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MailOnline

14 die of cancer in seven years living next to phone mast with highest radiation levels in UK

By [Rebecca Camber](#)

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Fourteen people living within a mile of a mobile phone mast that emits one of the highest levels of radiation in the country have died of cancer.

Four of the deaths have been in a cul-de-sac yards from the site.

A further 20 residents have developed tumours in the last seven years, although they have survived.



Campaigner Wendy Baggott, pictured with campaigners at the tower, says 'it's a threatening presence'

Those living in the shadow of the mast have begun a campaign for its removal, claiming that it has caused a cancer hotspot. The Health Protection Agency is investigating.

Worried parents are refusing to take their children to the playing fields where the mast is sited for fear of damaging their health.

The mast was erected in 1995 on a disused water tower on the High Acres estate in Kingswinford, near Dudley, West Midlands.



Threat: The mast, attached to a water tower, casts a shadow over Bartic Avenue in Kingswinford, West Midlands

But campaigners claim health problems started among the 700 residents of the estate when more antennae and dishes were added in 2001.

It serves four mobile phone operators.

Experts from the communications watchdog Ofcom, who carried out tests on the mast, say it has the highest radiation level of any phone mast site surveyed in England this year.



Victim? Betty Genner, who died of ovarian cancer in January 2003, with her husband John

However, the radiation was still within UK safety guidelines.

Wendy Baggott, 52, who leads a protest group against the mast, which is only 200 yards from her home, said: 'It feels like a threatening presence looming all over the neighbourhood.'

'Over the last seven years there have been 14 cancer deaths in the area. Four of those happened in this road. The

wellbeing of the whole community is being affected.'

The retired NHS clinical auditor, whose husband Clive has twice contracted skin cancer, said: 'It is a massive concern to us that there is a children's play area so near to it.

'Parents and grandparents around here won't let their children go there because they are terrified they could get cancer.'



Happier times: Dorothy Day, who died from Eaton Lambert syndrome in 2005, with husband Leonard

One resident, Michael Morris, died from a brain tumour in 2003 aged 57.

His widow Pamela, 61, said: 'There have been so many people in the neighbourhood who have died of these cancers.

'Michael used to take the dogs for walks up there by the tower and I wonder if it might have been that.

When these masts came I think it was when he started to go downhill.'

The 14 deaths have included Betty Genner, who was killed by ovarian cancer in 2003 aged 68, and Dorothy Day, 69, who died two years later from cancer.

Six months ago another woman succumbed to a brain tumour. All of them lived within a mile of the mast.



Sufered: Michael Morris, who died of a brain tumour in 2003, with wife Pamela

The Government insists mobile phone masts pose no threat to the public.

But some campaigners believe the radiation from masts could be powerful enough to change the composition of body cells, making them more susceptible to cancer.

An Ofcom spokesman said: 'This is the highest level of exposure that we have recorded in England this year.

'The tower recorded levels 5,000 times below the safe exposure limit. It was not an excessive level of radiation.

'Other results around the country have been found to be around similar levels and this is well within the safety limit.'

A spokesman for the Health Protection Agency said: 'No concerns have been raised by general practitioners or other local health services in the area about any greater than expected numbers or unusual cases of any serious illnesses.

'Further contact is being made with local general practices to confirm that they do not have any specific concerns.'

But Yasmin Skelt, from pressure group Mast Sanity, which campaigns against the spread of mobile phone masts, said: 'The Government keeps refusing to believe there is a problem. China and Russia realise this and keep their limits at a sixtieth of what we have got.

'We are being told nothing about the health effects, agencies that should be helping the British public are not helping. Why are we putting up with it?'

BRIEFING

- Mobile phone masts emit almost ten times as much radiation as a microwave oven
- Radio waves from the masts penetrate more than an inch into the body's tissues
- The radiation emitted by a mobile phone held against the head is far more powerful than that produced by a mast
- In 2000, a report backed by the Government concluded there was no definite link between masts and ill health
- There are 51,000 phone masts in the UK

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The government denies any connection - a complete cover up.

- Mike, Exeter, Devon, 20/6/2008 09:22

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Death by 'Common Purpose". Nothing new there!

- Nick Chance, Worcester, 20/6/2008 08:57

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This is just utter nonsense. It shows a total lack of understanding of basic physics (inverse square law) and also the nature of true "randomness" (which is NOT a smooth distribution, but encompasses clustering). The radiation from your mobile phone is far more powerful than that you receive stood even 100m from a mast.

- Ecgbert, Sheffield, 20/6/2008 08:53

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Why not move away from the area?

- Tony Calladine, UK, 20/6/2008 08:51

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The evidences are very clear. If you have choices, don't live close to any radiation equipment.

- Ms D.Lee, Hong Kong, 20/6/2008 08:25

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Anyone noticed how cordless phones work, home wireless networks, microwave ovens, guess what? You have a 'mast' in your home!

If you live near an airport or early warning station guess how they detect aircraft at a distance? If you watch TV guess how that is beamed to your home.

This statement below is wrong as it depends entirely on distance from the device, exactly how much power could we be talking about (how many thousandths of a watt?) Power from a transmitting source diminishes by the square of distance from source. Which is why having a mobile next to your ear gives most the most exposure even at much lower transmit powers.

'Mobile phone masts emit almost ten times as much radiation as a microwave oven' Wrong!

- Alan, Luton, 20/6/2008 08:05

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