

Kingston-upon-Hull independent local radio licence applications

Questions and responses: White Rose Radio

These are the responses received from White Rose Radio on the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding their application for the Kingston-upon-Hull licence.

1. How would the following terms be defined in the context of the music policies described in the Format: “predominantly” (with reference to AC music) and “greater emphasis” (with reference to the use of the album chart)?

AC will be the single biggest music category, accounting for between a third and two-thirds of White Rose Radio’s music output. We would be happy for a Format requirement that between 35% and 65% of our music output should be AC. Please note that many of the songs and artists that will be included in our other categories may also have an Adult Contemporary “feel” – such as country music from the likes of Alison Krauss, or contemporary easy listening, such as Katie Melua. However, the above percentage would be taken to refer to what might be described as “pure AC” – those songs that do not fall into one of our more “specialist” categories.

It is difficult to quantify in numerical terms what we mean by placing a “greater emphasis” on the album chart when it comes to compiling our current playlist. We do not necessarily mean that there will be more album tracks than singles on the current playlist; rather that the album chart will be foremost in our thought processes when compiling the playlist. This is a policy that has brought us great success at Compass FM: our latest confidential RAJAR figures give Compass FM a 24% weekly reach and average hours of 15.3.

The best way to explain is in terms of what we already do at Compass FM. Whereas potential singles chart placement is always considered when drawing up Lincs FM’s playlist, at Compass FM we endeavour to ensure that successful albums of interest to our target audience are represented on the playlist – even if there is not a single release. Recent playlist songs have included “Spiders Web” by Katie Melua from her Piece by Piece album, two tracks from the debut album by X Factor finalists Journey South and a track from the album of duets by Mark Knopfler and Emmylou Harris. Additionally, single releases that aren’t expected to be hits might also be included on the basis that the album is proving very popular, and download-only releases from major albums may also be playlisted.

We are reluctant to put quotas on the percentage of album tracks, downloads, potential hit singles and probable non-hit singles on our current playlist. However we would be quite willing for a Format requirement for White Rose Radio that there should be at least two non-singles on our 12-song current playlist.

2. **Could you also define the term “fondly-remembered non-hits” in the context of a Format commitment?**

Songs that were not Top 30 hits but that have retained or grown in popularity since their initial release.

3. **Please clarify the methodology used when monitoring the local commercial stations referred to on pages 27 and 28 of the application.**

We recorded a day's output of each of the local stations between 6am and 7pm: Galaxy 105 on Wednesday 9th November 2005, Magic on Tuesday 10th January 2006 and Viking FM on Friday 17th February 2006. The output was then analysed by Jane Hill and Ellie Leech at Lincs FM.

4. **The results of the music analyses conducted in the two consumer surveys are presented through mean scores and percentage of respondents, respectively. Could you please supply these calculations for both sets of responses?**

Both the methodology and the specific question asked were different in each case. Therefore we cannot supply the calculations you request.

In the first survey, five music genres (Chart Pop, Modern AC, Urban, Modern Rock, Classic AC) were tested specifically for “likelihood to listen”. Respondents were asked, “Using the scale of 1 to 9 can you tell me how likely or unlikely would you be to listen to the following list of artists/songs on the radio?” Mean scores were calculated from these responses.

An additional question in the first survey tested some further musical genres by name, with respondents this time being asked: “Which of these eras or types of music would you like to hear more of on the radio?” In this case, results are expressed as percentages as respondents were asked simply to respond to the music genres they wanted to hear more of, rather than give us a numerical scale response to their likelihood to listen.

When it came to the second survey, our research company suggested using the “would like to hear more of” question and methodology for all our music testing. Not only did we wish to test a greater number of genres, but we were interested in probing the question of broadening choice. It was a more active question, if you like. Not, “would you be likely to listen to this music?” but “what kind of music would you actively like to hear more of on the radio?”

The specific question was asked was: “Now I am going to read you a series of artists and songs from a number of music groupings. For each grouping I'd like you to tell me which type you would like to hear more of on the radio.” Again, no numerical scale was used.

The genre choices used in the second survey were informed by the results of the first survey, but a different question was asked. I trust this explains why the music results for the two surveys have been presented differently, and why it would be both impossible and inappropriate to present them as if they were truly comparable.