



CHANNEL 4 RADIO TO OFCOM CONSULTATION ON RADIO RESTRICTED SERVICES

Channel 4 is a publicly-owned not-for-profit television broadcaster operating in the UK. It was established in 1982 as a publisher-broadcaster required to commission originated content from the independent production sector. Its main public service channel, Channel 4, is a free-to-air service funded entirely by advertising and sponsorship. It also operates a number of other services, including the digital television channels E4, FilmFour and More4; and an expanding range of online services (at channel4.com), including the broadband service FourDocs.

Channel 4 is also a majority (51%) shareholder in Oneword Radio, a speech radio service providing serialisations of best-selling books read by the greatest actors, as well as drama, comedy, interviews with authors and reviews of the latest film releases. Oneword is available nationally from 6am to midnight everyday on the Digital One DAB digital radio multiplex, and 24 hours a day on Sky, Freeview, ntl cable and on the internet.

Channel 4 has announced its intention to bid for the second DAB national radio multiplex. In June this year, Channel 4 Radio was launched and is available online through www.channel4radio.com.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Ofcom consultation on radio restricted licences ("RSLs") as we support Ofcom's proposals, as follows:

Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to liberalise the restrictions on the issuing of S-RSLs in all areas where a new commercial service is advertised, or where a new commercial or community service is due to be, or has recently been, launched?

The primary reason why applicants for commercial radio licences seek to operate RSLs in the area to be advertised is for research purposes, including to provide evidence, through research of the RSL, of support. Removing the current restriction will enable applicants to continue to use RSLs for research purposes up to the time the application is submitted. This is a helpful amendment.

Q2 What is the most appropriate way for Ofcom to decide between competing short-term RSL applications for broadcasts to cover the same event in the same area at the same time?

We believe that 'drawing lots' remains the fairest way to decide between applicants. In order to deter multiple applications, Ofcom could review the criteria it will apply to determine how 'different' applications must be to qualify as distinct (for example, how many key personnel are entitled to participate in different applications?), and allow a period for the consideration of challenges.

Q3 Do you have any comments on other areas of S-RSL policy?

We welcome Ofcom's review of its policy to make it more flexible.



Q4 Do you agree with the proposal to allow commercial establishments to apply for L-RSL licences?

Yes, as long as priority for the available frequencies is given to use by community radio.

Q5 Do you agree with the proposal to offer L-RSLs for shorter periods of one year or more, up to a five-year maximum?

We see no objection to this.

Q6 Do you have any comments on other areas of L-RSL policy?

We welcome Ofcom's review of its policy to make it more flexible.

Channel 4 Radio
3 July 2006