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Our ref:
MC2018/12434/DB

Your Ref:
HG/KA/7081/French

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your correspondence of 31 August, on behalf of your constituent, Mr Lance French of The Pumphouse, The Street, Frittenden, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2DG, regarding mobile coverage within Frittenden.

I was sorry to read that Mr French does not have a good mobile signal. The government recognises the importance of good quality mobile connectivity across the UK, including in Frittenden and Kent. This is why we have been taking action to drive up coverage. A key element of this was the licence obligations set in 2014 to deliver outdoor voice coverage to 90% of the UK by end 2017. I am pleased that Ofcom confirmed in March 2018 that all four mobile network operators (MNOs) have met their obligations.

Ofcom has a mobile coverage checker on their website which uses postcodes to show which MNOs have the best coverage. This checker can be accessed at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/advice/ofcom-checker>. For Mr French's postcode (TN17 2DG), this shows good outdoor 4G coverage from all 4 MNOs. However, it does also seem to confirm that for 4G indoor coverage, the picture is mixed at best, and in large parts non-existent.

The government recognises that industry needs to improve coverage further, particularly in rural areas, as consumers' experience of mobile coverage is still not what it should be. This is why we have also reformed the Electronic Communications Code to encourage investment in the rollout of digital infrastructure by making deployment cheaper. The reforms came into force on 28 December 2017, and this will help expand current and future digital networks. We have also reformed mobile planning laws in England in November 2016, which provided new rights, for example, to build taller masts.

Our reforms will help drive this connectivity, and I also welcome Ofcom's consultation launched on 9 March, which outlines potential new licence obligations targeting rural coverage as part of the upcoming 700MHz spectrum auction. This will help deliver better mobile coverage and enable more people to benefit from the digital economy.

I hope that this information is helpful

Best wishes
Margot

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