

Foreword

The decision of Government to establish an independent expert group to examine possible effects of mobile phones, base stations and transmitters on health has been widely welcomed. There is probably no other technology in recent times which has been so quickly and widely adopted by the general public.

Sir Walter Bodmer, Chairman of the National Radiological Protection Board, quickly facilitated the setting up of the Group.

The Group decided on a broad programme of consultation. It received many constructive inputs from across the UK and abroad; from scientists, members of the public, from groups such as Friends of the Earth, Powerwatch, the Northern Ireland Families Against Telecommunications Transmitter Towers (NIFATT), from mobile-phone-related companies, from network operators, and from the Federation of the Electronics Industry (FEI). We have also benefited from media reports and from our regional public meetings. It is hugely important to be fully aware of public reactions and sensitivities across a wide spectrum of the population. The media and the public meetings have been valuable in this respect.

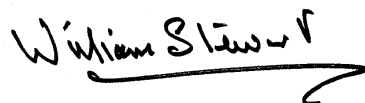
Our broad consultation process has helped the Group to produce what I believe to be a balanced report which adopts an evidence-based approach to health issues in particular, but also considers user choice and the importance of such new technologies to the economy of the UK.

The report points out that the balance of evidence does not suggest mobile phone technologies put the health of the general population of the UK at risk. There is some preliminary evidence that outputs from mobile phone technologies may cause, in some cases, subtle biological effects, although, importantly, these do not necessarily mean that health is affected. There is also evidence that in some cases people's well-being may be adversely affected by the insensitive siting of base stations. New mechanisms need to be set in place to prevent that happening.

Overall, the report proposes that a precautionary approach be adopted until more robust scientific information becomes available and that the subject be reviewed again in three years time, or before if circumstances demand it.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Group for the huge amount of work and innovative thinking that they have put into the generation of this report. I enjoyed being a part of this fiercely independent team.

Finally, particular thanks go to the Group's Secretariat, Dr John Stather and Dr Nigel Cridland. They have been unstinting in their non-intrusive support.



Sir William Stewart
Chairman
IEGMP

28 April 2000