

## Manchester independent local radio licence applications

# Questions and responses: Masti Radio

*These are the responses received from Masti Radio to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding its application for the Manchester licence.*

### **1. What did your survey research tell you about the extent to which respondents are satisfied with the existing radio stations available to them other than Asian Sound?**

#### *Overview*

Our own specially commissioned research discovered two main issues:

An alarming number of young Asians appear to have already deserted (or never formed the habit of using) the radio medium on at least a weekly basis;

Those Asians who do listen virtually ignore all but a handful of stations in a pattern quite unlike that of the population as a whole.

On the basis that widespread non-consumption is the ultimate indicator of a perceived lack of interest in what is on offer, we interpreted these findings as evidence of general dissatisfaction with existing radio provision in the Manchester area from an Asian point of view. There seemed little point, therefore, in probing satisfaction levels to commercial stations other than Asian Sound because, with the exception of only Galaxy 102 and Key 103, their very small audiences are evidence enough. Even these two exceptions are some way behind Asian Sound Radio despite their more obvious appeal to young adults and a perception that Asian Sound is mainly for 'older' Asians.

#### *Detail*

We were already aware from our own experience, plus a study of the very small sample of Asian Rajar respondents, that less Asians listen to radio for less hours per week in Manchester than the average for the local adult population as a whole. But even we were surprised when the research company carrying out our main study of Asian radio listeners reported they had to talk to 1,156 Asians to find 504 who qualified to take part in the survey by listening to the radio for at least five minutes per week. Even allowing for some people using non-listenership as an excuse to avoid being interviewed, this was a staggering outcome.

It was made all the more vivid by the fact the research fieldworkers were seeking-out a higher proportion of younger than older Asians, not only to reflect the heavy youth bias in the local Asian population, but because we wanted to ensure a robust sub-sample in Masti Radio's primary 15-34 target group for our attitudinal and music/speech preference questions.

This meant the majority of the people approached will have been born and raised in a multi-cultural UK city environment and speak English as a first language, so might reasonably be expected to be more likely than their parents to find a wider range of 'mainstream' (non-Asian) radio stations interesting. But their widespread avoidance of the medium as a whole suggests this is not so, as does the very limited station repertoire of the 43.6% who do listen.

ii). When confronted with forty-five possible choices only six radio stations had ever been heard by more than 10% of the 504 people - all Asian radio listeners - questioned in our main study. Compared with 85.9% who had heard Asian Sound Radio at some point, only 43.5% had ever heard Galaxy 102, making it the top 'mainstream' station, 37.5% had ever heard Key 103, 33.9% BBC Radio 1 and 25.6% the BBC Asian Network (available via digital transmission only). The only other station to top 10% (with 10.3%) was local commercial Oldham licensee 96.2 The Revolution. This is because our fieldwork sample in their area reflected the large proportion of Asians in the local population.

In terms of weekly audiences, compared with Asian Sound's overall 72% (of all Asian adult radio listeners), Galaxy was second with 28.6%, Key third with 23.6% and Radio 1 fourth with 18.3%. BBC Asian Network reached 10.3% of Manchester's Asian radio listeners each week, but no other station, commercial or BBC, local or national attracted more than 4.5% - and most scored less than 3%.

Weekly listening - stations with audiences of 2% or more of Asian radio listeners

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MASTI RADIO RESEARCH STUDY	% Asian Listeners				
	15 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45+	
BBC Radio 1	18.30%	21.30%	19.20%	16.80%	10.70%
BBC Radio 2	3.00%	1.10%	4.10%	4.20%	3.60%
BBC Radio Five Live/Sports Extra	4.20%	2.80%	4.10%	3.20%	8.30%
BBC Asian Network (digital)	10.30%	7.90%	9.60%	10.50%	16.70%
Key 103	23.60%	31.50%	22.60%	15.80%	17.90%
105.4 Century FM	2.20%	1.70%	4.10%	1.10%	1.20%
Asian Sound Radio	72.00%	62.90%	72.60%	77.90%	84.50%
Galaxy 102	28.60%	46.60%	23.30%	22.10%	6.00%
96.2 The Revolution (Oldham)	2.80%	2.20%	5.50%	1.10%	1.20%
107.4 Tower FM (Bolton/Bury)	2.00%	2.80%	0.70%	3.20%	1.20%
Sunrise Radio Yorkshire (103.2 FM + DAB in Bradford area*)	2.60%	2.80%	3.40%	2.10%	1.20%
Sunrise Radio (London and digital)	2.20%	1.70%	2.10%	4.20%	1.20%

Yarr Radio (digital)	2.00%	3.90%	0.70%	-	2.40%
Kiss (digital)	2.60%	5.60%	1.40%	1.10%	-

Full research tables can be found in Confidential Appendix 5

\* Sunrise Radio Yorkshire is audible on DAB in parts of Manchester

Given the apparently large numbers of Asian non-radio listeners encountered by our researchers, the weekly reach equivalents of the above results may be as low as half the percentage values shown. If that is the case Asian Sound would be left with a weekly reach (of all Asian adults), somewhere in the mid-30's percentage range.

Galaxy and Key would be in the low 'teens', Radio 1 around 9%, BBC Asian Network around 5% and all other stations under 2%.

These are the main reasons which led us to draw the conclusion that, from an Asian perspective, the Manchester radio dial is nearly empty rather than nearly full.

**2. It is stated in the application that 83.7% of Asian radio listeners said they would be 'very likely' or 'quite likely' to listen to your proposed new service (p.49). Please provide details of the station description which was presented to respondents.**

Respondents were replying here to the specific question:

"How likely would you be to listen to a new, mainly Asian, radio station in the Greater Manchester area at least once a week?"

As this was the first part of the final question (7) it is also likely respondents will have built up a reasonably detailed impression of how the station might sound through the cumulative effect of earlier statements (mainly in other questions) and our requests for their speech and music preferences with regard to what they might like to hear on our new station. In order of appearance, these are the statements and references to the new station featured in each interview before question 7 which should have helped build an image in the respondent's mind:

"Next year there will be a new commercial FM radio station for Greater Manchester area - and the company I am conducting this survey for, Masti Radio, is proposing it should be a station mainly for the Asian community. So this is your chance to tell us what you'd like to hear!" (statement at the start of the section probing music and speech preferences prior to Question 3)

"Thinking about the types of music you like to listen to, please select the music group you'd most like to hear on the new station, followed by the other song groups you particularly like" (Question 3a)

"Thinking further about the music the new station should play – which of the following options is nearest your ideal balance between Asian and Western music styles" (Question 3c)

“Turning to speech items you might like to hear on a new station mainly for Asians - which of the types of speech on the card do you think it important to include, starting with the most important one” (Question 4a)

“Which of these suggestions is nearest your ideal balance between music and speech for a new Asian station?” (Question 4c)

“In what languages should programmes on the new station be broadcast?” (Question 5)

“What is your religion?” (Question 6a) “And how do you think a new FM station mainly for Asians should reflect religious interest?” (Question 6b)

### Age Targeting v. Survey Sample Composition

It is also important to note we did not feel it necessary to specify that Masti Radio would be aimed at younger Asians because our respondent quota was heavily weighted toward that group, ensuring the survey would reflect their perceptions and feelings. Adopting this approach avoided any need to refer to age at all, something which might have coloured the answers of respondents in different age groups, conflicting with our intention to gather spontaneous views on attitudes and preferences which would allow us to ‘fine-tune’ our proposals - in addition to proving a strong appetite for the idea of a new (mainly) Asian station.

### **3. What evidence can you provide that there is a demand for Masti Radio to "showcase local talent"?**

Masti Radio’s ‘parent’, Sunrise Radio (Yorkshire) has a long history of involvement in both Rochdale and Manchester Melas, major platforms for local talent and this year for the first time we’ve been booked for Bolton Mela as well. We were originally approached by the Asian community in the Manchester area on the strength of our reputation for supporting similar activity in Bradford and surrounding areas. Involvement in Manchester and Rochdale Melas has included hosting activity on the main stage.

So it is a natural progression for us to want to give all sorts of local talent a platform on Masti Radio (over a wide range of skills including business, so not just restricted to the performing arts). This is something we would have done whether or not we had received any external endorsement for the idea, because it’s the kind of positive social contribution our Directors wish to make.

We have received plenty of encouragement for taking this pro-active stance, some of it expressed in letters already provided in our support volumes. Here is an illustrative selection of relevant quotes from those original letters:

“Contact Theatre would support the set up of a radio station aimed at the younger generation – especially the proposal of Masti Radio. We feel as a young people’s theatre strongly about providing opportunities for young

people and for them to know what's happening in their area..... our mission is to make and produce ground-breaking performance by and for young adults (13-30)..... We work with several different media publications and radio stations but feel there is a gap in the market for providing young people, especially from diverse backgrounds a radio station aimed at them” - Punam Ramchurn, Communications Manager, Contact Theatre, Oxford Road, Manchester

“...In our discussion it was good to note that the new service will help young Asian people to become more involved, participate in issues and concerns and at the same time develop skills which can be linked into mainstream opportunities.....” – M.Sarwar, Chief Executive, Multi Asian Arts Centre, Rochdale

“.....Therefore it is a logical extension of our educational programme to support and nurture the next generation of Chinese artists and to empower young Chinese people into viewing themselves as potential creative practitioners..... We feel that your proposal which seeks to empower the young Chinese community through training and work experience opportunities within the radio industry fills an essential need” – Amy Cham, Learning Co-ordinator, Chinese Arts Centre, Thomas Street, Manchester.

“.....Many Asian people particularly the young are in desperate need for an alternative Asian Radio station that represents their listening requirements, that believes in partnership, that is innovative and socially responsible. Masti's programming content meets this need, the focus on enterprise, education and employment is key to improving the image and economic prosperity of the region.....” – Khalid Safulah, Chief Executive, Asian Business Federation

“....The minority youth market has been identified as the fastest growing section of the community and subsequently will become a major influence in establishing how diversity is perceived and valued in the future.....with their considerable experience in terms of bringing quality and choice to the marketplace I am confident that Masti Radio holds the potential to deliver a platform for this and future generations to succeed by working closely with others, like ourselves.....It is evident that there is a significant personality and distinctiveness to this section of the community which is not currently being met by any of the existing radio stations.....Having a radio station which reaches those previously under-served will certainly fill this need and also, more positively, help build a more inclusive and cohesive community.....”  
B C Patel, Editor in Chief, Apna News, Derby Street, Bolton

“.....As a successful business owner in the Manchester area catering for a wide variety of social functions, business events I am aware that our local youth are under-served in a number of ways let alone in terms of radio entertainment.....In studying Masti Radio's proposal I feel that their unique idea of young people engaging with other young people would help not only these youngsters but also me in terms of cost effective advertising as I would

certainly consider Masti Radio for my next marketing push” – Raj Somaiya, Managing Director, Payal Events Management, Manchester.

“...At Manchester Art Gallery we are constantly striving to appeal to a very broad audience, especially those from Asian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and also particularly to young people. We do have several exhibitions and projects coming up which we feel would appeal to these audiences and if you get the license, then I would be very interested to talk to you about joint promotions.....” – Kim Gowlard, Communications Manager, Manchester Art Gallery

“We are interested to hear your plans for a new station in Greater Manchester. Connexions is all about engaging with young people and offering opportunities for a brighter future. Any radio station that intends to do the same has our support and we would be interested in exploring ways to work together” - Martin Bush, Communications Officer, Connexions Greater Manchester.

Additionally, six letters have been received recently which refer in particular to the desirability of our plans to provide such a service, so we have attached them for your reference (prefixed A7 a-f).

Finally, we'd like to add a further dimension to the promotional work in the Greater Manchester area originally mentioned in the Application. Not only has Sunrise/Masti's Events and Marketing Manager (Raj Parmar) organised a host of events, many have featured local dancers, models and singers, a level of involvement which will increase significantly if Masti Radio is awarded this new licence.