

Login or register | Free email services | Make us your homepage

news  
telegraph.co.uk



Just £59.99  
(normally £101.88)

Telegraph  
WineService

Search For



Tuesday 17 August 2004



Telegraph Network

telegraph.co.uk

News home

Breaking news

Business news

Crossword Society

Factfiles

Law reports

Matt cartoon

Obituaries

Opinion

Picture galleries

Text alerts

Weather

Week at a glance

Your view

About us

Contact us

## Police blame health crisis on radio mast

By Nic Fleming

(Filed: 14/08/2004)

Six people including a chief inspector, other officers and civilian workers at a police station have blamed debilitating health complaints on a mast for a controversial new communications system yards from their desks.

Chief Insp Steve Strong and his staff reportedly believe their bouts of dizziness and severe headaches began when a [transmitter for the Tetra radio network was put up](#).

Around 25 people living near the mast at the station in North Walsham, Norfolk, have complained of similar symptoms. Other reported health complaints include repeated nosebleeds, especially among children, disturbed sleep and skin problems.

The officers, who have been referred to the force's doctor, are said to have been warned not to discuss their worries publicly. A source said: "They don't know which way to turn. They have been forbidden from speaking out.

"They are caught between going to work in a place that is making them ill and the huge financial and political pressures that demand Tetra must be a success at all costs."

Last month the family of Pc Neil Dring, a Leicestershire police motorcyclist who died of cancer of the oesophagus, said he had complained of headaches when he began using his Tetra handset and that he was convinced it was to blame for his condition.

The Government's £2.9 billion Tetra system is being rolled out to all 53 police forces in England, Scotland



The mast at the North Walsham station

Telegraph  
Wine Service

Telegraph Wine Service

TELEGRAPH FANTASY  
FOOTBALL ONLINE  
WWW.TFFO.CO.UK

Telegraph  
WineService

Just £59.99  
(normally £101.88)



and Wales by next spring.

It is already being used by 65,000 officers in 40 forces. The digital handsets boast improvements including better security and coverage, the ability to receive pictures and data, and emergency buttons.

Hundreds of officers have said they believe their health is suffering and campaign groups are fighting against siting the system's 3,500 transmitters near their homes, schools and workplaces.

Residents, police and politicians in North Walsham are angry with O2 Airwaves because its contractors put up a transmitter just days after planning permission for a new, taller mast was refused. Negotiations about finding an alternative site are continuing.

Chris Warren, of the Norfolk Police Federation, said: "The federation would not want to see any piece of equipment brought in that is demonstrably injurious to our members. But there is no scientific evidence that Tetra is injurious to officers' health."

O2 Airwaves said: "All the medical evidence would suggest the symptoms reported are not connected with the use of radio technology."

**Publishers wishing to reproduce photographs on this page should phone 44 (0) 207 538 7505 or e-mail [syndication@telegraph.co.uk](mailto:syndication@telegraph.co.uk)**

- ▶ [13 January 2004: Cancer-fear village blocks 999 mast](#)
- ▶ [6 December 2003: Revolt over masts puts brake on new police system](#)

Previous story: [BBC chief calls in outside accountants](#)

Next story: [Graffiti vandal's £600,000 damage](#)

© Copyright of Telegraph Group Limited 2004. [Terms & Conditions](#) of reading.  
[Commercial information](#). [Privacy and Cookie Policy](#).

[XML](#) [RSS feeds available](#)