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By email

5 July 2024

Ref: CP/JF4196

Re: Telephone Signal – Llandudno

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you following the completion of a revealing survey of 289 individuals, which has brought to light the urgent and chronic lack of mobile signal in Llandudno. This issue requires immediate attention and action.

Llandudno is home to 115,000 residents and hosts nearly 18 million daily visitors, with 11 million tourists staying overnight or for extended periods. As such, Llandudno is often called the "Queen of Welsh Resorts", which brings in over £1.1 billion to the national economy through tourism, on which over 11,000 jobs rely, with the GDP of Conwy & Denbighshire being £4.3 billion. In an age where individuals and businesses are becoming more dependent on an increasingly connected world, there is a clear correlation between the availability and stability of the internet and the efficiency and, thus, performance of businesses. However, according to Ofcom, the indoor likelihood of receiving voice or mobile data is classified as "limited", and while the same report suggests that the outdoor signal is "likely", the recent survey suggests quite the opposite. As such, in my recent survey, over 29% of respondents who provided a specific concern claimed that the lack of mobile signal negatively impacted their ability to run a business. A resident claimed that they are "unable to run a business effectively as staff are on call and uncontactable", which impacts the ability of companies to stay open. A more direct impact is the inability of business owners to make payments, with a comment stating, "The signal to the tills is also shocking, and that's with the internet in the shop", and in particular for those who support tourists with travel whereby for a taxi driver, the lack of signal "affects my card machine in my taxi". Having listened to citizens' concerns, it is clear that the lack of telecommunication infrastructure is having a substantial impact on those trying to succeed, with another resident stating that the lack of mobile signal "is detrimental to visitors in the area".

On a more personal basis, the average age of those living in Wales has increased. According to the ONS, "there has been an increase of 17.7% in people aged 65 years" from 2011-2021, leading to an increased need for medical services, support staff and reliable connectivity with family during emergencies. Given that emergency services use EE's network, the data suggests a consistent lack of availability, which understandably causes not just theoretical concerns for residents during the time of emergency. Still, the survey shows that residents have faced genuine barriers to reaching such services. Over 21% of respondents raised specific health concerns. From the requirement for mobile signal for the use of the safety of support staff to assisting elderly family members, from arranging doctor appointments to the need for clear and timely action in an emergency, the infrastructure is not suitable for those requiring consistent access to mobile signal. It is, therefore, no surprise that a support worker stated, "I support vulnerable adults in the community, and they love coming into town; however. As a staff team, we are hesitant because of the need to contact the office for extra support or guidance if required". A family member also commented, "My phone is an emergency contact number for my elderly family members and my children. Often, in the height of the tourist season, I'm uncontactable as the masts must be at capacity ... as there is no data available, despite showing a signal."

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Finally, I would like to address the concerns regarding the safety of children. In the survey, this concern received the most feedback, with over 30% of respondents having raised concerns about being unable to contact their children. The next generation is becoming more proficient from a younger age when using technology, and unrestricted access to mobile data has improved security measures such as tracking and has provided assurances for parents when their children are with friends or at school. Comments include a mother stating that her "daughter is at the age now where she wants to be allowed a bit of freedom but with no signal to contact her and no signal for her to contact me", which is causing concern and anxiety. To summarise the complaints, a final comment from a concerned resident included, "The rest of the world is talking about AI. Llandudno is still yet to install the infrastructure to be able to make a call from a mobile phone."

The issue with our current infrastructure is that the telephone mast needs to be upgraded or expanded in capacity. With clear arguments regarding safety, the economic impact and concerns during health emergencies, I am keen to understand better what measures you, as a telephone signal provider, are taking to improve signal in Llandudno to ensure that residents and tourists can fully utilise modern and upcoming mobile technology. I would also be grateful if you could provide assurances that the issue will be investigated with a plan moving forward to ensure the stability and reliability of our mobile network.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet".

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS