
EQUINITI

Working with

Ofcom

**Programme Making and Special Events
(PMSE) Funding Scheme**

Questions & Answers

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Background

Why is this happening?

In November 2014 Ofcom decided to make valuable spectrum in the 700 MHz band available for mobile data as soon as practicably possible. Initial plans indicated that it would be possible to make the band available by the end of 2021.

Further analysis suggested that benefits to citizens and consumers would be greater if it was available sooner and so Ofcom decided to work to accelerate the programme by 18 months and release the 700 MHz band in Q2 2020. In October 2016 Ofcom gave formal notice that access to the band 694 to 790 MHz will cease to be available for use by PMSE from 1 May 2020 and it would not authorise use beyond this date.

What is Ofcom doing to help PMSE equipment owners?

Government has decided to fund a grant scheme to support PMSE equipment owners that have to vacate the 700 MHz band earlier than expected. Ofcom agreed to design and run a grant scheme to disburse funds. The scheme will be administered on Ofcom's behalf by Equiniti Ltd.

Who is Equiniti?

Ofcom has contracted Equiniti Limited to manage the administration of funding on its behalf. Equiniti will be your first point of contact throughout the funding scheme.

How do I contact Equiniti?

You can contact the Equiniti helpline on 0800 011 3617 (international callers: +44 121 415 0283) between 8:30a.m. and 5:30p.m. each business day.

Alternatively, you can contact us by writing to us at the address below:

PMSE Funding Administrator
Equiniti Limited
Aspect House
Spencer Road
Lancing
West Sussex
BN99 6DA

Eligibility criteria

What are the eligibility criteria for funding?

The eligibility criteria for the funding scheme are as follows:

- Equipment owners must either have held a licence in the 700 MHz band between 17 October 2014 and 23 August 2018 or must be able to produce verifiable evidence that their business is based on hiring out PMSE equipment rather than using it and therefore does not require a licence;
- Claimants can only claim for equipment that belongs to them;
- Equipment being claimed for must be in working order;
- Equipment being claimed for must have been purchased before 23 August 2018;
- Equipment being claimed for must have at least some of its tuning range in the 700 MHz band.

Ancillary equipment that cannot be used because its related eligible equipment is made unusable by the clearance of the 700 MHz band will be eligible for funding. Ancillary equipment will have to satisfy the eligibility criteria, except for the tuning range requirement if the equipment has no tuning function.

What evidence do I need to provide as an unlicensed hirer?

If you were not a licence holder between 17 October 2014 and 23 August 2018 you must be able to produce verifiable evidence that your business is based on hiring out PMSE equipment rather than using it and therefore does not require a licence.

Evidence that must be submitted is as follows:

- A letter on company header paper confirming your status as an unlicensed hirer
- Confirmation of your Companies House registration number (where registered)
- A copy of the terms and conditions of hire supplied when hiring out equipment

Please note that Ofcom may request supplementary evidence in addition to the above.

How do I upload unlicensed hirer eligibility evidence?

Log into OCMS and select 'UPLOAD UNLICENSED HIRER ELIGIBILITY EVIDENCE' from the landing page, click through using the 'Next' button until you reach the 'Unlicensed hirer eligibility' screen.

From here you will be able to upload each piece of evidence in the specified section.

If requested, supplementary evidence can be entered on the following page under 'additional information and documents'.

Funding

What is the tax status of the funding payment?

Ofcom is not able to provide tax advice. Claimants who require advice on tax affairs should seek professional advice. This will be at a claimant's own expense and cost.

When will I receive funding?

We expect that we will start making payments to those who are eligible from July 2019 onwards. You will not receive any funding until you have either surrendered your equipment or provided proof that it has been modified and we have verified that it meets all the eligibility criteria.

How much funding will I receive?

The minimum level of funding that is available to eligible PMSE users is 60% of the cost of replacing the equipment.

How does my VAT status affect my funding?

An additional 20% in funding will be paid to claimants who are not VAT registered to recognise that they will not be able to offset or reclaim VAT on items or services they buy.

Is there a list of equipment along with the funding available for each item?

Yes, a rate card has been produced which shows the current cost of replacing each item of equipment along with the funding that is available.

My equipment is manufactured by Telex or RTS but I cannot find it listed on the rate card, what should I do?

Items manufactured by Telex or RTS can be found listed under Bosch within the rate card. Please search for your equipment, and make any subsequent claim, using Bosch as the manufacturer.

How is funding calculated?

The following formula is used to calculate the amount of funding awarded for each piece of equipment.

$$F_i = RC_i \left(1 - \frac{A}{L}\right)$$

Where F_i is the funding available for each i piece of equipment, RC_i is the current cost of replacing that model of equipment, A is the age of the equipment at the time of clearance and L is the expected asset life of the equipment.

The above formula gives a funding value equal to 60% of the cost of the identified replacement equipment to that being surrendered.

In order to calculate funding using this formula some basic assumptions are made. These assumptions are that the age of the equipment when surrendered (referred to as the asset age) is 6 years old and the working life of a piece of equipment (referred to as the asset life) is 15 years.

My equipment is more than 6 years old, will this affect my funding entitlement?

No. Given the difficulties in assessing asset life and asset age, industry averages will be applied. Therefore, all equipment that is 6 years old or greater will be treated as though it is 6 years old for the purposes of calculating funding.

My equipment is less than 6 years old, will this affect my funding entitlement?

Where equipment owners can provide verifiable evidence that their equipment is younger than 6 years, then the actual age of the product will be used in calculating the level of funding.

You are able to specify the age of the product when registering your claim within the Ofcom Claims Management System (OCMS), the online claims portal.

What date is used to assess the age of my equipment?

When calculating funding the age of the equipment as at 1 May 2020 is used.

Must I surrender my equipment on 1 May 2020?

No. It is expected that the period for surrendering equipment will commence from June 2019. Claimants will be asked during the claims registration process to elect their preferred month for surrendering equipment.

Clearing 700 MHz band – Questions & Answers

As the age of the equipment for the purposes of funding is calculated as at 1 May 2020, where equipment is surrendered early an additional uplift in the funding will be applied.

Equipment that is being modified does not need to be surrendered.

Registering a claim

What is OCMS?

OCMS stands for 'Ofcom Claims Management System' and is an online portal specially developed to support claimants through the claims process.

OCMS allows claimants to register a claim, submit evidence in support of a claim, arrange surrender of equipment, as well as raise queries and contact the scheme administrator, Equiniti.

How do I register a claim?

Claims for funding for equipment that will either be surrendered or modified should be made online through OCMS at www.pmsefunding.co.uk no later than 26 April 2019. If you are unable to access the internet, then please contact our helpline to request a claims pack.

The helpline can be contacted on 0800 011 3617 if calling from within the UK or on +44 121 415 0283 if calling internationally.

When does registration open and close?

Registration online, by phone and by post opens on 4 February 2019. The registration period closes on 26 April 2019 after which you will be unable to register to make a claim.

All claims for funding must be submitted no later than Friday 26 April 2019.

Do I need anything to enable me to register?

If you are a licence holder and held a WTA licence in the 700 MHz band between 17 October 2014 and 23 August 2018, a letter will be sent to you when registration opens providing a Unique Reference Number (URN) and the main licence number that has been used to identify you as a licence holder. These 2 pieces of information will be required to allow you to register online.

If you are a business that hires out PMSE equipment and therefore do not require a licence you will be able to register online from 4 February 2019. You do not require a URN to be provided in advance of registration as this will be generated for you when you register online.

I am a licence holder and I have not received a letter what should I do?

If you are a licence holder and held a WTA licence in the 700 MHz band between 17 October 2014 and 23 August 2018 and have not received a letter, please contact the Equiniti helpline on 0800 011 3617 (international callers: +44 121 415 0283). This line is available between 8:30a.m. and 5:30p.m. each business day.

I have registered my claim, what happens next?

Once your claim is submitted you will receive confirmation online that this has been received. Once the claims processing period opens in June 2019 you may be asked to provide the following:

- Evidence that the equipment you are claiming for was purchased before 23 August 2018
- Evidence that the equipment you are claiming for belongs to you
- Where you are claiming for equipment that is less than 6 years old, evidence to support this

I am a licence holder/hire company and did not register my claim by 26 April 2019, what can I do now?

All claims must be registered before the registration period closes on 26 April 2019. Claims cannot be accepted after this date.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances which prevented you from making a claim by the closure date, you can contact Equiniti by raising a claimant support request within OCMS detailing the reasons why you were unable to make a claim before the deadline, so it may be reviewed.

Amendments to a claim before registration closes

Claim registration is still open and I wish to amend my claim, is this possible?

Yes. It is possible to amend a submitted claim within OCMS up until registration closes on 26 April 2019. Please log into OCMS and select 'YOUR CLAIM' from the landing page where you will be able to make amendments.

Once you have made amendments, please ensure you submit your claim again before the registration closure date of 26 April 2019.

Amendments to a claim after registration closes

I have items that I no longer wish to claim for, what do I do?

It is not possible to amend a claim once registration closes. However, you can write to us detailing the items you wish to remove and explain the reasons why.

Please contact Equiniti by raising a claimant support request through OCMS detailing the items you wish to remove and the reasons for this.

If the replacement value of your original claim is over £6,000 you will still need to provide evidence of ownership for all remaining items.

I no longer wish to make a claim, what should I do?

Please contact us by raising a claimant support request through OCMS to let us know that you no longer wish to make a claim.

I have changed my mind and now want to have my equipment modified rather than surrender it, can I amend my claim?

It is not possible to amend a claim once registration closes. If you wish to receive funding you will have to surrender the equipment as you originally intended.

If you no longer wish to surrender your equipment, please contact us by raising a claimant support request through OCMS detailing the items you no longer wish to surrender and the reasons why.

I have changed my mind and now want to surrender my equipment rather than have it modified, can I amend my claim?

It is not possible to amend a claim once registration closes. If you wish to receive funding you will have to have the equipment modified as you originally intended.

If you no longer wish to modify your equipment, please contact us by raising a claimant support request through OCMS detailing the items you no longer wish to modify and the reasons why.

I have bought some more equipment from a friend recently and now want to add this to my claim, how do I do this?

It is not possible to add items that had not previously been registered in your claim, all items you wish to claim for must be registered before registration closes on 26 April 2019. If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that should be taken into consideration, please detail this in writing by raising a claimant support request through OCMS.

I have equipment that I should have included within my claim, can I add this now?

It is not possible to add items that had not previously been registered in your claim, all items you wish to claim for must be registered before registration closes on 26 April 2019. If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that should be taken into consideration, please detail this in writing by raising a claimant support request through OCMS.

Age of equipment evidence

How do I submit my age of equipment evidence?

Log into OCMS and select 'UPLOAD AGE OF EQUIPMENT EVIDENCE' from the landing page, this will take you to an upload page where you will be able to upload evidence for equipment that you have specified is less than 6 years old.

Please be aware that you can only upload 1 file against each entry of the claim form and this file must include evidence for the full quantity of items.

For example, if you have given the quantity as 5, you must include evidence demonstrating the age of all 5 items in the file you upload. You are not able to upload a single file for each item.

The 'UPLOAD AGE OF EQUIPMENT EVIDENCE' button is not visible on the landing page, what should I do?

This button will only appear on the landing page once you submit a claim containing 1 or more items that you have specified as being less than 6 years old.

What file types can I use when uploading age of equipment evidence?

Files with the following extensions can be used when uploading age of equipment evidence; .bmp .doc .docx .gif .jpeg .jpg .odg .ods .odt .pdf .png .rtf .svg .tiff .txt .xls .xlsx.

Evidence of ownership

Do I need to prove that I own the equipment?

Proof of ownership will not be required for any individual claim, or series of related claims, that has a total replacement value of £6,000 or less. Ofcom believes that it is important that smaller users, who it understands might not have proof of ownership, are able to access the scheme.

Users claiming for equipment with a total replacement value over £6,000 will need to produce proof of ownership for all items of equipment.

What do I need to provide as evidence that I own the equipment?

Acceptable evidence includes: receipts or invoices showing when the equipment was purchased; certified asset registers to identify equipment and when equipment was acquired.

When do I need to provide evidence of ownership?

You will need to provide evidence that you own the equipment that you are claiming for before it is surrendered or modified. We will contact you when it is time to supply this information. This evidence can then be submitted online.

What happens once I have returned my evidence of ownership?

Equiniti will contact you again approximately one month prior to the first date that you have indicated that you wish to surrender/modify your equipment to advise of the next steps in the process.

What happens if I don't return my evidence of ownership by the deadline given?

Your claim will be delayed until the evidence is submitted and approved. Once evidence has been approved we will contact you through OCMS to arrange a new date for surrendering the equipment or providing the modification invoice.

I don't think that I have any/all evidence of ownership and the total replacement value of my claim is over £6,000 what should I do?

It is a requirement for all claims with a total replacement value greater than £6,000 to be supported by suitable evidence to prove ownership of the equipment. If you are unable to provide evidence for some or all of the items you have claimed for, you should submit any evidence you do have so claims against these items can be processed.

Items of equipment that do not have supporting proof of ownership cannot be claimed for. If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that should be taken into consideration, please detail this in writing by raising a claimant support request through OCMS.

How will I know if my evidence of ownership has been accepted?

Once we have reviewed your proof of ownership you will receive an email to advise whether this has been accepted or rejected.

Will my evidence of ownership be returned to me?

All documents can be provided through the online portal so under normal circumstances there should not be any requirement to provide original copies. If for any reason original copies have been provided to us, these will be returned to you.

Surrendering equipment

How do I return equipment to Equiniti?

Items being surrendered will need to be packaged securely and sent to Equiniti via courier. You will receive a consignment pack ahead of your surrender date to assist you with this.

What is a consignment pack?

In order to surrender your equipment, you will be sent a consignment pack through the post approximately 3 weeks before your surrender date. This pack will contain an inventory of items being returned, a set of barcodes to allow you to label your equipment, and instructions on how and where to send your items.

I have not received my consignment pack, what should I do?

If you have not received your consignment pack and your surrender date is less than 2 weeks away, please contact us by raising a claimant support request through OCMS and we will arrange for a new pack to be sent to you.

How do I package my equipment to return it to Equiniti?

You will be required to arrange packing of items yourself. You will be sent individual labels for each item of equipment and you will need to attach these to each item in accordance with the consignment pack instructions. You should ensure that all items listed on the inventory form provided in your consignment pack are included in the package you are sending for surrender and that all items are packaged suitably for collection by courier.

Failure to pack the items correctly may invalidate your claim if the items subsequently arrive in damaged condition.

Do I have to pay to return my equipment?

Yes, you will have to pay for the equipment return.

I am returning my equipment in batches. How do I know what to surrender in the first month/subsequent months?

Once your claim has been processed and approved you will receive an email to confirm when items have been scheduled for return. We will be processing claims from 7 June 2019 onwards.

I don't think I will be able to return the equipment in my assigned surrender date, how can I change this?

You can only amend your surrender date to a later time. You cannot surrender your equipment earlier than the month you specified when you registered your claim.

If you wish to change your assigned surrender date, please raise a claimant support request using OCMS.

What happens once I have returned my equipment to Equiniti?

Your equipment will be compared to the inventory form that you have returned and the originally registered claim. It will be tested in accordance with the terms of the scheme and, if the equipment passes these tests, you will receive

payment within five working days of the Friday of the week your equipment was surrendered, tested and passed testing.

What happens if I don't return all the equipment listed on my inventory form?

If there is equipment missing from the inventory form this will not be included when the claim is processed. The value of this equipment will be removed from your claim.

We will contact you to request that you return any missing equipment and will make arrangements for surrendering this equipment at a later time. As this equipment is being returned later than originally agreed this may affect the replacement value we apply to it.

What happens if I return equipment that is not listed on my inventory form?

If the equipment forms part of your overall claim but was not due to be surrendered at this time, the processing of any claim value on this equipment will be set aside until the agreed surrender date.

If these items do not form part of your overall claim, you will not receive any funding for these items.

For items that do not form part of your overall claim, Equiniti will contact you to advise how to arrange collection of these items, which will be at your own expense. Items will then be held for a reasonable amount of time, after which they will be disposed of if they have not been collected.

Equipment testing

What happens if my equipment doesn't pass testing?

Equiniti will contact you to advise you of the items that have not passed testing and will advise how to arrange collection of these items, which will be at your own expense. Items will then be held for a reasonable amount of time, after which they will be disposed of if they have not been collected.

You will not receive payment for the individual items that have failed testing.

You will still receive the balance of the claim for the items that do pass testing and will still be paid to the original payment timetable.

Modification

What if I am modifying my equipment?

You will need to return your modification receipts to Equiniti no earlier than the month you selected for modification when you registered your claim.

The cost of modifications will be funded so long as the modifications are not more expensive than the funding that would have been available to an equipment owner had they decided to replace their equipment instead.

Do I need to have my equipment modified before I can receive funding?

Yes. You will need to provide proof that your equipment has been modified by way of a modification invoice/receipt.

What if I do not return all my modification receipts?

You will receive funding for the items for which you have returned your modification receipts. You will not receive funding for the remaining items until we have received your modification receipts.

What happens once I have returned my modification receipt(s) to Equiniti?

Once you have returned your modification receipt(s), these will be checked and authenticated, and you will receive payment within ten working days.

What if my receipt(s) do not meet the acceptance criteria?

Equiniti will contact you to advise that your receipt(s) cannot be accepted and the reasons why.

Payment

How will I be paid?

If you have registered your bank details on OCMS you will be paid by BACS. Where payment by BACS has not been selected, payment will be made by cheque which will be sent to the address you registered within OCMS when making your claim.

I would prefer to receive my payment by cheque rather than BACS, is this possible?

Yes. If you do not select payment by BACS within OCMS then the payment method will default to payment by cheque. Cheques will be sent to the address you registered within OCMS when making your claim.

Will I receive a payment statement?

Yes. A payment statement will be provided to you following payment.

General

When will I have to stop using 700 MHz?

PMSE users will no longer have access to the 700 MHz band from 1 May 2020.

What is the guard band?

The guard band is the 9 MHz of spectrum between 694 MHz and 703 MHz.

Can I use the guard band?

Ofcom decided to allow PMSE users continued access to the 694 MHz to 703 MHz band. However, the boundary of the 700 MHz band for funding purposes will remain as 694 MHz and not 703 MHz (i.e. claims can be made for equipment that has at least some of its tuning range between 694 to 790 MHz).

When do I need to supply my hire company evidence?

If you are not a licence holder you will need to provide evidence that you operate a business based on hiring out PMSE.

This evidence must be submitted through OCMS before registration closes on 26 April 2019. If you fail to submit all requested documentation by the 26 April 2019 the scheme administrator will not be able to process your claim. Any evidence received after this date will not be accepted.

I have lost my confirmation e-mail/letter detailing the equipment I am surrendering/modifying and the months I had selected to return my equipment, how can I obtain another copy?

A reprint of the claim you submitted containing this information can be reprinted from OCMS.

I have broken a piece of equipment since registering my claim, will this equipment still be eligible for the funding payment?

No. In order for equipment to be eligible for funding the equipment must be in working order when it is received by Equiniti. If you need to remove an item of equipment from the list you originally registered for surrender/modification please let us know by raising a claimant support request through OCMS so we can make the necessary changes.

Version Number: 1.7

Publication Date: 14 February 2019