

Providing a service in accordance with ‘Key Commitments’, Takeover Radio Children’s Media Trust

Type of case	Broadcast Licence Conditions
Outcome	In Breach
Service	Takeover Radio (Leicester)
Date & time	October 2021
Category	Key Commitments
Summary	The Licensee failed to fulfil the requirements specified in its Key Commitments with regard to the character of service and the delivery of original output. Breach of Licence Conditions 2(1) and 2(4).

Introduction

Takeover Radio (Leicester) is a community radio station providing a service for children and young people in Leicester. The licence for the service is held by Takeover Radio Children’s Media Trust (“Takeover” or “the Licensee”).

Like all other community radio stations, Takeover is required to deliver ‘[Key Commitments](http://static.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/Community/commitments/cr000010.pdf)’ (<http://static.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/Community/commitments/cr000010.pdf>), which form part of its licence. These Commitments set out how the Licensee will serve its target community and deliver social gain (benefits to the target community), and also include a description of the on-air service.

Ofcom received a complaint about the Licensee’s compliance with its Key Commitments. The complaint stated that the Licensee was not complying with its character of service with regards to providing a service for children and young people in Leicester. The complaint also stated that the Licensee was failing to meet its Key Commitment to broadcast a minimum of 11 hours of original output per day and that Takeover was failing to provide training or education for the target community, as required by its Key Commitments.

In order to assess this complaint, Ofcom requested recordings of the output of the service from Monday 18 October and Thursday 21 October 2021, as well as full programme schedules for the week beginning 18 October 2021 and an explanation of how Takeover was meeting its obligations under its Key Commitments, with particular reference to the involvement of the target community in the service and the provision of training and work experience for the target community.

In its written response, the Licensee set out the training courses which it had run during the lockdown period, stating that they “had more than 15 young people in training sessions”, and also provided links to its online training materials. Ofcom is satisfied from this aspect of its response that the Licensee was meeting its Key Commitment to provide “education or training to individuals”.

Having assessed the recordings, associated programme schedule and written response from the Licensee, it appeared that Takeover was not delivering the following Key Commitments:

- “Takeover Radio provides a service for children and young people in Leicester, characterised by the involvement of the target community. It entertains with a mix of popular music from the 21st century, blended with speech and interactive educational programming. It provides training and work experience for young people in Leicester”.
- “The service provides original output for a minimum of 11 hours per day”.

Ofcom considered that this raised potential issues under Conditions 2(1) and 2(4) in Part 2 of the Schedule to Takeover Radio Children’s Media Trust’s licence. These state, respectively:

- “2(1) The Licensee...shall provide the service specified in Part I (b) of the Annex for the remainder of the licence period”;
- “2(4) ...the Licensee shall ensure that the Licensed Service accords with the proposals set out in Part I (b) of the Annex so as to maintain the character of the Licensed Service throughout the licence period”.

We requested comments from the Licensee on how it was complying with the above conditions.

Response

In its response, Takeover did not deny that it was failing to meet its Key Commitment to provide a minimum of 11 hours of original content per day. It set out that:

“Before the lockdown, Takeover was able to keep up with its plan of 11 hours of original content each day. We had regular breakfast, lunch and drive-time show adult presenters, with young people’s shows taking up time over the evenings and weekends...Since people have started back at their main activities, young people and adults, e.g. School, extra-

curricular activities, work, social lives etc, many have found that sadly they do not have a place for Takeover anymore”.

Regarding Takeover’s compliance with its character of service, the Licensee explained that it broadcasts a more pop-based output because this is “what a younger audience generally prefers”. It also talks to young people involved in training courses “about features they would like to hear and promote them by coming up with original ideas for these and help them with planning and presenting them”.

Decision

Reflecting our duties to ensure a diverse range of local radio services, community radio licensees are required to provide the licensed service specified in their Key Commitments. This is a fundamental purpose for which a community licence is granted.

Original Output

In our assessment of the recordings from 18 and 21 October, Ofcom found that the Licensee broadcast three hours of original output on Monday 18 October, and a maximum of five hours of original output on Thursday 21 October.

In the programme schedule which the Licensee provided, it indicated that a further three hours of original output would normally be broadcast as part of the Thursday schedule, but that the presenter was unable to broadcast due to illness. Nonetheless, this additional show would mean that the Licensee was broadcasting eight hours of original output on Thursday 21 October, which is still below its Key Commitment obligation to broadcast eleven hours of original output per day.

We note that many community radio stations have weekly rather than daily original output requirements, but that from the schedule provided, the Licensee was broadcasting at most 24 hours per week of original output, compared to the Key Commitment equivalent of 77 hours per week. We therefore consider that Takeover is not complying with its Key Commitments by broadcasting less than the required eleven hours of original output per day.

Character of Service

As stated above, Ofcom was satisfied that the Licensee is providing training and work experience opportunities for the target community, including through online training courses. As such, we are satisfied that the Licensee is complying with the final line of its character of service, which states that the Licensee “provides training and work experience for young people in Leicester”.

In our assessment of the recordings from 18 and 21 October, we did not find much content of specific appeal to the target community of “children and young people in Leicester”. While there was three hours of content broadcast by presenters from the target community on Thursday 21 October, we found no other content targeting that community. Both the ‘breakfast’ and ‘afternoon’ shows were generic ‘light entertainment’ content, with no specific focus on issues of interest to children and young people, or speech content designed to appeal to that community. We found that significant amounts of the speech content would be inaccessible to children and young people, given frequent references to popular culture from the latter half of the twentieth century, and that there was content broadcast which might be considered inappropriate for the target community. For these reasons, we consider

that Takeover is not complying with its Key Commitment to serve “children and young people in Leicester”.

Conclusion

Ofcom’s Decision is that Takeover Radio Children’s Media Trust is in breach of Licence Conditions 2(1) and 2(4) for failing to comply with the following Key Commitments:

- “Takeover Radio provides a service for children and young people in Leicester, characterised by the involvement of the target community. It entertains with a mix of popular music from the 21st century, blended with speech and interactive educational programming”.
- “The service provides original output for a minimum of 11 hours per day”.

We expect the Licensee to rectify these issues immediately. Ofcom will monitor this service to ensure that Takeover is complying with the Key Commitments.

Breach of Licence Conditions 2(1) and 2(4) of Part 2 of the Schedule to the Community Radio Licence held by Takeover Radio Children’s Media Trust (CR000010BA).