

Analysys Mason supports Ofcom's review into super-fast broadband with largest ever duct access survey in Europe

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As part of its review into super-fast broadband, regulator Ofcom called on global telecoms adviser Analysys Mason to undertake an important survey of duct access in the UK. This was the largest sample survey ever carried out and made publicly available in Europe.

Ofcom is considering how competition might be maintained in a next generation access network environment, and the potential role of duct access.

Analysys Mason surveyed BT's duct infrastructure in 11 cities and towns to assess levels of occupancy and to investigate the practical issues that communication providers may face if deploying new fibre cable in Openreach's access and backhaul networks. The survey consisted of a total of 31 routes including 817 chambers, 18 206 duct-ends and 76 street cabinets over a total route distance of 143km.

The Analysys Mason survey identified that over half of duct-ends (51%) have at least 42% of unoccupied space, which suggests that duct access may be feasible.

According to Ian Birleson, Partner at Analysys Mason, providing access to existing ducts, thereby reducing the cost of deploying fibre for communication providers, is one solution that may lower the barriers to entry and therefore support competition.

"Our study also demonstrates that the unoccupied space in the infrastructure network is not evenly distributed across the different sections of the network and across the different cities we have surveyed. The duct infrastructure is more likely to be congested in the access part of the network than in the backhaul network, and duct-ends are more likely to have unoccupied space in cities where recent civil engineering work was carried out," says Birleson.

"Analysys Mason would like to thank Openreach for their co-operation, the skills of Setec telecom and Lythgoes Ltd. (our partners for this project) and Ofcom's proactive support throughout; this project has been a great success," adds Birleson.

Analysys Mason has extensive experience in next generation access networks and implementation project management.

Survey results and Analysys Mason's analysis of the requirements for implementing duct access is available for download at:

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/telecoms/discussnga/duct/>

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About Analysys Mason (www.analysismason.com)

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