
Community Radio Fund

Guidance notes

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, broadcasting on AM, FM, or via a C-DSP licence on a digital radio multiplex.

Applicants should read this guidance in full before applying.

About this document

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

- what the Fund is for;
- eligibility criteria; and
- the application and award process.

In 2020-21, grants were provided as emergency cash funding to support stations facing severe financial difficulty due to the Coronavirus outbreak. **For 2021-22, the Fund will return to supporting the core costs of running Ofcom-licensed community radio stations, as set out in this guidance.**

2. Community Radio Fund (“the Fund”)

Background

- 2.1 Ofcom has been tasked by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (“DCMS”) with administering the Fund. For further information about Community Radio and the Fund, including the amount allocated for a particular period, please see [our website](#).
- 2.2 In 2020-21, DCMS funded grants to be provided as emergency cash funding to support stations facing severe financial difficulty due to the coronavirus outbreak. For 2021-22, DCMS has advised that the Fund will return to supporting the core costs of running Ofcom-licensed community radio stations, as set out below.
- 2.3 DCMS has also advised that from 2021-22, Community Digital Sound Programme (“C-DSP”) stations will be eligible for grants, alongside existing analogue community radio stations, if the station is broadcasting on a digital radio multiplex at the date of their application.

What is the Fund for?

- 2.4 The Fund has been established to give grants to help fund the core costs of running Ofcom-licensed community radio stations. These core functions include:
- management
 - fundraising to support the station (e.g. grants, commercial funding)
 - administration
 - financial management & reporting
 - community outreach
 - volunteer organisation and support
- 2.5 Grants will be made as a single lump sum and must be spent within the Relevant Expenditure Period as defined in the Grant Agreement, which is usually 14 months. Grants are for community radio services that are currently broadcasting.

What does the Fund NOT support?

- 2.6 Grants awarded under the Fund cannot be given for the following:
- Capital expenditure/equipment (for the office, studio, transmission etc.)
 - Vehicle costs
 - Volunteer expenses
 - Cost of building repairs, construction or maintenance
 - Programming or marketing costs
 - Utility bills
 - Rent and/or mortgage payments
 - Licence fees or copyright fees (such as PPL/PRS or software fees)
 - Fees payable to Ofcom (including but not limited to application and licence fees)

- Retrospective grants i.e. to cover expenditure already incurred
- Costs associated with launching a radio station
- Costs relating to another licence type held by the licensee i.e. a small-scale digital radio multiplex
- Funding for the repayment of loans
- Company directors' fees
- 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?

- 2.7 There is no limit to how much can be applied for. However, applicants should also take account of the Community Radio Fund Panel's statements on previous rounds. These include a list of previous grants, the average given in the particular round, and 'issues of note arising from the Panel meeting'. The latter includes advice for applicants on what the Community Radio Fund Panel (the "Panel") is looking for as well as common problems with applications.
- 2.8 The statements are on the [Community Radio Fund page](#) of our website under the heading 'previous award of grants' here. Applicants should pay particular attention to statements from 2019-20 or before. Please note that the statements provided for the three rounds of emergency funding in 2020-21 are not relevant given the purpose of the funding during this period was particular to the circumstances of that period.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 Grants can only be made to community radio stations licensed by Ofcom (Stations licensed under The Community Radio (Guernsey) Order 2013 are not eligible for funding).
- 2.11 C-DSP stations, licensed under the Small-scale Radio Multiplex and Community Digital Radio Order 2019, are now eligible for the Fund in addition to stations licensed to broadcast on AM and FM.
- 2.12 Applicant stations must be on air as at the **date of their application** for their application to be considered by the Panel. Payment can only be made to stations that have launched.
- 2.13 For analogue community radio stations, there should be a minimum of fifteen months remaining on the licence from the closing date for applications. If there are less than fifteen months remaining on the licence, the licensee must have submitted an extension application to Ofcom by the closing date. C-DSP licences do not have an end date. In either case, we expect the services to continue to broadcast for the full length of the grant tenure

if an application is successful. Please see the Grant Agreement, [which is published on the Ofcom website](#) and will be sent to successful applicants.

- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 There will normally be two rounds of grant awards in each financial year. Normally, if a Licensee has received a grant for a particular station in one funding round, that station will not be considered for a further grant under another round in the same financial year. The licensee for such a station can apply in the next year and subsequent years. Licensees which have been awarded a grant in a previous funding round must report on the spending of that grant before submitting a new application. The grant report form is on the [Community Radio Fund page](#) of our website.
- 2.16 Joint applications may be submitted by two or more Licensees, for example to co-fund a shared post. However, one Licensee should be nominated to manage the grant and it will be paid to that company (and not split between two or more).

Licensees that hold two or more community radio licences

- 2.17 Some licensees may hold an analogue community radio licence and one or more C-DSP licences, or multiple C-DSP licences. These licensees should only make one application to the Fund but be clear in their application which licence(s) the funding applies to.
- 2.18 In their application, licensees should be very clear about how a prospective grant would be used across the licences they hold. For example, should a grant be applied for to support a fundraiser role across both an analogue community radio licence and a C-DSP licence, the applicant should make clear in the application the benefits that would be afforded across both licensed services and how the role would support both services effectively.
- 2.19 Similarly, because licensees that receive a grant will be required to report on how it has been spent halfway through the grant tenure and after the tenure has finished, these reports would need to evidence how much of a grant has been split across the licences held by an applicant, where relevant, in line with the information provided at the point of application. A grant can only be used for the purpose of meeting costs for which that grant has been awarded, as set out in the Grant Agreement, and cannot be used for any other purposes including costs associated with services launched during the grant tenure.
- 2.20 It is, however, important to reiterate in this section that funding cannot be used to support the launch of a new C-DSP service. This is still the case even where only part of the funding would be used for this purpose and the rest of the funding used in line with the purposes listed above.
- 2.21 A licensee that simulcasts their community radio service using a DSP licence is only eligible to apply for the Fund where the grant relates to their analogue or digital community radio licence. Applications relating to DSP licences that are not C-DSP licences will not be eligible.
- 2.22 If you have specific questions about the restrictions that apply to licensees that hold two or more community radio licences, it is important that you seek clarification from the

Community Radio Fund team before you submit your application, ahead of the closing date, via the contact details set out below.

Community stations based in Wales

- 2.23 In accordance with the Compliance Notice made under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011¹, 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.
- 2.24 Accordingly, to assist the Panel’s consideration of applications, any applicants on behalf of stations based in Wales are asked to provide information in their application about the effects of a grant on the Welsh language, as set out above.
- 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.

¹ The [Notice](#) is available on our website. [More information about Ofcom in Wales](#) is also available.

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.²

How to apply

- 3.3 Download the application form from Ofcom's website. 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.
- 3.4 We recommend that you submit your application 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 before the day of the deadline if you have any problems.
- 3.5 If there is a compelling reason why the applicant cannot submit the application form and/or the supporting documentation by email, you must contact Ofcom at least a week in advance of wishing to submit their application to discuss this and at least a week in advance of any deadline.
- 3.6 To contact the Community Radio Fund team, please call: 0207 981 3002, or email: communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. If you contact us by phone, you will need to leave a voicemail and someone will call you back to discuss this.

Completing the application form

- 3.7 The Panel relies on the application form in order to make decisions about awarding a grant. It is therefore important that the application form is sufficiently detailed so that the Panel can understand the station and the reasons why it is seeking a grant.
- 3.8 You should provide your contact details on the cover page of the form. To ensure that someone with the appropriate authority receives the Grant Agreement to sign, we request

² This is subject to paragraph 3.15 of this guidance.

information about a director or company secretary or in the case of any other organisation the relevant person with authority, in the cover page of the application form.

- 3.9 Questions 2.1-2.3 request your company name and company number (as found on Companies House), where applicable, and the licence number, name and location for the station(s) you wish to benefit from the grant, if awarded. You should enter the **total** grant amount that you are applying for in question 2.4.
- 3.10 In answer to question 2.5, set out the purpose and objectives of each station that you wish to benefit from the grant. The Panel wants to understand what you do, who you serve, and what you have achieved so far and are trying to achieve in your community.
- 3.11 Be clear and concise about what the funding will be used for in question 2.6-2.8. If you are applying for a grant for more than one purpose or station, ensure you are clear about which purpose and/or station your answers relate to. Provide information on the grant purpose and objectives, and a timeline for grant spend. If the funding sought is for staff, a job description(s) and a financial breakdown between salary and employer's on costs (such as employer's national insurance, pension and management fee) should be provided. These questions will be used to define the grant purpose set out in the Grant Agreement.
- 3.12 To illustrate why the grant is needed, applicants should provide details of any significant changes in station circumstances, such as changes to the station's financial position which may not be evident in the most recent published accounts.
- 3.13 An application may be submitted for more than one purpose (details should be included on the same form). If more than one grant purpose is identified, Licensees should indicate the priority of each one by listing them in order of importance. The Panel may make a grant to an applicant to fund more than one purpose, however the relative priority that the Panel attaches to any purpose is entirely at the Panel's discretion.
- 3.14 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 set out above relating to the effects of a grant on the Welsh language.
- 3.15 In considering the applications submitted, the Panel will have regard to the compliance history of Licensees applying for funding. As such, question 2.14 gives the Licensee the opportunity to provide any comment it may have with regard to its history of compliance with the conditions of its broadcast and wireless telegraphy licence(s), as well as its compliance with any conditions attached to previous grants from the Community Radio Fund.
- 3.16 Additional information submitted may only include: job descriptions, person specifications, work plan, operating budget, company accounts (or equivalent), or grant report.
- 3.17 If we have any queries about the information received, we may ask the Licensee for clarification. No new information can be submitted after the deadline other than that requested by Ofcom (except for a change in the Licensee contact details).
- 3.18 Applications to the Fund will be treated as confidential and will not be published.

- 3.19 If you have any queries, please contact us via phone: 0207 981 3002, or email: communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. If you contact us by phone, you will need to leave a voicemail and someone will call you back to discuss your question.

Grant decisions

- 3.20 All the 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.
- 3.21 We will notify Licensees of the outcome of the application award round. Notification will be to the contact given on the application form. General feedback on the reasons why applications were unsuccessful will be published in a statement about the awards.
- 3.22 Decisions on awards will be made public via Ofcom's website. The grant recipient, amount of award and purpose of the grant will be announced.

What happens next?

- 3.23 A grant is subject to the Licensee signing a Community Radio Fund Grant Agreement ("Grant Agreement") which will be sent **by email** (or other means that have been agreed upon with the applicant) to the licensee along with a request for bank details.³ The Grant 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 Grant Agreement, and in accordance with all conditions set out in the Grant Agreement. For information on the responsibilities and other terms of the grant see the template Grant Agreement, which is published on Ofcom's website.
- 3.24 We usually use Adobe Sign to sign the Grant 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.
- 3.25 If awarded a grant, the Licensee will be required to use the grant within a specified time (which is set out in the Grant Agreement).
- 3.26 After the completed Grant Agreement and bank details form have been returned to the Team, arrangements will be made for the grant to be transferred by BACS to the Licensee's bank account.
- 3.27 Grants have to be paid in the financial year in which the award is made.
- 3.28 Licensees that receive a grant will be required to report on how it has been spent halfway through the grant tenure, after the tenure has finished, and (if applying for a further grant within the tenure of the existing grant) with any future application for a grant. If a satisfactory report is not made, Ofcom may require repayment of the grant and will not normally consider making a further grant to a Licensee.

³ We will discuss with postal applicants how to deal with this.

- 3.29 If a grant has not been spent in accordance with the agreed purpose, 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. Subsequent changes to the grant purpose once the Grant Agreement is signed are not permitted.

Additional information

- 3.30 Ofcom expects Licensees to make their community aware of activities supported by the Fund, e.g. by publishing a statement on their website or via on air announcements.
- 3.31 The purpose and scope of grants from the Fund may vary from year to year and these Guidance Notes may be varied accordingly. These Guidance Notes may be subject to change in future. Applicants are advised to check the Ofcom website for the latest version of the Guidance Notes and application form.

Data Protection

- 3.32 We require the information requested in this 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.

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