



Providing a service in accordance with ‘Key Commitments’, Youth Community Media

Type of case	Broadcast Licence Conditions
Outcome	In Breach
Service	Radio Wyvern
Date & time	18 to 24 March 2024
Category	Key Commitments
Summary	The Licensee failed to maintain aspects of its character of service specified in its Key Commitments. Breaches of Conditions 2(1) and 2(4).

Introduction

Radio Wyvern is a radio service for young people in Worcester, aged between 11 and 25. The licence for Radio Wyvern is held by Youth Community Media (“Radio Wyvern” or “the Licensee”).

Like other community radio stations, Youth Community Media is required to deliver [‘Key Commitments’](#)

(<https://static.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/Community/commitments/cr000053.pdf>), which form part of its licence. These set out how the station will serve its target community and deliver social gain (community benefits), and also include a description of the on-air programme service.

Ofcom received a complaint about the Licensee’s compliance with its Key Commitments. In order to assess the complaint, Ofcom requested recordings of the output of the service between 18 March and 24 March 2024, as well as a programme schedule for the same week, music logs and an explanation of how the Licensee was meeting its requirements under its Key Commitments.

Having assessed the recordings, associated programme schedule, music logs and written response from the Licensee, it appeared that it was not delivering the following aspect of its Key Commitments:

- Character of service. Radio Wyvern is for young people aged 11-25 in Worcester. It reflects a broad section of youth culture, with output produced for and by local young people. There is an emphasis on educational culture, and the station tackles issues affecting, and of concern to, young people on a daily basis.

Ofcom considered that this raised potential issues under Conditions 2(1) and 2(4) in Part 2 of the Schedule to Youth Community Media'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".

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

Response

The Licensee emphasised that "its comprehensive involvement in educational and youth-focused activities demonstrates Radio Wyvern's dedication to its community" and its Key Commitments.

It submitted that it has various educational partnerships and programmes including "strong ties with the University of Worcester, particularly with the journalism courses". Similarly, Radio Wyvern said that it supports students from a local school who "participate in writing and recording commercials, learning valuable skills in media production" and "provides on-air support to students during exam season, offering advice and guidance on educational pathways" and when results are released. The Licensee explained that a panel of 30 students aged 14 to 17 from three local schools are involved in selecting the music that is played on-air "ensuring that the station's playlist resonates with its young audience", which includes choosing music for the "nostalgia hour" from 9am on weekdays. The Licensee explained that the topics on air "are aligned with the guidance from [the] advisory board" and the board "assists in producing a daily prep sheet, which is distributed to over 400 stations and stations" across the UK and various international regions. It also explained that a show at 3pm focuses "on pop music and social media trends" and music from this show is selected by the advisory board panel. The Licensee considered that it is the only local service that reports and responds to local incidents, for example, recently "the closing of a main road in Worcester". It further explained that a young presenter from the target community presents the breakfast show and had been trained by the station for several years.

The Licensee explained that it is working with the local council's support to construct a sound stage in a local park where local school bands will be able to perform, and it also hosts an annual festival for under 25s in Worcester featuring performances by local bands. Further, Radio Wyvern explained that it collaborates with a local theatre by promoting productions by young drama groups, "fostering an appreciation of the arts among young listeners".

Radio Wyvern said that the local Police and Crime Commissioner addresses young listeners' questions on air, "providing insights into law enforcement and community safety" and that the station provides a "safe space where ex- young offenders learn essential life skills". The station is also "actively involved with the council's fostering program, conducting interviews with agencies to promote fostering" and facilitating outreach activities.

In response to Ofcom's Preliminary View, the Licensee expressed disappointment about the proposed breach outcome and asked Ofcom to reconsider this. Radio Wyvern explained that it recently held a meeting with 17 of its "young participants", who questioned "why no one in Worcester was consulted about what the local youth want" and "why, despite choosing 'light entertainment,' they are being told this is not what they want". It explained that participants "expressed that they are not interested in content about influencers and educational segments". The Licensee further explained that members of the target community "do not wish to be overwhelmed with content that does not interest them".

The Licensee also welcomed assistance from Ofcom regarding changing its character of service, stating that the world "has changed drastically and beyond recognition" since it was drafted. Radio Wyvern highlighted that "young people are not listening to traditional radio, they prefer platforms like Spotify and other streaming services".

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.

Radio Wyvern's character of service states that it is "for young people aged 11-25 in Worcester. It reflects a broad section of youth culture, with output produced for and by local young people". The music broadcast was of appeal to the target community, and was in accordance with the music requirement of the Key Commitments, i.e. "current and recent chart hits, alternative and modern rock, urban, dance and unsigned/local bands". The breakfast show was presented by a young person from the target community, who the Licensee explained had undertaken training at the station and regularly presents the breakfast show.

However, overall, Ofcom found that the service did not "reflect a broad section of youth culture" as required. The majority of the content could not be distinguished from a service for the general population of Worcester, with the exception of the breakfast show which included items about stress relief, celebrity news and popular trends on the social media. The other speech content monitored, included generic 'light entertainment' content with limited specific focus on issues of interest or appeal to young people aged 11 to 25. For example, there were segments reminiscing about popular culture from the 1990s and early 2000s and presenters addressing a general adult audience, which we acknowledge could serve the older half of the target community but would unlikely be of interest to the full range of young listeners specified in the station's character of service. We acknowledge the Licensee's statement that it has consulted local young people and they are not interested in "educational segments" and like 'light entertainment' content. However, the Licensee is required to meet its character of service and these listener reflections appear not to align with the types of content set out in the Key Commitments at present.

The station's character of service also requires output to be produced for, and by, local young people. It appeared that only the weekday breakfast show was produced and presented by a local young person. While we do not expect all presenters to be part of the target community, we would expect all presenters to include in their shows content aimed at the target community, but as set out above, we found that this was not the case.

Radio Wyvern's character of service also states: "There is an emphasis on educational culture, and the station tackles issues affecting, and of concern to, young people on a daily basis". This is both an on-air and off-air requirement.

We acknowledge that off-air, the Licensee is involved with a range of local initiatives that support its target community including educational initiatives and its engagement with its youth listener panel to inform its music playlist. We recognise Radio Wyvern’s statement that it provides relevant content to its target community, including asking questions to the local Police and Crime Commissioner and content about “exam season” and fostering. However, this content was not broadcast during the week monitored. We did not identify daily on-air content “tackling issues affecting, and of concern to, young people” as required by the station’s Key Commitments.

We note that the Licensee has asked Ofcom for assistance with changing its character of service. The Licensee may wish to request a change to its Key Commitments to better align them with the feedback from the target community. Such a request must be approved by Ofcom before a licensee makes changes to its output.

Ofcom’s Decision is therefore that Radio Wyvern is in breach of Licence Conditions 2(1) and 2(4) for failing to comply with the following aspect of its Key Commitments:

- Character of service. Radio Wyvern is for young people aged 11-25 in Worcester. It reflects a broad section of youth culture, with output produced for and by local young people. There is an emphasis on educational culture, and the station tackles issues affecting, and of concern to, young people on a daily basis.

We expect the Licensee to work to rectify this immediately. Ofcom will monitor this service to ensure that Radio Wyvern is complying with its Key Commitments.

Breaches of Licence Conditions 2(1) and 2(4)