

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Roger Cox
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Dear Roger,

I very much welcome the recent announcement from the Health Protection Agency that it is to undertake a new programme of research into wireless local area networks, otherwise known as WiFi and wLAN. However, I have concerns that the research parameters will not deliver the type of data required in order to determine potential health risks associated with this kind of technology, and thus any necessary prevention strategies.

As I understand it, HPA will be measuring exposures from wireless computer networks and comparing these with the 1998 ICNIRP guidelines, as well as exposures from other sources such as mobile phones. This approach presumes that the ICNIRP guidelines are sufficient and, furthermore, will assess only the relative risks posed by WiFi and wLAN, rather than measuring the potential threats of this technology in its own right. This is alarming given that it is almost ten years since the ICNIRP guidelines were developed and many argue that a thorough review is long overdue. A significant body of research suggests that health effects occur at levels of exposure well below the ICNIRP levels, so using this standard as the starting point for new research seems flawed.

Additionally, considerable data has already been collected about the exposures from WiFi and wLAN - we know that levels inside classrooms, for example, will almost always exceed those from any nearby base stations. Yet wireless technology has been rolled out across British schools, despite government advice in June 2000 that local authorities should prevent the beams from nearby base stations antenna falling on schools because of health concerns. As a result, I would argue that, rather than allocating resources to measuring levels further, the HPA's priority must be to determine the effects of wireless technology on young and vulnerable people. By collecting health and performance data about those exposed on a daily basis in schools to WiFi and wLAN, there is an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a review of the ICNIRP guidelines and potentially protect the health of a whole generation.

I very much hope you will consider these points and urge the HPA to reconsider the nature of its new programme of research. I would like to stress again how pleased I am that wireless technology is being given the attention it deserves and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.