
Community Radio Fund

End of year report: 2019/20

[Annual report of Community Radio Fund](#) – Welsh overview

Contents

Section

1. Overview	1
2. Community Radio Fund End of Year Report 2019/20	2

Annex

A1. Awards to stations in 2019/20	6
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1. Overview

This document reports on how the Community Radio Fund was administered in 2019/20. Ofcom has been tasked by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with administering a Community Radio Fund. DCMS provides a sum of money each year for the Fund and grants are awarded to Ofcom-licensed community radio stations.

The report sets out how much money was given out as grants, which stations received grants and for what purposes grants were awarded.

2. Community Radio Fund End of Year Report 2019/20

- 2.1 The Community Radio Fund ('the Fund') exists to help community radio licensees and to support core costs incurred in the provision of community radio services.
- 2.2 Ofcom administers the Fund on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The money allocated to the Fund is given out in the form of grants, following a formal application process.
- 2.3 The decisions on grant applications are made by the Community Radio Fund Panel ('the Panel'), which reports to the Ofcom Policy and Management Board.¹
- 2.4 DCMS allocated £400,000 to the Fund for the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. In addition, DCMS allocated a further £30,448 to the Fund for the second round. As a result, £430,448 was available for the year.
- 2.5 The Panel met twice during the year to consider applications for grant awards, in June 2019 and January 2020.

Summary of payments

- 2.6 In the first round, grants totalling £182,236 were awarded to 11 stations.
- 2.7 In the second round, £245,408 worth of grants were awarded to a further 15 stations.
- 2.8 Over the two funding rounds 72 applications were considered, asking for a total of £1,444,814 (£675,182 in the first round and £769,632 in the second round). There were five applicants who applied in both rounds, two of which were successful in the second round.
- 2.9 Grants over the course of the year ranged from £6,830 to £34,320, with an average payment of £16,447.85. The list of individual awards can be found in Annex 1.

Panel priorities

- 2.10 Ofcom publishes a statement from the Panel following each funding round which sets out the awards made, reiterates the Panel's ongoing funding priorities, and makes additional comments and observations.
- 2.11 In the statements, the Panel emphasises that it cannot make grants to all applicant stations as there is a limited amount of money to give out as grants. It considers each application,

¹ Previously the Panel reported to the Ofcom Board. The Ofcom Board reviewed the Delegated Authority Framework in July 2019 and agreed that the Panel will now report to Ofcom's Policy and Management Board.

along with accompanying material, and takes into account the level of need of applicants, as well as the anticipated benefit of the grant.

- 2.12 During the financial year 2019-20 The Panel continued to consider fundraising and promoting long-term sustainability to be critical, core activities. It therefore continued to favour proposals with these aims. Applicants were asked to explain how a grant would help financial sustainability and set out clear financial targets for fundraising posts. The Panel also continued to believe there was scope for collaborative working or joint applications from stations.
- 2.13 Many of the grant requests in 2019/20 were for business development and fundraiser positions. The Panel also funded two positions that would not ordinarily be funded by the Panel; a Chief Operating Officer and a Controller of Community Content and Development. Applicants demonstrated how these roles would help build financial sustainability for the station concerned.
- 2.14 The summary award statements, and additional comments by the Panel, are available via the [Community Radio Fund page](#) on Ofcom's website.

Grant monitoring

- 2.15 The Panel has a reporting procedure in place to check that grant awards are spent as agreed. A grant agreement is put in place between Ofcom and each licensee awarded a grant, and this sets out the terms of the award, including an expenditure period. At the end of the grant expenditure period successful applicants are required to complete a report (the 'grant report') detailing how they spent their Fund grant. In addition, interim grant reports are requested halfway through the relevant expenditure period. The interim reports are to help identify any potential issues arising with the grant spending. If a satisfactory report is not made, the Panel may require repayment of the grant and may consider not making a further grant to a licensee.
- 2.16 In the event that a licensee ceases to hold its broadcasting licence (e.g. by surrender or revocation) while a grant agreement is in place, any unspent grant monies will be required to be repaid in full.
- 2.17 For the first round of funding in 2019/20, the interim reports were required during March 2020, with the final reports due in December 2020. However, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, we have delayed our request for interim reports. A number of reports were provided as part of the application process for the 2020/21 round in May 2020 and are currently being reviewed.
- 2.18 The interim grant reports for the second round of funding in 2019/20 are not due until the end of October 2020, with the final grant reports to be submitted by July 2021. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, some stations requested an extension to their grant tenure when their grant was paid. These extensions were agreed and the reporting dates were amended.

- 2.19 Grant reports were received during the year for grants awarded from the Fund during 2017/18 and 2018/19. Ofcom checks each report carefully and seeks clarification from grant recipients where necessary.
- 2.20 All grant reports received during 2019/20 were satisfactory.
- 2.21 In March 2020, one awardee from a 2018/19 round requested a change in the purpose of their grant to amend the job description of their Business Development Manager to a Community Liaison Manager. The Panel agreed to this temporary change in the exceptional circumstances. Another awardee from 2018/19 requested to repurpose the grant for emergency funding in May 2020. The Panel agreed to this change but hoped that the awardee would still be able to use as much of the grant as possible for the purpose for which it was originally intended.
- 2.22 As part of the application process for 2020/21 grants, an awardee from 2019/20 requested to repurpose their grant for emergency funding. The Panel did not agree to this change but agreed to an extension of the grant tenure.

Community radio sector and future of the Fund

- 2.23 The community radio sector has continued to grow: there were 298 stations broadcasting at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, compared with 283 in 2018/19.
- 2.24 We concluded the final round of analogue community radio licensing in March 2020², following our [update on our stated priorities for Community Radio](#) published in September 2019.
- 2.25 As part of our work on small-scale DAB licensing, community digital sound programme service (C-DSP) licences will start to become available in September 2020, alongside the advertisement for small-scale multiplexes in specific areas. More information about this can be found in the [Radio broadcast update May 2020](#) on our website. Holders of C-DSP licences will be eligible to apply for the Fund and we will publish information about this ahead of the first round in which they are able to apply.
- 2.26 Ofcom's current funding agreement with DCMS has been extended to cover the 2020/21 financial year.

Panel members

- 2.27 The Panel is made up of three members appointed by Ofcom. For 2019/20 these were:
- Wendy Pilmer, the Chairman of the Panel, who is a consultant who works with the world's leading broadcasters in implementing strategy and managing change;

² We have invited applications for prospective community radio services in the town of Northampton with a closing date of 13 July 2020. This is because the existing applicant failed to meet the statutory deadline to submit an application to extend the duration of its licence but stated its desire to continue broadcasting.

Community Radio Fund

- Richard Hilton, who is Senior Finance Business Partner at Business in the Community, a charity and membership organisation that works with companies to improve the positive impact of business on society; and
- Fiona Lennox, an Ofcom employee, who has extensive experience in communications strategy, policy, research and management.

A1. Awards to stations in 2019/20

Round 1

Award	Purpose	Station name	Location
£13,728	Fundraising and Promotions Manager	Awaaz FM	Southampton
£6,830	Business Strategy Manager	BRFM 95.6 FM	Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey
£19,217	Business Development Officer	Burgess Hill Radio	Burgess Hill, Surrey
£12,706	Sales Representative and IT and Broadcast Technical Development	Glastonbury FM	Glastonbury, Somerset
£9,386	Business Manager	Legacy 90.1	Hulme, Manchester
£16,000	Sales and Revenue Executive	Paisley FM	Paisley, Renfrewshire
£18,000	Controller of Community Content and Development*	Radio Newquay	Newquay, Cornwall
£34,320	Chief Operating Officer*	Resonance FM	Central London
£17,130	Business Development Manager	Salford City Radio	Salford, Greater Manchester
£22,919	Fundraising and Sustainability Manager	Sunshine	East Belfast
£12,000	Advertising and Sponsorship Sales Executive	Your FM	Stockport, Greater Manchester
£182,236	Total		

**Applicants demonstrated how these roles, which would not ordinarily be funded by the Panel, would help build financial sustainability for the station concerned.*

Round 2

Award	Purpose	Station name	Location
£16,215	Sustainability and Business Coordinator	Bolton FM	Bolton
£20,000	Grants and Business Development Manager	Bradford Asian Radio	Bradford
£17,160	Commercial Sales & Sponsorship Manager (£8,580) Grant Funding Manager (£8,580)	Canalside's The Thread 102.8 FM	Bollington
£16,480	Business Development Co-ordinator	Cannock Chase Radio	Cannock and Rugeley, Staffordshire
£19,140	Fundraising and Sustainability Manager	Hot Radio 102.8	Poole
£17,500	Funding and Sustainability Officer Salary	Hull Kingston Radio	East Hull
£12,770	Fundraiser	K107 FM	Kirkcaldy, Fife
£19,800	Business and Sustainability Manager	Maritime Radio	Greenwich
£14,977	Station Sustainability Officer	Penistone FM	Penistone, South Yorkshire
£8,500	Salesperson	Radio Verulam	St Albans
£20,568	Funding/Station Manager	SFM 106.9	Sittingbourne
£8,424	Fundraiser & Community Liaison Manager	Sheppey FM	Sheerness, Kent
£17,678	Business Development Manager	Vectis Radio	Newport, Isle of Wight
£16,420	Training Project Development Manager	WCR FM	Wolverhampton
£19,776	Business Development Officer	YO1 Radio	York
£245,408	Total		