
Community Radio

Six community radio licence awards: May 2020

STATEMENT:

Publication date: 12 May 2020

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1. Overview

This document announces the award of Six community radio licences.

The licences are for stations serving communities in Scotland (in Dunfermline) and England (in Dover, Kent; North Somerset; Croydon, Surrey; and two stations in South-East London).

2. Licence awards

- 2.1 During March 2020, Ofcom made decisions to award six community radio licences. The licences are for stations serving communities in Scotland (in Dunfermline, West Fife) and England (in Dover, Kent; North Somerset; Croydon, Surrey; and two stations in South-East London).
- 2.2 All community radio services must satisfy certain 'characteristics of service' which are specified in legislation – Ofcom was satisfied that each applicant awarded a licence met these 'characteristics of service'. In addition, each application was considered having regard to statutory criteria, the details of which are described below. This statement sets out the key considerations in relation to these criteria which formed the basis of Ofcom's decisions to award the licences. Where applicable, the relevant statutory reference (indicated by the sub-paragraph number) is noted in brackets.

Applicants awarded a licence

- 2.3 Ofcom has made a licence award to each of the following:
- Radio West Fife (Radio West Fife SCIO), Dunfermline and surrounding areas
 - DH1 (Digital Hits Network Limited), North Somerset
 - Dover (Dover Radio CIC), Dover and surrounding areas
 - Select Radio (Select Radio Limited), Dulwich, Lewisham and surrounding areas
 - Rainbow Radio (Rainbow Broadcasting Limited), Forest Hill and surrounding areas
 - Croydon FM (Croydon FM C.I.C), Croydon and surrounding areas
- 2.4 These services will be licensed for a period of five years from the date of their launch, on FM.
- 2.5 As required by law, Ofcom was satisfied that the new services would not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any local analogue commercial radio service.

Radio West Fife

- 2.6 Radio West Fife will provide a service to the communities of West Fife which has its main centre of population in Dunfermline. The service aims to focus on underserved audiences through local and specialised programming which will be of interest to the retired and elderly people, the unemployed, young people, students, minority groups and single parents. The applicant has experience in hospital radio and online service delivery. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had demonstrated its experience of running a radio service in the area, and of running a not-for-profit organisation, fund-raising and managing volunteers (1a) while evidence of demand and support for the service was demonstrated via research they had conducted, and extracts from letters and emails expressing support for the proposed station (1d). The applicant has a large number of Trustees with monthly open Trustee meetings where feedback to the station is considered. The group has links

with local organisations, will run surveys and also studio open days to encourage feedback (1f). The Groups' members have experience of recruiting and training volunteers, and some have teaching and training qualifications too. It has a partnership with Fife College for undertaking more formal training and qualifications (1g).

DH1

- 2.7 DH1 will serve the residents and tourists in North Somerset through the provision of programming with wide appeal. The group has FM broadcast and community radio experience. The applicant has a large pool of volunteers who have pledged their support enabling them to already allocate positions within their structure. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a) and provided diverse and extensive evidence of support (1d). They demonstrated that they have pre-existing links and relationships with community-focused businesses in the local area and spoke about how they intend to engage with these organisations to broadcast output which provides social gain to the community (1e). The applicant provided details of the training programmes that they intend to complete and how they will engage and participate with members of the public who want to become involved in the service (1g).

Dover Community Radio

- 2.8 Dover Community Radio will serve the people of Dover and surrounding areas with varied programming to unite and cater to the interest of a wide range of listeners. The applicant has experience of operating an internet service and has existing links within the community. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had the ability to maintain the service (1a). The group demonstrated that its speech content will be tailored specifically to the needs and interests of the local community who are currently underserved by other local media outlets (1b), which will result in the service broadening choice in the local area (1c) and provide local social gain by disseminating important local information (1e). The predominantly volunteer-led applicant demonstrated its track record of providing structured training programmes for new and inexperienced presenters, with particular focus on broadcast skills development to allow participants to contribute to the station's output (1g).

Select Radio

- 2.9 Select Radio will target 16-45 year olds who live, work or study in the areas of Dulwich, Lewisham and the surrounding areas. The applicant has experience of broadcasting, operating an online radio service and working with local organisations to satisfied Ofcom that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a). The applicant proposes to offer programming with wide appeal, whilst supporting locally produced music indicting an ability to cater to the tasks and interests of the target community (1b). It proposes a range of initiatives to provide training, access and support to alleviate social issues locally to deliver social gain (1e). The applicant provided several ways in which they

plan to solicit feedback from both listeners and participants of the service and therefore how it will ensure accountability to its target community (1f).

Rainbow Radio

- 2.10 Rainbow Radio will serve the African migrant community living and working in Forest Hill and the surrounding areas. Established in 2003, the applicant has experience of online, satellite and DAB broadcast demonstrating to Ofcom the ability to maintain the service (1a). The applicant's programming proposals of providing a range of musical genres and speech output in various languages is embedded in research and therefore caters to the tastes and interests of the target community (1b), broadens the range of services available locally and offers distinct content (1c). The applicant provided details of the numerous ways in which it will address the needs of the target community and promote participation in the service to deliver social gain (1e). It also has a well-established and extensive range of feedback channels to ensure the accountability of the service (1f).

Croydon FM

Croydon FM will serve the culturally and ethnically diverse community of Croydon and surrounding areas. The applicant currently operates their service online, while the directors and volunteers have a range of experience including community outreach work and fundraising. Ofcom was satisfied that the applicant had demonstrated its ability to maintain the service (1a). The applicant provided research it had completed which underpins their plans to provide locally oriented programming delivered by members of the community and urban music output giving a clear indication of its ability to cater to the interests of the target community (1b). This provision of a platform for local music talent will broaden range and promote distinct content (1c). The applicant demonstrated evidence of local support (1d) and details of a variety opportunities available to the target audience to engage with the service resulting in the delivery of social gain benefits to the target community (1e).

3. Statutory requirements relating to community radio licensing

- 3.1 The following pages set out the statutory requirements relating to community radio licensing, and details of the licensing process. Further information about these, and detailed information relating to community radio, can be found in Ofcom's [Notes of guidance for community radio licence applicants and licensees](#).
- 3.2 In carrying out its functions, Ofcom is required to have regard to the general duties set out in section 3 of the Communications Act 2003. In addition, under section 85(2)(b) of the Broadcasting Act 1990 ("BA 1990"), it is the duty of Ofcom to do all that it can to secure the provision within the UK of a range and diversity of local radio services.

The characteristics of a community radio service

- 3.3 All community radio licensees must satisfy 'characteristics of service' requirements which are specified in Article 3 of the Community Radio Order 2004. The characteristics of community radio services are:
- that they are local services provided primarily for the good of members of the public, or of communities, and in order to deliver social gain, rather than primarily for commercial reasons or for the financial or other material gain of the individuals involved in providing the service;
 - that the service is intended primarily to serve one or more communities (whether or not it also serves other members of the public);
 - that the person providing the service does not do so in order to make a financial profit by so doing, and uses any profit that is produced in the provision of the service wholly and exclusively for securing or improving the future provision of the service, or for the delivery of social gain to members of the public or the community that the service is intended to serve;
 - that members of the community it is intended to serve are given opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service; and
 - that, in respect of the provision of that service, the person providing the service makes himself accountable to the community that the service is intended to serve.
- 3.4 Article 2 of the Community Radio Order 2004 includes four mandatory "social gain" objectives. "Social gain" means the achievement, in respect of individuals or groups of individuals in the community that the service is intended to serve, or in respect of other members of the public, of the following objectives:
- the provision of sound broadcasting services to individuals who are otherwise underserved by such services;
 - the facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion;

- the provision (whether by means of programmes included in the service or otherwise) of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service; and
- the better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.

3.5 Article 2 also includes a number of other objectives of a social nature which may be considered to represent "social gain".

Matters to which Ofcom shall have regard

3.6 There are seven matters set out in section 105(1) BA 1990 that Ofcom must have regard to when considering whether to grant a community radio licence. In summary these are:

- The ability of each applicant to maintain its proposed service over the licence period (section 105(1)(a)).
- The applicant's ability to cater for the tastes and interests of the target community (section 105(1)(b)).
- The extent to which each applicant would broaden the range of local radio services available in the area, and have a content distinct from those services (section 105(1)(c)).
- The extent to which there is evidence of local demand or support for a proposed service (section 105(1)(d)).
- The extent to which the service would deliver social gain benefits to the public or relevant community (section 105(1)(e)).
- Provisions for making the operator of service accountable to the relevant community (section 105(1)(f)).
- Provisions for allowing access by members of the public or the relevant community to the station facilities, and the provision of training in the use of those facilities (section 105(1)(g)).

3.7 In considering whether, or to whom (and on what conditions), to grant a community radio licence, Ofcom must also have regard to the need to ensure that any service provided under that licence does not prejudice unduly the economic viability of any other local commercial radio service.

3.8 Furthermore, without prejudice to the generality of that economic impact requirement, section 105(4) BA 1990 requires Ofcom to impose conditions to ensure, in effect, that any community radio service is prohibited from taking any relevant income from paid advertising and sponsorship of programmes except in the following respects:

- A 'fixed revenue allowance' totalling £15,000 per financial year of the licensee for such relevant income - this exception applies to any community radio service where that service overlaps with any local commercial radio service serving a potential audience of no more than 150,000 persons who have attained the age of 15 years or older.
- A 'fixed revenue allowance' totalling £15,000 per financial year of the licensee for such relevant income plus a proportion of the total relevant income (specified by Ofcom in

the licence), but which must not exceed 50% of the total relevant income (disregarding the fixed revenue allowance) for the licence in question in that year - this exception applies to all community radio services other than a community radio service referred to in (i) above. It should be noted that a community radio service that overlaps with any local commercial radio service serving a potential audience of no more than 150,000 persons who have attained the age of 15 years or older, which has at any time been varied pursuant to section 106(1A)(e) BA 1990, is also covered by this exception.

- 3.9 For the avoidance of doubt, programme sponsorship includes station or channel sponsorship, and commercial communications.

Process for assessment of applications

- 3.10 The Ofcom Board has delegated the discharge of certain of its functions in relation to television and radio broadcast licensing to one or more senior executives from Ofcom's Content & Media Policy Group. Each of those individuals, on their own or together, have responsibility for deciding on the award of community radio licences.
- 3.11 The decision-makers for these licence awards were Ofcom's Head of Radio & Broadcast Licensing Policy and Ofcom's two Principals, Broadcast Licensing.

May 2020