

# THE INDEPENDENT

## Two in three believe radiation from phones damaged their health

By Geoffrey Lean  
Published: 08 July 2007  
United Kingdom

Two-thirds of Britons believe radiation from mobile phones and their masts has affected their health, a startling official survey shows. And huge majorities are dissatisfied with government assurances about the potential threat.

The survey is the result of a giant European Union exercise that polled more than 27,000 people across the continent, 1,375 of them in Britain. It shows that concern about the radiation is far greater than even the most ardent campaigners had dared to believe, and that official attempts to downplay the issue have backfired.

It also goes some way to explain the overwhelming public response received by The Independent on Sunday since we started raising questions about the effect of the radiation on people and wildlife in April.

This month, two councils – Haringey in London and Carmarthenshire in Wales – will be considering whether to allow Wi-Fi in their schools, after concern expressed by Sir William Stewart, the chairman of the Health Protection Agency. Sir William told the BBC's Panorama, "I believe that there is a need for a review of the Wi-Fi and other areas ... I think it's timely for it to be done now."

The survey, by the EU's Eurobarometer programme, which samples opinion across the continent, found 65 per cent of Britons believed mobile phones affected their health, and 71 per cent thought the masts did.

Across Europe, the figures were 73 and 76 per cent respectively, sharply up from 55 and 58 per cent five years ago.

Recent years have seen increasing evidence of risks from the phones. Scandinavian studies have suggested that people who have used them for more than 10 years are much more likely to get brain tumours, and that the radiation kills brain cells, which could lead to today's young people being senile from their forties.

There is much less evidence on effects from the masts, but studies have revealed a worrying incidence of symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, nausea and memory problems. Campaigners also claim they may cause cancers.

The survey shows that more than half of Britons are "very" or "fairly" concerned about such potential health effects, despite efforts at reassurance by ministers, officials and some scientists. Moreover, it reveals great dissatisfaction with the information they are given.

Nearly three-quarters of Britons say they are "not very well" or "not at all" informed about the official "protection framework" against the "potential health risks" from the radiation.