

Consultation response form

Your response

Question	Your response
Question 1: Do you have any comments on Ofcom's proposed Plan of Work 2023/24?	<i>Is this response confidential? – N (delete as appropriate)</i>



We thank Ofcom for the opportunity to respond to your annual plan.

We would like to thank Ofcom for continuing to work with us as the sector body representing Ofcom licensed Community Radio stations, we find our regular meetings positive and a good opportunity to put forward the issues the sector is facing, and build a constructive relationship between the regulator and the stations it regulates.

SSDAB

We welcome the continued rollout of Small-Scale DAB (SSDAB) and want to encourage Ofcom to continue as quickly as possible to enable as many Community Radio stations to use SSDAB as a path to DAB radio. We would also like to see Ofcom produce some analysis and publicly report on the success, impact, and sustainability of SSDAB, both for SSDAB MUXs and also for new services and existing community stations launching onto SSDAB.

Stakeholder, Station & Sector Engagement

We would like to encourage Ofcom to consider how it engages with the sector, individual stations and stakeholders like the UK Community Radio Network, we receive regular feedback from stations that Ofcom can take quite some time to respond to questions or concerns, far in excess of the 5 days advised on the autoresponder, and without any name or personality attached to responses stations feel they are unable to build a positive relationship.

We would like to encourage Ofcom to support and attend our regional and national conferences, an opportunity to meet face to face with stations and other stakeholders.

Volunteer Value

We again would ask Ofcom to consider a review of the volunteer value that stations can draw against as part of their annual report, the current value is in excess of 15 years old and we feel not only currently undervalues our vital volunteers for which the sector should be proud to support and celebrate, but also Ofcom currently values volunteers at less than the minimum wage, which surely cannot be appropriate. We would welcome an opportunity to work in detail on this, and feel our detailed responses already made on the matter go a good distance to a good resolution.

Community Radio Fund

The Community Radio Fund is a vital opportunity for some stations to receive funding to secure their success, we welcome the recent DCMS report (Sustainability of Local Journalism released 25th of January 2023) and the news that the Government is set to increase the Community Radio Fund, we hope that the fund is increased to an appropriate level in consideration with the current and future levels of demand and stations eligible to apply for the fund. We also welcome the Committees recommendation that the fund broadens it's approach to help community radio stations conduct more local journalism.

Our thanks for the continued support and relationship with Ofcom.

UK Community Radio Network

Representing, Supporting and Developing Ofcom licensed Community Radio Stations