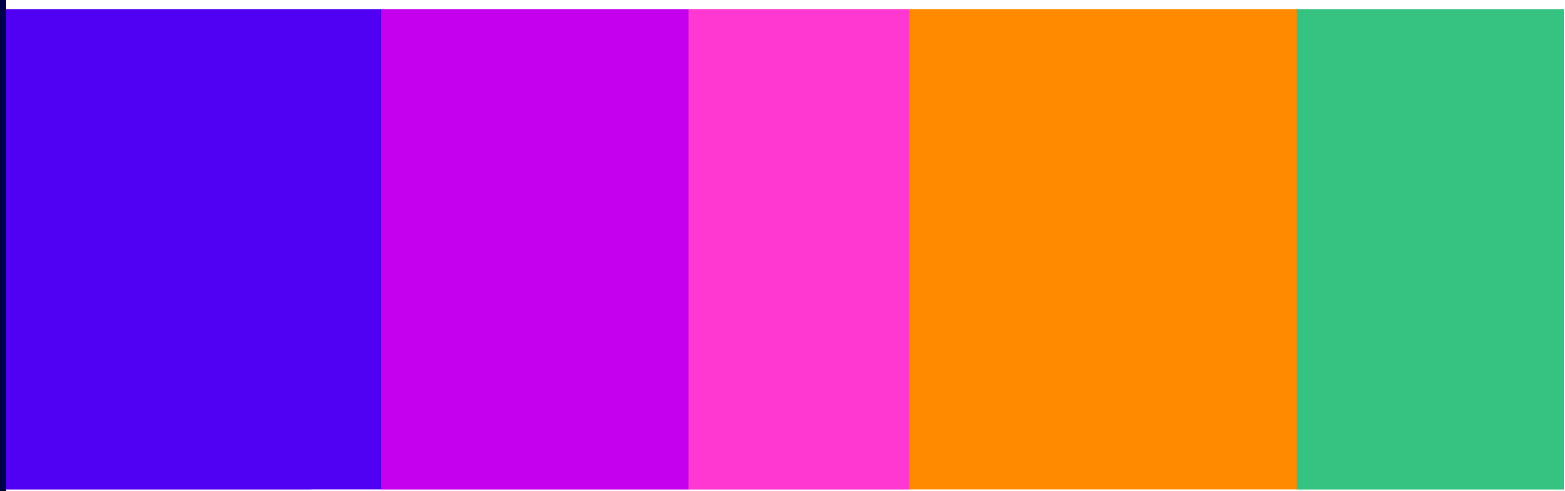


Community Radio Fund

Guidance notes

Revised 04 September 2026 – Issue 23



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1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 The aim of this document is to provide information and guidance to prospective applicants for the Community Radio Fund (“the Fund”). It contains information about:
 - What the Fund is for
 - Eligibility criteria
 - The applications and awards process
- 1.2 Applicants should read this guidance in full before applying.
- 1.3 This document was updated in July 2026 to reflect the broadening of the scope of grants available in light of the [Government’s Local Media Action Plan](#).¹
- 1.4 Any part of these guidance notes (and the relevant application forms) may be updated from time to time. Prospective applicants should therefore check the relevant section of Ofcom’s website at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/community-radio/community-radio-fund> to make sure they are referring to the most recent version.
- 1.5 The Fund helps to support the sustainability and growth of Ofcom-licensed community radio stations, broadcasting on AM, FM, or via a C-DSP licence on a digital radio multiplex.

Background

- 1.6 Ofcom administers the Fund on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (“DCMS”). DCMS provides an annual funding allocation to Ofcom and grants are awarded to Ofcom-licensed community radio stations.
- 1.7 The Fund is intended to support the sustainability of Ofcom-licensed community radio stations by providing awards for core running costs and in some cases equipment.
- 1.8 DCMS has confirmed that the Fund will be allocated £900,000 in 2026-27 and £1,000,000 in financial years 2027/28 and 2028/29 each.
- 1.9 For 2026/27 Ofcom will consider applications and make awards under the following streams of funding:
 - The Sustainability Stream
 - The Equipment Stream
- 1.10 Further details about each of the funding streams can be found in the sections below.
- 1.11 Services may apply to both streams subject to the general eligibility criteria as set out in section 2 which need to be read in conjunction with the bespoke eligibility criteria for each of the funding streams detailed in section 3 (for the Sustainability Stream) and section 4 (for the Equipment Stream).

¹ The guidance notes have been updated to include clarificatory changes on 4 September relating to the specified bank account (see paragraph 2.7) and reporting timeframes (see paragraphs 6.8 to 6.17).

- 1.12 There will typically be one application round, and therefore one set of grant awards, in each financial year, although Ofcom reserves the right to issue funding in two rounds.

Summary of Streams

	EQUIPMENT STREAM	SUSTAINABILITY STREAM
PURPOSE²	Studio and transmission equipment costs. Including costs to improve accessibility.	Job roles or projects which support the sustainability of the station.
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	Analogue Community Radio services who have been on air for 10 or more years. Must be on air at date of application. For analogue community radio stations, there should be a minimum of fifteen months remaining on the licence from the closing date for grant applications. ³	Analogue Community Radio stations and C-DSP stations who are on air at the date of application. For analogue community radio stations, there should be a minimum of fifteen months remaining on the licence from the closing date for grant applications. ⁴
MAXIMUM AWARD	£2,000	£100,000
MUTI-YEAR FUNDING AVAILABLE	No	- In 26/27 a limited number of multi-year awards will be available up to a maximum of three years. - In 27/28 a limited number of multi-year awards will be available up to a maximum of two years. - In 28/29 there will be no multi-year awards available.
JOINT APPLICATIONS BETWEEN LICENSEES AVAILABLE	No	Yes
EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE	- Mixing desks - Video/audio recording equipment - Antenna equipment - Feeder cables - Playout software	- Management of station - Fundraising to support the station (e.g. grants, commercial funding) - Administration - Financial management & reporting

² Where these Guidance Notes refer to a grant “purpose”, where applicable this should also be read to include equipment, if relating to an Equipment Stream grant.

³ If your licence does not have fifteen months remaining, you must apply for an extension prior to submitting your grant application.

⁴ If your licence does not have fifteen months remaining, you must apply for an extension prior to submitting your grant application.

	• Microphones/headphones • Server capacity to store music/recording/audio content • Compression/recording equipment (either physical or software) • Technical or other equipment that supports accessibility needs of stations (e.g. to improve accessibility to the studio and enable disabled people to participate fully in the operation, activities and output of the station.) • Any other technical equipment Ofcom considers appropriate	• Community outreach • Volunteer organisation and support
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2. General eligibility criteria and requirements

- 2.1 The criteria and requirements set out in this section apply to applications under both the Sustainability Stream and the Equipment Stream. Applicants should also refer to section 3 for additional criteria applicable to the Sustainability Stream and section 4 for additional criteria applicable to the Equipment Stream.
- 2.2 Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with Ofcom which sets out the relevant terms, please read the template Grant Agreement on the [Community Radio Fund](#) page for details on this.

Licence holder requirements for both streams

- 2.3 Grants can only be made to community radio stations licensed by Ofcom. Stations licensed under the Community Radio (Guernsey) Order 2013 are not eligible for funding.
- 2.4 For analogue community radio stations, there should be a minimum of fifteen months remaining on the licence from the closing date for grant applications. If there are less than fifteen months remaining on the licence, the licensee must have submitted an extension application to Ofcom by the closing date for grant applications. C-DSP licences do not have an end date.
- 2.5 Applications can only be submitted by, and awarded to, the entity which holds the licence.

Services must be broadcasting

- 2.6 The relevant service(s) must be broadcasting as of the date of application and we expect the service(s) to continue to broadcast for the full length of the relevant expenditure period and/or retention period (as defined in the Grant Agreement), if an application is successful. This means broadcasting on DAB in the case of C-DSP licensees and via FM or AM in the case of community analogue licensees, but ultimately this depends on the licence type and therefore platform(s) in relation to the licence number(s) stated in the Grant Agreement (see paragraphs 2.15 - 2.18 below for guidance to licensees who hold two or more licence types). For the avoidance of doubt, we consider that an online-only service does not constitute “broadcasting”⁵ for these purposes.

Specified bank account

- 2.7 The applicant will be required to provide a specified bank account to hold the funds, if awarded, and this account must be held by the entity which holds the licence. The funds must be held and managed through the specified bank account for the duration of the grant period (the relevant expenditure period specified in the Grant Agreement). The Licensee will be required to promptly provide the Designated Responsible Officer (see below) with such information, records and evidence relating to that account as the DRO may reasonably request to manage the grant and verify that it has been spent in accordance with this Grant

⁵ Section 405 of the Communications Act 2003 states that “broadcast” means broadcast by wireless telegraphy. An online-only service is not so made available.

Agreement. This may include bank statements and other evidence demonstrating that the grant has been spent in accordance with the DRO's authorisation and that any unspent grant remains held in the specified bank account.

Designated responsible officer (DRO)

- 2.8 Each applicant will be required to nominate a DRO (for example, a director, company secretary, trustee or equivalent senior officer) on the application form who would take responsibility for oversight of grant expenditure.
- 2.9 The DRO will need to sign a declaration before we can release the funds:
- acknowledging responsibility for overseeing the expenditure of the grant, including authorising each release of grant funds from the specified bank account (with an appropriate record of that authorisation being retained);
 - confirming that they will only authorise expenditure for the purposes specified in the Grant Agreement;
 - confirming that appropriate records of expenditure and authorisations will be maintained in accordance with the Grant Agreement and provided to Ofcom on request;
 - confirming that they will oversee grant reporting and ensure that reports are submitted in accordance with the Grant Agreement; and
 - confirming that they will notify Ofcom of anything that significantly delays or otherwise affects spending of the grant and of any changes to information the Licensee has provided to Ofcom including information provided as part of the grant application process.

Repeat applications and existing grant holders

- 2.10 Where two funding rounds take place within the same financial year, a station that has received a grant under a particular funding stream in the first round will not be considered for a further grant under the same stream in the second round. The licensee may, however, apply for funding under a different stream during the same financial year and may reapply under the original stream in future financial years.
- 2.11 Licensees who have been awarded a grant for multiple years can not apply for funding under the same stream whilst within the grant's relevant expenditure period.
- 2.12 Licensees who have been awarded a grant in a previous funding round must attach with their application their final grant report on the spending of that previous grant or, if they are still within the relevant expenditure period, a report on the expenditure so far i.e. an interim report. The Licensee must use the grant report form available on the [Community Radio Fund](#) page of our website. Failure to provide the interim or final report may result in the Panel rejecting your application.
- 2.13 If a previous Equipment Stream grant holder wishes to apply for a grant under any stream of the Community Radio Fund, they must provide evidence at the time of application that the station has retained the equipment in accordance with the relevant Grant Agreement. The

required retention period for equipment is five years from the date of relevant Grant Agreement, unless otherwise stated in the relevant Grant Agreement or agreed by Ofcom.

- 2.14 If the applicant cannot demonstrate that they either still hold the equipment or that the equipment was retained for this period, the Licensee may be ineligible for further funding from the Community Radio Fund until the expiry of that retention period.

Licensees that hold two or more community radio licences

- 2.15 Some licensees may hold an analogue community radio licence and one or more C-DSP licences, or multiple C-DSP licences. These licensees should only make one application to the Fund but be clear in their application which licence(s) the funding applies to.
- 2.16 A licensee that simulcasts their community radio service using a DSP licence is only eligible to apply for the Fund where the grant relates to their analogue or digital community radio licence. Applications relating to DSP licences that are not C-DSP licences will not be eligible.
- 2.17 If you have specific questions about the restrictions that apply to licensees that hold two or more community radio licences, it is important that you seek clarification from the Community Radio Fund team before you submit your application, ahead of the closing date, via the contact details set out below.
- 2.18 Where the application relates to more than one community radio service provided under multiple licenses held by the same licensee:
- in its application, the licensee should be very clear about how a prospective grant would be used across the licences it holds. For example, should an application be for a grant to support a fundraiser role across both an analogue community radio licence and a C-DSP licence, the applicant should make clear in the application the benefits that would be afforded across both licensed services and how the role would support both services effectively; and
 - the mandatory reports that a licensee must submit during and after the grant period would need to evidence that the grant has been spent across the licences held by the licensee, in line with the information provided at the point of application.

Using the grant to support the launch of a service

- 2.19 A grant can only be used for the purpose of meeting costs for which that grant has been awarded, as set out in the Grant Agreement, and cannot be used for any other purposes including costs associated with services launched during the grant period.
- 2.20 In particular, it is important to note that funding cannot be used to support the launch of a new C-DSP service even where the applicant already holds a C-DSP licence for that service. This is still the case even where only part of the funding would be used for this purpose.

Community stations based in Wales

- 2.21 In accordance with the [Compliance Notice made under the Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#), when Ofcom makes decisions about the award of a grant, it must also take in to account the following:

- a) what effects, if any (and whether positive or negative), the awarding of a grant would have on:
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language;
 - b) how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example, by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on:
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language; and
 - c) how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example, by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects on:
 - i) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language; and
 - ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
- 2.22 Accordingly, to assist the Panel's consideration of applications, any applicants on behalf of stations based in Wales are asked to provide information in their application about the effects of a grant on the Welsh language, as set out above.
- 2.23 Applications may be submitted in Welsh. Any application submitted in Welsh will be treated no less favourably than an application submitted in English.

Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) requirements

- 2.24 All grants are awarded on the basis that they are a Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 2.25 Applicants must be able to provide written confirmation that receipt of the payment will not exceed the applicant's total MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over the current financial year and the two previous financial years. This means that you must confirm that you have not received more than £315,000 minus the value of the grant applied for in MFA subsidies or other comparable types of subsidies (see section 42(8) of the Subsidy Control Act) from Ofcom or any other public authorities over this financial year and the two preceding financial years.
- 2.26 For further information on this, please refer to the [chapter 7 of the Statutory Guidance for the United Kingdom Subsidy Control Regime](#).

3. The Sustainability Stream

What is the Sustainability Stream?

- 3.1 The Sustainability Stream provides grants for activities that have historically been supported by the Community Radio Fund i.e. the core costs of running Ofcom licensed community radio stations, typically through the funding of posts or projects that promote financial stability and long-term sustainability that focus on:
- Management of station
 - Fundraising to support the station (e.g. grants, commercial funding)
 - Administration
 - Financial management & reporting
 - Community outreach
 - Volunteer organisation and support
- 3.2 The maximum award of any individual grant under the Sustainability Stream is £100,000⁶. However, when considering the amount to apply for, applicants should take account of the Community Radio Fund Panel's statements on previous rounds. These include a list of previous grants, the average given in the particular round, and 'issues of note arising from the Panel meeting'.
- 3.3 The statements are on the [Community Radio Fund page of our website](#) under the heading 'recent award of grants'.
- 3.4 Applicants will need to justify why they require the grant amount that they have applied for and explain what they would do if they do not receive the total amount of funding requested.
- 3.5 In addition, as explained at paragraphs 2.24 – 2.26 above all grants are awarded on the basis that they are a MFA subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and as such, before making the payment, we will require written confirmation that receipt of the payment will not exceed the MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over this and the previous two financial years. You must therefore ensure that the amount sought will keep you within that threshold.
- 3.6 Joint applications may be submitted by two or more Licensees, for example to co-fund a shared post. However, one Licensee should be nominated to manage the grant, and it will be paid to that licensee (and not split between two or more).

Funding period

- 3.7 Applicants can apply for:
- a one-off grant lasting up to 14 months

⁶ For information on Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) requirements and ineligible funding, see paragraphs 2.24, 2.25, 2.26, 3.5, and 4.4 respectively.

- a joint application⁷ lasting up to 14 months; or
- a multi-year bid lasting up to either 2 or 3 years, depending on which financial year they apply in.

Multi-year bid

- 3.8 Applicants may request funding for a multi-year period of up to three years in the 26/27 round and up to two years in the 27/28 round. This intention must be explicitly indicated in the application form, along with a justification for the multi-year request supported by detailed costings and a clear workplan. **There is a limited amount of funding for available for multi-year funding, so requests need to be clearly demonstrated and fully justified.**
- 3.9 Recipients of multi-year awards will be required to submit multiple interim reports throughout the relevant expenditure period in accordance with the reporting schedule set out in the Grant Agreement.

Sustainability Stream application eligibility criteria

- 3.10 Applicants wishing to request funding under the Sustainability Stream should note the general criteria and requirements in section 2 above, in addition to the ones mentioned below.
- 3.11 All community radio stations licensed to broadcast on AM and FM, as well as C-DSP stations, licensed under the Small-scale Radio Multiplex and Community Digital Radio Order 2019, are eligible for grants from the Sustainability Stream.
- 3.12 Applicants can only request for the Sustainability Stream grant for one of the periods set out in paragraph 3.7.
- 3.13 Applicants should take note of the list of items at paragraph 3.14 that cannot be supported by the Sustainability Stream grant.

What does the Sustainability Stream NOT support?

- 3.14 Grants awarded under the Sustainability Stream cannot be applied to the following:
- Capital expenditure
 - Vehicle costs
 - Volunteer expenses
 - Cost of building repairs, construction or maintenance
 - Programming or marketing costs
 - Utility bills
 - Rent and/or mortgage payments
 - Licence fees or copyright fees (such as PPL/PRS or software fees)
 - Fees payable to Ofcom (including but not limited to application and licence fees)

⁷ Joint applications are applications submitted by two or more licensees seeking funding for a shared post or initiative.

- Retrospective grants i.e. to cover expenditure already incurred
- Costs associated with launching a radio station
- Costs relating to services undertaken pursuant to another licence type held by the licensee i.e. a small-scale digital radio multiplex
- Repayment of loans
- Company directors' salaries or costs
- Grant management or administration fees⁸
- Cost of a technical consultant
- Costs reimbursed or to be reimbursed by funding from other public authorities or from the private sector
- Interest payments (including service charge payments for finance leases)
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties

⁸ Management and administration fees are costs associated with the governance, oversight and day-to-day administration of the grant or postholder. This includes management charges, office administration and other organisational overheads.

4. The Equipment Stream

What is the Equipment Stream?

- 4.1 The Equipment Stream is to support analogue community radio stations who have been cumulatively broadcasting for 10 years or more with studio and transmission equipment costs. This includes costs to improve accessibility.
- 4.2 The Equipment Stream is intended to improve accessibility and support the sustainability of analogue community services through a small one-off grant to support costs towards:
- Mixing desks
 - Video/audio recording equipment
 - Antenna equipment
 - Feeder cables
 - Playout software
 - Microphones/headphones
 - Server capacity to store music/recording/audio content
 - Compression/recording equipment (either physical or software)
 - Technical or other equipment that supports accessibility needs of stations (e.g. to assist volunteers'/station managers' access studio to produce station content)
 - Any other technical equipment Ofcom considers appropriate⁹
- 4.3 The maximum award of funding for Equipment Stream is £2,000 per station per award round¹⁰. Applicants may apply for multiple items of equipment, provided the total cost does not exceed £2,000.
- 4.4 In addition, as explained at paragraphs 2.24 – 2.26 above all grants are awarded on the basis that they are a MFA subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and as such, before making the payment, we will require written confirmation that receipt of the payment will not exceed the MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over this and the previous two financial years. You must therefore ensure that the amount sought will keep you within that threshold.

Funding period and retention period

- 4.5 Applicants granted funding under the Equipment Stream will be required to purchase the equipment within three months of the grant being awarded and retain the equipment for at least five years from the date of the relevant Grant Agreement, unless otherwise stated in the relevant Grant Agreement or agreed by Ofcom.

⁹ For example, equipment intended to support accessibility needs, or to enable activities such as recording interviews, producing programme content, and other broadcasting-related activities.

¹⁰ See paragraph 4.2 to 4.11 for eligible and ineligible funding.

Equipment Stream application eligibility criteria

- 4.6 Applicants wishing to request funding under the Equipment Stream should note the general criteria and requirements in section 2 above in addition to the ones mentioned below.
- 4.7 Only services who have been broadcasting on FM or AM for cumulatively 10 years or more at the point of the opening of the application round are eligible to apply for funding. The number of years a service has been broadcasting for is calculated from the “commencement date” as stated in the relevant licence and which also corresponds to the “on air” date shown against each community radio licence on the Ofcom website at [Ofcom | Community Radio Stations](#).
- 4.8 Licensees must provide evidence of three quotes, obtained at most one month before application, for the proposed item(s) for which funding is being sought. Evidence must include supplier emails, links and any other method that demonstrates legitimacy and costs of the proposed item(s).
- 4.9 Licensees who are still within the ‘Retention Period’, as defined in the Grant Agreement, for a previous Equipment Stream award must provide evidence with any new application, or when otherwise requested by Ofcom, to demonstrate that the equipment is still retained by the licensee. If no evidence can be provided or the licensee fails to retain the item for the entire duration of the ‘Retention Period’, the licensee may be ineligible for, further funding from the Community Radio Fund until the expiry of that Retention Period. Ofcom may also seek to demand repayment of the relevant grant previously made.
- 4.10 Applicants should take note of the list of items at paragraph 4.11 that cannot be supported through the Equipment Stream Fund.

What does the Equipment Stream NOT support?

- 4.11 Grants awarded under the Equipment Stream can only be used for equipment and cannot be applied to the following:
- Vehicle costs
 - Volunteer expenses
 - Cost of building repairs, construction or maintenance
 - Programming or marketing costs
 - Utility bills
 - Rent and/or mortgage payments
 - Licence fees or copyright fees (such as PPL/PRS or software fees)
 - Fees payable to Ofcom (including but not limited to application and licence fees)
 - Retrospective grants i.e. to cover expenditure already incurred
 - Costs associated with launching a radio station
 - Costs relating to services undertaken pursuant to another licence type held by the licensee i.e. a small-scale digital radio multiplex

- Repayment of loans
- Company directors' salaries or costs
- Grant management or administration fees¹¹
- Costs of a technical consultant
- Costs reimbursed or to be reimbursed by funding from other public authorities or from the private sector
- Interest payments (including service charge payments for finance leases)
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- Corporation taxes

¹¹ Management and administration fees are costs associated with the governance, oversight and day-to-day administration of the grant or postholder. This includes management charges, office administration and other organisational overheads.

5. The Application Process

Application Information

- 5.1 The deadline for receipt of applications for each funding round is published on the Ofcom website.
- 5.2 Applications and supporting documentation received after the deadline will not be considered (subject to paragraph 5.19 of this guidance).

How to apply

- 5.3 Applicants must ensure that they submit their application using the **most recent version** of the Community Radio Fund application form, published on the Ofcom website. Applications submitted using outdated versions of the form will not be accepted.
- 5.4 Download the application form from Ofcom's website. You may apply in English or Welsh and application forms in both languages are available on the website. Completed applications and any appropriate supporting documentation should reach Ofcom by 5pm on the advertised closing date.
- 5.5 We recommend that you submit your application by email to communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. The application form and supporting documentation should be in Word, RTF or Excel format, rather than PDF. We cannot accept emails with html attachments and any emails with html files will not be delivered. Our email system cannot accept emails with attachments larger than 10 Megabytes, so in the event the application and supporting documents exceed this size, any supporting documentation should be sent in a separate email or emails each of which is below 10Mbs. Please contact the team before the day of the deadline if you have any problems.
- 5.6 If there is a compelling reason why the applicant cannot submit the application form and/or the supporting documentation by email, you must contact Ofcom at least a week in advance of wishing to submit the application to discuss this and at least a week in advance of any deadline.
- 5.7 To contact the Community Radio Fund team, please call: 0207 981 3002, or email: communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. If you contact us by phone, you will need to leave a voicemail and someone will call you back.

Completing the application form

- 5.8 The Panel relies on the application form in order to make decisions about awarding a grant. It is therefore important that the application form is sufficiently detailed so that the Panel can understand the station and the reasons why an applicant is seeking a grant. In this section we provide some additional guidance as to how you should complete the various sections in the application form.
- 5.9 You should provide your contact details on the cover page of the form. To ensure that someone with the appropriate authority receives the Grant Agreement to sign, we request information about a director or company secretary or, in the case of any other organisation, the relevant person with authority, on the cover page of the application form. Each applicant

needs to state their nominated DRO (for example, a director, company secretary, trustee or equivalent senior officer) on the application form who would take responsibility for oversight of grant expenditure. This can be the same person nominated as the application contact or who signs the Grant Agreement (see paragraphs 2.8 – 2.9 above for more information).

- 5.10 In section 2, questions 2.1 - 2.3 of the application form request your company name and company number (as found on Companies House), where applicable, and the licence number(s), name and location for the station(s) you wish to benefit from the grant, if awarded. If submitting a joint application, one Licensee should be nominated as the main contact within the application form. This Licensee will be responsible for managing the grant and should also complete the declaration at paragraph 7 of the application form. Any mandatory documents listed in paragraph 8.1 of the application form must be provided for both Licensees, where applicable.
- 5.11 In section 3, you should enter the total grant amount that you are applying for. If you are applying for a grant for more than one purpose or station, ensure you are clear about which purpose and/or station your answers relate to.
- 5.12 In section 4, question 4.3, applicants should provide details of any current income and expenditure as well as anticipated significant changes in station circumstances, such as changes to the station's financial position which may not be evident in the most recent published accounts.
- 5.13 In considering the applications submitted, the Panel will be provided with and may have regard to the compliance history of Licensees applying for funding over the previous five years, both in respect of its compliance with licence conditions and compliance with prior Ofcom Grant Agreements. For example, failure to submit relevant reports in accordance with a previous Grant Agreement may be taken into account and result in your application being rejected. As such, question 4.8 of the application form gives the Licensee the opportunity to provide any comment it may have with regard to its history of compliance with the conditions of its broadcast and wireless telegraphy licence(s), as well as its compliance with any conditions attached to previous grants from the Community Radio Fund.
- 5.14 In section 5, for the Sustainability Stream, provide information on the grant purpose and objectives for the station(s). The Panel wants to understand what you do, who you serve, what you have achieved so far and what you are trying to achieve in your community. Provide a timeline for the grant spend and if the funding sought is for staff, a job description(s) and a financial breakdown between salary and employer's own costs (such as employer's national insurance and pension) should be provided. These questions will be used to define the grant purpose set out in the Grant Agreement.
- 5.15 An application may be submitted for more than one purpose (details should be included on the same form). If more than one grant purpose is identified, applicants should indicate the priority of each one by listing them in order of importance. The Panel may make a grant to an applicant to fund more than one purpose, however the relative priority that the Panel attaches to any purpose is entirely at the Panel's discretion.
- 5.16 We also need station budgetary and funding information to help us understand the applicant's needs. For stations based in Wales, please provide the additional information set out above relating to the effects of a grant on the Welsh language.

- 5.17 Additional information submitted may only include: job descriptions, person specifications, work plan, operating budget, company accounts (or equivalent), grant report, or evidence of equipment retention.
- 5.18 If we have any queries about the information received, we may ask the applicant for clarification. No new information can be submitted after the deadline other than that requested by Ofcom (except for a change in the applicant's contact details, specified bank account and DRO).
- 5.19 If you have any queries or require reasonable adjustments, please contact us via phone: 0207 981 3002, or email: communityradiofund@ofcom.org.uk. If you contact us by phone, you will need to leave a voicemail and someone will call you back to discuss your question.

Data protection

- 5.20 Any personal data provided for the purposes of your application will be handled in accordance with our General Privacy Statement.
- 5.21 Applications to the Fund will be treated as confidential and will not normally be published. Should we be legally required to publish any information, or otherwise consider it necessary for the performance of our functions, we will normally first explain our intention to disclose the information (including the context in which we intend to disclose it) and give you the opportunity to make representations about the proposed disclosure.

Grant decisions

- 5.22 All the applications will be considered by Ofcom's Community Radio Fund Panel who will take the decision as to whether to award a grant to an applicant and how much to award. The Panel's decisions are final. [Further information about the Panel](#) is on our website.
- 5.23 We will notify applicants of the outcome of the application award round. Notification will be to the contact given on the application form. General feedback on the reasons why applications were unsuccessful will be published in a statement about the awards.
- 5.24 Decisions on awards will be made public via Ofcom's website. The grant recipient, amount of award and purpose of the grant will be announced.

Additional information

- 5.25 The purpose and scope of grants from the Fund may vary from year to year and these Guidance Notes may be varied accordingly. These Guidance Notes may be subject to change in future. Applicants are advised to check the Ofcom website for the latest version of the Guidance Notes and application form.

6. Award Management

Grant Agreement

- 6.1 A grant is subject to a successful applicant
- signing a [Community Radio Fund Grant Agreement \(“Grant Agreement”\)](#);
 - providing a signed declaration from its DRO; and
 - Providing a signed declaration confirming that the receipt of a grant from the Community Radio Fund will not cause the organisation to exceed the MFA threshold of £315,000, calculated over the current and two preceding financial years¹².
- 6.2 The Grant Agreement, template DRO declaration and MFA template declaration will be sent **by email** (or other means that have been agreed upon with the applicant) to the successful applicant for signing.
- 6.3 When signing the Grant Agreement, the applicant must also complete details relating the specified bank account in Annex 3 of the Grant Agreement (we will discuss with applicants requiring reasonable adjustments how to deal with this). In entering into the Grant Agreement, the successful applicant will confirm that it accepts the grant on the basis that it will be for the purpose described in the Grant Agreement, and in accordance with all conditions set out in the Grant Agreement. For information on the responsibilities and other terms of the grant see the template Grant Agreement, which is published on Ofcom’s website.
- 6.4 We usually use Adobe Sign to sign the Grant Agreement and to gather specified bank account details which only requires a web browser and an email address. Instructions on how this will work will be set out in the email notifying successful applicants of the outcome of the application award round.

Grant payment

- 6.5 After the completed Grant Agreement, DRO and MFA declaration has been returned to the team, arrangements will be made for the grant to be transferred by BACS to the grant recipient’s specified bank account.
- 6.6 Grants must be spent by the grant recipient within the relevant expenditure period (which is set out in each individual Grant Agreement). Grants for a period of one year or less must be paid by Ofcom to the grant recipient in the financial year in which the award is made.
- 6.7 For multi-year Sustainability awards the grant will be paid in instalments, subject to the receipt and approval of interim reports. A payment schedule will be agreed by Ofcom and provided to the Licensee at the commencement of the Grant Agreement. Subsequent instalments will only be released once Ofcom has reviewed and approved the relevant interim reports (discussed further below) and any supporting evidence requested, including bank statements, invoices and other supplementary documentation.

¹² Please see paragraphs 2.24 – 2.26 on MFA requirements.

Reporting

Equipment Stream

- 6.8 Applicants granted funding under the Equipment Stream, will be required to provide a proof of purchase report of the equipment within four weeks of the end of the relevant expenditure period.
- 6.9 If the equipment has not been purchased within the relevant expenditure period, the applicant will be required to return the funds to Ofcom. Any underspends will also be required to be returned.
- 6.10 Providing these reports is an important condition of the Grant Agreement. Grant recipients must use the Equipment Stream grant report form available on Ofcom's website and attach relevant proof of purchase.
- 6.11 The grant holder shall submit a non-confidential report to Ofcom, and Ofcom may publish the report on its website in the interests of transparency. Grant recipients must use the non-confidential grant report form available on Ofcom's website.
- 6.12 If any grant has not been spent in accordance with the specified purpose (e.g. for the specified equipment), or if a grant recipient has not otherwise complied with the Grant Agreement, including the requirement to provide reports to Ofcom as set out above, Ofcom may require repayment of the grant and may consider not making a further grant to that recipient for five years from the date of the previous Grant Agreement under which the previous funding was awarded. Changes to the grant purpose/designated equipment once the Grant Agreement is signed are not permitted unless approved in advance by the Panel.

Sustainability Stream

- 6.13 Recipients of the one-off grant lasting up to 14 months and joint application grants lasting up to 14 months will be required as a condition of the Grant Agreement to report on how the funds have been spent halfway through the grant period (i.e. submit an interim report) and within four weeks of the end of the relevant expenditure period.
- 6.14 Recipients of multi-year awards will be required to submit multiple interim reports throughout the grant period in accordance with a reporting schedule set by Ofcom in the Grant Agreement, and a final report within four weeks of the end of the relevant expenditure period.
- 6.15 Providing these reports is an important condition of the Grant Agreement. Grant recipients must use the Sustainability Stream grant report form available on Ofcom's website.
- 6.16 The grant holder must submit a non-confidential final report to Ofcom, and Ofcom may publish the report on its website in the interests of transparency. Grant recipients must use the non-confidential grant report form available on Ofcom's website.
- 6.17 If any grant has not been spent in accordance with the specified purpose (e.g. for the specified equipment), or if a grant recipient has not otherwise complied with the Grant Agreement, including the requirement to provide reports to Ofcom as set out above, Ofcom may require repayment of the grant and may not consider making a further grant to that recipient for five years from the date of the previous Grant Agreement under which

the previous funding was awarded. Changes to the grant purpose once the Grant Agreement is signed are not permitted unless approved in advance by the Panel.

Equipment Stream retention

- 6.18 If a previous Equipment Stream grant holder wishes to apply for a further grant under any stream of the Community Radio Fund, they must provide evidence at the time of application that the station has retained the equipment in accordance with the relevant Grant Agreement. The required retention period for equipment is five years from the date of the relevant Grant Agreement. If the applicant cannot demonstrate that they either still hold the equipment or that the equipment was retained for this period, they may be ineligible for further funding from the Community Radio Fund until the expiry of that Retention Period.

Managing changes during the grant period

- 6.19 If any changes to the Grant Agreement are required, it is the licensee's responsibility to contact Ofcom as soon as possible. Relevant changes may include:
- delays in recruiting an individual;
 - the post being split between two individuals;
 - delays to the project;
 - the need for an extension;
 - the station facing the risk of going off air or experiencing a break in transmission;
 - the relevant post-holder leaving their position;
 - delay in purchasing equipment.

This list is not exhaustive.

The licensee must notify Ofcom so that the panel can determine the appropriate course of action. For example, only the panel can approve changes to the designated purpose or grant extensions to the funding period.

- 6.20 If it is found that a grant recipient has not informed Ofcom of such changes and continues to spend the funds, they may be required to repay part or all of the grant, subject to Ofcom's assessment.