

Action to address key issues

[GRI Reference: this section covers 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, SO1]

During 2003/04 we continued to engage with stakeholders, actively instigating debate about new issues and responding to real concerns. In this section of the report we describe the action we have taken in three specific areas. They are:

Mast siting As a growing business with an expanding network, we aim to consult communities on where we site our communication masts and to give local authorities and interest groups advance information on our development plans in line with best-practice guidelines. We have signed up to the industry's codes on responsible mast siting. Our performance against the code for UK operators, called the Ten Commitments, was independently reviewed in 2003. O₂ has worked hard to address people's concerns, but we know we have more to do.

Feedback from employees We want our employees to feel proud to work for O₂. Our success depends on their talents and skills and we are committed to treating them in a way that reflects our core values – to be bold, open, trusted and clear. Our employees have told us what makes O₂ special and also where more needs to be done to improve our business. Our employees have said what corporate responsibility means to them and how we should ensure that we abide by the high standards we set ourselves. We are taking steps to make sure managers across the Group have the right tools to deal with the many sensitive issues involved in running a modern mobile operator.

Child protection We were among the first to alert people to concerns about pornography, inappropriate contacts on mobile phones, and the dangers of mobile-related bullying and crime. Now we are concentrating on ways to help young people use their mobiles safely, and providing information to parents to improve their knowledge of mobile technology and its capabilities. The feedback from some of our campaigns – like 'Teach UR Mum 2 TXT' – has been very encouraging.

See over for what we are doing...

Responding to concerns about...

Mast siting

[GRI Reference: this section covers 2.9, EN7, EN25, PR1, IO3, IO7, PA8, TA1]

Some people have expressed their concerns about where we locate our communication masts for our networks. We take these concerns seriously. We aim to develop our infrastructure responsibly and make efforts to inform people in advance of our plans. **We aim to listen, consult and respond.**



“We are building a lot less now than three years ago, but the level of community consultation is far greater today.”

Jim Stevenson, Community Relations Manager, O₂ UK

What we are doing to reassure the public

A team of community relations managers works in each of our businesses and their job is to make sure local communities are informed of where we plan to build masts. We attend public meetings, consult through drop-in sessions, distribute information leaflets and operate a dedicated helpline for queries on O₂ UK's mast siting (see pages 21-22).

Providing early information

Every autumn we publish a list of the UK sites we plan to develop in the coming year. This helps local planners to work with our community relations teams in addressing potential problems.

Jim Stevenson,
Community Relations Manager, O₂ UK

30th April 2004
Subject: 02 Mast in Thorneywood

Dear Mr Varney,

I enclose a copy of the minutes to a Public Meeting we held with 02 concerning the erection of a mast in the residential area of Thorneywood.

The main points that came from the meeting are:

02 do not know the local area and in fact attachment 4 marks the mast site on the wrong side of the road.

Centac claim the council had 28 days for prior approval. The council deny they have any involvement.

Questions were asked regarding the integrity of the owner of the site because of rubbish dumping, the fact that the temporary planning permission for the car lot had expired on Year 2000, constant parking of "for sale" cars on double yellow lines and since then there has been an act of vandalism against a member of the campaign committee.

02 did not convince the public there were no health risks attached to the mast.

We are now in the process of getting a 500+ names petition against the mast (amount of names needed) and are holding a demonstration on the Port Leazes Road on Saturday 1st May at 2pm, which hopefully Central TV will be showing.

We would urge you to reconsider the siting of this mast because the local community are very upset.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Kiely

"We would urge you to reconsider the siting of this mast because the local community is very upset."

Catherine Kiely,
Thorneywood, Nottingham, UK

O₂ responded to this letter and we are continuing our discussions with the local community in Thorneywood.

Mast sharing

Wherever possible we try to work with other operators to share masts so there is less impact on the environment. We entered into groundbreaking 3G network sharing agreements with T-Mobile in the UK and Germany. Through these agreements we commit to sharing our infrastructure, which reduces the environmental impact of our 3G network roll-out.

Safety

Measurements by safety regulators in the UK and Germany have shown that our masts and base stations operate well below international safety limits, often by many hundreds or even thousands of times. Our masts are well cordoned off with clear safety signs to warn people not to get close to antennae. The National Radiological Protection Board in the UK has issued new recommendations on safety procedures for people working on masts. We are reviewing our practices and expect to make some small changes to make sure we comply.

Environment

To minimise the visual, noise and environmental impact of our masts we work to a checklist when extending our network in sensitive areas, such as close to schools or in places of natural beauty. Where we may harm biodiversity or create an eyesore, we work to find alternative sitings or to mitigate the impacts. We have signed up to the mobile phone industry's Ten Commitments on responsible mast siting in the UK and a similar code in other countries of operation. This commits us to consulting communities on our plans openly and in good time.

O₂ Airwave

O₂ Airwave has completed over two thirds of its programme to build a secure network across mainland Britain, a process that has involved extensive consultation.

The recent completion of the network on the Gower peninsula in South Wales involved countless meetings with councillors, Welsh Assembly members, Members of Parliament and local campaigners – who were invited to help us choose appropriate mast sites. In Scotland, extensive briefings were given to planning officers, members of the Scottish Parliament and interest groups. The network building programme has gained significant community support and very few cases of local opposition.

Engaging with...

Employees

We want everyone at O₂ to feel proud of working for the Company. Last year we surveyed employees to see what they think about our approach to corporate responsibility, and they said there were things we could do better. One issue was to pick campaigns that were socially important in their own right – without any immediate commercial value to the Company.

Understanding the views of our people

Between October 2003 and January 2004 we used external experts to survey employees' attitudes to corporate responsibility. In total 347 employees were canvassed across the business – 272 through an online survey and the rest through focus groups and interviews. Nearly half of the respondents to the online survey said it was important for companies to help create a better society and 89 per cent said large companies should do more than focus on profit.

Most thought O₂ was committed to corporate responsibility and that we did it well. But there were concerns that the

commitment did not go right through the Company and was strongest at the very top and at grass root level. Some 43 per cent of the quantitative online survey said we were not good at communicating our policies inside the Company, and this was given as a reason why corporate responsibility has yet to be embedded within O₂.

Several respondents urged us to be bolder in our campaigns and to pick tough topics for our campaigns – like child protection, an issue we are leading the industry in addressing.

Each year in October we run our employee engagement survey, Reflect O₂. The results for each function are benchmarked against each other and senior management have performance targets linked to this survey. Each survey is followed by action plans that are published on our internal website.

How we are responding

With the restructuring of our business we have devolved day-to-day management of our corporate responsibility agenda to our individual businesses. At the same time we have transferred the responsibilities of the Corporate Responsibility Advisory Council to the Executive Committee and the individual operating businesses. We believe these two actions will strengthen our commitment to corporate responsibility at every level and improve our performance. The new strategic objectives we have set will also increase our focus and performance and will be carefully measured – just as we measure our business performance.


Here are some of the actions we have taken this year:

Diversity

We created a new diversity steering group for O₂ chaired by Danuta Gray, O₂ Ireland's Chief Executive Officer, who acts as diversity champion for the whole business. One key aim is to make sure our managers really understand the many complex issues involved in creating a diverse workplace and using our intranet as a management training tool.

Corporate responsibility at every level

In 2003/04 the management and oversight of corporate responsibility was transferred from a dedicated council to the Executive Committee and the operating businesses. This was to ensure that we integrate corporate responsibility to every level of the business.



"I would like it if people said: That's refreshing. That's different. They've taken on something as hard or as tough as that and made a difference."

O₂ employee

Responding to...

Child protection

[GRI Reference: this section covers PR2, PA7]

We aim to be proactive in alerting parents and their children to the potential dangers of mobile phones and all the ways to use them more safely. During the year we published a series of leaflets to tell them about mobile services and launched the highly successful 'Teach UR Mum 2 TXT' campaign as a safe way for young people to stay in touch with their parents.



Child protection leaflets:

What your child's mobile phone can do

This leaflet aims to help parents and guardians understand mobile phone technology. It describes the full range of capabilities that modern mobile phones have and also alerts them to the harmful ways that some people try to use services, covering such issues as chatrooms and grooming by paedophiles.

Bullying on mobile phones

This leaflet on bullying tackles a very important problem some children face. Bullying is never acceptable. It can leave a child feeling frightened and alone. The leaflet tells them who to contact if they are being bullied and how the law can protect them.

Sensible use of camera phones

Camera phones are becoming more and more popular. Used appropriately they can be both useful and great fun. But used irresponsibly they can cause distress and may invade someone's privacy. This leaflet looks at how to use them safely and respectfully.

“ O₂'s production of a range of information leaflets and co-operation with other operators to launch a UK code of practice and to classify adult content are very welcome indeed. This is tangible and practical social responsibility and it's backed by a willingness to continue working with organisations such as National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations to promote the safe use of mobile phones to both young people and their parents.”

David Butler, Chief Executive, National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations

Teach UR Mum 2 TXT

Our campaign with Milly's Fund in the UK is designed to help parents and carers to stay in touch with young people in a safe and unobtrusive way. We have printed leaflets and run text clinics in shopping centres around the UK.

Nuisance call bureau

In the UK we run a nuisance call bureau. Employees within this operation work closely with the agencies that monitor our chatrooms to make sure they are not being used by people trying to make inappropriate contact with young people. The trained moderators also listen for children who are distressed, referring them to agencies like the Samaritans.

Code of conduct

Operators in the UK and Ireland have developed codes of practice for the responsible and secure use of mobile services. We are proposing a similar code in Germany. The UK code covers visual content, online gambling, mobile games, chatrooms and internet access. Certain commercial information will be classified as 18 and users will need to prove that they are old enough before being allowed access to this content. Parental controls will also be made available for internet content. We are developing age verification processes so we can ensure proper controls under the UK code. These controls will be relevant and useful in other future contexts such as location services, gambling, betting, lottery and e-money transactions. We aim to implement the UK code by December 2004.

TIME

USE YOUR PHONE

Helping children deal with nuisance calls

Children with their own mobile phones may occasionally receive unwelcome calls or texts. Sometimes these are from people they know. Sometimes they are from complete strangers. Such calls and messages can be frightening or threatening. This leaflet gives parents and carers ideas about how to counsel children on dealing with nuisance calls.

Chatrooms

This leaflet deals with how children can use chat services safely when talking to friends they may not know in the real world. All our chatrooms are carefully monitored to listen for people trying to make inappropriate contacts with young people.

Crime

Mobile phones are valuable. When they get stolen, children are often the victims. Our leaflet on phone crime gives tips on how to avoid drawing attention to themselves when using their phones, and alerting them to the dangers around them.