

Broadcast and On Demand Bulletin

Issue 519, 31 March 2025



The Weekend Show with Bev and Ros

Type of case	Broadcast Standards
Outcome	In Breach
Service	Radio Winchcombe
Date & time	11 January 2025, 17:08
Category	Offensive language
Summary	The most offensive language was broadcast at a time when children were particularly likely to be listening. In breach of Rule 1.14 of the Broadcasting Code.

Introduction

Radio Winchcombe is a local community radio station broadcasting to Winchcombe and the surrounding areas. The licence for Radio Winchcombe is held by Radio Winchcombe Limited (“Radio Winchcombe” or “the Licensee”).

Ofcom received a complaint about the broadcast of offensive language in the song “Homesick” by Noah Kahan & Sam Fender at approximately 17:08. The track contained one use of the word “fuck”.

We considered this raised potential issues under the following rule of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code (“the Code”):

Rule 1.14: “The most offensive language must not be broadcast...when children are particularly likely to be listening (in the case of radio)...”.

Ofcom therefore requested comments from the Licensee on how the programme complied with this Rule.

Response

The Licensee acknowledged that the broadcast did not comply with the Broadcasting Code and apologised “for the inclusion of this track on the programme and the fact that this contained a word which is in breach of Ofcom’s guidelines on offensive language”.

Radio Winchcombe stated that it makes “every effort” to ensure that broadcast material is compliant with the Code, but that on this occasion, a track was played from a CD from the presenter’s personal collection and the offensive language was not identified prior to broadcast. It said that, given these circumstances, no apology was made on-air.

The Licensee also said the track in question would not be broadcast again. It also stated that it felt that it had “sufficiently robust” compliance measures in place, but that it “will be discussing this again with the Board and other volunteers to see if we can improve further”.

Ofcom prepared a Preliminary View finding the content in breach of Rule 1.14 and provided it to Radio Winchcombe for its comments. The Licensee apologised again and accepted that the programme “clearly broke the Ofcom rules”.

Decision

Reflecting our duties under the Communications Act 2003, Section One of the Code requires that people under eighteen are protected from unsuitable material in programmes.

Ofcom takes account of the audience’s and the broadcaster’s rights to freedom of expression as set out in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights when considering a broadcaster’s compliance with the Code.

Rule 1.14 prohibits the broadcast of the most offensive language on radio when children are particularly likely to be listening.

When considering this case, Ofcom took into account our 2021 research into [Public attitudes towards offensive language on TV and radio](#). This research found that the word “*fuck*” was considered by audiences to be among the most offensive language and required clear and strong contextual justification after the watershed. It also found that audiences consider that, in order to protect children, this word should not be aired on radio at times when children are particularly likely to be listening. This refers to the school run and breakfast time but might include other times.

According to Ofcom’s [Guidance on offensive language on radio](#), radio broadcasters should have particular regard to broadcasting content at the following times: between 06:00 and 09:00 and 15:00 and 19:00 Monday to Friday during term time; and between 06:00 and 19:00 at weekends all year around, and in addition, during the same times from Monday to Fridays during school holidays.

In this case, the broadcast of the word “*fuck*” at 17:08 on a Saturday was a clear example of the most offensive language being broadcast at a time when children were particularly likely to be listening. We took into account the Licensee’s explanation of the circumstances which led to the broadcast of this language and the steps it said it has taken to avoid recurrence. We also noted that no apology was broadcast after the incident.

Ofcom’s Decision is that the programme was in breach of Rule 1.14 of the Code.

Breach of Rule 1.14