cause the interference, and as well as investigating specific cases of interference, we have also offered advice and assistance on how to avoid this.
- We recently published a study to estimate the likelihood and extent of interference to various services over the coming 10 years. The study found that there will be a low likelihood of interference with other spectrum users, providing certain technology enhancements are implemented. The study also found that these technology enhancements are on the product roadmaps of many of the PLT device manufacturers and suppliers, and are already expected to feature in products this year.
- We have already been informed by BT, the main supplier of PLT devices in the UK, that following work they have undertaken with Comtrend (a major manufacturer of these devices), an upgraded and improved product is now being produced which will dramatically reduce the potential for causing interference. Product innovation in this way is a likely outcome, as stated in

our report, and I hope that the benefits of this enhancement will be seen soon.

In addition to product innovation, one of the uncertainties associated with this technology is the absence of a suitable harmonised standard for manufacturers and regulators to use as a benchmark. The European Commission has acknowledged this problem, and I am happy to say we have recently been informed that the Commission has requested the Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization to begin work immediately in producing a standard, a move that we in Ofcom strongly support. This is particularly important because the products are manufactured and sold across the EU.

I appreciate this response is not the one Mr Petters hoped for. However, this does remain our consistent view, and there have been no developments to change it. If you have any further questions about this or any other Ofcom matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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