

## Belfast independent local radio licence applications

# Questions and responses: Belfast 105

*These are the responses received from Belfast 105 FM to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding the group's application for the Belfast licence.*

### **1. Could you please clarify the maximum extent to which Belfast's 105 FM would automate programming?**

Belfast's 105 FM will broadcast an automated programme, "The All nighter" between 2am and 6am seven nights a week. This programme, aimed at shift/night workers, will be recorded "as live" each evening and feature highlights of the days programming including interviews, debates and entertainment news. The programme will be relaxed in style with speech based items complemented by easy listening classic songs from the 60's to the present day.

No other programmes in the Belfast's 105 FM schedule will be automated.

(We have defined "Automation" as set out in the Radio Authority, News and Current Affairs Code and Programme Code of January 2002.)

### **2. Please clarify whether the commitment made to sports coverage within the Format indicates that sport would feature in every "daytime" (i.e. weekdays 0800 to 1900 and at weekends 0800 to 1400) top of hour bulletin as well as throughout two dedicated programme strands on Monday and Friday evenings.**

Belfast's 105 FM will broadcast sports bulletins every hour, on the hour, from 0600 to 2200 after our news bulletins seven days a week. These sports bulletins would be separated from our news bulletins by a commercial break and/or a specific sports news intro.

Monday to Friday, from 0700 to 0900 and from 1700 to 1900 Belfast's 105 FM will also broadcast rolling sports headlines on the half hour (in addition to our hourly bulletins).

In addition to sports news we will broadcast hour long sports programmes with in-depth analysis and discussion on Monday and Friday evenings from 1900 to 2000. These 100% speech based programmes will be a "must listen" for Belfast sports fans and cover all the main sports codes including women's sports and minority sports.

Our Saturday and Sunday Sports Beat programmes broadcast from 1400 to 1800 will include reports, commentary and updates from all major sporting events and codes.

**3. Please clarify how the term “current” would be defined in the context of the music policy described in the Format.**

Conscious of the necessity to broaden the range of choice and cater for tastes and interests different from those already catered for, Belfast’s 105 FM has taken a radical line on current music in order to clearly differentiate our output from the other local commercial services.

For this reason, we have defined “current” as any music that has been released within the previous 18 months.

**4. The Format indicates that 70% of news output would be “local Belfast news”. Would this be measured in minutage terms, or by the number of stories?**

We propose to measure local news content in minutage terms. Our news team will include two full time journalists who will be “out and about” in the city covering local news. We believe a significant number of issues of interest to Belfast people are not currently covered on existing radio services. In addition, because Belfast is the regional capital, a significant volume of regional and national news will have a specific Belfast “angle” involving locally based news reports and interviews.

On this basis we are happy that 70% of new output by minutage will be local Belfast news.

**5. The application asserts that “both males and females in the 31 to 55 age group want more music and more news”. Please illustrate how this comment is substantiated by the group’s research particularly in light of the finding that “all respondents want their ideal station to have less news and more music than their favourite station” (summary in-street survey).**

This comment is substantiated by our research in the following way:

**Analysis of Street Questionnaire data**

Detailed analysis of the question ‘*Would your ideal station have less, the same or more news*’ shows that 31 – 55 year olds want more rather than less news. People 30 years and under want less news. When the sample of younger people is combined with the 31 – 55 year olds (i.e. the whole sample), the effect of the scores is to make the whole sample in favour of less news.

## Analysis of Hall Questionnaire data

On carrying out the same analysis of the same question as in the Street Questionnaire we find that 31-55 year olds want much more news. On this occasion the younger group also want more news (but to a lesser extent).

The slight difference between the two data sets is probably an artefact of the different experimental conditions.

## Analysis of Street Sample (detail)

Age 31 - 55			Whole sample		
<b>Ideal station NEWS</b>	N° cit.	Percent	<b>Ideal station NEWS</b>	N° cit.	Percent
Non-response	1	1%	Non-response	5	3%
Less	15	15%	Less	44	23%
Same	58	60%	Same	109	58%
More	23	24%	More	30	16%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mean = 2.08 Standard deviation = 0.63			Mean = 1.92 Standard deviation = 0.63		
<b>Ideal station MUSIC</b>	N° cit.	Percent	<b>Ideal station MUSIC</b>	N° cit.	Percent
Non-response	1	1%	Non-response	4	2%
Less	3	3%	Less	6	3%
Same	54	56%	Same	75	40%
More	39	40%	More	103	55%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mean = 2.38 Standard deviation = 0.55			Mean = 2.53 Standard deviation = 0.56		
<i>People aged 31 – 55 clearly want more music and more news</i>			<i>The whole sample data shows an opposite effect in relation to the need for news.</i>		
Age 15- 30					
<b>Ideal station NEWS</b>	N° cit.	Percent	<i>When we analyse those aged. 15 – 30 we find that they want <u>less</u> news</i>		
Non-response	4	4%			
Less	29	32%			
Same	51	56%			
More	7	8%			
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>			
Mean = 1.75 Standard deviation = 0.59					

Ideal station MUSIC	N° cit.	Percent
Non-response	3	3%
Less	3	3%
Same	21	23%
More	64	70%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

Mean = 2.69 Standard deviation = 0.53

*and much more music.*

*The needs of young people are clearly different and act as a distortion to the whole sample figure.*

*(These findings are in accordance with the statement in the proposal and demonstrates the different needs of Belfast Broadcasting's target audience.)*

### Hall Test Sample (detail)

Age 31 - 55			Whole sample		
Ideal station NEWS	N° cit.	Percent	Ideal station NEWS	N° cit.	Percent
Non-response	13	8%	Non-response	27	9%
More	85	51%	More	123	42%
Same	62	37%	Same	121	41%
Less	8	5%	Less	23	8%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mean = 2.50 Standard deviation = 0.60			Mean = 2.37 Standard deviation = 0.64		
Ideal station MUSIC	N° cit.	Percent	Ideal station MUSIC	N° cit.	Percent
Non-response	15	9%	Non-response	21	7%
More	80	48%	More	170	58%
Same	68	40%	Same	97	33%
Less	5	3%	Less	6	2%
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mean = 2.49 Standard deviation = 0.56			Mean = 2.60 Standard deviation = 0.53		
<i>People aged 31 – 55 clearly want more music and more news</i>			<i>The whole sample data shows slightly less enthusiasm for news</i>		
<b>Age 15- 30</b>					

<b>Age 15- 30</b>			
<b>Ideal station NEWS</b>	N° cit.	Percent	<i>When we analyse the people aged 15 – 30 we find that they still want more news- but less than the 31-55 age segment. The majority want the same amount of news,</i>
Non-response	13	10%	
More	38	30%	
Same	59	47%	
Less	15	12%	
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Mean = 2.21 Standard deviation = 0.66</b>			
<b>Ideal station MUSIC</b>	N° cit.	Percent	<i>and <u>much more</u> music.</i>
Non-response	5	4%	
More	90	72%	
Same	29	23%	
Less	1	1%	
<b>TOTAL OBS.</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Mean = 2.74 Standard deviation = 0.46</b>			

So there is a clear differentiation between age groups and Belfast Broadcasting will deliver more news type programmes in accordance with its target audience needs.

**6. On what basis did the group select a 40% speech minimum given that the preferred balance between speech and music appears not to have been tested?**

*General:*

Our research demonstrated a demand for a range of speech based content from more local news to more information about what's happening in Belfast. There is a demand for more listener interaction through phone in debates and competitions and there is a demand for more lifestyle type information.

While we have not specifically quantified this demand in terms of percentage of speech output, it was clear, in planning our proposed programme schedule, that our speech content would have to be at least in the order of 40% average daytime minimum if we were to respond adequately to this demand.

We were also conscious of the necessity to respond to the importance placed by Ofcom on criterion (c) *the extent to which a proposed service would broaden the range of programmes available by way of local (commercial) services in the area, and would cater for tastes and interests different from those already catered for.*

While Belfast's 105 FM will be significantly different purely by virtue of its commitment to 40% speech content, it is our commitment to specific content, be it local sports or community news, that will broaden the range of programmes and cater for tastes and interests different from those already catered for.

*How do we know that the older group 31 – 55 want more talk type programmes?*

To answer this we have analysed the rating of programme types for being 'Regularly listened to'. The proportion of music 'Regularly listened' compared with the average of talk programmes is 70% to 30%. This finding is based on actual behaviours in a music-driven environment.

When people were asked what changes they would make to their ideal station 14% of responses related to music and 58% to talk.

We believe from these figures and the consistent theme derived from focus groups and the other quantitative data that the provision of an additional 10% talk content is justified in order to satisfy the latent demand.

In coming to the above conclusions we can draw on two main sources of data:

Current programme preferences from the Street Questionnaire data show the following listening preferences:

HALL TEST age 31-55  
A - Pref  
A - Preferences

	Regularly	Occasional	Neither	Tend not to	Turn off/Ct	TOTAL
765.National/Intl News	96	42	3	22	0	168
766.Natl/Intl CurrentAffairs	60	54	9	34	3	168
767.NI/Belfast News	127	26	5	8	0	168
768.Traffic info	56	36	15	43	7	168
769.Weather	82	41	6	29	3	168
771.Phone-in chat / debates	75	46	10	22	7	168
772.Competitions	45	30	26	44	14	168
773.National/Intl Sport	44	28	13	55	18	168
774.Belfast area sport	26	37	12	65	16	168
775.Crime	34	49	22	48	8	168
776.Health/lifestyle	37	41	27	42	12	168
777.Entertainment news	42	48	19	43	9	168
778.Education1	34	43	31	42	9	168
779.Celebrities	35	49	17	45	14	168
770.Music	142	19	3	2	0	168

This table is based on the sub-sample 'aGE 31-55' containing 168 observations and defined by the following filter:  
Age Amongst "31-34 ; 35-39 ; 40-55"

Regularly listen to music	142	Ratio music to talk	2.5	<b>Current regular listening</b>	
Regularly listen to talk (avge)	57	Ratio talk to music	0.4	<b>Proportion music</b>	<b>0.7</b>
				<b>Proportion talk</b>	<b>0.3</b>

In this analysis we have taken the current incidence of 'Regularly listen to Music', and the average occurrence of regularly listening to talk type programmes. No weighting for preference has been made.

As we can see, the current ratio of actual behaviours for the whole 31-55 age segment is 70% music to 30% talk. If the older sub-group age 40-55 is selected the ratio changes to 68% music to 32% talk. There is a trend for increased consumption of talk with increasing age.

In a further question, we asked people what changes they would make to their ideal station:

- 13.6% of responses related to more music,
- 57.6% related to 'talk' topics.

But of course this is a multiple-response question, so the results must be treated with caution.

Hence – despite the fact that this question was not directly tested we feel that there is ample evidence for a significant shift towards the 'talk' end of the spectrum. People in the target audience want more news, they want more talk, they want more lifestyle and entertainment topics. A move from 30% to 40% would be in line with target audience wishes.

#### Street data

151.Changes to favourite station  
**What changes would you make to your favourite station?**

Changes to favourite station	N° cit.		N° cit.	
Non-response				
<b>MUSIC -more/type/choice/range</b>	<b>8</b>			
LESS/NO TALK more music	8			
more local bands	1		1	
Presenters/DJs -funny etc	11		11	
Guests/Celebrities/artists	0		0	
Adverts(less)	4			
Debates	1		1	
News (local)	4		4	
Shows e.g fashion/a.m./etc	4		4	
Sports	2		2	
News (Nat/Intl)	0		0	
Better reception	0		0	
HUMOUR -good laugh/fun	6		6	
VARIETY	1		1	
PARTICIPATE -Competitions/prizes	3		3	
Info -whats on in area	1		1	
MUSIC -specific style	5			
Total comments	59			
More music as %	<b>13.6</b>	Non-music cumulative	34	<b>More talk as % 57.6</b>

The number of responses is greater than the number of observations, due to multiple responses (to maximum of 6).  
 This table is based on the sub-sample '31-55' containing 97 observations and defined by the following filter:  
 Age Amongst "31-34 ; 35-39 ; 40-55"