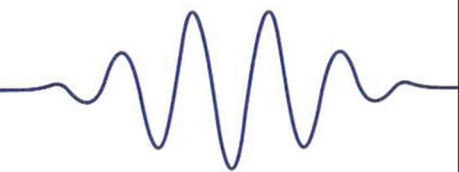


VDSL Interference



Radio Society of Great Britain

Advancing amateur radio since 1913



I am seeking your help. In many areas of the UK, all the HF amateur bands up to and including 20m are being blighted by interference from VDSL (Very high-speed Digital Subscriber Line), the most widespread means of providing residential broadband internet services in the UK. Unfortunately, Ofcom, which is responsible for investigating radio interference, appears unwilling to recognise the seriousness of this problem or to take any significant action. As a result, for many radio amateurs, VDSL interference swamps the natural background noise level on the HF bands to such an extent that only the strongest signals can now be heard, making some, or all, of these bands virtually unusable.

Since 2016, the RSGB has had extensive discussions with Ofcom about this problem and have presented them with considerable evidence of the extent of VDSL interference. In 2017, we conducted a survey about VDSL interference and from more than 1,200 replies, over half said that they were suffering significant VDSL interference. Nevertheless, Ofcom is refusing to take action against this interference in any meaningful way. One justification given by Ofcom for not acting is the principle of 'proportionality' – while there are around 29 million VDSL users in the UK, over the past 5 years Ofcom has received, on average, only 6 complaints per year about VDSL interference.

Despite our evidence indicating that a significant proportion of amateur radio operators are now experiencing interference from VDSL, it seems that very few of us have ever formally complained to Ofcom. There are probably many reasons for this, including that it is sometimes hard to positively identify that VDSL is the cause of high background noise levels, along with the perception that complaining to Ofcom will just be a waste of time since hitherto they have been unwilling to act.

We need, urgently, to demonstrate to Ofcom the size of the problem. Therefore we are asking every radio amateur who is suffering from VDSL interference to submit a complaint to Ofcom. The full details of how to do this are on the RSGB website at www.rsgb.org/vdsl-reporting and brief details appear on pages 19 and 20.

Unless we stand together and make our voice heard on this point, there is every indication that interference levels will continue to increase, and eventually the HF bands could become unusable to everyone except those living in the most remote and isolated areas. Furthermore, unless we act now, there is a danger that future broadband technologies (such as G.Fast) will cause even more interference over a much wider spectrum range, and thus potentially make all of our existing HF, VHF and UHF spectrum allocations virtually unusable.

I very much regret that we have been put in a position where it has become necessary to seek your help directly in this way but please accept my thanks in advance for your support.

This call to action is just one aspect of a wider campaign that the Society is planning for the coming months against both VDSL interference and escalating levels of interference from other sources. We anticipate that this will be a difficult battle, but together, please be assured that we will fight vigorously to defend your rights against the growing fog of interference.

Dave Wilson, M0OBW
President RSGB