
Community Radio Fund

Guidance notes for emergency funding due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak – Round 3

[Community Radio Fund – guidance notes for emergency funding due to the coronavirus \(Covid-19\) outbreak – Round 3](#) – Welsh translation

GUIDANCE NOTES:

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1. Overview

The Community Radio Fund helps to fund the core costs of running Ofcom-licensed community radio stations. For 2020-21, grants will be provided as emergency cash funding to support stations facing severe financial difficulty due to the Coronavirus outbreak (“Covid-19”).

About this document

These guidance notes are for licensees applying for the Community Radio Fund in 2020-21. They contain information about:

- what the Fund is for;
- changes to the Fund to provide emergency funding;
- eligibility criteria; and
- the application and award process.

This round reflects that an additional £200,000 has been made available on an emergency basis by DCMS for 2020-21, given the ongoing impact of Covid-19, to support community radio stations which are taking steps to tackle loneliness and isolation within their communities.

These guidance notes are for the third funding round in 2020-21. **The window for applications opens on 18 December 2020 and closes at 5pm on 14 January 2021.**

In order for an application to be considered by the Panel, applicants must submit the following documents:

- a copy of the [current application form](#) (any applications submitted on the wrong form will not be considered) with all questions completed (or marked as N/A if they are not applicable), including the declaration. Where the declaration cannot be physically or electronically signed, the information required in the declaration should still be completed;
- a copy of the statutory accounts, as submitted to Companies House. If you do not have to file accounts on Companies House or have not been on air long enough to submit accounts, this **must** be specified, and you should submit an equivalent document; and
- an interim (or final) report on the spending of any grant awarded in 2019-20 (if applicable). **If you have already submitted a report to Ofcom, you should submit an updated report with your application.**

If an applicant has made an application in the previous funding rounds in 2020-21, **they must submit all documents in full again.**

If an applicant fails to provide everything listed above, they will not be considered for grant funding.

As with the previous funding rounds in 2020-21, we will not require a grant report from stations receiving emergency funding. However, we may be in contact with grant recipients with questions about the impact of this funding.

2. Community Radio Fund ('the Fund')

Background

- 2.1 Ofcom has been tasked by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ("DCMS") with administering the Fund. DCMS usually provides up to £400,000 per annum for the Fund (at present confirmed until 2020-21). For further information about Community Radio and the Fund please see [the Fund page](#) on our website.
- 2.2 For 2020-21, DCMS has advised that the Fund should be used to provide emergency funding to support stations that would otherwise be unable to continue operation due to the Coronavirus outbreak ("Covid-19").
- 2.3 The total amount available in Rounds 1 and 2 of 2020-21 was £406,810. In the first funding round, the Panel awarded grants totalling £333,152. The second round awarded grants totalling £73,658. Statements on the award of grants in [Round 1](#) and [Round 2](#) are published on Ofcom's website.
- 2.4 An additional £200,000 has been made available by DCMS for a third funding round in 2020-21, with the same purpose as Rounds 1 and 2 to provide emergency funding to support stations in light of Covid-19.

What is the Fund for?

- 2.5 The Fund has been established to give grants to help fund the core costs of running Ofcom-licensed community radio stations. For 2020-21, grants will be given as emergency cash funding to support stations facing severe financial difficulty due to the Covid-19 outbreak.
- 2.6 Grants will be made as a single lump sum and are to cover a one-year period only for analogue community radio services that are currently broadcasting.¹
- 2.7 Further to our [Note to Broadcasters published on 9 November](#), the application form will ask applicants to demonstrate how they will be able to deliver their Key Commitments from July 2021 onwards, including how a grant would help them to reach this position.
- 2.8 The form will also require applicants to demonstrate how they are taking steps to combat isolation and loneliness within their communities.

What does the Fund NOT support?

- 2.9 Grants cannot be given for the following:

¹ Community Digital Sound Programme (C-DSP) licensees are not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

- Ofcom fees² (fees payable to PPL/PRS and other organisations **can** be paid using a grant from the Fund)
- Costs reimbursed or to be reimbursed by funding from other public authorities or from the private sector
- Interest payments (including service charge payments for finance leases)
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties

How much can we apply for?

- 2.10 **There is a maximum grant amount of £7,500 available in this round.** Any applications requesting greater than £7,500 will not be considered by the Panel.
- 2.11 Applicants should only apply for what is really needed and should consider which payments could be deferred. Because of the expected high demand for funding, those who request lower amounts are more likely to be awarded the full amount requested.
- 2.12 Applicants will need to justify why they require the grant amount that they have applied for, and explain what they would do if they do not receive the total amount of funding requested.

Application eligibility criteria

- 2.13 Grants can only be made to analogue community radio licensees (“Licensee”). Stations licensed under The Community Radio (Guernsey) Order 2013 are not eligible for funding, and neither are community digital sound programme service licensees licensed under the Small-scale Radio Multiplex and Community Digital Radio Order 2019. Payment can only be made when a station has launched (and becomes an Ofcom Licensee).
- 2.14 Applicants must be on air by 31 January 2021 for their application to be considered by the Panel. For 2020-21, applicants can apply even if they are nearing their licence end date. However, where the licence expires before 31 August 2021, the licence holding company **must** have submitted an extension application to Ofcom³.
- 2.15 Applications can only be submitted by, and awarded to, the licence holding company. The grant must be paid to the bank account of the licence holding company.

Licensees that have already applied for a grant in 2020-21

- 2.16 Licensees that applied for a grant in 2020-21 may apply in this round. Applicants should complete the [new form for the third round](#); any applications submitted on the wrong form will not be considered by the Panel.

² It is a requirement of every broadcaster’s licence that they pay their annual licence fees, but Ofcom understands that some licensees will not be able to pay their fees on time. For those who cannot pay, we are willing to delay payment and will write to all licensees on this when their invoice is due.

³ If a successful grant recipient has their extension rejected by Ofcom during the grant tenure (and therefore would cease to be a Licensee), Ofcom may require repayment of the grant.

- 2.17 Licensees that did not receive a grant in the first or second round in 2020-21 should review the statements on the award of grants in [Round 1](#) and [Round 2](#). If you have further queries relating to an application from the second round, these should be sent to the Community Radio Fund team by email **as soon as possible**. Queries received close to or on the closing date may not be responded to until after the round has closed.
- 2.18 Licensees that have received a grant in 2020-21 may apply for additional emergency funding. However, the Panel will prioritise applicants that did not receive a grant in the first two rounds.

Licensees that have received a grant in 2019-20

- 2.19 Licensees that have received a grant in 2019-20 may apply for emergency funding but should note that they will be considered after those that are not in receipt of emergency funding.
- 2.20 If these licensees have already spent their grant as originally planned, or intend to do so, they must submit an interim or final report along with their application by the closing date for applications. The [grant report form](#) is on our website. **An updated interim (or final) report must be submitted as part of this application process even if this has already been submitted to Ofcom, including during a previous round.** If you have not started spending your grant, you should still submit an interim report explaining this.
- 2.21 Unsuccessful applicants from the first or second round should take note of the published statement and amend their application accordingly using the new application form for this round.
- 2.22 If licensees have not finished spending their current grant and wish to repurpose this, **in addition** to applying for emergency funding, they must complete an interim report on the spending of the current grant to date and confirm the amount that they wish to repurpose. The [grant report form](#) is on our website.
- 2.23 Please note that the guidance in the grant report has not been updated to reflect the emergency nature of the fund in 2020-21. Licensees applying for emergency funding who fall into either of the above two categories should simply complete the report and include it alongside their application.
- 2.24 Where licensees do not wish to apply for emergency funding, we will consider repurposing grants or extending the grant tenure for grants awarded in the 2019-20 funding rounds where a station requests this, outside of this emergency fund application process. Such requests should be made directly to Ofcom via email at communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk.

Community stations based in Wales

- 2.25 Applications may be submitted in Welsh. Any application submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than an application submitted in English.

- 2.26 In accordance with the Compliance Notice made under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011⁴, when Ofcom makes decisions about the award of a grant, it must also take in to account the following:
- a) what effects, if any (and whether positive or negative), the awarding of a grant would have on—
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language;
 - b) how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example, by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on—
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language; and
 - c) how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example, by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects on—
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
- 2.27 Accordingly, to assist the Panel’s consideration of applications, any applicants on behalf of stations based in Wales will be asked to provide information in their application about the effects of a grant on the Welsh language, as set out above.

⁴ For more information, please see the [Office of Communications Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

3. The application and award process

Application information

- 3.1 **The deadline for receipt of applications for each funding round is published on the Ofcom website.**
- 3.2 Applications and supporting documentation received after the deadline will **not** be considered. Given the exceptional circumstances, Ofcom is not able to pursue applications that are incomplete and these will not be considered by the Panel. These include:
- applications submitted on an incorrect form (these will not include the full set of questions for the current round);
 - applications where the declaration is not completed;
 - applications that do not include statutory accounts, unless a valid reason is given for the absence of these; and,
 - applications that do not include a grant report, where the applicant has received a grant in 2019-20.

How to apply

- 3.3 Download the [application form](#) from Ofcom’s website. **You must apply using the [application form for Round 3 of the emergency Fund](#).** You may apply in English or Welsh and application forms in both languages are available on the website. Completed applications and any appropriate supporting documentation should reach Ofcom by 5pm on the advertised closing date by email to communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. The application form and supporting documentation should be in Word, RTF or Excel format, rather than PDF. **We cannot accept emails with html attachments and any emails with html files will not be delivered.** Our email system cannot accept emails with attachments larger than 10 Megabytes, so in the event of all documents exceeding this value any supporting documentation should be sent in a separate email. Please contact the Team by email before the day of the deadline if you have any problems.
- 3.4 We cannot accept applications by post.⁵ If this is a problem, you must contact Ofcom by email as soon as possible and no later than 6 January 2021. If you are unable to contact the team by email, please call Ofcom’s Contact Centre on 0300 123 3000 and request a call back from a member of the Broadcast Licensing Team.

⁵ Ofcom’s offices are operating at a reduced capacity because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Completing the application form

- 3.5 As set out above, the application form for Round 3 will ask applicants how they will be able to deliver their Key Commitments from July 2021 onwards, including how a grant would help them to reach this position.
- 3.6 Applicants should also demonstrate how they are taking steps to combat isolation and loneliness within their communities.
- 3.7 Be clear and concise about what the funding will be used for. Provide information on the grant purpose and objectives, and a timeline for grant spend. We also need station budgetary and funding information to help us understand the Licensee's needs. For stations based in Wales, please provide the additional information requested relating to the effects of a grant on the Welsh language.
- 3.8 Each applicant should set out its reasons for applying for a grant and argue its case for funding under questions 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10.
- 3.9 Questions 2.9, 2.13, 2.14 and 2.15 request information on the station's turnover, reserves (restricted and unrestricted), losses attributable to Covid-19, and liabilities (including amounts and due dates).
- 3.10 Applicants **must** provide the company's latest statutory accounts (those required by Companies House), or equivalent accounts (if they do not have to make filings on Companies House). **If you do not have to file accounts on Companies House or have not been on air long enough to submit accounts, this must be specified in question 2.16, and you should submit an equivalent document.** Applicants may provide additional summaries of income and expenditure or their operating budget if they wish.
- 3.11 In the previous funding rounds in 2020-21, the Panel recognised that some stations are part of wider organisations which may be able to offer financial support. If you are part of a wider organisation, you should be explicit about the level of financial support you are receiving from your wider organisation. This will enable the Panel to take this into consideration.
- 3.12 Applicants who received an award in 2019-20 **must** also submit an interim report along with their application by the closing date. **If this has been submitted as part of the previous round, or as part of the usual grant reporting process, an updated report should be submitted with the application documents.**
- 3.13 Additional information submitted may only include the documents set out in paragraph 3.10 and any relevant Fund reports, as listed in the checklist at the end of the form.
- 3.14 No new information can be submitted after the deadline except for a change in the Licensee contact details.
- 3.15 Applicants will receive an automatic response from communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk as confirmation that their application has been submitted. **If you do not receive an automatic response, you must contact Ofcom before the deadline.**

- 3.16 Applications to the Fund will be treated as confidential and will not be published.
- 3.17 If you have any queries, please contact us via email: communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk.

Grant decisions

- 3.18 All eligible applications will be considered by Ofcom’s Community Radio Fund Panel. The Panel’s decisions are final. [Further information about the Panel](#) is on our website.
- 3.19 We will notify Licensees of the outcome of the application award round by email. Notification will be to the contact given on the application form.
- 3.20 The Panel will announce the number of applicants, number of grants awarded, total amount of funding awarded, and average amount of grant. Details will be published on Ofcom’s website.

What happens next?

- 3.21 A grant is subject to the Licensee signing a Community Radio Fund Grant Agreement (“Agreement”) which will be sent **by email** to the licensee along with a request for bank details. The Agreement will confirm that the Licensee accepts the grant on the basis that it will be for the purpose described in the Annex to the Agreement, and in accordance with all conditions set out in the Agreement.
- 3.22 We use Adobe Sign to sign the Agreement. The licensee will only need a web browser and an email address to use this. Instructions on how this will work will be set out in the email notifying licensees of the outcome of the application award round. To ensure that someone with the appropriate authority receives the Agreement to sign, we are now requesting information about a director or company secretary in the first page of the application form.
- 3.23 If awarded a grant, the Licensee will be required to use the grant within a specified time (which is set out in the Agreement).
- 3.24 After the completed Agreement and bank details have been returned to the Team, arrangements will be made for the grant to be transferred by BACS to the Licensee’s bank account.
- 3.25 **If you do not sign the Agreement or provide full bank details by 17 March 2021, we may not be able to pay out your grant.**
- 3.26 We will not require a grant report from stations receiving emergency funding. However, we may be in contact with grant recipients with questions about the impact of this funding.
- 3.27 If a grant has not been spent in accordance with the agreed purpose without the prior agreement of Ofcom, or if a Licensee has not complied with other conditions of funding, Ofcom may require repayment of the grant and will not normally consider making a further grant to the Licensee.

Data Protection

- 3.28 We require the information requested in the application form in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see Ofcom's [General Privacy Statement](#) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.