

Reference: 2098472

Information Requests
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28 November 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about BBC Local Radio.

We received this request on 31 October 2025 and have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Under the terms of the December 2016 Agreement between the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the BBC, Schedule 2, Section 2 concerning the imposition of the BBC's 'First Operating Licence' provides that:

"In imposing the regulatory conditions in the first operating licence, Ofcom must seek to increase the current requirements on the BBC as a whole to secure the provision of more distinctive output and services. In particular, Ofcom must—

- (a) have a presumption against removing any of the current requirements which would result in the provision of less distinctive output and services;*
- (b) consider the case for increasing the current requirements in areas where the BBC has exceeded those requirements or where this would support the provision of distinctive output and services;*
- (c) consider the case for setting requirements in areas where an improvement in performance would secure the provision of distinctive output and services; and*
- (d) consider the need for the BBC to reflect, represent and serve audiences taking into account the needs of the diverse communities of the United Kingdom's nations and regions".*

I therefore request the following information:

1. All information, data, assessments, reports, analyses, or other evidence relied upon by Ofcom in determining which regulatory conditions were to be included or removed in the first BBC Operating Licence (2017) specifically in relation to BBC Local Radio.

2. In particular, any material which informed Ofcom's assessment of:

a. The hours of broadcasting each day specifically local to - and broadcast from - each local radio area, including consideration of what the BBC Trust had required and the extent to which the BBC had 'exceeded those requirements' at that point.

b. Whether or not a target audience for BBC Local Radio was to be included or removed.

in the context of the statutory requirements quoted above to promote distinctive output and to reflect, represent, and serve diverse UK communities.

If any of the requested information is held only in part, or subject to exemptions, please provide all disclosable material and identify any exemptions relied upon under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If information does not exist in any of the categories, stipulated in 2a or 2b of this request, please provide a nil response. If any fee is required in pursuit of this work, please notify.

Our response

Information within the scope of your request is not readily available and would require a manual search of all documents within our project file containing relevant key words. On an initial search, we have identified over 350 documents which may be within the scope of your request.

Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the “appropriate limit”. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (the “Regulations”), and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour, which equates to 18 hours of time.

We estimate that it would take over 18 hours to search for, locate and extract the information you have requested. You may wish to submit an alternative request, however in view of the nature of your request and the way in which information is held in our project file, we are unable to advise on appropriate ways in which to refine your request to bring it within the cost limit.

For further information, you may wish to refer [here](#) to the documents published as part of our first BBC Operating Licence consultation (including the qualitative research paper linked in the 20 July 2017 update), which set out the background, methodology, and key considerations relevant to this area.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).