

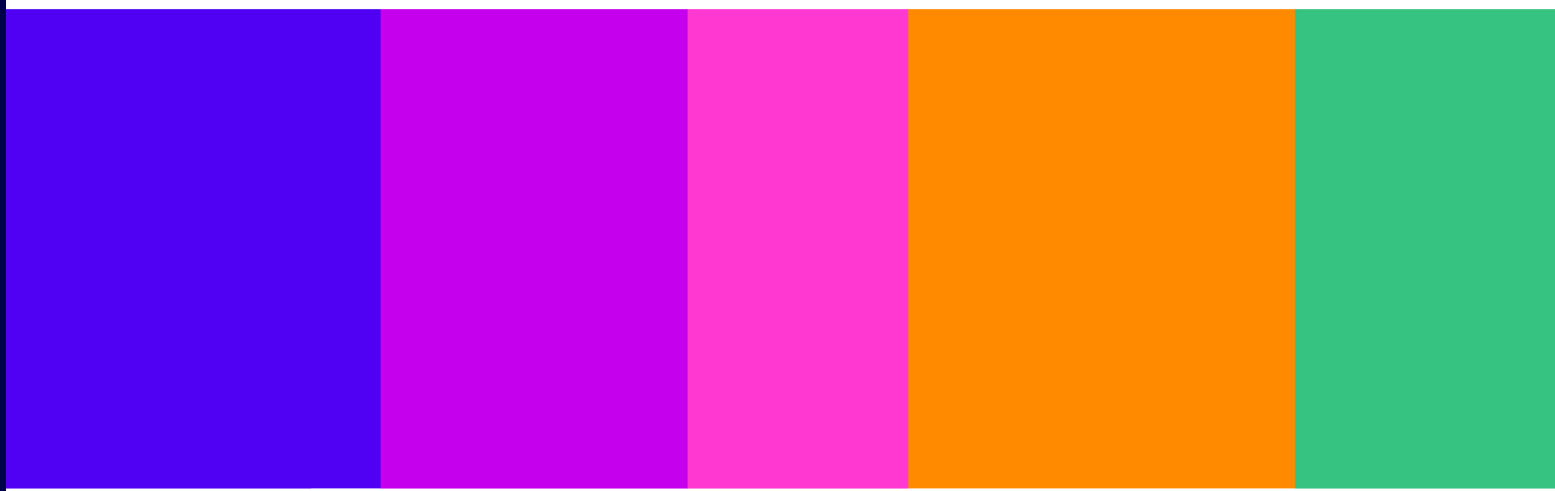
Community Radio

Call for 'expressions of interest' in applying
for community radio licences

Guidance

Published 14 September 2026

Closing date for responses 26 October 2026



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1. Introduction

About this document

This document invites 'expressions of interest' (Eoi) from people and groups that are interested in applying for a community radio licence on either FM or AM. These 'expressions of interest' will form the basis for a further invitation to apply for community radio licences.

The deadline for 'expressions of interest' is 5pm on 26 October 2026.

2. Community Radio 'expressions of interest'

- 2.1 In September this year, we published a statement on Ofcom's 'Licensing Priorities for Broadcast Radio' in which we explained that we planned on offering a further round of community radio licensing (the September Statement). Rather than going straight to invite applications, we decided to firstly conduct an Expression of Interest ("Eoi") exercise by publishing this document alongside the statement.
- 2.2 We now invite Eois for community radio licences, primarily FM, but also AM in the circumstances explained in paragraph 2.9. Prospective applicants should bear in mind the areas of priority explained at paragraph 2.5.
- 2.3 Following the review of the Eois received, we intend to publish an invitation to apply for community radio licences for selected areas. That invitation will only include areas for which we have received an Eoi in response to this publication. Therefore, potential applicants interested in applying for a licence **MUST** submit an Eoi in response to this publication, for the area for which they would like to apply, in order for us to consider inviting applications for that area in the upcoming invitation to apply.
- 2.4 Please note that submission of an Eoi in response to this publication will not constitute an application for a licence. To apply for a licence, applicants will need to complete and submit an application form and the requisite supporting documents and fees in response to the invitation to apply, if their area is included.
- 2.5 We may not be able to invite applications for every area for which we have received an expression of interest for an FM or AM licence. As set out in our September Statement, we intend to prioritise, in this order:
- Areas unserved both by existing community radio services and by the coverage of a SSDAB multiplex¹;
 - Areas where existing analogue community radio exists, but is unserved by a SSDAB multiplex;
 - Areas where a suitable frequency is likely to exist; and
 - Previously surrendered licensed areas.
- 2.6 Additionally, due to internal resourcing constraints and prioritisation as set out in the September Statement if we receive a large number of Eois, we may need to impose a limit on the number of areas for which we will invite applications initially, and then consider advertising the remaining areas in subsequent batches.

¹ In this context (and for the remaining criteria in subsequent bullet points), we will assess 'unserved' from the perspective of whether the proposed transmitter location for the new community radio licence would be within the coverage of either a) an existing community radio licence, and b) within the coverage of a SSDAB multiplex coverage area, or proposed coverage of a SSDAB multiplex which is due to launch when the community radio licence is advertised.

- 2.7 Potential applicants are responsible for ensuring they keep themselves informed of updates that Ofcom publish regarding the invitation to apply. We therefore strongly recommend that anyone submitting an Eol and interested in applying for a licence sign up for Ofcom ‘broadcasting updates’ [here](#). We will not be writing to anyone who submits an Eol with further information.

Information required

- 2.8 An Eol for services intending to apply for an FM or AM licence should include the following information:
- the name of the organisation and its contact details;
 - the area the group wishes to broadcast to (including a description of the target locations and an indicative map showing desired coverage);
 - a short description of the target community; and
 - the proposed location of the transmitter.
- 2.9 For anyone wishing to provide an AM specific community radio service, our statement set out that the Eol must include information to allow Ofcom to consider the merits of an AM community radio licence. This information, in addition to the information listed under paragraph 2.8, must also include:
- A detailed business plan, providing sufficient information to explain how it will manage the financial challenges surrounding AM transmission. This business plan should also include evidence of engagement with technical consultants and/or transmitter sites to enable Ofcom to assess whether the proposal would likely be financially viable.
 - A detailed explanation of why the stakeholder would prefer AM over DAB and/or FM. This should specifically detail the reasons (either technological or topographical, for example) why audiences would be better served using AM technology over other options that may be more reliable and cost-effective.
- 2.10 As explained in our September statement, we will not consider advertising an opportunity for an AM service as an alternative option in either a competition (i.e. two prospective applicants applying for one FM frequency in a specific location) or offering an AM frequency where there is no FM frequency available. We will only consider advertising an opportunity for an AM service if there is sufficient justification provided through this Eol process.
- 2.11 For both FM and AM services, we will consider the merits of each Eol for a particular area before deciding on whether to invite applications for the provision of a service in that particular area.
- 2.12 The submission of an Eol will not be taken as a binding promise on the part of its author to apply for a licence. Equally, any invitation to apply for a community radio licence will not be limited only to those who have submitted an Eol in response to this document, though it will be limited to areas for which we have received an Eol (subject to any required prioritisation, as set out in paragraph 2.5). The submission of an Eol in response to this document will not be taken to be a submission with respect to any future calls for Eols (i.e. it will be considered as part of this licensing round only).

How to respond to this publication

- 2.13 Please send your EoI complete with all relevant documents preferably by email to broadcast.licensing@ofcom.org.uk, or by post to:

Broadcast Licensing
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

- 1.1 The closing-date for the submission of 'expressions of interest' is **5pm on 26 October 2026**.
- 1.2 Responses can be submitted to Ofcom in English or in Welsh. We welcome responses in formats other than print, for example an audio recording or a British Sign Language video. To respond in BSL:
- send us a recording of you signing your response. This should be no longer than 5 minutes. Suitable file formats are DVDs, wmv or QuickTime files; or
 - upload a video of you signing your response directly to YouTube (or another hosting site) and send us the link.
- 1.3 For further information on community radio licensing, please see our website [here](#).
- 1.4 We strongly recommend that interested groups monitor the Ofcom website, or sign up for broadcasting web alerts for further news [here](#).

Data protection

- 1.5 We require the information requested in the Expressions of Interest in order to carry out our licensing duties under the Broadcasting Act 1990, Broadcasting Act 1996 and Communications Act 2003. Please see [Ofcom's General Privacy Statement](#) for further information about how Ofcom handles your personal information and your corresponding rights.