

Ofcom's proposals to harness the 6 GHz band will boost the UK's digital economy

The Dynamic Spectrum Alliance (DSA) welcomes Ofcom's pragmatic and balanced proposals to expand the spectrum available for Low Power Indoor and Very Low Power Wi-Fi and to harness the capabilities of standard power Wi-Fi in the 6 GHz band to further improve connectivity for consumers and businesses, thereby encouraging investment and innovation within the UK's economy.

Ofcom's plan to implement prioritised spectrum sharing in the upper 6 GHz band will help ensure that Wi-Fi users have the capacity they need, while retaining the option to also deploy licensed mobile services in the band. By giving Wi-Fi priority in the bottom 160 MHz of the band (6425–6585 MHz) and early access in the mobile priority portion of the band (6585–7125 MHz), Ofcom will enable homes, enterprises and public spaces to benefit from multi-gigabit connectivity. By enabling Wi-Fi to begin using the upper 6 GHz band before the end of 2026, Ofcom will give the UK a significant competitive advantage over economies in which this spectrum remains critically under-employed.

Furthermore, implementation of Ofcom's proposal to authorise standard power Wi-Fi in the lower 6 GHz band (5925–6425 MHz) using an automated frequency coordination (AFC) database will enable the UK's companies and citizens to enjoy much better connectivity outdoors and in large indoor spaces, such as transport hubs and shopping centers. As Ofcom suggests, AFC systems could also enable the upper 6 GHz band to be efficiently shared by Wi-Fi and mobile services.

"Ofcom's innovative proposals embrace coexistence and innovation rather than division," said Martha Suárez, President of the DSA. "By ensuring meaningful access for licence-exempt technologies in the upper 6 GHz band and supporting dynamic spectrum sharing, the UK will unlock faster, more affordable connectivity for everyone. The DSA stands ready to help Ofcom to implement these proposals as soon as possible empowering all consumers and businesses, fueling next-generation applications, and keeping the UK competitive in the global digital economy."

Implications for other countries

Ofcom's well-calibrated proposals highlight how administrations around the world can draw on the inherent strengths of licence-exempt technologies and the proven tools available to enable consumers and businesses to employ the upper 6 GHz band for Wi-Fi. Indeed, technologies operating in licence-exempt spectrum, such as Wi-Fi, are built to share spectrum intelligently and deliver flexible and affordable connectivity.

There is no reason for delay: with AFC systems already proving effective in North America, countries across the world can use this technology to open the upper 6 GHz band safely and efficiently, while protecting incumbents, and also allowing future mobile use. As and when mobile services are deployed in specific locations, AFC systems will adapt seamlessly, preserving flexibility and maximising efficiency.

About the Dynamic Spectrum Alliance

The DSA is a global, cross-industry, not-for-profit organization advocating for laws, regulations, and best practices that enable more efficient spectrum use, fostering innovation and affordable connectivity for all. Learn more at <https://www.dynamicspectrumalliance.org>.