

# Developing EMF Policy on Children

Developing UK government policy in  
the light of scientific uncertainty

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# Introduction

- UK approach to developing policy for EMF and children
- RF - Experience on the process resulting in a precautionary approach
- ELF – Policy for children – quo vadis?



# Background: The "Stewart Report"

- 1999-The Stewart group was set up to investigate the public health implications of mobile telecommunications.
- Process involved wide consultation and inputs from stakeholders and regional public meetings.



# Background: The "Stewart Report"

- 2000-The Report published.
- 'it is not possible at present to say that exposure to RF radn...is totally without potential adverse health effects and that the gaps in knowledge are sufficient to justify a precautionary approach
- Recommended an overall precautionary approach due to gaps in scientific knowledge.



# Recommendations

1. Limit public exposure.
2. Measure exposure.
3. Reduce scientific uncertainty.
4. Increase public information and involvement..
5. Give advice to the public including the use of mobile phones by children.
6. Review the science after 3 years



# Actions

1. ICNIRP Guidelines adopted by government and industry
2. SAR values and Radiocommunications Agency audit
3. £7.36 million research programme



# Actions

4. Improve consultation for mast siting.
5. DH leaflets on mobile phones and base stations and web based information.
6. NRPB/AGNIR review published January 2004.



# Stewart Recommendations on children's use of mobile phones:

Children may be more vulnerable because:

- of their developing nervous system.
- the greater absorption of energy in the tissues of the head.
- of a longer life time of exposure.



# Case Study:

Mobile  
Telecommunications  
and children

Stewart recommends  
that "use of mobile  
phones by children for  
non-essential calls  
should be discouraged"



Stewart also recommended that "the mobile phone industry should refrain from promoting the use of mobile phones by children".



The UK Departments of Health  
issued leaflets explaining the  
precautionary approach  
- emphasising Stewart advice on  
children's use of phones.

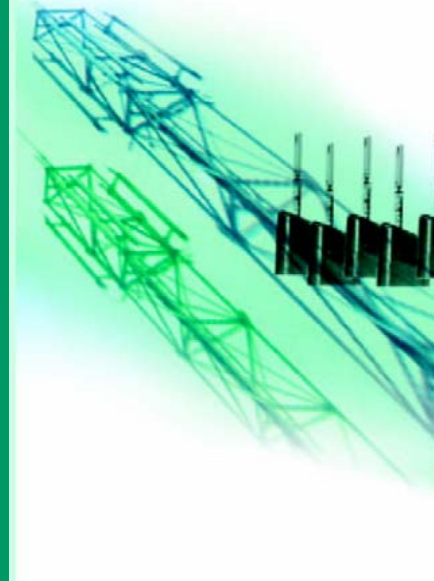
[www.doh.gov.uk/mobilephones](http://www.doh.gov.uk/mobilephones)



# Mobile phones and Health



# Mobile phone **Base stations** and Health



In the light of the recommendation the UK CMOs strongly advise that where children and young people do use mobile phones, they should be encouraged to

- Use mobile phones for essential purposes only
- Keep all calls short – talking for long periods prolongs exposure and should be discouraged.

The UK CMOs recommend that if persons want to avoid their children being subject to any possible risk that might be identified in the future the way to do so is to exercise their choice not to let their children use mobile phones



- Although the exposure from base stations will be many times lower than from using a mobile phone, the Stewart Group acknowledged that there was some public concern about base stations located on or near schools. The pattern of radio waves emitted from a base station is generally even, but there is a zone within each cell where the concentration of waves will be slightly higher. The base station operator will be able to provide information about the pattern of radio wave emissions if a school or parents are concerned about the possibility that this zone includes a school or any part of its grounds.



# Public Concern about Base Stations

- Audit of base station exposures near schools
- Consultation with school and parents when siting macrocells in or near schools but noted "there are no scientific grounds for setting guidelines below ICNIRP..."



# Current position

- A 3 year review of the science was undertaken and published in January 2004. (AGNIR)
- Very little on childhood exposures to RF
- No new substantial studies on children since Stewart



## UK is now considering:

- broadening precautionary approach from mobile telecommunications to other parts of the EMF spectrum.
- ELF and children, in light of IARC, ICNIRP, NRPB advice.



# ELF: Next Steps

- In the context of the EU Council Recommendation on public exposure
- Supported by NRPB Guidelines (March 2004)
- Setting up stakeholder meetings
- Process for consultation
- Discuss factors for consideration
- 



# ELF: Next Steps

WHO EHC and Workshops part of the  
process

