



Imperial College London

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Airwave Health Monitoring Programme

Conducted by Imperial College London

**Department of Epidemiology and Public Health,
Faculty of Medicine**

With support from the Police Federation,
UNISON and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

Thank you for taking time to read this information carefully. You are being invited to take part in the Airwave Health Monitoring Programme sponsored by the Home Office and being run by the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, Imperial College London. We'd like to explain why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Why do we need Airwave Health Monitoring?

Following questions about whether there might be any possible health consequences for users of TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio) communications systems such as Airwave, a report was prepared for the Government by an independent panel of scientific experts, the Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR). AGNIR concluded "current evidence suggests that it is unlikely that ... signals from TETRA ... pose a hazard to human health". However, recommendations included the need for further medical research to examine the possible short and long-term health consequences of using TETRA technology. In response, the Home Office started a programme of National Research into exposure to radio waves from Airwave handsets and possible health effects. The *Airwave Health Monitoring Programme* is part of this research programme.

What is the aim of this programme?

The aim of this programme is to investigate any possible short and long-term health impacts associated with Airwave use among police personnel over the next 10 – 15 years.

Who is conducting the programme?

The programme is being conducted by the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at Imperial College London. The Police Federation, Unison and the Police Force support the project and have offered their full cooperation.

How was I chosen?

The health questionnaire will be sent to all police personnel across Great Britain.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. There is no obligation. Nevertheless, we must emphasize how vital your participation is to investigating possible health effects in relation to Airwave, clinical and lifestyle factors. This will be important not just to you as an individual, but to future users of the system as well. If you do decide to take part you will be given this leaflet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You will still be free to withdraw from the programme at any stage without giving a reason by contacting the research team.

What does it involve?

You will find a short questionnaire with this information leaflet. This questionnaire will enrol you in the programme, and allow us to accurately assess your Airwave use and relate it to your health data.

Health screening

The programme will also provide the opportunity for participants to receive a free and confidential health screen, which will improve our overall health assessment and give us the opportunity to provide free and independent health feedback directly to you. **The health screening is a popular component of the programme, which was requested by over three-quarters of police personnel in the pilot phase.** Neither the Police Force nor the Home Office will be able to look at your health screen results.

Health screening is currently being rolled out, force by force in Britain. For updates on how the screening roll-out is progressing, please visit our website: <http://www.police-health.org.uk>.

Will the information be kept confidential?

Yes. Your privacy and confidentiality has been a main aspect in planning this research. The study will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. All identifiable data collected will be handled in the strictest confidence by the medical research team, and will not be passed on to your police force or the Home Office. All data will be stored securely on a private computer network at Imperial College.

Why should I help?

There is no current evidence that Airwave is harmful to health. However, there is general agreement that further research is required into the possible short and long-term health consequences of using TETRA technology. The results of the questionnaire and the health screen will be vital for investigating possible health effects in relation to Airwave use, clinical and lifestyle factors.

The subsequent research findings will also provide vital information for improving future treatment of illness, health promotion, diagnosis and prevention of disease.

Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, says:

“The Police Federation has actively campaigned for good quality independent research to ascertain if there are any health effects on the users of Airwave. That’s why it is important that we all play our role and I would encourage you to find the time to participate in this important research. It will only produce truly valid results if there is a high level of participation from police officers. Please help if you can.”

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact a member of the Medical Research Team at:

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More information about the study, with a comprehensive FAQ list, is available on our website.
Website: <http://www.police-health.org.uk/>

Please find the Police Federation’s position on Airwave and health at:
http://www.polfed.org/PFNews_Airwave_Issue24.pdf