

## 3 Radio and audio content

### 3.1 Recent developments in Wales

#### **The local digital multiplex for North West Wales has launched**

In December 2014, the local digital multiplex for North West Wales was launched, broadcasting BBC Radio Cymru, BBC Radio Wales, Capital FM, Smooth Radio, Nation Radio, and Nation Hits from transmitters at Arfon and Conwy to a potential audience of 100,000 listeners.

Due to international frequency constraints, each of the transmitters are on two separate frequencies, with Arfon on 10D and Conwy on 12D. Some car radios may have trouble switching dynamically between the two transmitters; a work-around is for users to set two pre-sets for each of their favourite stations, one for each transmitter.

Further transmitters may be launched in mid-2016 at Gwaenyssgor, Holyhead South Stack, Llandona, Nebo and Penmaen Rhos. These would increase local DAB coverage to almost 70% of the population in North West Wales.

Prior to launch, MuxCo was informed by Global Radio that it did not want both of its local Capital FM services carried on the multiplex. The Capital FM (North Wales Coast) service is carried, but the Capital FM (Caernarfon) service, which broadcasts more programming in Welsh, is not.

#### **Changes in commercial radio broadcasting**

Local commercial station Radio Hafren, which held the local commercial licence for Montgomeryshire, ceased broadcasting on 11 February. There are no current plans to re-advertise the licence.

In April 2015, Heart North Wales ceased broadcasting on the Wrexham, Chester and Liverpool local digital multiplex. Listeners will be able to keep listening to Heart North Wales by tuning to FM or listening online.

Format change requests were approved for five of Town & Country Broadcasting's services in Wales. Radio Pembrokeshire, Radio Carmarthen and Radio Ceredigion can now share up to 12 hours of locally made content between them, and all programmes can be shared between Nation Hits and Bridge FM. The character of the stations is unchanged.

#### **Developments in community radio broadcasting**

In May 2012, as part of its third round of community radio licensing, Ofcom awarded a licence to Radio Beca, to serve the communities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and north Pembrokeshire, providing most of the content in Welsh. Stations are usually required to start within two years of licence award; Radio Beca was granted an extension to this deadline, but has been unable to get its service on air. Ofcom withdrew the licence offer in May 2015.

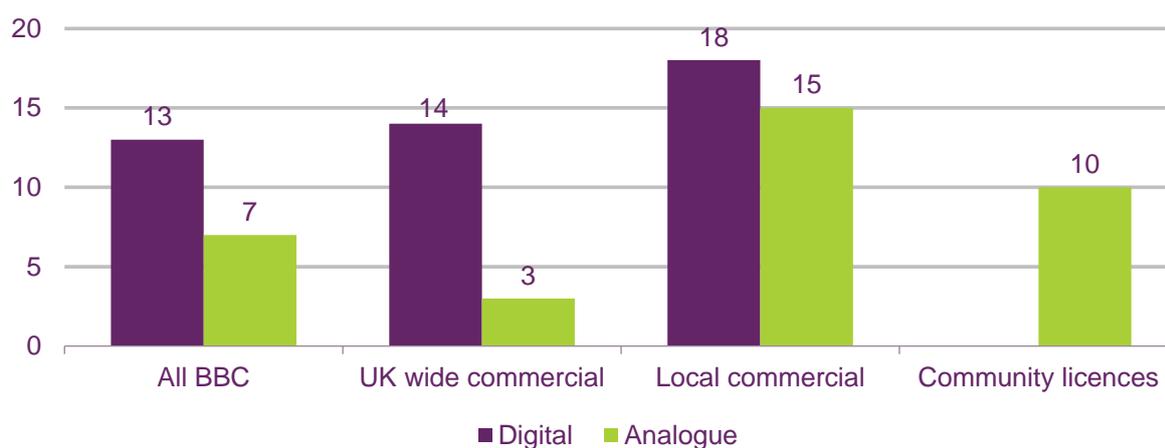
## 3.2 Radio service availability

### There are 45 DAB stations available across Wales

Across the five local commercial digital multiplexes broadcasting in Wales, 45 digital stations are available; many of these are simulcasts of analogue stations within the same area. Local DAB services are available to 63% of households in Wales.

There is one less analogue local commercial station this year, as Radio Hafren ceased broadcasting in February 2015.

**Figure 3.1 Radio station availability in Wales**



Source: Ofcom, April 2015

Note: This chart shows the maximum number of stations available; local variations along with reception issues mean that listeners may not be able to access all of these

## 3.3 DAB coverage

### The BBC's national DAB multiplex reaches nearly nine in ten Welsh households

The BBC's network services broadcast on DAB are available to 89.2% of households, up from 85.9% the previous year, as additional transmitters have been added to the network. Household coverage for the commercial multiplexes is lower in Wales than the UK average. The UK-wide multiplex Digital One covers 64.1% of households in Wales, an increase of 4.1pp year on year. The aggregate of local DAB multiplexes in Wales cover 63.0% of households and 46.7% of major roads.

**Figure 3.2 Household coverage of DAB**



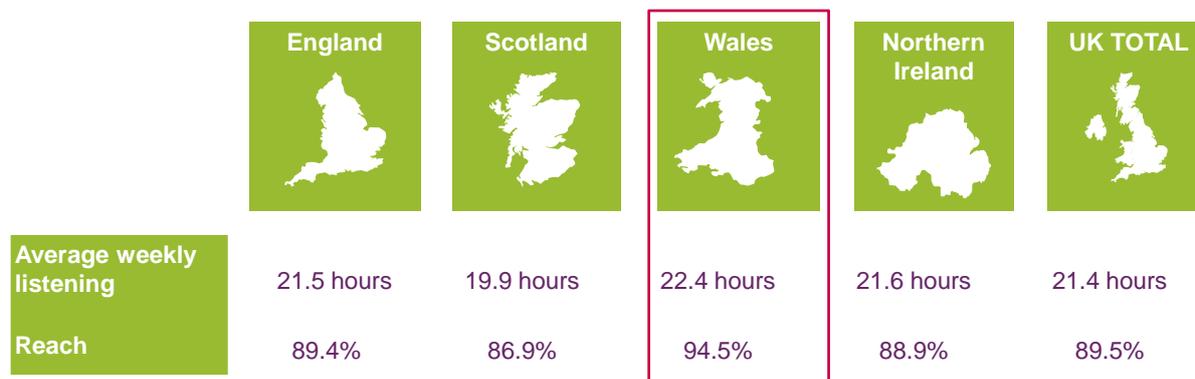
Source: BBC, Arqiva, Ofcom, June 2015  
 Note: BBC figures indicate coverage at the end of 2014

### 3.4 Patterns of listening to audio content

#### More people in Wales listen to radio, and they listen for longer, than the UK as a whole

In 2014, radio services reached 94.5% of the adult population in Wales (Figure 3.3). This was the highest reach of all the nations and 5pp above the UK average. Listeners in Wales also listened to radio for the longest compared to all the other nations, at 22.4 hours per week on average, one hour more than the UK average.

**Figure 3.3 Average weekly reach and listening hours: 2014**



Source: RAJAR, All adults (15+), year ended Q4 2014. Reach is defined as a percentage of the area’s adult population who listen to a station for at least five minutes in the course of an average week.

#### Wales has the highest share of listening to BBC network services

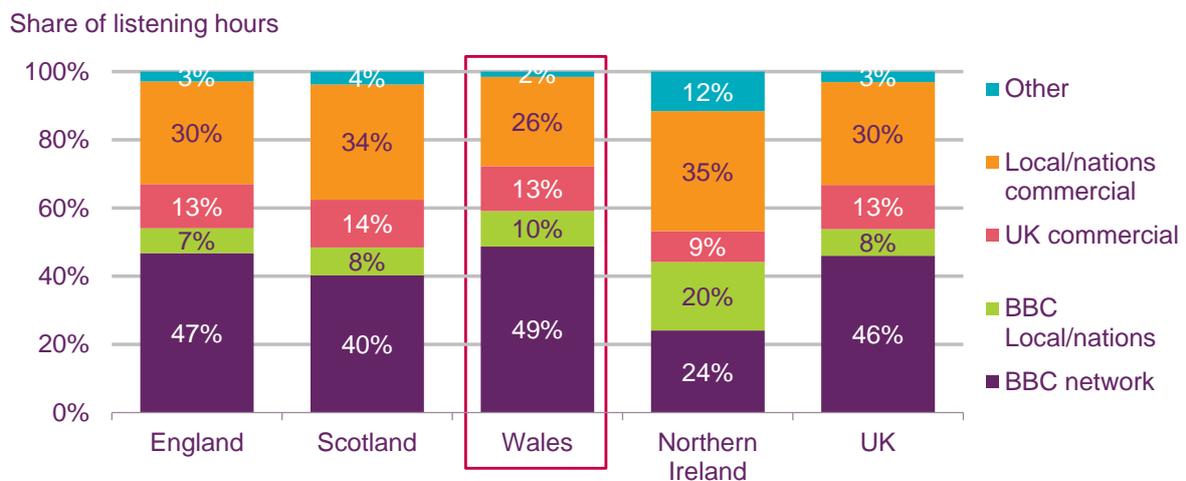
BBC network radio stations represented almost half (49%) of all listening hours in Wales in 2014 (Figure 3.4). These was the highest share of listening for this sector, compared to the

other nations, and more than double the share of listening for BBC network services in Northern Ireland (24%).

Share of listening hours for UK commercial radio stations in Wales was on par with England and the UK average (13%). Of all the UK nations, share of listening hours for local commercial radio was the lowest in Wales, at 26%. Wales also had the lowest share of total commercial radio listening hours.

Listening to the BBC nations' service (BBC Radio Wales or BBC Radio Cymru) accounted for 10% of the share of listening hours for Wales in an average week in 2014. Excepting Northern Ireland, this is higher than the sector's share of listening hours in all of the other nations, and is 2pp higher than the UK average.

**Figure 3.4 Share of listening hours by nation: 2014**



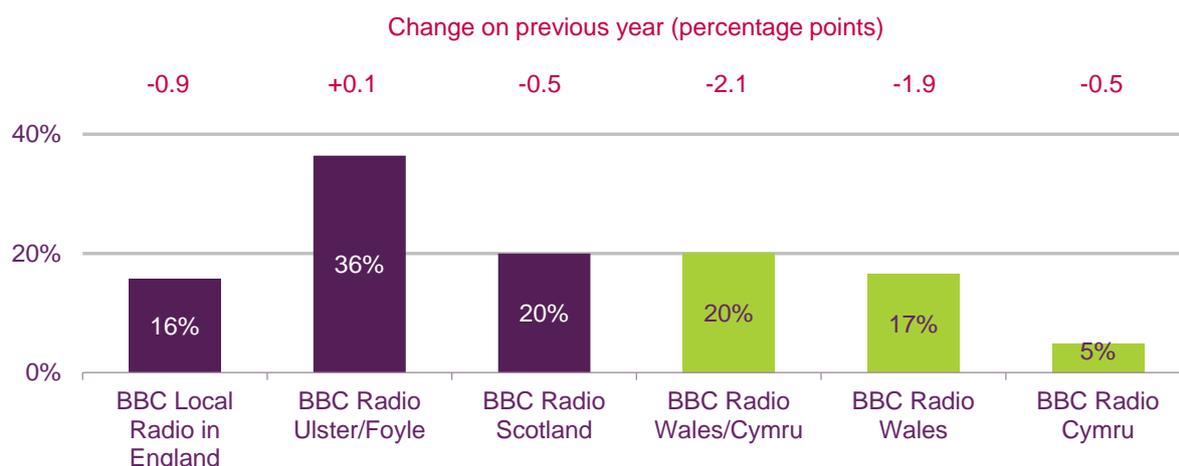
Source: RAJAR, All adults (15+), year ended Q4 2014

**The audience of BBC Radio Wales and BBC Radio Cymru decreased in 2014**

A fifth (20%) of adults listened to BBC Radio Wales or BBC Cymru in an average week during 2014 (Figure 3.5). This was on par with BBC Radio Scotland, higher than BBC Local Radio in England by 4pp, but lower than the weekly reach in BBC Radio Ulster by 16pp.

On an aggregated basis, BBC Radio Wales/Cymru experienced a bigger year-on-year decrease in weekly reach than any of the national and local BBC services in the other UK nations. This was driven by a 1.9pp fall in reach for BBC Radio Wales.

**Figure 3.5 Weekly reach for nations/local BBC services: 2014**



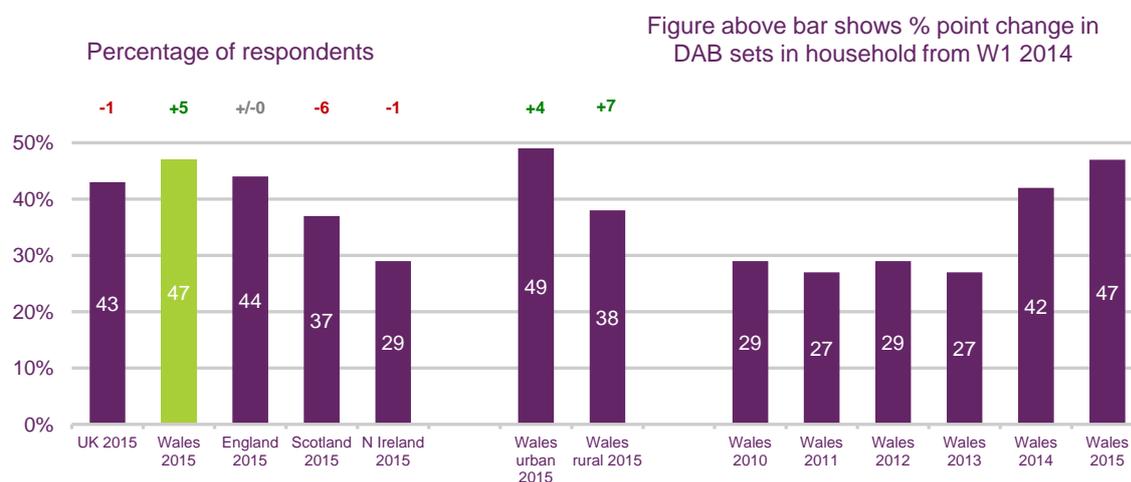
Source: RAJAR, All adults (15+), year ended Q4 2014

### 3.5 Digital radio set ownership and listening

#### Close to half of adults in Wales who listen to radio have a digital radio set

Close to half of adults (47%) who listen to radio say they have at least one DAB radio set at home, unchanged since 2014. Ownership of DAB digital radios in Wales does not differ from the UK average (43%). As was the case in 2014, radio listeners in urban areas of Wales who listen to radio are more likely to own a DAB set (49%) than radio listeners in rural areas (38%).

**Figure 3.6 Ownership of DAB digital radios**



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker, wave 1 2015

Base: Adults aged 16+ who listen to radio (n = 2934 UK, 406 Wales, 1735 England, 386 Scotland, 407 Northern Ireland, 205 Wales urban, 201 Wales rural, 854 Wales 2010, 397 Wales 2011, 405 Wales 2012, 383 Wales 2013, 403 Wales 2014, 406 Wales 2015)

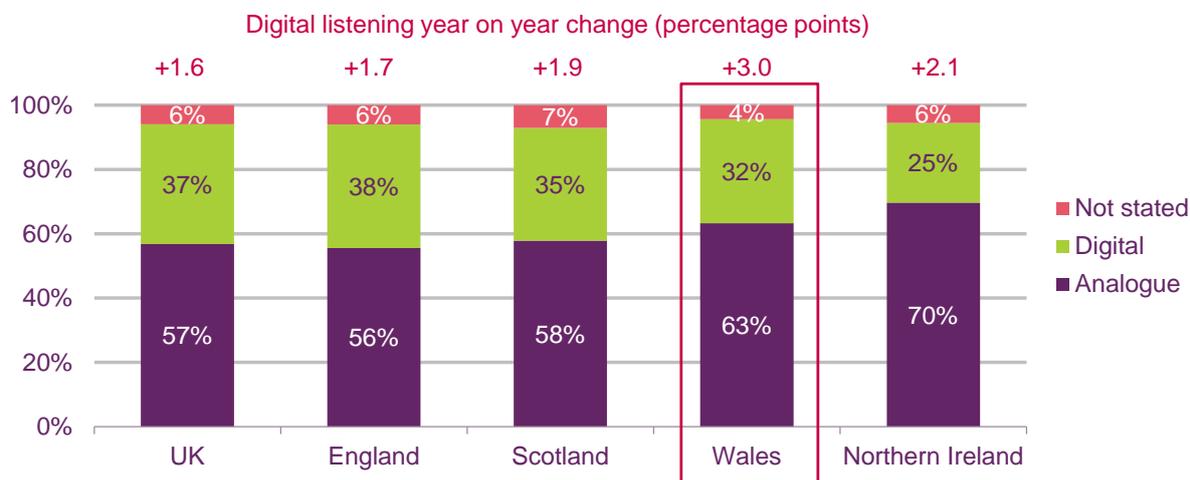
NB. Data in 2011 based on those who listen to radio and have any radio sets in the household that someone listens to in most weeks

QP9. How many DAB sets do you have in your household?

## Year-on-year growth in digital listening was highest in Wales

Excepting Northern Ireland, digital listening represented the smallest share of total listening hours in Wales (32%) and was 5pp below the UK average (Figure 3.7). Year-on-year growth in digital listening was largest in Wales out of all the UK nations, at 3.0pp. Share of digital listening grew in the UK as a whole by 1.6pp.

**Figure 3.7 Share of listening hours via digital and analogue platforms: 2014**



Source: RAJAR, All adults (15+), year ended Q4 2014

NB: 'Digital platforms' refers to radio services that can be accessed through a range of devices. This includes DAB digital radios, digital television, and devices that connect to the internet such as dedicated radios incorporating WiFi connectivity, home PCs, and mobile handsets which can connect to the internet.

There has been steady and continuous growth in the share of listening via digital platforms since 2010 (Figure 3.8). Over the past eight years, digital listening in Wales has increased by 20pp.

**Figure 3.8 Share of listening hours via digital and analogue platforms in Wales: 2007-2014**



Source: RAJAR, All adults, calendar years 2007-2014

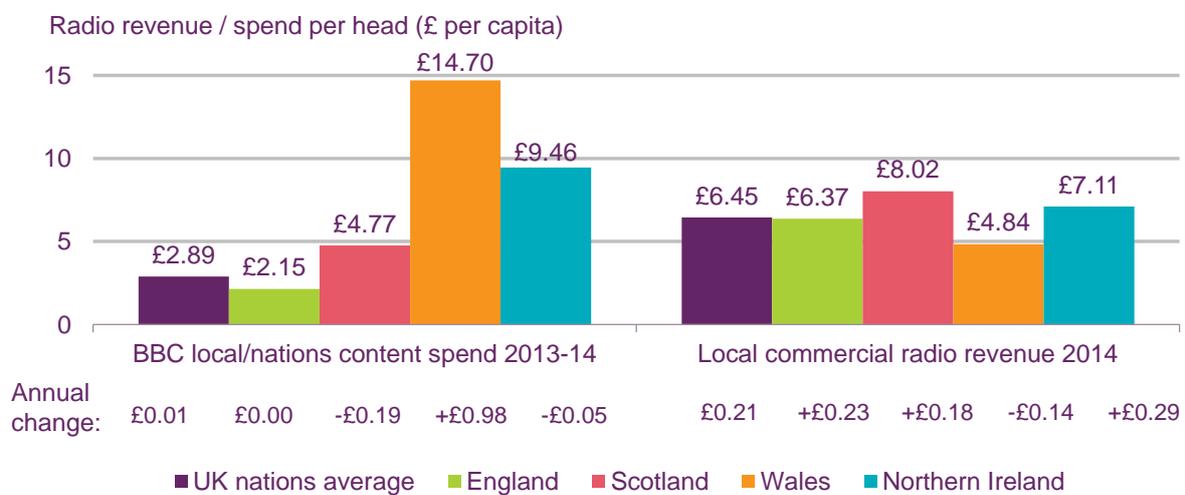
### 3.6 The radio industry

#### Wales was the only nation where local commercial revenues fell year on year

Local commercial radio revenue in Wales shrank by 2.9% to £14.9m in 2014, the only UK nation where revenues declined. Adjusted for population size, revenues in Wales fell by 14p per head. At £4.84, Wales also has the lowest local commercial radio revenue per head of all the UK nations.

In contrast to local commercial revenues, BBC spend on content per head of population for the local/nations stations in Wales is significantly higher than in other UK nations. The BBC's expenditure in Wales also increased considerably year on year, with an additional 98p per head taking spend on content to £14.70 per person.

**Figure 3.9 Local/nations radio spend and revenue per head of population: 2014-15**



Source: Broadcasters

Note: The UK total shows the average for local commercial radio across the four nations and therefore excludes revenues for the UK-wide commercial stations: Classic FM, talkSPORT and Absolute.

