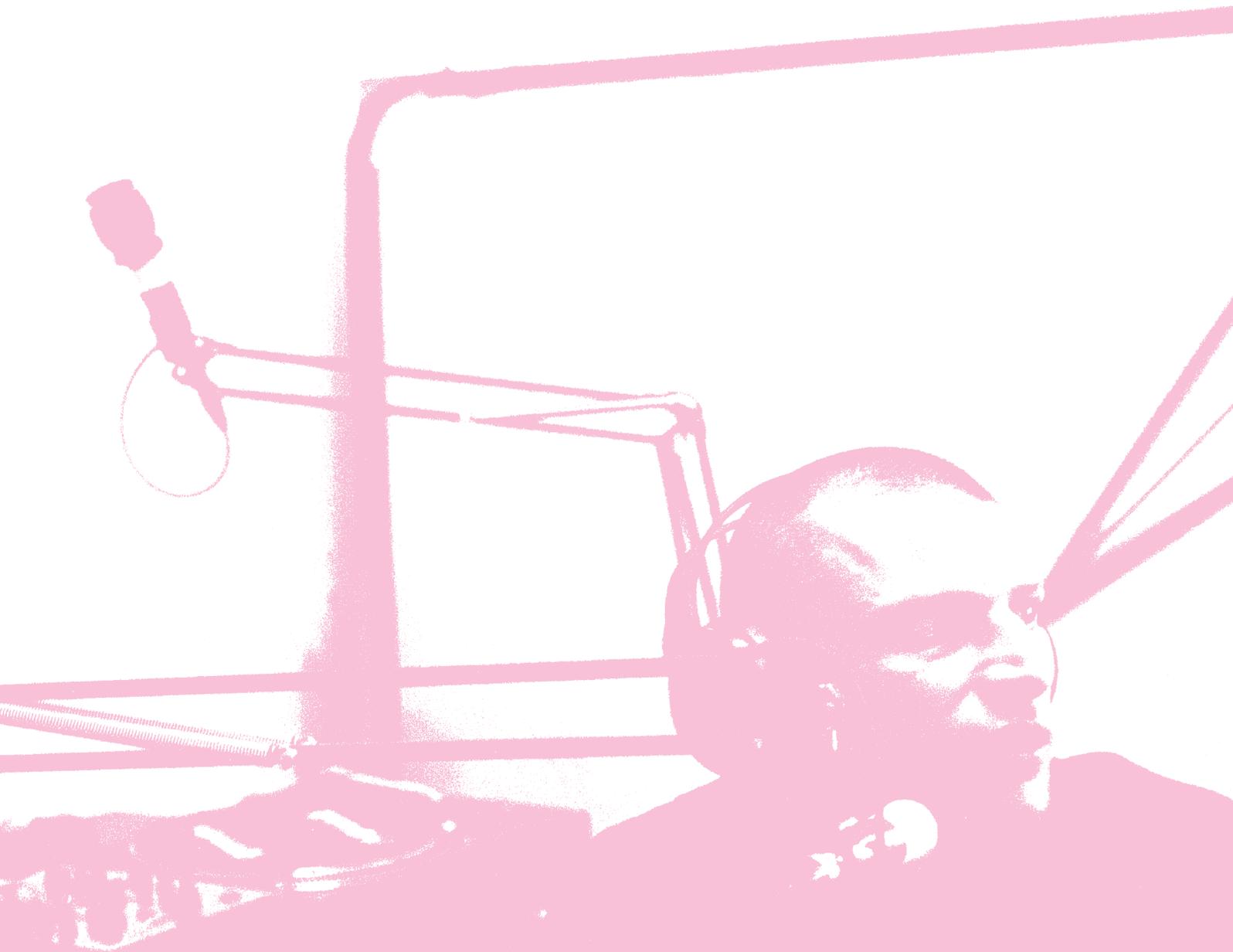


COMMUNITY RADIO TOOLKIT

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Published by Radio Regen

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Go to www.communityradiotoolkit.net to get updates of this book and to discuss its content. The site will be fully operational by the end of 2005 and will also contain FAQ's and 'bright ideas' from community radio people for community radio people.

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Department for Culture, Media and Sport with additional support from the
Community Media Association (Equal)**

FOREWORD

Foreword from James Purnell MP, the Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism

It has been said that community radio “**promises to be the most important cultural development in the UK for many years**”*, so it gives me great pleasure to provide a foreword to this comprehensive guide to setting up and running a community radio station.

We are now seeing the fruition of many years of work undertaken by my Ministerial predecessors, the regulators, groups such as the CMA, and lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the many radio enthusiasts who said that community radio was possible. It is now up to this new wave of broadcasters to make sure that community radio is sustainable. The success of the pilots suggests that it can be, but the road will not always be an easy one. This book should provide an invaluable reference to those wishing to run a community radio station and help ensure that this new tier of radio firmly establishes itself in the UK.

The social benefits of community radio could be substantial. In particular, disadvantaged communities, who are so often not directly catered for by other forms of media, will be given a voice, and in many cases be at the forefront of community radio stations. Opportunities will be there for them to present shows, help with the fundraising, or simply receive training that would otherwise have been difficult to access. The superb work that Radio Regen, and the other pilots, have done is testimony to what can be achieved.

I would like to wish each and every one of you setting out on the path to community radio the very best of luck.



James Purnell, MP

Department for Culture, Media and Sport



*From Anthony Everitt's independent evaluation of the 16 pilot stations, New Voices, www.ofcom.org.uk

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INTRODUCTION

Community radio UK stands proudly at the dawn of a new era. Britain's first long-term, full-time community radio stations have just taken to the air. The breakthrough follows a highly successful series of pilot stations which have been on air since 2002. Two of these were established and run by Radio Regen here in Manchester.

In creating and running these stations, Radio Regen has had many successes. We've also had a few failures. Sometimes we've tried our luck and come up trumps, and sometimes we've fallen on our faces. We've met countless amazing individuals and watched them bond together into great teams. We've seen bursts of joy and floods of tears. And we've learnt lessons. Lots and lots of lessons.

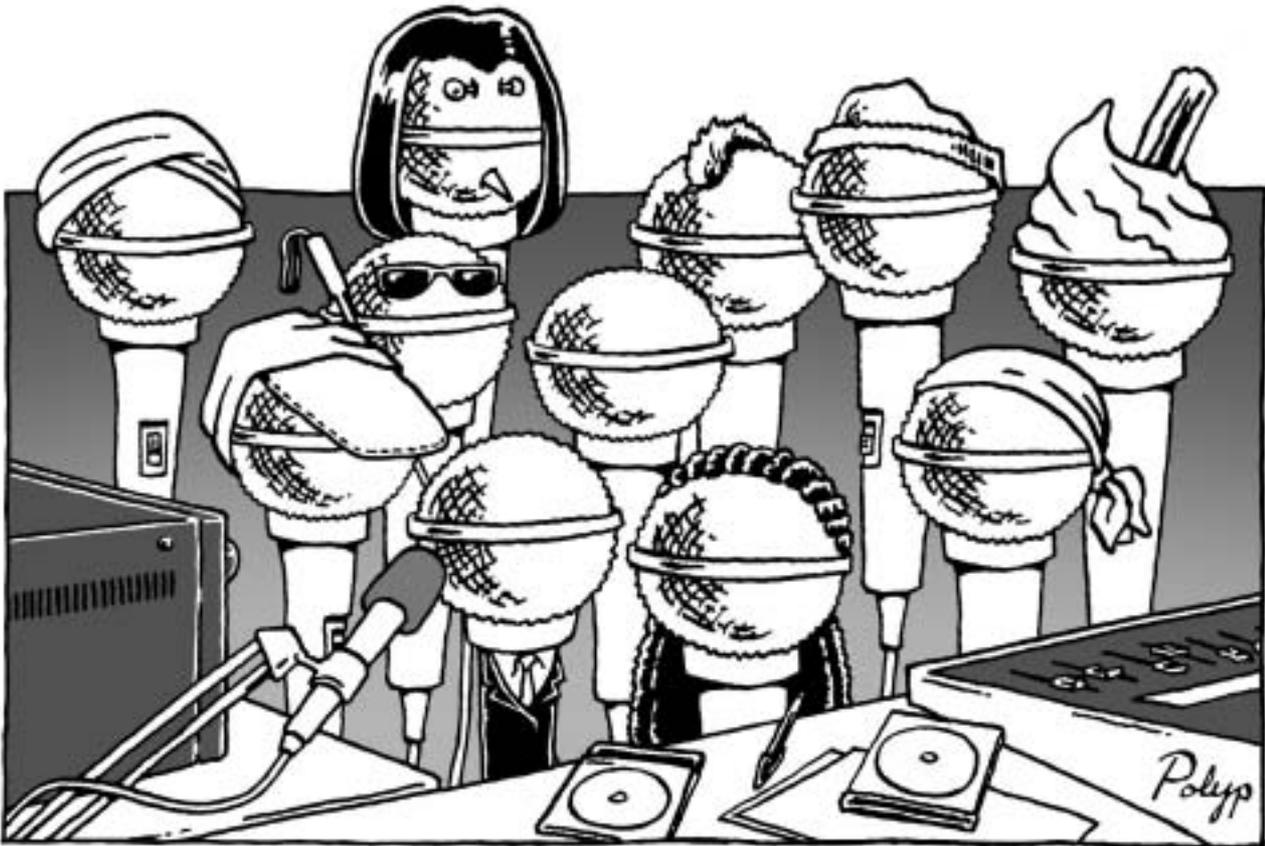
This book and the accompanying website (www.communityradiotoolkit.com) are our way of sharing the lessons we have learnt. We do not claim to have all the answers to every problem you will face. We are aware that some of our friends in community radio might offer different advice on some of these pages, and may have had many different experiences. The nature of community radio is that it appears in many different forms, and takes many different shapes. That said, we hope that the common sense of the advice that we offer speaks for itself.

This is an entirely practical exercise. We will not be filling many of these pages with inspiring tales of brutalised campesinos huddling around transistor radios in the jungles of strife-torn Latin America, or offering extended essays about the importance of free media in the emerging democracies of sub-Saharan Africa. We won't be agonising over theoretical debates about the nature of community or philosophising on access to the airwaves. That's not to belittle these things, simply to state that you won't find much of them here.

You'll also find very little in this Toolkit about radio production, or about the technicalities of radio and – save for one chapter on technology – sound engineering. There are countless textbooks, advice guides and even degree courses available which can teach you to make a jingle. We restrict ourselves here to the unique problems and opportunities offered by community radio, and the situations which are not addressed in mainstream media literature. Our task is to help you get on air and stay there, to the greatest benefit of your community.

This is not a manual, and it is certainly not a recipe book. If you are starting a station from scratch you could, we hope, use this Toolkit as a drawing board and a benchmark. Follow our advice from start to finish and we believe that you will make yourself an excellent community radio station. But we don't expect you to do that. We want you to create the community radio station that your community really needs, not the one that we tell you it needs. We hope our experience and advice can help you build the station that is right for you. You know your community. We don't. So pick out the tools that suit you.

If you are experienced in community radio, feel free to take as little or as much of our advice as you like. You can use this book as sandpaper, to smooth off the corners of your own operation, an oil can to help things run more efficiently, or a spanner, to tighten up the nuts and bolts. If we're still not helping, feel free to use us to prop up the wobbly leg on the mixing desk. Every community radio station has one.



If you don't have the whole community involved, it's not community radio.
But you might need a big studio!

In writing this Toolkit, we have tried to keep the language as plain and jargon-free as possible. We hope it should make not only an informative read, but an enjoyable one too. Before we go any further, let us make a few points about our choice of words:

- **Personal pronouns.** Throughout the Toolkit we have randomly assigned 'he', 'she', 'they' etc., as it makes for easier reading than 'he/she/they'.
- **We often refer to 'volunteers', 'staff' and 'the board' as if they were clearly distinct layers within a community radio station.** We understand that the situation is often more muddy than this, with 'staff' roles being taken by unpaid workers, members of the board also being volunteers etc. We are categorising people according to their responsibilities, not their pay cheque.
- **Yes, we do know that you become licensed when you receive a licence.** Despite correcting ourselves a thousand times under the watchful eyes of a team of proof-readers, we accept that a few 'licences' may yet appear as 'licenses'. If you spot any let us know and we might send you a prize. Or we might not.

Radio Regen is a relatively new kid on the community radio block. We have worked hard and achieved a lot in our first few years, but the gates to our success were opened by others. In Britain and all over the world, brave pioneers have argued, campaigned and fought for the right of access to the airwaves. They have challenged indifference, ignorance and often the authorities to turn their dream of community radio into reality. We like to think that Radio Regen flies the flag for community radio today. If the flag flies high, that is only because we stand on the shoulders of giants.

This book is dedicated with thanks to all those who dared to dream.

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen
Ally Fogg, Toolkit Editor
 Manchester, UK
 September 2005

A MESSAGE FROM AFRICA



Zane Ibrahim is one of the great pioneers of community radio.

An anti-Apartheid fighter, he spent a period of exile in Canada. His return to Cape Town saw him establish South Africa's first community radio station – Bush Radio. The station still flourishes and Zane splits his time between his home town and the many fledgling community radio projects that seek his advice world-wide. He fired up the entire audience at Radio Regen's Community FM 2004 conference in Manchester and his link to the city stays strong. He remains an inspiration for the work we are doing here and this is his response to the Community Radio Toolkit:

"Those long dirt roads that go on for hours into the Zambian countryside can be hell... except just after the rainy season when it takes eight hours to travel 50 miles. Just after the rainy season is when the wild flowers bring tears to the eyes. I had to stop the Jeep and drink in the beauty of the African countryside. I was expected at Breeze FM in the little rural village of Chipata near the Malawian border in about three hours. With an hour and a half of driving left to go, I had some time to indulge myself. Some time to let the sun seep into my African soul. I stood there... mesmerised... just the brilliance of a Zambian spring, the sounds of the birds and the majestic African sky as company.

I saw her come out of the bush, about 100 yards away coming towards me. She walked with that dance-like swaying movement of one used to carrying loads on their heads. The sun on her black shoulders danced as she gently moved her upper body from side to side as she walked. She had one arm holding a small box-like object against the left side of her head. Time stood still for me.

As she came nearer I heard the sound... the drums... the pulsating beat of Zambian Kwaito music can put you in a trance on a good day. Today was a good day. She smiled respectfully and greeted as she passed. It was a real good day.

Then it struck me. Apart from the tiny multicoloured beaded skirt which showed which tribe she was from, she had nothing on... except the radio.

Hooray, we won! We brought the medium to the people. Finally, after almost 40 years of trying to sell community radio to the world, it was time this old man could rest, satisfied that we had won... finally.

Coaching the people at Breeze FM, and all the other stations in the future, will be so much easier.

Why?

This is why.

Finally... Radio Regen, those Millennium Marconis from Manchester have decided to lose that British reserve and raise the banner for the voiceless, the truly voiceless.

Finally... a tool that can be understood by "the community" – a tool that demystifies the medium and can be used by trainers and coaches everywhere, without having to decipher the confusing messages that comes with so many "how to" courses on the medium.

Finally... I can sit under a Baobab tree in Zimbabwe and explain the medium to the subsistence farmers of the Motobo Hills without having to edit in my head as I go along. Where I can ask one of the farmers themselves to lead the session, while I lean back and dream about my forefathers who sat under this same Baobab, using simple tools like this to pass on information and know-how to the next generation.

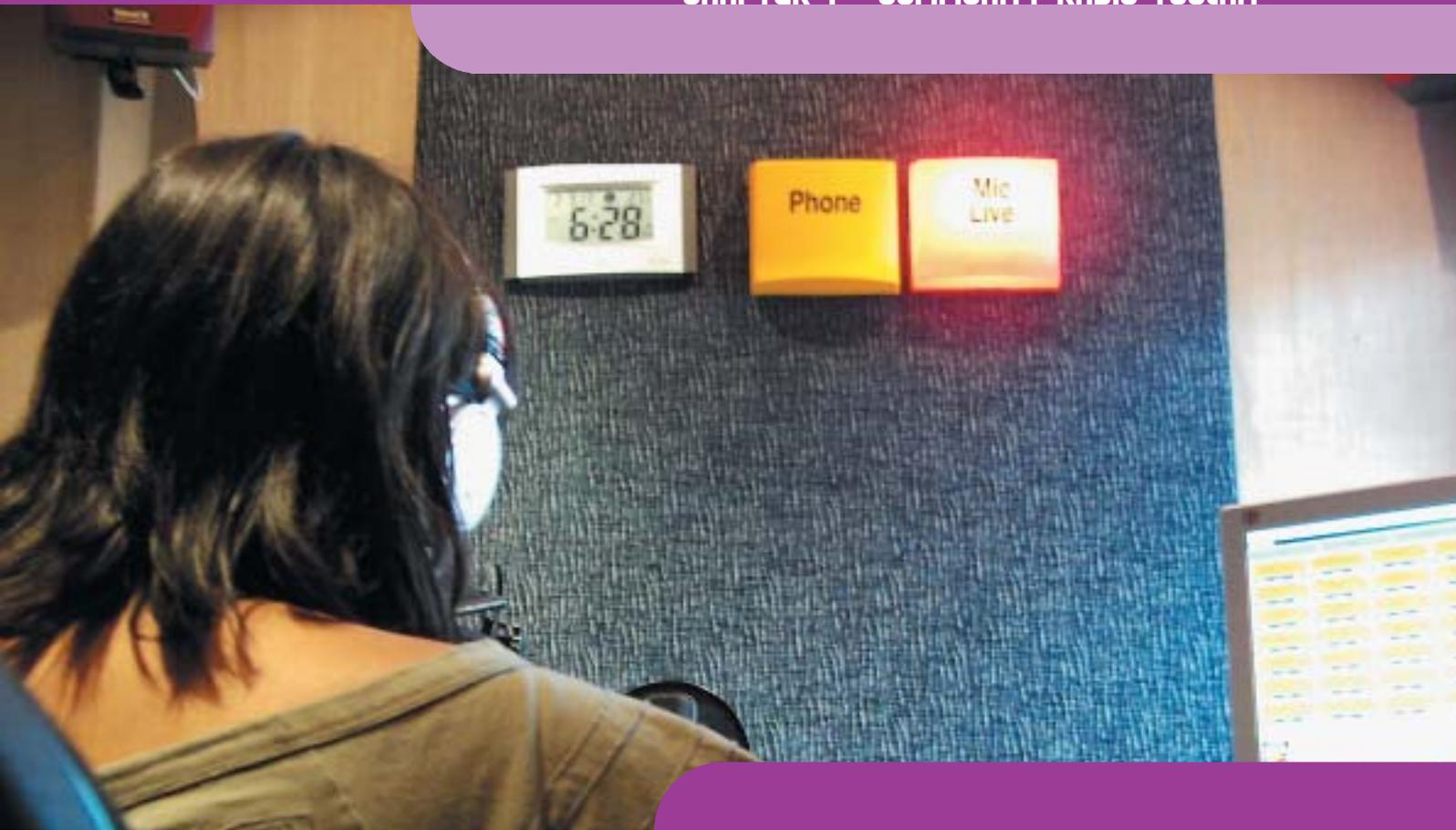
Finally... I can start looking for the chair that I've been dreaming of for decades, that rocking chair, made out of ebony, that will wrap itself around me while I light my pipe, turn on my radio and drink in the information, the music and the vibe of my community, knowing that all is well. The people have a voice, the people have a will and the people will never, never, never again have to listen to His Master's Voice.

Thank you, Radio Regen, thank you."

"AMANDLA ... gwethu"
(**"POWER ... to the people"**)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zane Ibrahim', written in a cursive style.

Zane Ibrahim



THE GREAT COMMUNITY RADIO SWITCH ON

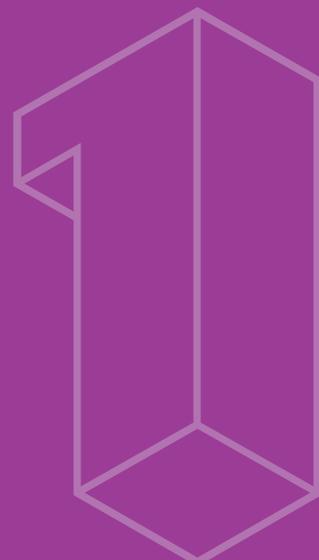
What is community radio?

History

Definitions

'Community' versus 'radio'

Social gain



THE GREAT COMMUNITY RADIO SWITCH ON

“Community-based broadcasting, where local people produce and present their own programmes, promises to be the most important new cultural development in the United Kingdom for many years.”

Professor Anthony Everitt, March 2003

Why start a community radio station?

Before another word is said, we should warn you: community radio will get into your blood. It may well stay there like an exotic parasitic disease, an itch to be constantly scratched. It may sap every last drop of your energy, wake you up in the middle of the night, drag you out of bed and turn your hair grey. So why on earth should anyone do it?

We think you should do it because it can enable your community to change itself, to connect with itself, to realise its full potential.

We think you should do it because it is extraordinary fun. It is extraordinarily satisfying not just to make radio like no one else is making, but to help transform your community itself while you do it.

We think you should do it to express yourself and to fulfil yourself. To empower yourself and engage yourself. Do it for the memories, do it for the fun. Do it for the look on people’s faces when you explain it to them and they say ‘wow!’ Do it for the thrill of flying by your bootstraps, for the rawness, the immediacy, the buzz.

Community radio is a venture with the extraordinary capacity to change your life. And like any such extraordinary venture, it can also totally mess up your life.

To even think about setting up a community radio station, you’d probably have to be just a little bit nuts. We hope this book will help you keep it like that.

CRIB SHEET

Why start a community radio station?

- Because you can

What is community radio?

On Christmas Eve 1906, Reginald Fessenden stood by a microphone in Massachusetts to play his violin and read from his bible. It was the first successful audio broadcast and the implications were staggering. Anyone with access to some fairly basic technology had the power to send information, opinion, entertainment and culture directly into people’s homes. Unsurprisingly to some, governments quickly established a firm stranglehold over the airwaves and have kept it pretty tight ever since.

But the magical particles we call radio waves are a glorious gift to the world. Should they be the preserve of state and business? On the streets of the world, activists have claimed their right of access to the airwaves. Community radio has appeared on the frontline of revolutionary struggles, with broadcasters literally risking their lives to take their message to their people. It has emerged as unlicensed pirate radio, giving a voice to under-represented communities in the estates, barrios and ghettos of the world.

A very brief history of community radio Around the world...

Although there are many competing claims, it is widely accepted that the world’s first community radio stations emerged in Bolivia during a tin miners’ strike around 1947. Their trade union decided to use some of the emergency strike fund to pay for 27 local radio stations, offering union members and their families access to the airwaves and opportunities for social benefits – now a familiar formula. It is a measure of the power of the medium that over the next forty years these stations (and others in Latin America) faced regular persecution, arrests of activists and seizure of equipment by authorities. Meanwhile in California, the Pacifica Foundation set up the USA’s first ‘listener-sponsored’ radio station

in 1950 – a variation on community radio that is still the most common model in North America today. From these beginnings, the demand for community radio began to take root around the world. Amid the political radicalism of the 1960s and 70s, community radio activists began lobbying for access to the airwaves across the developed world, both through legal lobbying and less-than-legal broadcasting. Australia – with its small, dispersed population and little in the way of local commercial or public broadcasting in many areas – began licensing community stations in 1972, and now boasts one of the healthiest community media sectors in the world. In Africa and Asia progress was slower, although stations are now widespread in Southern Africa, Vietnam, India, the Philippines and beyond.

Although the nature of community radio varies considerably from country to country and station to station, some elements are consistent almost everywhere. Community radio anywhere in the world is committed to:

- Community development rather than profit;
- Providing access to the airwaves to under-represented voices;
- Being based at grassroots level and serving a distinct local community;
- Being established and run primarily by volunteers and activists rather than paid staff.

VOXBOX 1.01

“My advice to anyone getting into community radio would be don’t start from scratch. Look at what is going on in other countries, see how they are doing it. There are years and years of experience internationally, whereas here it is very early days. Listen to their broadcasts, look at their schedules, don’t sit here and feel that there’s nothing to draw on – there is plenty outside the UK.”

*Karen Cass, Chair and founder,
Radio Reverb, Brighton*

CRIB SHEET

Community radio around the world:

- Has been going for more than 50 years
- Has emerged in every continent
- Is different everywhere
- But has similarities everywhere

...and back in the UK

The role of pirate broadcasters such as Radio Caroline and Radio Luxembourg in pushing the development of mainstream radio has been well documented. In short, they provided the blueprint (not to mention many of the broadcasters) for BBC Radio 1 and many of the commercial stations we still hear today. These commercially-minded ventures have little to do with community radio as we know it. But much less has been written about smaller, local pirate stations operating in urban areas and around campuses since the 1960s. It was these stations – driven by a love of radio and a perceived need for community broadcasting – that are the true ascendants of modern community radio. As time passed and wisdom accumulated, many activists began to see the advantages to be gained from working alongside rather than in opposition to the legal broadcasting apparatus. In Britain the drive towards legal recognition was led by the Community Radio Association (now the Community Media Association), formed in 1983 to campaign for a third tier of broadcasting alongside the BBC and commercial stations. The CRA included many veterans of unlicensed stations, plus academics, community activists and other experienced campaigners.

Over the past two decades, the sector has lobbied successive governments and powerbrokers, patiently chipping away at the obstacles and objections. The (then) regulators at The Radio Authority helpfully identified spare pockets of frequencies which could perhaps be used for the purpose. The culmination of these negotiations was contained in The Communications Act 2003 and then the Community Radio Order 2004, which established the final legal framework for full-time, long-term community radio licences in the UK. Throughout this process, the British community



radio sector, in negotiation with state regulators, has come to a broad consensus about what community radio should actually be. At its simplest, it has two crucial features:

- It is not run for financial profit;
- It is made by a community, for the benefit of that community.

If a station is being run for profit, or it is being imposed upon a community from outside, then it is not a community radio station. Community radio should also serve two principal functions:

- **Access:** an outlet for cultural, political and artistic voices and opinions which are excluded elsewhere;
- **Development:** social, cultural and educational gain for the community as a whole and for its individual members.

If a radio station is not offering access to voices which are under-represented elsewhere, and if a station is not of practical benefit to its community, it is not a community radio station.

VOXBOX 1.02

“Community radio is a new type of radio station focusing on the delivery of specific social benefits to enrich a community or a range of listeners within a small geographical area.”

Ofcom

“Community radio proposes to be a new tier of very local, not-for-profit (or not profit distributing) radio. It should be different from, and complementary to, existing independent local radio. Community radio offers potential benefits in terms of social inclusion, local educational, training and experience, and wider access for communities to broadcasting opportunities.”

Department of Culture, Media and Sport

“Community radio shouldn’t be popular, it should be necessary.”

Zane Ibrahim, Bush Radio, Cape Town

“Made by a community for the benefit of that community.”

It should also be emphasised that a community radio station as we understand it operates within the law and alongside the authorities. Unlicensed pirate stations can offer access to the marginalised, and can under certain circumstances offer social gain to their community. But it is a sad truth that a radio station cannot ever be sustainable when seizure of equipment and arrest are a daily risk. So to any unlicensed broadcasters reading this, we strongly advise getting yourself straight. The rewards are limitless.

CRIB SHEET

Community radio:

- Is legal and licensed
- Is made by a community for a community
- Is not for financial profit
- offers access to the airwaves
- Brings social gain

A word on ‘Access Radio’ versus ‘community radio’

From 2002-2005, a number of community radio stations were awarded temporary full-time licences as part of the Government’s ‘Access Radio’ pilot study (see Factbox 1.01). The aim of this ‘experiment’ was to establish the value and sustainability of community radio and to propose an appropriate licensing regime for ‘Access Radio’. When the study was commissioned, the authorities were reluctant to use the phrase ‘community radio,’ fearing that it would be seen as a slight against mainstream radio stations who feel that they too serve a ‘community’ of listeners. The trial licences were therefore awarded under the description ‘Access Radio.’ Community media activists were never entirely happy with that term, as it only describes at most 50% of a community station’s remit – to provide access to the airwaves. When the pilot scheme was reviewed, the politicians and bureaucrats relented and allowed the term ‘community radio’ to pass into the legislative framework. So ‘Access Radio’ is just community radio by another (now dated) name.

Defining your community and the Radio Regen approach

At its simplest a community is a group of people with an interest in common. That interest could be the area where they live, their religion, age, ethnic origin, lifestyle, hobbies, careers or any combination of the above. The 16 pilot community radio stations which took to the air in 2002 reflected the wide variations in what we can mean by 'community' (see p14). Old, young, urban, rural, Christian, Muslim, Asian, African-Caribbean and artistic groups were all recognised.

Each of the pilots was different and distinct, but broadly they could be categorised in two ways:

- Communities of place;
- Communities of interest.

As Factbox 1.01 shows, there was a fairly even split between the two models in the pilot scheme, and that probably reflects the debate within the community radio sector as a whole. So let us nail Radio Regen's colours to the mast. We have established radio stations within geographical communities. The people we represent and serve are those who live within about 5km of our transmitters. We describe our stations as 'inclusive' – welcoming everyone irrespective of age, race, creed or identity.

It is certain that 'exclusive' community radio stations run by communities of interest – religious groups, cultural groups, creative groups etc. – have a natural operational advantage. It is easier to motivate and organise a group who share similar attitudes to a project and have similar social and cultural values. Community outreach work may be simplified. Management is eased. It's also easier to market such a station – the brand identity of community of interest is self-explanatory e.g. Stamp Collector FM is far easier to explain than ALL FM's 'serving the council wards of Ardwick Longsight and Levenshulme' (see below).

We also recognise the wide social gain which can come from apparently 'exclusive' stations. Projects such as the excellent Desi Radio, run by the Punjabi community of Southall, or Cross Rhythms, the Christian radio station from Stoke-on-Trent, have

recorded impressive social and educational benefits, benefits which often stretch well beyond their specified communities. We also accept that the output of these stations can have a significant cultural and artistic value.

Indeed, if frequencies were an unlimited resource, we would urge every club, every faith, every tenants' association to start their own radio station. The cruel reality is that available frequencies are scarce. If a radio station serving one section of a community is granted a licence, there will not be a frequency available for another radio station which might serve all sections of that community.

So if forced to choose, we support geographically-based community radio stations because they offer the greatest potential benefit to the largest number of people for each available licence. But just as importantly, we have seen the effectiveness of a radio station in bringing sometimes troubled communities together. Community radio is an opportunity to spread tolerance, respect and understanding in a multicultural society. It would be a tragedy if it were to become another point of division, as 'communities within a community' scramble against each other for the same prize – a real concern as the sector grows in profile and popularity.

That said, the knowledge in this manual should apply to all models of community radio. We happily accept that community radio is a broad church and all the healthier for that. Irrespective of our own ideological leanings, we understand that community radio often springs up from other projects or from within communities of interest, with little long-term design. This organic evolution is perhaps as healthy a conception for community radio as any other.

Even defining geographical communities can have problems. ALL FM was established to serve the 'community' of Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme. These three districts comprise the A6 corridor between central Manchester and Stockport, and from a geographical and administrative perspective this grouping made perfect sense.

FACTBOX 1.01

The Access Radio pilot stations, 2002-2005**Radio Regen's projects:**

ALL FM – covers Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme in South Central Manchester. This is an ethnically diverse area of multiple disadvantage, with extensive issues around poverty, poor health, inadequate healthcare, social engagement, crime, drugs and addiction, youth nuisance and gang culture. It is home to a large population of refugees, asylum seekers and recent immigrants from countries such as Somalia and Eastern Europe. A popular slogan at ALL FM is 'one station, many nations.' The station's area is also highly socially diverse: extensive literacy problems stand alongside a high population of students and graduates, and there are strong traditions of small business development, creative involvement and community activism. In its first 30 months, ALL FM brought more than 200 volunteers and 2,000 local guests onto the airwaves. It has more than fifty community partners.

Wythenshawe FM – covers the Wythenshawe area to the south of Manchester. This huge, sprawling development is one of the largest social housing estates in Europe with a population, including neighbouring districts, of around 90,000.

Geographically it is isolated from the rest of Manchester, surrounded by the motorway network, and only seen by most Manchester residents as a signpost on the way to the airport. Ravaged by decades of under-investment, many local families are now experiencing their third generation of adult unemployment. The area has high levels of deprivation on every recognised scale with notably high rates of disability and chronic illness. Ethnically the community is mainly white British, and is notable for its residents feeling a strong sense of loyalty to the area and the community. The area is also a hot-bed of talent – since going on air, WFM has served 200 volunteers, with around 80 active at any given time, 24 of whom are currently involved in the station's soap opera 'Parkway.'

Other projects:

Angel Radio (Havant, Hampshire) – aimed at the over-60s in this south coast town.

Awaz FM (Glasgow) – radio by and for the Asian communities of Glasgow.

BCB (Bradford Community Broadcasting) – service for the diverse communities of Bradford.

Cross Rhythms City Radio (Stoke-on-Trent) Community radio from a Christian perspective.

Desi Radio (Southall, West London) – serving the Punjabi population.

Forest of Dean Radio (Gloucestershire) – serving a population spread over a large rural area.

GTFM (Pontypridd) – a 'town and gown' joint project between Glamorgan University and the local residents' association.

New Style Radio (Central Birmingham) – an African-Caribbean community station.

Northern Visions Radio (Belfast) – speech-oriented radio for Belfast's whole community.

Shine FM (Banbridge, Northern Ireland) – a 3-month project operated by a Christian group for the community.

Sound Radio (East London) – catering for the diverse communities of East London.

Radio Faza (Nottingham) – South Asian community station co-managed by the Asian Women's Project and the Karimia Institute.

Resonance FM (Central London) – the London Musicians' Collective run a project of experimental sound and music.

Takeover Radio (Leicester) – a service for children, young people and their families.

ALL FM's own market research revealed surprising reactions to the brand, however. The residents of Ardwick feel no special connections to the residents of Longsight or Levenshulme, and the same applied to the other districts. Their affinity to the 'ALL' brand was strong, but based on the understanding that 'ALL FM' was community radio for 'all', not community radio for Ardwick, Longsight and Levenshulme. Similarly, a strong affinity to ALL FM has been recorded among listeners who do not live in the A6 corridor but in one of the many nearby districts where the station can be heard and who share many of the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the area.

ALL FM's application for a full-time licence from 2005 reflected these findings. The station's catchment community now matches the reach of its transmitter. Now it truly will be 'ALL' FM.

That said, a clearly defined geographical area might not have such difficulties. Community radio for Wythenshawe (Wythenshawe FM) is self defining, as it would be for many towns and single neighbourhoods. The issue gets complicated when your particular 10km circle of FM reception doesn't have a name.

A station will also be defined by its participants. It is vital that you do not fall into the trap of thinking that your community is just the group of people who come in and make radio shows. It is not even those people and their listeners. Do not become just another club. Community radio is too important for that. You have an obligation to do outreach work, finding sections of the community who are not involved and involving them. Look to your ethnic and gender mix. As a medium, radio is largely built on big mouths, big egos and expensive gadgets with flashing lights, so of course it mostly attracts boys (of all ages). You may have to take positive action to involve a representative share of women. We had to do exactly this at Wythenshawe FM and it's worked well.

Your station will also be defined by its output. If you have mostly speech, you will attract mostly older listeners. If you mostly play classic rock hits all day, you will get a lot of middle-aged men. Volunteers will mostly be attracted to your station by its output, so it makes sense for the output to be as diverse as

the community. If a station makes extensive commitments to the elderly, it's unlikely to meet them if it is playing hip hop 24 hours a day. This may seem common sense, but stations will often find themselves torn between the most popular output and the most representative. If you look at the commercial or public sector radio, you will see that all stations aim their output at a specific demographic – an audience of a particular age, social class and range of interest. This is no coincidence. Radio stations of all types have realised that they can reach the largest raw number of listeners that way.

Community radio is different in that it must to some extent try to be all things to all people within that community. If a community radio station tries a formatted, 'narrowcasting' approach it will always lose out to the commercial and BBC stations which can do the same thing better. As a result, community radio will never get the biggest audience, nor should it try to. It is not the job of a community radio station to reach the largest number of listeners. However, you can be so much more useful to your community if they are actually listening. Striking the balance between giving the audience enough of what they want that they will keep listening, and providing enough variety to keep the loyalty of all your community is an eternal juggling act (see Chapter 9).

Your attitude to mainstream industry conventions should extend to your choice of presenters. If you fill your schedules with experienced radio broadcasters who all adhere to the stereotyped "Radio Local" chatter-and-patter microphone techniques, then you have to ask why listeners should choose you over the better-funded, flashier mainstream stations which you are aping. It is our experience that listeners enjoy the rough edges of community radio, the mistakes, the occasional chaos. They also appreciate the apparently random nature of stations which are as diverse, unpredictable and exciting as the communities which spawned them.

So don't ignore audience figures but don't fret over them either. If you serve your community, people will come to you.



Zane Ibrahim: “Don’t be popular. Be necessary.”

At the Community FM conference (see p20) in February 2004, the special guest speaker was Zane Ibrahim, founder of Bush Radio, Cape Town, one of the true heroes in the history of community radio in Southern Africa (more from him shortly). Among many pieces of wise advice, he told the delegates this: ‘Don’t be popular. Be necessary.’

Thankfully, you can be both.

CRIB SHEET

Your community:

- Can be any group of people with something in common
- May consist of all of the residents of a given area, or only those with a shared interest or characteristic
- Is NOT just the people involved in making the radio and their listeners
- Should be reflected in the activities, output, management and personnel at the station
- Needs you!

‘Community’ versus ‘radio’

After addressing the February 2004 Community FM conference, Zane Ibrahim of Bush Radio, Cape Town was taking questions from the floor. One astute questioner asked this: ‘How much of community radio is community, and how much is radio?’

Zane scarcely blinked before replying – to the surprise of some delegates – ‘90% community, 10% radio.’

This is of course a simplification. But it echoes our staff’s experience that resources, energy and time are devoted overwhelmingly to non-broadcast activity. The volunteers make the radio. It’s the staff’s role to enable them to do it.

VOXBOX 1.03

‘When we set up the full-time stations we thought we knew what we were doing. We knew radio. We’d done a whole bunch of successful RSLs. We thought we could jump in and make great radio.

‘We completely underestimated the need to resource and properly ‘do’ the community side of it. We didn’t set up a radio station, we set up a community centre. By that I mean the needs of the volunteers were nothing to do with radio. We had to go with volunteers to court to stop them being evicted. We had to advise them on the personal issues that were messing up their heads and making them unwelcome in the station.

‘These things are nothing to do with radio but they’re where we had to put priority for our resources – outreach/support as against programme production. We could have the best programmes being made by a small group of skilled volunteers, but if they weren’t representative, if we didn’t have the whole range of the community involved, then it wouldn’t be community radio.’

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

The relative importance of community against radio also applies to the output. Yes, good output is important. Interesting programming, clever scheduling and skilled presenters are vital ingredients. Some community stations will go so far as to bring in professional presenters to host key shows. That perhaps misses the point. One of the strengths of community radio is that it provides room for error.

If a presenter misfires a jingle or crashes the intro to a song, then that radio is technically imperfect. But what if that presenter is in the studio in spite of health problems, long-term unemployment and depression? Whilst the quality of output might be suffering, if real value and personal development is being added to the volunteer’s life then that may be a much more important factor. Occasional bad radio is mostly forgotten within moments; good training, support, and life-enhancing opportunities can be remembered for a lifetime.

Of course, if the same presenter then goes on to swear, get the station taken off air or loses all your listeners, then that is going too far. As with almost everything in community radio, it is a question of finding the right balance.

The 10% to 90% ratio may be very useful as a way of understanding the challenges involved in community radio. But don't take it too far. Do not attempt to quantify your activities, or count the hours spent on 'community' activities as against 'radio' activities. Other community stations may find their volunteer base has fewer issues and needs less support off-air. We would however suggest that if your volunteers need little support, you'll deliver more 'social gain' if you seek out those that need some (see below).

Ultimately community radio is what happens when the power of people meets the power of the airwaves. Arguing about which side is more important is like arguing about which hand makes more noise when you are clapping.

CRIB SHEET

Running a community radio station:

- Is 90% community, 10% radio
- May leave you very little time to make radio
- Involves giving volunteers enough rope to tie themselves in knots
- But not enough to hang themselves

Community radio and social gain

Community radio stations are uniquely placed to make a difference to society. We can deliver skills, boost community pride, boost the community's image and standing, and improve the delivery of services to those who need them most. We can reach the isolated, the forgotten and the marginalised. We can offer individuals life-changing opportunities and offer the whole community a social hub.

If we can do these things, then we surely must do them, simple morality demands that. And so does the law.

FACTBOX 1.02

Social gain is defined as:

- (a) Provision of radio services to individuals who are otherwise underserved by such services;**
- (b) Facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion;**
- (c) Provision of education or training;**
- (d) Better understanding of the community and the strengthening of links within it.**

Social gain may also include the achievement of other 'social objectives':

- (a) Delivery of services provided by local authorities and other public services;**
- (b) Promotion of economic development and of social enterprises;**
- (c) Promotion of employment;**
- (d) Provision of opportunities for the gaining of work experience;**
- (e) Promotion of social inclusion;**
- (f) Promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity;**
- (g) Promotion of civic participation and volunteering.**

Adapted from The Community Radio Order 2004 (HMSO)

In negotiating its existence with the government, the community radio sector has always been happy to emphasise the development potential of community radio. Before agreeing to license community radio stations, politicians asked (admittedly in a more polite way) 'so what is in it for us?' The answer was social gain. This was written into the legislation (Factbox 1.02) and it is social gain – not brilliant radio or huge audiences – that stations are legally obliged to deliver.

So, to a large extent, social gain is the bed that the community radio sector has made for itself. We should be happy to lie in it. This is not the same as community radio becoming simply another form of paternal public service broadcasting. We must avoid becoming just another tool of the political authorities. A community radio station must never become 'Spokesperson FM' with a succession of official voices telling us to eat up our greens. Community radio is by the people, for the people and of the people, and must always remain so.

The social gain of a radio station must not only exist – it has to be measurable. It's not enough to say 'our radio station has made people happier round here – you can tell from the spring in their step.' The authorities, from Ofcom to the funding bodies, want cold hard facts: the number of people passing through training, the number of people visiting the station and so on.

It is also important to explain 'social gain' to your station team, staff and volunteers alike. You can be sure that what fires up the vast majority of your volunteers is making radio, not the amazing impact that radio has on the community. This is part of the general picture of 'selling' community radio to the team (see Chapter 10).

Social gain versus the world

It is worth noting that the duty to provide real improvements to the community can often come into direct conflict with the right of access to the airwaves – the right which underpins the very foundations of community radio. This is a source of continuing debate within the sector.

To maximise access, a community radio station could have a walk-in, first come, first served policy, where anyone and everyone could book the first available hour to broadcast. Hundreds of different people could access the airwaves every month, but the opportunities for creating any kind of identifiable social gain might be minimal. Community radio stations must to some extent restrict access in order to devote the time and energy to the support and training needed to have a real impact (Voxbox 1.03).

For better or worse, the UK community radio framework is now structured with the emphasis on social gain rather than access. This perhaps places a duty on stations themselves to remember the importance of access. Any community radio station worth its salt will try to get the most social gain while also offering access to voices which do not appear elsewhere on the airwaves.

The pursuit of social gain can also be in conflict with the pursuit of quality broadcasting. Sometimes (although by no means always) the output which

brings greatest benefit to an individual or the community is not the output which will bring in most listeners. As always, keep the balance. Ensure that there is easy listening (and we don't mean the music) elsewhere on the schedule. If you don't address the needs of the audience, if you don't entertain the audience, then eventually you are going to lose out.

CRIB SHEET

The social gain from community radio:

- Includes the provision of radio services to the excluded
- Includes public engagement, debate and discussion
- Includes the improvement in the image and self-belief of communities
- Includes the delivery of education and training
- Should also deliver many other social objectives – including access
- Is the principal reason UK community radio exists

The legal framework

Of all the hurdles and obstacles which face those wishing to establish a community radio station, perhaps the most daunting is the bureaucracy surrounding the licence application process. We will guide you through this in detail in Chapter 3, but to set the context, we say this for the first time (of what will be many): the licence application form is your friend.

Many of those who are involved in community radio come from a background in pirate radio. Others come from the world of community, political and environmental activism. In both of those worlds, the authorities tend to be seen as the enemy – either preventing people from doing what they want to do, or imposing interventions which are not welcome. It can be something of a culture shock to learn that the laws covering community radio were to a large extent drafted according to the wishes of community radio campaigners. These regulations are mostly our own.

Yes, the community radio sector is indeed heavily regulated. To gain a community radio licence a group must embark on a complex application process, and make extensive promises about how it will and will not operate. Many of these rules, for example those covering accountability to the community or about the distribution of profits, are there to prevent profit-minded entrepreneurs hijacking the community radio sector to establish a commercial station by the back door.

The regulations do not demand a surplus on the balance books. They do not demand a particular share of listenership or any other measures of success used in the mainstream media industry. Instead they demand that you hit social gain targets – such as the number of people involved in the station, the number of people trained, the number of community groups and statutory agencies assisted. They are mostly concerned with ensuring that you keep the promises you have made in your licence application.

VOXBOX 1.04

“One of the most important things about community radio is that it gives everyone the chance to make their voice heard. Some of the people who use it to the greatest effect are using it only sparingly – not permanently, or as an activity in its own right, but as a powerful tool for democracy and change. People such as: children who do an annual radio project at school and put the questions to their local council that the adults never thought to ask; teenagers who attend a holiday training project where they learn skills which give them self-respect and help them make something of their lives; young single mothers who learn radio at their local support centre and who then grow in confidence as they discover how to ask questions and get people in authority to listen to their views; citizens from communities undergoing change who use interviews and documentaries to get a serious hearing for grassroots opinions”.

Cathy Aitchison, independent media consultant

When you look at individual sections of the licence application form, everything it is asking of you should be quite reasonable – covering the activities which you should want to do anyway. If large sections of it appear utterly irrelevant to what you intend to do, then the problem may not be with the form but with your plans. It may be that what you have in mind is not really a community radio station.

CRIB SHEET

The licensing framework:

- Was developed with the full co-operation of the community radio sector
- Is your friend
- Can be used as a useful guide
- Is there to protect good community radio stations

Radio organisations

Radio Regen

Radio Regen is a registered charity, which was founded in 1999 in Manchester by Phil Korbelt, Cathy Brooks and Phil Burgess with this mission: ‘To work with communities to enable them to use community radio to tackle disadvantage’. Korbelt and Brooks were then running the independent radio production company Peterloo Productions, and were looking for a way to move on from making radio with a social conscience to making radio with a social involvement. The first step, drawing upon a European Social Fund regeneration grant, was establishing a BTEC-accredited radio training course in collaboration with Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT).

The graduates of these and many subsequent training courses went on to help establish and run temporary radio stations under RSLs (Restricted Service Licences) (see Chapter 2). At the last count, Radio Regen and its trainees had run or helped to run 25 radio stations. As the abilities of its trainees have flourished, so has Radio Regen’s need to provide ever better training and support, and the organisation will soon commence Britain’s first radio production foundation degree course based on community radio.



Radio Regen has also established or been involved in innumerable cultural and developmental projects beyond the strict confines of the radio stations, including the youth project Remix the Streets and the arts project Artransmit, which has established two radio soap operas and run the MCing workshop scheme Beatslam.

The charity has so far enabled more than 5,000 volunteers to get on air, currently employs 20 staff, and has a turnover of around £600,000, making it the largest independent group in the UK community radio sector.

For all that, Radio Regen's proudest achievement so far has been the establishment of Manchester's two full-time community radio stations, ALL FM and Wythenshawe FM (see Factbox 1.01, p14). When Ofcom granted applications to run pilot access radio stations, Radio Regen was the only group to be awarded two licences. With those two stations now flying the coop – moving towards long-term security as independent enterprises – Radio Regen is now looking forward to a future at the heart of community radio development in the UK.

In February 2004, Radio Regen organised the first Community FM conference, probably the largest gathering of would-be community radio operators Britain had ever seen – 120 delegates from Aberdeen to the Scilly Isles and from Newry to Norwich, of all different ages and from every imaginable background, ranging from amateur radio enthusiasts through to statutory service providers. Ofcom was also represented at the event, and the Government attended in the shape of Ivan Lewis, the then Minister for Adult Skills, who left the delegates in no doubt about his faith that community radio should be at the heart of the national adult skills policy.

Community FM (and its follow up in August 2004, at which Ofcom regulator Lawrie Hallett helped talk community radio groups through the newly published licence application form) demonstrated the vibrancy, energy and momentum of the community radio sector. It also demonstrated the need for extensive information, education and training for community radio activists and workers.

Radio Regen hopes that Community FM will be the first step towards establishing a national centre for community radio development. The charity is working with its partners in the sector to use distance learning to deliver professional development skills to those wishing to set up full time community radio stations, and hopes that by obtaining such qualifications, the powers that be will be persuaded to give you licences and funds. See www.radioregen.org and www.communityfm.net for details.

Radio Regen remains committed to local delivery of community radio services. But our expertise is about to take the national stage.

CRIB SHEET

Radio Regen:

- Is a registered Community development Charity, founded in 1999
- Is the biggest Community radio group in Britain
- organised the Community FM conferences of 2004
- Has set up and overseen two separate Community radio stations in Manchester
- Is establishing a national centre for Community radio development

Ofcom

Ofcom is the Office of Communications, established between 2002 and 2003 as the single regulator for the broadcast media industry. Its duties are wide ranging, but its central statutory duty is to further the interests of citizens and consumers by promoting fair competition and protecting consumers from harm and offensive material.

For those with experience of the five regulatory bodies Ofcom replaced (including the Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Radio Authority), Ofcom is a model of clarity and co-operation. Nevertheless it is a huge bureaucracy and can be slow to react. It has been rumoured that Ofcom once commissioned a consultation to establish whether they were having too many consultations. It is theoretically independent of politics, but mostly operates under the watchful eye of the Select Committee for Culture, Media and Sport.

Ofcom has the power to grant your licence, and the power to revoke it. Whilst it operates according to clear guidelines and regulations, its decisions are often coloured by your emotional engagement – whether that is anger, sympathy or mercy. It's rather like a (mostly) benign deity. It grants you the gift of life, it holds great power over you, if you've sinned you can even issue prayers and sacrifices in the hope of forgiveness. And of course, it is who you have to account for yourself to at the final whistle. Its community radio team are, at the time of going to press, Soo Williams and Lawrie Hallett, and can be reached via communityradio@ofcom.org.uk.

CRIB SHEET

Ofcom is:

- A bit like God, but with less sense of humour

The Community Media Association (CMA)

Long before Radio Regen arrived on the scene, the CMA (formerly the Community Radio Association) and its members had been campaigning for the rights of communities to generate a third tier of broadcast media, alongside commercial operators and the BBC. The CMA's head office is in Sheffield, and it has a training studio in London and a development office in Scotland.

As a community radio station, you have a basic duty to become actively involved in the CMA for a number of reasons. Firstly because you owe it to them – had it not been for the efforts of the CMA, you would not be on air at all.

Secondly, it is in the interests of every community radio station to bolster and strengthen our collective identity as a sector. The CMA is the only umbrella organisation that UK community media has. It is the CMA who will negotiate on your behalf with copyright agencies and the like. The CMA makes sure that your views are represented to Parliament, Ofcom, the DCMS and other Government departments. It promotes the sector to funders and makes sure community media organisations stand alongside other broadcasters when precious broadcasting resources or new policies are being discussed by Government.

Thirdly, the CMA is an invaluable source of experience, wisdom, support and resources. Working with member organisations, it is actively involved in training and advising community radio stations and you would be foolish to miss out. See www.commedia.org.uk for details. The CMA is also working closely with Radio Regen in establishing development resources for the community radio sector.

Activities of the CMA include:

- Publishing the community media quarterly newsletter Airflash – full of news, essential information and advice;
- Providing a streaming service (free to organisational members) which enables you to broadcast on the internet as a simulcast or between RSLs;
- Hosting regular conferences and events, perfect for networking and meeting other people with a passion for community radio;
- Providing information and advice;
- Providing materials for broadcast (see p123);
- Organising training/research to support the sector;
- Representing community media to Government and industry bodies.

Finally, while the battle to get community radio on to the air has been (mostly) won, the campaigning work of the CMA is far from finished. A report regarding the current legislation is due in mid 2007 and the CMA will need your input if it is to lobby for our interests. Community radio is the first medium of its type to be unrolled in the UK, but if it continues to thrive, the CMA's campaigns for community television, internet and other broadcast media are sure to receive a massive boost. As a sector,

community radio is possibly just the tip of the community media iceberg. Who knows what still lies beneath the water? You owe it to the next generation of community media activists to keep up the fight.

CRIB SHEET

CMA is:

- Your umbrella organisation
- Your voice in negotiations with the authorities
- A valuable source of advice and resources
- Still campaigning

Hospital Broadcasting Association

Although not community radio by the strict definition, hospital radio shares many of our characteristics – it is generally run as a charitable operation by volunteers. The Hospital Broadcasting Association represents around 260 hospital stations, many of which have vast experience in making not-for-profit radio. It is worth checking their website (www.hospitalbroadcasting.co.uk) for details of hospital stations in your area – the possibilities for building friendships and collaboration are wide. Their website is also a useful resource in its own right, with plenty of good, transferable advice.

Radio Academy

The Radio Academy is a charity, formed in 1983 as the professional body for people working in the radio industry and to provide neutral ground on which the whole subject of radio can be discussed. It is dedicated to the encouragement, recognition and promotion of excellence throughout the UK radio industry. Members range from students on relevant courses to Governors of the BBC, and the Academy has embraced the emerging community sector warmly at recent conferences and events.

CSV Media

For over forty years, Community Service Volunteers have been at the forefront of community action in the UK. Their CSV Media section runs media training for the voluntary sector and their 'media clubhouses' offer training in various ICT skills

including radio. They are particularly adept at recruiting volunteers and establishing bridges between the voluntary and corporate sectors.

Highlands & Islands Community Broadcasting Association (HICBA)

Formed as an umbrella group for the large (and ever growing) numbers of community radio stations in Scotland's 'hinterlands' (their words), HICBA offers an experienced view of the unique challenges facing community broadcasters in mostly isolated areas. See www.hiradio.co.uk

Further reading and links

Background and history

www.commedia.org.uk/library.htm

Community radio around the world

World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)

www.amarc.org

The evaluation of the 'Access Radio' pilot scheme
New Voices

www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/comm_radio/com_radio/.

Organisations

Radio Regen

www.radioregen.org

Ofcom

www.ofcom.org.uk

Community Media Association

www.commedia.org.uk

Hospital Broadcasting Association

www.hospitalbroadcasting.co.uk

Radio Academy

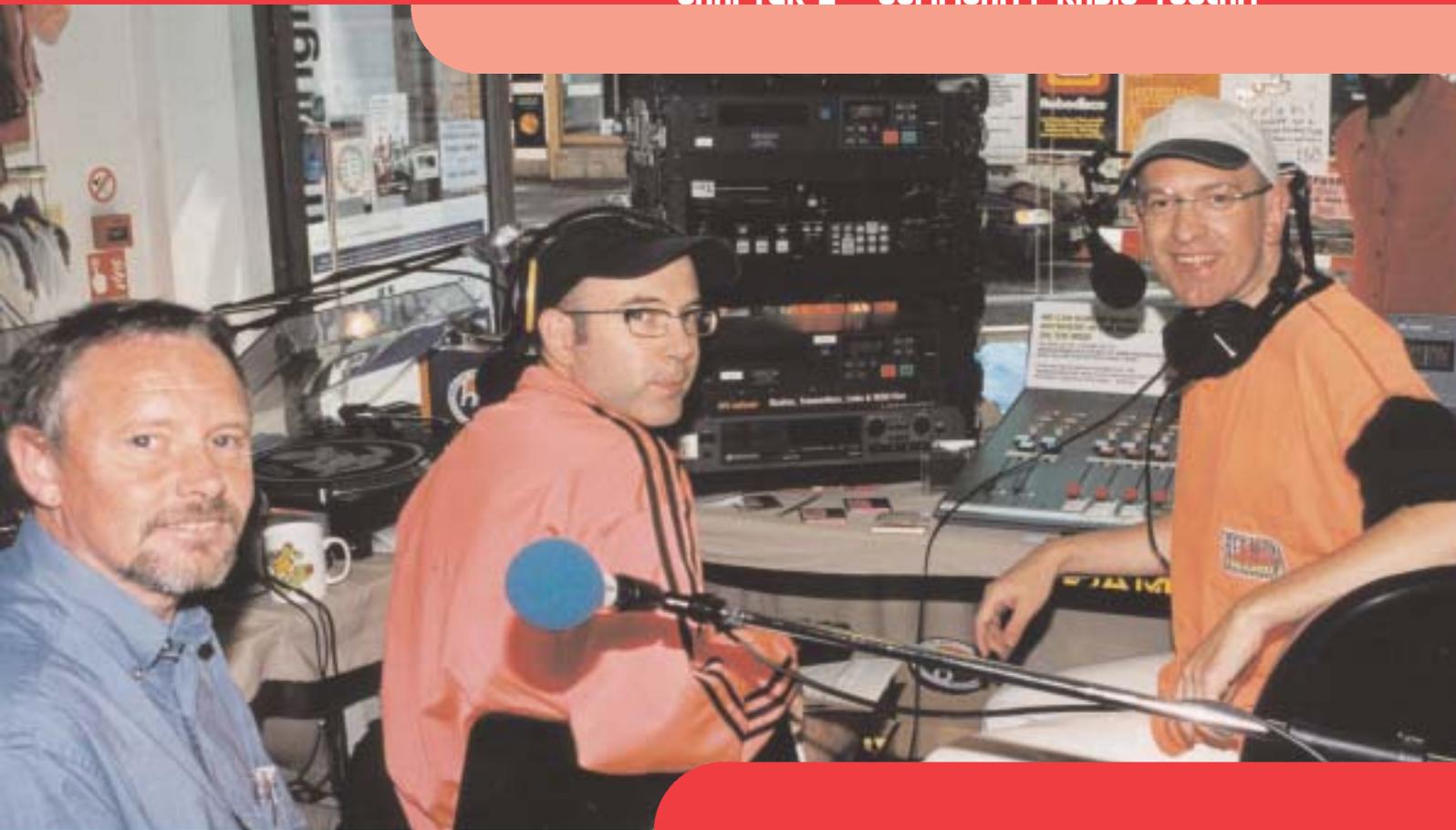
www.radioacademy.org

CSV Media

www.csv.org.uk

HICBA

www.hiradio.co.uk



FIRST STEPS

Forming a group

Key partners

Resources

The law

Running an RSL



FIRST STEPS

When you are new to community radio, the idea of running a full-time, licensed station with its own premises, paid staff, hundreds of volunteers and a financial turnover of up to six figures will seem like an impossible dream.

The success of the original pilot stations in the community radio sector prove that it can be done. Indeed the chances are that a station like the one you dream of has already been created by someone very like you. It doesn't need huge sums of money to get started. If you are good at what you do, you can find the money to do it and make that money work for you.

Over the next four chapters we will talk you through the processes involved in establishing a community radio station pretty much from scratch. Remember there will be support and funding available from somewhere at every stage, if you find the right partners. Really this is all there is to it:

- Establish your community radio group, and be prepared to formalise/incorporate it into a social enterprise or charity;
- Equip yourself with premises, resources and technical equipment;
- Conduct training, run temporary 'RSL'

broadcasts, and begin to demonstrate your competence and worth;

- Convince Ofcom that you are the best-placed community radio group to broadcast in your area before anyone else does.

Doesn't sound so difficult now does it?

Getting a group together

A community radio station has to come from somewhere. While sometimes it will be the brainchild of an existing community group, very often it is dragged into being by the vision, drive and stubborn persistence of one or two enthusiasts (Factbox 2.01).

As with any similar venture, a community radio station is unlikely to ever get off the ground without at least one enthusiastic 'driver.' But a station that leans too heavily on one individual is asking for

FACTBOX 2.01

The Drivers

In his official evaluation of the 16 Access Radio pilots, Prof. Anthony Everitt noted that the stations were often founded or led by one charismatic and knowledgeable figure. Some of the characters he highlighted included:

Forest of Dean Radio (FODR) 'Roger Drury is the project's founding figure. A community artist with skills in circus, drama, writing, video/film and local history. In the early 1990s he heard about and researched RSLs. FODR ran the first of a series of RSLs in 1995 and before the arrival of Access Radio, prepared a three-year business plan in the 'vague hope' that a long term community radio licence would eventually be achievable.

Angel Radio 'Tony Smith, one of the founders of Angel Radio, built his first transmitter at school – he went home during lunch and broadcast records to his fellow students. Later ...he and his wife, Lorna Adlam, lived in a country area where there was no local radio service and set themselves up as pirate broadcasters. 'Everyone knew. The DTI people only raided us on complaint. We left a key in the front door for them.'

Sound Radio 'Lol Gellor was a song-writer, producer and musician, who later became interested in film and video. In the mid-1990s, he worked for the multicultural arts promotion agency, Cultural Partnerships, for whom he produced his first RSL for the Clapton Park estate in Hackney in 1995. 'Not coming from a radio background, I discovered what radio can be – a catalyst for the community'.

New Voices, Ofcom 2003

trouble. Community radio is a group activity by its very nature. Unless the station is planted and embedded into the community by many, many roots, it will become little more than an exercise in ego. Worse still, if the driving force is suddenly taken ill or is forced to withdraw from the project for other reasons, where does that leave the project? So ask yourself about the community you are hoping to represent. Is it large enough and strong enough to sustain a radio station? Is it small enough that you can hope to serve it all? Typically, some single villages would be too small for a station, while most cities are too large and diverse to be represented and helped effectively with one community station. Can your radio group claim to represent it all? Are you attempting to? What is your mission statement? Your group needs to broadly agree on these questions before you proceed any further.

In the early months or years your group may be little more than an informal association, with no more responsibilities than the local stamp collectors' club. Very quickly however you will wish to enter financial contracts with community partners, attract grant money, make binding promises to Ofcom and employ staff. To do so your group will have to formalise itself into some form of non-profit distributing company or charity, with named directors and a legally binding constitution (see Chapter 7 'Accountability').

The structure you choose needs to guarantee two protections:

- That the station will be managed competently, honestly and effectively;
- That the station truly represents the community it claims to represent.

Some stations will choose to combine these two functions into a single board. At others there will be some form of division into representative and operational groups. At ALL FM, for example, the representational functions are held by the Steering Group, which sets the overall policies and directions of the station, while the Board of Directors takes responsibility for supporting day-to-day decision making, supervision of staff and other operational matters. Different structures will suit different groups. Balancing a truly democratic structure with

VOXBOX 2.01

“When we were at the RSL stage, I wish we’d got a tighter agreement as to what our purpose was. There were only a few of us involved at the beginning and as we grew we started to get disagreements as to what we should be doing. If I could go back to day one I’d make sure we had a mission statement or some kind of understanding as to the direction we should be going in. If people were committed to it they would have helped us, if they weren’t we’d have gone our separate ways. As it was we had people involved who had very different ideas about what it was we wanted to do.
Javed Sattar, Project Manager, Awaz FM, Glasgow

a truly operationally effective one is a delicate operation (see p94-96). Almost inevitably the more truly democratic and representative you are, the harder you will find it to make the type of sudden or brave decisions which are often needed to run a community radio station. Balance is all.

Running a community radio station requires many skills. Ideally your group will attract people with experience in the voluntary sector, project management, finance and accounting, company law, technical engineering, fund-raising and maybe – just maybe – radio. Of course some of these skills will (and must) be learnt on your journey, but you will give yourself a huge head start if you can enthuse and involve members of your community who already have some of that knowledge. If you haven’t already got such people around (e.g. as volunteers or regular guests on your RSLs), make a real effort to go out and find them.

Your group should also be broadly representative of your community. If you are in an ethnically diverse community this should be represented within your group. Try to get as good a mix as possible of ethnic backgrounds, social classes, faiths, and lifestyles. Even if your community is more homogeneous, make sure you have a good spread of ages, gender, orientations, and disabilities – try not to forget anyone. Again, it is your responsibility to ensure they are involved, rather than their responsibility to

find you. But don't get too carried away, you don't need 27% Ruritanians on the Board because there are exactly 27 of them in the community.

CRIB SHEET

Your community radio group:

- Is essential - community radio cannot be made by individuals
- Needs to give itself a legal structure
- Needs to represent your community
- Needs to ensure good management

Key partners

As a community radio station, very few of your activities will be entirely self-contained. You will be at your most useful when you are working jointly with other groups, and other agencies and services. They may also have much to offer you, from premises or technical resources to specialist skills. The relationships you form may involve financial transactions (for example, health agencies which might pay you to broadcast their message) or they may be mutually beneficial arrangements (e.g. the local theatre group with whom you can co-produce radio drama). These groups, institutions and services are what we call your 'partners.'

How you approach them and get them involved will depend entirely on the circumstances, but often it will start off with something as simple as a phone call explaining who you are and what you want to do. You may be astonished at how little persuasion is required. After all, you have as much to offer them as they have to offer you (see p193). The other sure-fire way to get a group involved is to invite them in for an interview - there's nothing like seeing, hearing and feeling community radio to make converts.

The nature of your partners will go a long way towards shaping the eventual nature of your radio station. In particular, they will be the key factors in determining what forms your social gain will take - that is, how you will enable your community to improve itself. For example, if your radio station has committed itself to working with the elderly, you will want and need a lot of agencies, services and community

groups who work with the elderly as partners. Whatever the nature of your community, top of the list of the partners you need is likely to be an education and training partner, typically a further education college. This should be an institution that can access funds from the Learning and Skills Council, which will enable your station to earn payments for the accredited training you will do (see p167-169).

High on your list should also be statutory/mainstream services. Many of these are under the control of your local authority. Get the council on your side and doors will open. Fail to do so and you might be in for a very rough ride. Except in the most unlikely circumstances, you should not meet any council opposition. As a community radio station you have so much to offer them - your problem is more likely to be keeping them at bay and maintaining your independence. You must convince your service providers that they need you and that they don't need to control you (see p192).

Precisely which statutory agencies you bring on board will depend on your community, but you should think of contacting education authorities, housing providers, health authorities, hospitals, health centres and health campaigns, community police officers, schools, colleges, youth services and of course local regeneration and development agencies.

You may also want to think about involving the great and the good of your community. This may include MPs, councillors, ethnic and religious community leaders, and the other big players in local civic life. But be very careful of who you are involving yourself with. You should know your community well enough to find out the local political and personal rivalries. Avoid finding yourself becoming a political football or battlefield. In some circumstances it may be wiser to avoid the traditional 'gatekeepers of the community', find your own alternative routes and go to the movers and shakers when you have something to offer them - such as a 10km wide soap-box. Politicians can also be held at bay, if need be, by the Ofcom rules about involvement of political parties in running stations.

Be prepared for some complex community politics. In areas of large and complex cultural and ethnic

diversity, be ready for delicate political and cultural rivalries between and even within particular ethnic or religious groups. Within ALL FM's area, for example, there is a population of some 24,000 people of Pakistani origin. But just within that community there are many smaller social groups based on religious, class, political or geographical bonds, and these groups won't always agree.

Faith representation in your community group is a controversial issue. Some radio groups are based almost entirely upon religious faith. Others forbid religious involvement altogether. There is no right or wrong approach. However, working relationships with churches, mosques, synagogues and temples can form powerful bonds with large sections of the community, both as listeners and volunteers. They can be a valuable resource for even the most secularly-minded project. A happy medium may be to allow faith groups to participate, but with a firm 'no preaching' rule (see p159-160).

The local business community should be considered and represented – and hopefully they will want to work with you to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility. The nature of your station will probably determine whether business involvement is in the shape of the local shopkeeper or the Chamber of Commerce. Think about relationships with the major local employers and don't forget the less usual suspects e.g. local utilities companies need to be able to communicate with their customers. Local trade union branches are likely to be very supportive, and can be financially generous. Tenants' groups are another important link to the community.

Perhaps the most useful partners for any community radio station are local schools. Not only can you offer them enormous benefits, which are reflected in your social gain achievements (see p170) but also they are an enormously satisfying way to use community radio. The benefits are fast and obvious to see. Moreover they are a fantastic way to reach new listeners. For every school with its own radio show, that will mean hundreds of children urging their parents to tune the family radio to your frequency. In return, schools are now obliged to pursue broader community development. You offer the perfect arena.

VOXBOX 2.02

***“When we first got involved in Wythenshawe FM, I thought it might be a great way of letting people know what's going on in the school, and what a busy active school we are. You might think that nobody listens to small community radio stations but then our children went over there and did a short show made up of interviews with local people, people from the school and so on. The next day I went to the bank and I met someone who'd been listening to it, and then I met a parent who works in a local factory and they'd had it on in there. You reach a lot more people than you think.*”**

The children were writing down scripts, doing research, devising interview questions, it is all good for their communications skills. And it makes a huge difference to their confidence to confront a different world of ICT and mass communications.”

John Gretton, Head Teacher, St Anthony's RC Primary School, Wythenshawe

With so many agencies wishing to become involved in your station, there is a danger you might lose your own identity. This is yet another balancing act you need to perform. In all dealings with potential partners, you have to be clear that they are entering into a partnership to make community radio – they are not simply buying your airtime or resources as a platform for their propaganda. If they wish to buy advertising or airtime, that is one thing (see p190), but if they are to be true partners it is much better that they join in with the work and the fun. They should get their hands dirty at the station, like every other participant. If the local community police officers want a radio show, for example, they should use it as an arena for community discussion and debate, not just for public information – it should be 'Anytown FM' not 'Cop FM'. If they need persuading, ask them to consider which show would get more response. They should also train, prepare and work hard to make it the best radio show they can, exactly as would be expected of any other volunteer.

And in particular beware of becoming overwhelmed by statutory services. You could easily find yourself becoming 'Town Hall FM', which would be in no one's

interest. One of the best pieces of advice we ever received was from a senior council officer, a friend and supporter of Radio Regen, who's known for his sharp mind as he is for his earthy vocabulary. As we were preparing to go on air with a project he had commissioned, he said this: 'Whatever you do, don't make it sound like the f***ing Council'. He, like anyone with common sense, knew that such a station sound would have listeners tuning out in droves.

CRIB SHEET

Your key partners:

- Should include a training partner such as a college
- May also include council departments, public services, support agencies, community groups, schools, businesses etc
- Should play an active part in your station
- Must recognise that your strength is in being you and mustn't try to take over

Resources

As you progress, you will increasingly find yourself in need of resources. While you may be able to begin your training using the facilities of your partner college, for example, sooner or later you are going to need your own material resources. These include basic radio equipment which can be used to conduct your own training and which you can use for your first RSLs (see p29).

Eventually you will want to be the proud owner of an Aladdin's Cave of technology (see Chapter 4). But for now you will probably have to scabble your equipment together. Be shameless, ask local schools, colleges, recording studios, audio shops, musicians, professional DJs etc for spare equipment they have lying around, and you could soon find yourself with a basic set up of mixer, turntables, CD players and microphones, enough for your initial training and your first RSL. Sooner or later you will also have to buy your own transmitter. Other studio equipment can be cobbled together, but a transmitter must be dependable and not put you in danger of inadvertently breaching the Ofcom Engineering Code (see p48). It is a worthwhile investment.

The bigger challenge is finding premises. You need an office, and if possible a training studio too. Preferably it should be somewhere volunteers can come and go at will, so definitely not in someone's private residence. If you can find somewhere suitable to hold a broadcast studio, then so much the better, but that shouldn't be your priority yet. You will also need some basic office equipment – computer, phone, and don't forget the kettle.

CRIB SHEET

Your group will need:

- Shameless blagging skills
- Studio and transmission equipment
- Premises, office equipment and a kettle

Legal matters

As a voluntary organisation, whether or not you are employing staff, you have a number of legal obligations that must be met. The laws are mostly there to protect your volunteers and staff i.e. you have not only moral obligations but legal ones too. Your most immediate concerns should be:

- Equal opportunities in employment practices (including recruiting volunteers);
- Equal opportunities in provision of services;
- Employment law;
- Health and safety;
- Insurance (especially employer's liability insurance).

We are not legal experts, and it would be irresponsible of us to offer legal advice here. Ideally you should seek professional legal advice on every aspect of your start-up procedures, but at the very least study the excellent advice in Sandy Adirondack and James Sinclair Taylor's 'Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook' and the other references provided at the end of this chapter.

With the caveat that this is not legal but practical advice, we will pay passing regard to perhaps the most important of these issues: health and safety.

Health and Safety

As soon as you have premises, whether temporary or permanent, you need to instigate a health and safety

policy. This is not dry pedantry, it's about stopping people getting hurt and suing you. The correct procedure to establish such a policy is as follows:

- Carry out a risk assessment to identify risks to employees, volunteers, members of the public and anyone else who may enter your premises;
- Conduct a specific risk assessment for employees or volunteers below the age of 18, if applicable;
- Use the results of your assessment to design a strategy to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety;
- Formalise this into a health and safety policy;
- Register your organisation with your local Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or local authority environmental health department;
- Display an HSE 'Health and Safety Law' poster in a prominent place.

The HSE publishes a vast number of pamphlets and other sources of guidance towards good health and safety practices.

CRIB SHEET

Your legal obligations:

- Are wide-ranging and paramount
- Should be explained to you by a lawyer
- Include your health and safety practices

Your first RSL

Preparing

Planning, preparation and organisation are all necessary, but let's remember why we are doing this. Getting your community broadcasting to your community is what it is all about.

Getting on air is surprisingly easy. All you need to do is go to Ofcom's website, download an application form for a Restricted Service Licence and you are away. RSLs are a close relative of community radio licences. They are granted to organisations to broadcast for up to 28 days with very localised transmissions, and are often used for special events, such as cultural festivals. Their other specific purpose is to allow groups who may wish to apply for another type of licence (either commercial or community) to have a trial period, either for training



or market research purposes. In other words, RSLs are meant for people just like you. They can be booked up to a year in advance, and except at rare busy times (notably Ramadan) they are allocated on the basis of first-come first-served.

The fees involved in all the necessary licences will vary from broadcast to broadcast, but including copyright payments, they will be in the region of £4,200 for the full 28 days (or around £150 for each day that you broadcast). As we shall explain later in this chapter, RSLs are exhausting, and we would strongly advise that your first RSL periods should only be for three or four days. As your skills, confidence and experience grow, gradually build up the length of your licences.

One unfortunate consequence of the granting of community licences is that there will now be fewer frequencies available for RSLs. That said, Ofcom are committed to the principle of RSLs, and promise to continue offering as many as they can. Availability will differ by area and time of year.

Your RSL broadcasts will serve three main purposes:

- To raise the profile of your station and attract more partners and volunteers;
- To give your group experience on and off air;
- To give your group motivation and achievements.

You will need to find a suitable location to broadcast from. While you may have space in your office, it is highly advisable for you to be as visible as possible. The ideal studio for a community group's RSL is in the biggest shop window on the busiest street corner of your community. You want thousands of passers-by to see you are there and rush home to tune in their radios. Even better, you want them to rush in off the street and ask how they can join in.

Make sure the venue you choose is not only visible but also accessible (especially for those with disabilities – you might be legally obliged to make provision).

It must also have excellent public transport links. In multicultural communities it should be culturally sensitive – maybe not above a butcher’s shop, betting shop, massage parlour or pub, for example. Radio Regen’s many RSL broadcasts have been held with varying success in very different locations. The lessons that we have learnt include:

- Charity shops/cafés may let you sit in their windows;
- Theatre foyers are good;
- Libraries are great until the shushing starts;
- Leisure centres can be good;
- Unless they have a bar and snooker table.

Currently, a group can hold an RSL twice in any one year, plus a third time if it is to cover a specific event and doesn’t sound like your other two stations. So you could in theory be broadcasting for three months of the year before you need to even think about applying for your permanent community radio licence.

Make sure your broadcasts are well publicised. If you are only on air for a few days you can’t hope that people will just find you on the dial. Organise leaflets and flyers. Aim for coverage in your local newspapers (and make sure that they write about you before you broadcast, not just after). Use all the marketing and public relation skills you can muster (see p71-73).

Also remember, please, that this is not just about radio. To get a full time licence you have to be able to prove that you can deliver social gain. Your first RSL might deliver stacks of it but if you’ve neglected to gather the evidence that you trained twelve refugees, three primary schools and a ballroom dancing team, then you might as well have not bothered. The regulator and the funders can only support what you can prove you have done, so design those monitoring forms and ensure that someone is there to get them filled in and signed from Day 1.

CRIB SHEET

To organise an RSL you need:

- To get through a simple application process and pay ‘the man’
- To find suitable premises to broadcast
- Lots of advance publicity

On air at last

Maybe your first RSL broadcast will be the very model of project management. Perhaps it will be planned to the finest detail, weeks in advance, rehearsed to perfection and pulled off without a hitch. Perhaps all your organisers and volunteers will drift through the days on air in a state of Zen-like calm. Perhaps. But we doubt it.

In our experience the weeks leading up to your first RSL broadcast will be marked by a state of rising excitement as contributors frantically plan, abandon and totally re-design their output. Community partners will be pestering you about their shows and pre-recorded messages. The agencies which ignored your letters six months ago will begin to realise what they are missing out on and suddenly start phoning and demanding airtime. Civic dignitaries are sniffing around with a combination of curiosity and suspicion. As the adrenaline begins pumping you’ll be sleeping too little and drinking too much, while your friends and family haven’t seen you for so long that they’ve sent out a St Bernard.

In the few days before the broadcast, tempers will begin to fray and panic set in as fuses blow in equipment and personnel alike. Someone will drop a CD player while taking it out of the van. Two of your most valuable group members will have an enormous argument about who ate the last jaffa cake and one will storm out in a barrage of obscenity just as the vicar drops by to say hello. Then right at the point when you think it can’t get any worse, the clock ticks down to the big moment, the red light switches on, and the words ON AIR light up your studio. At which point things start to get really hairy.

The speech and music you are broadcasting will of course depend on your community, but look for programming that will give you the maximum contact with the largest chunk of your community. Get schools involved. Conduct vox pop interviews on the street, make yourself as visible as possible. Hold debates about controversial community issues. Get a local celebrity along if you can. Be as ambitious as your imaginations, resources and budgets allow. When you are only on air for a short

VOXBOX 2.03

“We had so many mad moments doing RSLs. I remember we had an MC-type presenter who swore everytime he spoke. I kept saying to him look, when you go on air, you can’t swear, and he promised me over and over that he’d be all right.

So when we go on air, we give him the mic, and he says: ‘Yo this is MC Sugar, welcome to Wythenshawe FM community radio on 87 point Fing 9.’***

And although obviously you can’t have the swearing, it’s those kinds of personalities who make community radio what it is. If you try to make your station sound like another commercial station it will lose that, those personalities that you won’t find anywhere else.”

*Christine Brennan, Station Manager,
Wythenshawe FM, Manchester*

time, you will find your schedules fill up amazingly easily. Use every possible gap between records to mention your station name and tell people what you do. Your RSL is your showcase to your community.

When you are on air, time will flash by in a blur. You will be surrounded by enthusiastic, energetic characters who are all bubbling with excitement, and you will find it hard to leave the studio. You may well end up sleeping on the floor of the studio, if you sleep at all. You will experience moments of wild elation and a sense of rare accomplishment.

CRIB SHEET

Your RSL should:

- **Involve as much of the community as possible**
- **Be exhausting, exhilarating and inspiring**
- **End with you handing out anti-depressants to the team to cope with the ‘downer’**

After the storm

Most community radio veterans will agree that RSLs offer more laughter, fun and sheer thrills than any other



part of the community radio experience. The time limits focus everyone’s attention and knowing that it will soon end makes it feel extra special while it is happening. The most difficult part of running an RSL broadcast is maintaining that excitement and enthusiasm in the days and weeks afterwards.

It is well worth holding a de-briefing session a week or so after you go off air. You’ll probably be feeling the post-RSL slump, a combination of exhaustion and anti-climax. It may be hard to want to think about going to another meeting. So make it fun. Lay on cakes. Indulge in some rampant back-slapping. Tell everyone how brilliant they were. Take stock of your achievements and congratulate yourselves. If need be you should also review what went wrong, but ensure it is done without any finger pointing or blame. If there’s been some kind of disaster, try to work out where your systems went wrong, not the individuals.

Ask yourself how well your RSL reflected and represented your community. How well did you involve the community? Did you read out an announcement about the Women’s Institute Bring & Buy Sale, or did you get the ladies from the WI to learn how to edit their own report? Did you report on the community, from the community or as the community?

And most importantly, you need to remind yourself of your targets as a group. What are you going to do next? Are you going to plan for your full-time licence or run another RSL? You don’t want to dally too long or you might miss your chance (see p35-36). Let everyone discuss it. In the meantime you can plan other activities that the volunteers can undertake with their new skills. They could prepare an audio newsletter on CD every month, for example. Away from the studio there is fund-raising, promotional

events, administration, training, professional development for staff or potential staff, plenty of tasks to be getting on with.

One popular option is to run an internet radio station. While you may not catch many listeners, it does have the huge advantage that your station will run more or less exactly as it would if it were broadcasting on an FM frequency, allowing you to set up the perfect structures for a successful community radio station. Ryedale and Drystone Radio are two good examples.

VOXBOX 2.04

“It’s been very important for us to keep up activities between RSLs, particularly with on-line webstreaming. It keeps our profile up within the community, it keeps getting new people involved, so it is important for our growth. We always do some special projects, for example for International Women’s Day or International Day Against Racism.

But it is no substitute for RSLs. People get a buzz about FM broadcasts, they create their own community of listeners and volunteers – everybody’s got a radio in the house somewhere.”

Sangita Basudev, Project Manager, Sheffield Live!

Whatever you do, you should have more than half an eye on the Ofcom regulations for a full-time community radio station. When you come to apply for your full-time licence they will want to see your track record. So if you are going to claim you will create social gain, then you’ll need to have started making that happen. If you want to be a community radio station then you’ll need to behave like one. In other words, look at the mandatory obligations for social gain (p17), work out how you can fulfil them and prove that you have done so.

Some community radio groups will be happy to run an occasional RSL and have no great wish to expand beyond that. But our experience is that groups which start as the pet project of a single enthusiast can soon gather their own momentum.

As volunteers pick up experience and enthusiasm, as they see the benefits a station could bring to their communities, persuading the genie to get back in the bottle is never an easy task.

CRIB SHEET

After your successful RSL you should:

- Get some sleep
- Take stock, congratulate yourselves, plan your next move
- offer your volunteers continuing support and development
- Keep busy
- Begin to operate as if you are a full-time station

Further reading and links

Getting a group together, resources etc.

Just About Managing? Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups (4th edition). Sandy Adirondack (London Voluntary Service Council, 2005)

www.resourcecentre.org.uk

www.askncvo.org.uk

www.candoexchange.org

Legal matters

The Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook. Sandy Adirondack and James Sinclair Taylor (Directory of Social Change, 2001)

Voluntary But Not Amateur: A guide to the law (7th edition). Ruth Hayes and Jacki Reason (London Voluntary Service Council, 2004)

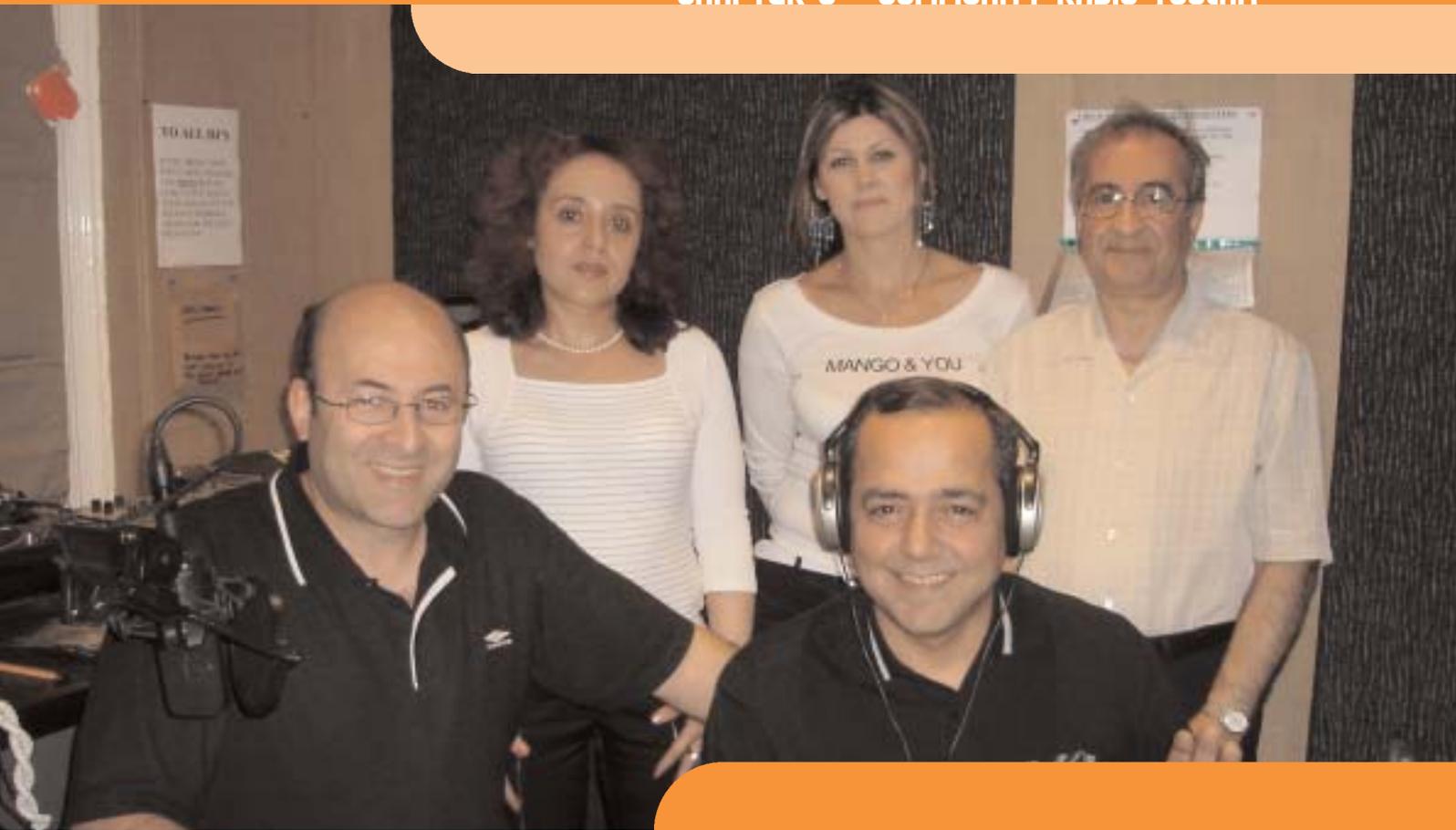
www.sandy-a.co.uk

www.volresource.org.uk

Health and Safety

The Health & Safety Handbook for Voluntary & Community Organisations (2nd edition). Al Hinde and Charlie Kavanagh (Directory of Social Change, 2001)

www.hse.gov.uk



APPLYING FOR YOUR LICENCE

About the licence

When to apply

What's in the form?

How to apply

Top tips



APPLYING FOR YOUR LICENCE

Few prospects in community radio are less appealing than filling in an application for a full-time community radio licence. By the time you've visited the Ofcom website then downloaded and printed out the document (currently 35 pages plus 20 pages of accompanying notes and 16 pages of legal appendices) you may well have lost the will to apply, if not the will to live. You really need not panic.

If you are ready to run a community radio station, then completing the form should be a straightforward (if exhausting) process.

It is worth remembering how licensed community radio came into existence in the United Kingdom. No Government minister woke up suddenly with a burning passion to initiate it. Instead there was a lengthy process of lobbying and campaigning by the community media sector. This persuaded key politicians and officials that licensing radio stations could offer sustainable social improvements at little to no cost to the Government, and without causing financial damage to the commercial radio industry.

It was community radio activists who told politicians what community radio is, and what it can do. The Radio Authority, Ofcom and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport investigated our claims and with a handful of exceptions they accepted what they were told. The licence application form reflects that lobbying process. With the notable exception of what many feel to be the onerous protection given to small commercial stations, almost everything in it is there because the community radio sector has said that it should be there.

We, as the activists and creators of community radio, need the application form to be detailed. Community radio is a precious gift and if it is to flourish we need to cherish it and protect it. We need to ensure that community radio is used properly to offer access to the excluded, diversity to the airwaves and tangible benefits to the community, rather than simply as a tool of vanity or self-interest. Community radio frequencies are too valuable a resource to be wasted on the greedy, the frivolous or the incompetent.

When Ofcom look at your form they are using it to make three decisions:

- Does what you are proposing match the legal definition of community radio?
- Is your group in a position to run a community radio station for five years?
- If there are more applications for licences in an area than there are frequencies available, would yours make the best community radio project?

In other words you must prove yourself on two fronts: against the basic standards that must be met by all community radio stations, and against rival groups from your own and neighbouring geographical areas. It is the latter which is the bigger potential hurdle for applicants. You could fill in an application that is comfortably good enough for Ofcom on its own terms, but still lose out to a better bid from another group that wants to broadcast to a different community on the same wavelength. While you shouldn't panic about your application, equally you should not take it lightly. Filling in the form could be the single most important action you ever undertake with a community radio project.

Of course, Ofcom will have to check that there is a frequency available for you. Sadly, in September 2004 the Government announced that where there is a small commercial radio station in an area, community radio stations will either not be licensed or will only be licensed with restrictions on advertising (Factbox 3:01) Obviously you should check frequency availability before you apply – the list of nearly 100 excluded areas is on the websites of Ofcom and the CMA.

FACTBOX 3.01***No go zones for community radio***

In September 2004 the Government ruled that Ofcom could not license community radio stations if the coverage area for the proposed station overlaps by 50% or more with a commercial radio station that has a population of less than 50,000 adults within its measured coverage area (MCA).

If the proposed area of coverage overlaps by 50% or more with a commercial station with an MCA containing between 50,000 and 150,000 adults, Ofcom must include conditions prohibiting commercial advertising and sponsorship. This could apply even if the community radio station was licensed before the commercial station.

If you've found it hard to follow the above explanations, don't worry, you only need to refer to the list on Ofcom's website.

Also note that some of these restrictions may change subsequent to the review of community radio licensing planned for 2007 – check www.commedia.org.uk and www.communityradiotoolkit.net for details.

It may also be worth investigating which other community radio groups are active in your area. If your fledgling radio project is going to be competing against a long-running, well-established, well-funded community radio station or group, you may wish to think about how your talents and ideas could be incorporated within the bigger project (or if you could take them elsewhere), rather than wasting the £600 fee on a proposal with little realistic chance of success. If you think you are on a par with a possible rival group it has to make sense to talk to them about a partnership or merger, as it is possible that only one of you will get a licence.

The application form is testing because we need to be tested, and the challenge is a fair one. It is written mostly in plain English, there are no trick questions, and there is free advice to be had. If you are ready to run a community radio station you will certainly be

ready to fill in the application. Furthermore, the form can itself be considered a useful guide to what is expected of you as a community radio station. If you approach the process in a sensible manner, the form should be your friend.

The frequency of frequencies

The other consideration before you put pen to paper or finger to keyboard is frequency availability. The availability spectrum runs from London where things are so squeezed that there might not be any other frequencies available after this year's application round, through the other big cities (some of which might get hit with the same moratorium), to small cities, towns and villages where frequencies are more readily available. This may be incredibly unfair on your group if you are based in a big city – if you are so affected join the CMA and lobby to increase frequency availability.

That's not to say that every village can get a wavelength, since the distance between stations with the same frequency needs to be pretty large – the nearest other community radio group might be 50 miles away but you may still be bidding for the same frequency. Still, the less built-up your area is the higher chance you have of getting a frequency. The 'rub' in all of these considerations is that not even Ofcom know whether you'll be bidding for the same frequency as your far away neighbours, or if there are two, five or ten frequencies available for your area. So, ponder these factors, stick your finger in the air and get writing.

When should I apply?

As with just about everything else in community radio, timing your application is a delicate balancing act. On the one hand you do not want to apply before you are ready. You must have an active community or radio group up and running, you must have registered yourselves as a 'body corporate' (or have evidence that you are in the process of doing so) (see p 91), and you must have gained enough experience to make your application realistic. On the other hand, in many areas of the country available frequencies are scarce.

Licences last for five years. You could easily spend many years getting your funding perfectly in place, training up your staff and volunteers and building solid bridges within your community. But in the meantime, a brash, flash project with a fraction of your credibility but enough potential to satisfy Ofcom could nip in and win a community licence uncontested. It could be five years before you could apply again, and by that time your rivals will probably have built up a solid track record of their own, with all the added advantages of being an established broadcaster. You may never get your licence.

Helpfully, Ofcom has specified that a community licence can be applied for with a starting broadcast date of up to two years after the licence is awarded. So stations awarded a five-year licence in 2005 could delay the start of broadcasting until 2007 without having to shorten their licence period i.e. their licences could be valid until 2012. Our advice would be to use this window, run a few RSLs as quickly as you can and then get your application in at the first opportunity with a later starting date if necessary.

CRIB SHEET

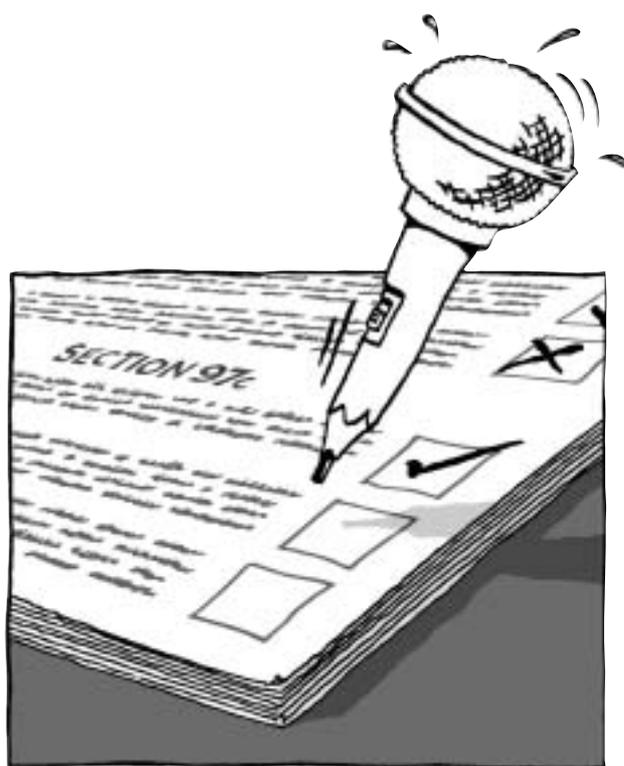
The licence application form:

- Is there to ensure you will do a good job of delivering community radio
- Is not as difficult to complete as you might think
- Shouldn't be left too late. The early bird catches the licence

What's in the form?

The current form has ten sections, each of which is clearly explained both on the form itself and in the accompanying notes of guidance.

1. **Opening statement.** This short introductory statement summarises your community, the objectives of your station and your broadcasting philosophy. This is the first impression you will make, and it is vital you make a good one. You have a few paragraphs to explain why the following pages will add up to the most exciting, necessary and important application ever to have been submitted, while simultaneously radiating good organisation, professionalism and efficiency. Spend a long time writing this statement, crafting it with utmost care. It might be an idea to write this at the end – then you will have a better feel for the strengths of your application.
2. **About your organisation.** This section asks you to declare whether you are a company or a registered charity. There are no other options. If you are some other form of organisation or institution, such as a club or school, then you will need to register a separate company before applying for your licence (see p91).
3. **Ownership.** Who owns your organisation? Legally the answer is the company directors. In this section of the form you must tell Ofcom about your board, who they are, their relevant experience and their home contact details. Ofcom is more interested in the track record of the named individuals than they are in the track record of the company, so if your company is new and untested but the board have extensive experience in the field, Ofcom should be suitably impressed.
4. **Management.** How is your station to be managed? What staff will you employ? Who are your management committee or steering group? Ofcom wants to know that your project will be run competently, but also that your management is representative of the community it is claiming to serve. If your group currently lacks in areas of expertise or representation, you should explain how you intend to plug those gaps through training or recruitment.
5. **Community to be served.** Ofcom specifically defines a community as being either a community of place or a community of interest. They have shown that they are willing to grant licences to relatively small communities of interest. However in the 'New Voices' evaluation of the 'Access Radio' pilot stations for Ofcom, Professor Anthony Everitt notes that a community of interest can often be served by a larger community of place, and it is our position at Radio Regen that communities of place generally offer better social



Don't put off your form-filling until the last minute.

gain than communities of interest (see p13). Ofcom has recently stated that it doesn't differentiate between rival applications from communities of place and communities of interest. Nonetheless, if you offer to deliver benefits to only one section of a community, you risk losing out to another bid which promises to deliver benefits to the whole community.

You will need to furnish this chapter with demographics and social statistics. You should explain in detail who your community is, what their particular problems are and what their needs may be. Back up your statements with figures from the National Census, local authorities or other statistical resources – but a street by street breakdown of your area might be counter-productive. Your local library, local authority or National Statistics websites should give you all the help you need. You will also need to offer evidence of local demand and support for your proposal but no petitions!

6. Social gain, accountability and access to station.

While every section in the application form is important, it is the quality of your promises on social gain that could make or break your application. The form asks you to explain how you will assess and meet your community's needs, including social inclusion, training, access to the airwaves and all the other benefits which

community radio is obliged and expected to bring (see p17). You must also state how you will ensure that members of your community can become involved in the management of the station, and how it can be sure that you are accountable to the community you serve.

This section is your opportunity to display your wide-ranging links to the community through community groups, schools, agencies and so on. It is in the nature of community radio that bids from economically and socially disadvantaged communities offer greater opportunity for social gain than bids from comparatively wealthy communities. Nevertheless your application should stress the areas in which your project can make the biggest practical differences. You won't get a licence out of sympathy.

- 7. Programming.** What will you be broadcasting? Ofcom's responsibilities include securing diversity of broadcasting and they are looking to the community radio sector to help provide it. This doesn't mean that you can't provide material (such as pop music in all its many forms) that is already being provided elsewhere, but it does mean you should be delivering it in a different way, or reaching a different audience. Programming which is truly unique in your location (such as foreign language broadcasting or specialist music/interest shows) will be looked upon favourably.

In broad terms, Ofcom are likely to give greater weight to access and social gain issues than they are to quality of programming. A roster of paid professional broadcasters making Sony Award-winning radio on a so-called community station will not impress them. Diversity, originality and the practical usefulness of programming are favoured above production values. Likewise, you will have to declare how many hours of live radio you expect to broadcast each week, as against pre-recorded shows and automated output. With commercial stations broadcasting pre-recorded shows is considered a negative factor – stations are expected to mostly broadcast live. However Ofcom is pragmatic about the issue in relation to community radio stations, accepting that pre-

recording can be an efficient use of limited resources and that much of a station's most useful work may be conducted off air.

8. **Finance.** How are you to be funded? Ofcom has a duty to consider the viability of any new radio service, so it's important to demonstrate that you've thought about financial planning. This section may look daunting, with its columns of budgets and projected expenditure, but really you (or your finance person) should have most of the information at your fingertips already. If you don't, you will soon have to assemble it, as similar information will be required by innumerable funding agencies and auditors. If the process of completing this section of the form is a real test for you, remember that getting your budgets in order is time well spent.

Ofcom requires that where advertising and programme sponsorship are permitted, this income must be less than 50% of your annual turnover. Sponsorship of non-broadcast activities is not included in the 50% rule, nor are primarily philanthropic donations. Ofcom also states that no more than 50% of your funding can come from any single source.

Ofcom will not expect you to be flush with cash. They are experienced enough to know that community radio is often a bootstraps operation. Nor will they expect you to have all your funding already in place. However they do want to see that you are realistic in regard to your budgets and your financial planning. It is also true that if they were deciding between two bids, everything else being equal they would be likely to favour the one that had more secure long-term funding.

At the time of writing – with Ofcom part way through sifting the first round of applicants – one unofficial comment on reasons for failure was that applicants were either wildly generous or too penny pinching with their budgets. The key word is realism.

9. **Engineering.** How are you going to broadcast? Ofcom is only really interested in your transmission equipment (see p54). What sort of transmitter is it, and where exactly are you going to put it? They even want a photograph. The purpose is to allow their technical specialists to calculate which frequency might be available to you, and to ensure that you can broadcast without endangering the signals of other radio stations and wireless telecommunications.
10. **Declaration.** Really a checklist of everything you should have stated in your application or included as additional material. You must also verify that you have paid your non-returnable fee of £600. Please note that the money must be in Ofcom's bank account before the application deadline – in other words your cheque must have cleared before this deadline.

CRIB SHEET

The licence application form:

- Is in ten sections
- Really isn't so scary when you break it down

Filling in your form: background information

Who will be judging your application?

Your form will be read and considered by the Radio Licensing Committee, a small team of experts who specialise in areas such as programming and finance. This Committee is currently guided by Ofcom's resident community radio specialists Soo Williams and Lawrie Hallett, both of whom have been highly supportive of the community radio sector. They will not be trying to catch you out or looking for excuses to block your licence out of spite. They want you to succeed, and if you make an honest factual mistake or miss something small out from your application they are likely to contact you for the necessary information rather than throwing your form in the bin with the cackle of a pantomime villain. Of course, that's not to say that errors and sloppiness in your application will not reflect on your abilities to run a station. They may well do.

How will they judge it?

The Ofcom group will first assess your application and then, if they think you deserve a licence, they'll go looking for a frequency for you to broadcast on. A high priority will be to ensure that you meet the requirements for mandatory social gain [see p17]. In other words that you are promising to deliver tangible improvements to people's lives and offer access to the airwaves to those excluded elsewhere. They will also confirm that you are structured as a non-profit company and that you are in some way representative of the community you hope to serve.

If you fail to meet any of the above requirements, it would actually be against the law for Ofcom to give you a licence, however nicely you might ask. So don't waste their time. If you do meet them, then Ofcom is legally permitted to give you a licence, which is not to say they will. They may be unconvinced by your financial plans or your management structure, or they may think that the community you represent is not large enough or willing enough to sustain your plans. But if your application is basically sound, if your licence is refused it will most probably be because there is another bid in your locality that the regulator prefers.

How will they compare rival bids?

At present, Ofcom has no plans to publish scores or detailed breakdowns regarding its decisions. However Ofcom is striving to improve transparency in their decisions, so something like this may yet come, and there is a new undertaking that a letter outlining the basic reasons for refusal is sent to any unsuccessful applicant. We also hope to present the transcript of Ofcom's feedback on the 2004/2005 process at the Community FM 2005 conference and on this book's website by the end of November 2005.

For the time being we must work with some assumptions. The most important factors are likely to include the quality of your promises on social gain, programming and ability to deliver. Which proposal would bring the greatest improvements to the lives of the most people? Other factors will be how well structured the organisation is, how much confidence Ofcom has in the personnel involved, and so on. Often the relative merits of different bids will be highly subjective and impossible to quantify. The bid that

wins could be the one which was the most persuasive to the panel. In other words, if everything else is roughly equal, the licence may go to the applicant who best presents and phrases their application.

When will you know if you've succeeded?

At present Ofcom is making the easiest decisions first. So in the round of applications submitted in November 2004, the first licence to be granted was for Forest of Dean Radio, an established and acclaimed Medium Wave community radio station in Gloucestershire (see p198) where there were no other applicants. Other decisions took considerably longer, as the claims and merits of rival applicants were considered. Ofcom will not commit itself to a decision date, so depending on the nature and location of your bid it could take anything from around three to nine months or more. The expectation at present is that Ofcom will give only the broadest explanations for its decisions. So if the application is unsuccessful they may say for example that there was no frequency available, or that the application failed to demonstrate mandatory social gain requirements. The assessors will not be drawn into detail or debate about decisions.

CRIB SHEET
 Your application will be judged:

- By expert assessors who are on your side
- Subjectively by real people, rather than by computer or tick box
- Quickly or slowly or somewhere in between

Filling in your form: practical tips

Make sure someone is responsible

While it may be possible to apply for a licence by committee, the potential for disaster is enormous. If one person fails to do their duties properly the whole application could collapse. While it may be that some members of your team are better placed to complete different sections of the form, make sure there is one person (usually the station manager or equivalent) with whom the buck will stop.

VOXBOX 3.02

“It’s a very daunting process. You’ve got these 35 blank pages, which increase to around 55 when you’ve filled them in. You’ve got to break it down into smaller pieces. Then it’s not so daunting. I booked three weeks clear in my diary and at the end of that it was written. So it wasn’t something that was done over a massive period of time, but equally it’s not going to be done in an afternoon.

“We finally submitted it about 30 mins before the deadline. It’s the fine-tuning of it – sending it back and forward between ourselves, quibbling about words. We could have gone on forever. Eventually you have to just give up and press ‘send’ “.

*Alex Green, Station Manager,
ALL FM, Manchester*

Start early, finish early

It is envisaged that every year Ofcom will invite new applications for community radio licences, and that there will then be a period of 12 weeks to the closing deadline. In 2004/5, the applicants faced a tough task since the forms were only published when the invitation was announced. Future applicants have the advantage of seeing the forms with plenty of time to prepare, although the paperwork may change as Ofcom develops its approach to licensing. Tedious paperwork tends to be put off until the last minute, but amazingly it doesn’t get any easier as the deadline approaches. Assume the process of completing the form will take you several weeks (see Voxbox 3.02). If you finish it earlier, then you have time to fine-tune the details before the deadline, rather than submitting a hasty, error-strewn application. We are aware of more than one well-established, ambitious, apparently well-organised community radio group that has failed to get its application in before the deadline. Others have faced enormous stress as they have realised that they need to form a registered company a few days before the deadline, for example, as they hadn’t read the form until the final week.

Do your background reading first

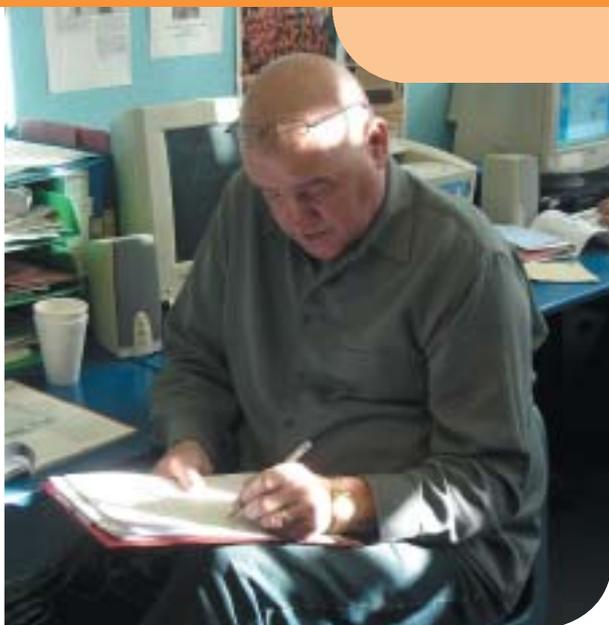
As soon as you even begin to contemplate applying for a full time licence, begin to do your homework. Read through the application form and guidance notes carefully. Then read them again. Then read the New Voices report, read everything on www.commedia.org.uk, www.communityradiotoolkit.net and www.communityfm.net. Then go to the Ofcom on-line archive and read some examples of successful bids. Keep reading them until you start spouting training budget projections and transmitter wattages in your sleep. Once you are convinced you understand absolutely everything that you are being asked for, then you should begin to think about filling in the form.

Find some peace

Community radio stations are often chaotic, noisy places with volunteers and colleagues placing continual demands on your attention. Although you will need access to your office records and files, it is worth trying finding a room where you can hide from unwelcome visitors and phone calls, or completing as much of the application as possible elsewhere – at home, a library or wherever suits you.

Send it to Ofcom the way they want it

Your application is to be completed on a computer using the same ‘rich text format’ document which you download from the Ofcom website. Do not print it out and write in your answers by hand. When you submit, you can send it by post if you must but Ofcom’s stated preference is that you send it by e-mail, so that is what you should do. It is best to assume there will be a server crash at the last minute, so be wary of holding off until the last five minutes – or even the last few hours. All accompanying documents should be posted in plenty of time – those too should have arrived before the deadline. Your £600 cheque must have cleared before the date too, so pay early. Please note that the Ofcom server did slow down on the last day of submissions in 2004 – read and be warned.



Use the same style of English as Ofcom use

If you read the form and the guidance notes, you will notice that Ofcom use plain, simple vocabulary where possible. They don't try to make things sound more complicated than they are. Their documents are written in an accessible yet formal style, they certainly don't try to be funny or use slang or trivial turns of phrase. Take that as your guide.

Right you're English write

While Ofcom will assure you that it will not hold the occasional spelling or grammatical mistake against you, many people find nothing more irritating than persistent errors in English. Such mistakes can even change the meaning of your sentences. Take great care and get your application read by an experienced proof-reader before submitting. Bad English suggests an ill-prepared bid – inviting the panel to wonder what else you may have failed to check.

Write as much as you have to say

As a general guide, we would return to our mantra: the form is your friend. If there is a large box to be completed, it generally means they want a lot of information, if there is a smaller box they want less. You can continue your answers on another page, but only do so if you really need to. If you are especially proud of your achievements in getting access to the airwaves for under-represented sections of society, then you may wish to flesh out the relevant sections with plenty of hard facts, figures and examples. On the other hand if your performance in that area so far has been less than impressive, don't try to hoodwink the panel by padding out your form with spurious connections or complicated but meaningless statistical tables. Instead, use the space to explain what you plan to do to improve your access performance. Avoid adjectives unless in quotes from authoritative supporters.

Answer all the questions

There will be questions asked which clearly do not apply to you and your bid – if you are sure they don't apply to you, write in 'n/a' or something equivalent. And unless it is really obvious, explain exactly why the question doesn't apply to you. Do not leave any boxes blank – that way both you and the assessors are sure you haven't just failed to answer.

Answer the questions you are asked

Read the form carefully and make sure you've understood what you are being asked for. Then only write what is relevant. Don't go off on tangents or pad out your answers with irrelevant information.

Don't tell them everything

At several points the application form offers you the opportunity to add 'any other information'. Only tell them what they really need to know, and they don't need to know your shoe sizes. With very rare exceptions, all the information that Ofcom will use to make its decision has already been asked for on the form. Try to use the questions as they are presented to you. If Ofcom feels that it does want to know more about your proposal, they will write to you and ask for more information (but do check if this still applies in the year you intend to apply).

Don't send the kitchen sink

Whatever else the panel might use to judge your application, it won't be a set of scales. While there will be additional documents and materials you will want to include – and some which Ofcom asks for – resist the temptation to send a copy of every complimentary letter and email you have ever received, or every press cutting or photograph from the studio wall. It might well be worth including meaty testimonials from important key partners (e.g. if your council leader has written to you saying your RSLs have been marvellous and they don't know what they'd do without you) but make sure they carry real punch before you bother the Radio Licensing Committee with them. If you are desperate to include lots of letters, photos, cuttings etc. then scan them all onto one CDR and send that. Letter-writing campaigns by your listeners and volunteers in support of your bid are not welcome and may even be counter-productive.

Phone a friend

If you've been active in community radio for a while, you should have met community radio activists from around the country. Some of them will also be filling in the form at the same time as you, others may have done so in previous years. Unless they are your immediate competitors for a licence, they are likely to be highly sympathetic to your plight, and probably more than willing to talk you through whatever problem areas you may have. It could be a valuable phone call even if the other person is in a worse mess than you are and you end up offering an sympathetic shoulder to cry on.

Don't fib

You may wonder how many of the facts you provide will be checked. After all, if you are in Aberdeen or Plymouth submitting an application to distant bureaucrats, you might not expect them to know much about your community. You may even think that with a couple of hundred applications to consider, Ofcom assessors are unlikely to phone up all the agencies you name as your supportive partners to check if they have even heard of you. And you would probably be right. However, if you have any temptation to add a few embellishments you should think again. While Ofcom may not know much about your area, it may well be that you have local competitors who know just as much as you do. Any sensible applicant is going to look at their rivals' applications as soon as they are published on Ofcom's website. If Ofcom doesn't spot your little white lies, someone else is highly likely to point them in the right direction (see below). Needless to say, Ofcom will thoroughly investigate any possible dishonesty that is brought to its attention.

Don't make unrealistic promises

Obviously you are trying to impress Ofcom, and there may be a big temptation to overstate your ambitions and your abilities. While of course you can give your application an optimistic sheen, your promises of service delivery and social gain should all be fundamentally realistic and attainable. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, Ofcom are looking at many community radio applications. They know better than anyone else what can be achieved within certain budgets. If other applicants of your

approximate size and financial turnover are promising to train 20 volunteers in their first year, and you are promising to train 200, they will be rightly suspicious. Secondly, the promises you make on your licence application will become your performance targets when you begin broadcasting. When your annual reports begin to show up a massive gap between your promises and your delivery, Ofcom can withdraw your licence and allow an honest broadcaster to take over.

Other bits and pieces

If you are successful in your application to Ofcom for a broadcast licence, there are some other licences that you will then need to sort out – including your PRS and PPL licences and possibly also a JFMG licence. See more details about these in the 'Money and Resources' chapter, but just to say here that getting these licences is simply a matter of filling in a very short form and paying up.

CRIB SHEET

When filling in your licence application form you should:

- Be thoroughly prepared and informed
- Give yourself plenty of time and space
- Tell ofcom as much as they want to know, but don't overload them
- Check you are answering the questions that are being asked
- Take great care with your English and presentation
- Be honest and realistic

After you apply

Put your feet up and have a cup of tea

Go on. You deserve it.

Check out the competition

As soon as Ofcom has checked that applications are legitimate, that all attachments have been attached and that all cheques have cleared, they will publish all the applications received on their website – which should be within a few weeks/months of the deadline passing. You can then look to see who else has applied in your geographical area. You won't know for sure which bids conflict directly with yours and which do not, as only when the Ofcom engineers have mapped the applicants will they know how many frequencies can be made available. But you can generally assume that any bids that overlap with your area of transmission, or are within a few kilometres of you, could be potential rivals.

You are entirely within your rights to look closely at any applications that potentially conflict with yours. If you spot a glaring inaccuracy in their application you are entitled to raise it with Ofcom. But be very wary of appearing to interfere. It would be one thing to point out that a rival applicant is claiming to be training volunteers at a college that in fact closed down last century. It is entirely different to pester Ofcom with e-mails saying things like 'So-and-so FM claim to serve a community of 120,000 people but we've checked and there are only 100,000.' Nobody likes a smart Alec.

Be on best behaviour

If you are broadcasting between your application being submitted and the judgement being made (on a training RSL for example), then be even more cautious than usual in standards of behaviour on air. Nothing would do more damage to your licence application than a successful complaint. Make sure all your volunteers are even more disciplined than usual in avoiding offensive language, libels, contempts and other on-air transgressions (see Chapter 8). It was rumoured that some of the Access pilot managers were seen to be patrolling studios with big sticks in the run-up to licence announcements.

As community radio romantics we like to believe that everyone in the sector would play scrupulously fair while applications were being considered. But the truth is, we should assume that someone, somewhere is listening to our broadcasts with an unusually keen and critical ear at such times.

Keep busy

The period of time between your application being submitted and your licence being granted could feel interminable – it certainly felt like it in 2005. There is a danger you could lose momentum as a group while you await Ofcom's judgement. So there is no reason why you shouldn't apply to run another RSL while you wait. It gives you a great opportunity to gather pace in your training and community outreach work while you wait for the big decision.

Of course you can increase your training and community activities off air too, not to mention your alternative radio activities such as webcasting (see p32). Whatever you do, make sure it is helping you get ready for the main event.

CRIB SHEET

After you have applied for your licence:

- Take a deep breath
- Check the competition
- Be on your best behaviour on air
- Keep yourselves busy

Further reading and links

www.ofcom.org.uk
www.commedia.org.uk
www.communityfm.net
www.prs.co.uk
www.ppluk.com



TECHNICAL MATTERS

Waves and codes

Studio equipment

Transmitters

Automation

Website



TECHNICAL MATTERS

Creating your finely polished gems of radio isn't rocket science, but transmitting them to your community does require you to dip your toe into the murky waters of technology. But if you are a technophobe, fear not, and don't let yourself be put off by technical jargon and double-Dutch speaking electronics brochures and trade magazines. The path you are about to tread is well-trodden, and all the information you need is readily available from reference books and the web. This chapter is intended to get you started.

Setting up and equipping a radio station is more problematic for a community group because it has only limited finances. Commercial stations usually employ broadcast engineering companies to oversee the entire setting up process from start to finish, but you are unlikely to be able to afford this approach. You will be relying on much more limited technical support, perhaps from a paid technician or possibly from volunteers with technical expertise, but almost certainly not as much as you would like.

Another major difference between the technical requirements of community radio and the commercial sector is the unique stresses your equipment will be under. A commercial broadcaster may use a particular studio for maybe 3 shows – or 6 to 9 hours – per day. You on the other hand are likely to be hammering the same room and equipment for close to 24/7. And with at least some of the pairs of hands at the helm being relatively inexperienced, the constant wear and tear will take its toll. One major problem is that, sad to say, some volunteers probably won't respect the equipment as much as paid, fully-trained employees of a commercial station would. It's unfortunate, but something like an accidentally dropped mini-disc player may sometimes illicit a "sorry" from the culprit, but often the reaction is an "oops, I hope no one notices and I can blame someone else anyway".

As an interesting aside, the disappearance of headphones from any radio station could easily form part of a major conspiracy theory. They are regularly left behind on outside broadcasts, sat on, simply taken away, permanently 'borrowed', run

over and often just vanish, seemingly into thin air. The plot, as the saying goes, thickens. Perhaps, like the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy and their disappearing pen-lids, there is an alternative dimension solely populated by lost headphones.

There are approximately a million and one ways to draw up the specifications for a studio, so the planning side of things is an art unto itself. And then there's the technical side of setting up a suitable transmitter and ensuring that it runs within the technical specifications that Ofcom insists upon (see p48), which requires another set of skills entirely.

Paid technical staff or volunteer technicians?

If you're lucky, you'll be able to employ someone with the necessary skills to do the technical work that is needed to get and keep your station on the air. But more often it will be a case of finding volunteers with the right expertise. You may be surprised at how many suitable people there are out there who are willing to lend a hand. There will almost certainly be universities and technical colleges in your area that run broadcast engineering courses and these are likely to be a breeding ground for the technically minded and radio-savvy. Amateur radio clubs and hospital radio groups will also be worth contacting. And then, if you can track them down, there are the radio enthusiasts who've been tinkering with seemingly unfathomable electronics in their garden sheds for years.



Depending on the experience of your technical bods – whether they are paid or unpaid – you may also need to employ freelance radio engineers to carry out certain tasks. Recruiting paid experts should be seen as a long-term investment rather than an unnecessary expense, so use them. It might be a good idea, for example, to pay an experienced professional contractor to give your technical equipment a periodic once-over. Or perhaps your technical staff will be adept at studio equipment maintenance, but not at the transmitter set up side of proceedings.

If you do involve volunteers in technical work, you must make sure that only suitably experienced and authorised volunteers are allowed to use the screwdriver set. There is nothing worse than an enthusiastic but incompetent late night DJ deciding to rewire your studio desk and wreaking havoc with the breakfast team's show when they turn up at 6.00am. Another point to bear in mind is that your employers' liability insurance will probably not allow unauthorised volunteers to undertake electrical engineering work.

CRIB SHEET

Equipping a community radio station:

- Will need experienced and skilled volunteers or professionals
- Is an expensive job
- Is an ongoing process – equipment will break and vanish

A very simple look at radio waves

Radio waves are part of a general family known as electromagnetic waves. These waves differ from both ocean waves (which are much larger and have a far lower frequency) and sound waves (which are pressure waves travelling through air, water, or solids). The shape of an electromagnetic wave is similar to sound waves and ocean waves, but the energy involved is electrical and magnetic rather than mechanical.

Electromagnetic waves of different frequencies are found all over the place. In order of decreasing frequency, electromagnetic radiation includes X-rays, ultraviolet light, visible light, infra red, microwaves and, at a relatively low frequency, radio waves.

Radio waves vary in terms of:

- **Amplitude.** This measures the strength of the radio wave, similar to measuring the size of an ocean wave hitting the shore. Stronger waves have a larger amplitude.
- **Frequency and wavelength.** Frequency measures the number of up and down cycles a wave goes through every second. Radio waves with a lower frequency have a longer wavelength.

Radio waves are naturally occurring but can be produced artificially by a radio transmitter. Your transmission equipment turns sound into radio waves of a particular frequency, and then broadcast them around the surrounding area. A radio turns the radio waves back into sound. The more powerful the transmitter, the bigger the amplitude of the radio waves, and the further your signal will go. As you get further away from the transmitter, the magic little pixies that sing the songs in your radio can't hear the signal as well, which is why the reception isn't so good at longer distances.

CRIB SHEET

Radio waves:

- Are electromagnetic, and exist naturally
 - Vary in amplitude and frequency
 - Don't really need magic pixies.
- It was a joke

The Ofcom Engineering Code

This document, written in mind-boggling techno-babble, is available on Ofcom's website. The code covers everything from transmission standards to environmental requirements via the details of your station's spurious and harmonic emissions.

You must ALWAYS adhere to the Ofcom Engineering Code. But don't worry, most of your staff and volunteers don't need to know anything about it. It's only your technical support staff who do – they will doubtless view it as ideal bedtime reading and oft refer to it in many a heated debate concerning cleared transmission parameters and spectral occupancy.

CRIB SHEET

The ofcom Engineering Code:

- Should only be of interest to engineers
- Can be safely ignored by everyone else

Buying your equipment

When it comes to equipping your studio there are basically three schools of thought.

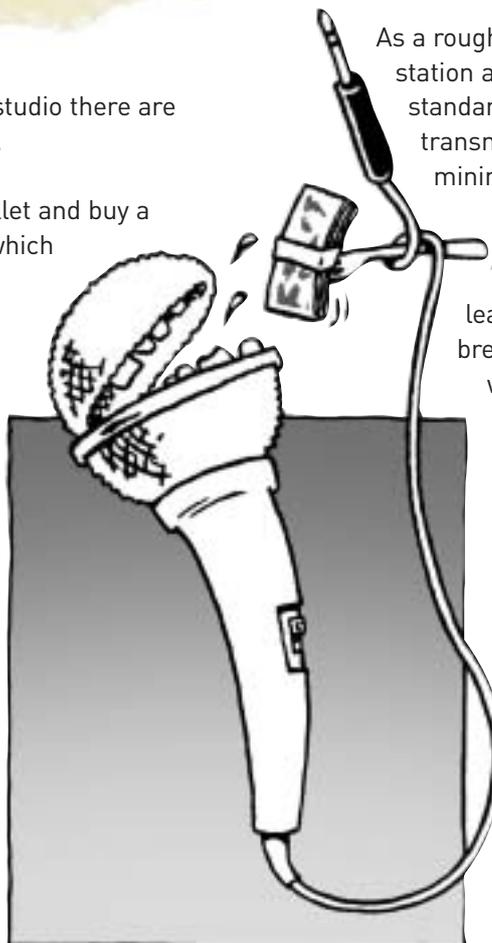
The first is to bite the financial bullet and buy a fully fledged professional set-up which will certainly be up to the tasks required and, should problems arise, be relatively easy to repair.

The second approach comes from more of a 'look at those prices, sod that' angle and involves buying brand new but dirt cheap high street equipment (obviously designed for domestic use) under the proviso that, should your £60 CD player go bang in 12 months time, you can go out and buy another one, no problem.

The third school of thought is the blag, beg, borrow and be resourceful approach. Commercial stations often

upgrade professional standard equipment and with words in the right ears and a bulging contacts book, good value second-hand purchases can often be made. Who you know can be as important as what you know if this is your desired path, so keep ears firmly pressed to the ground. This will be easier if your local commercial stations view your community radio venture as part of a broadcasting partnership rather than a threat to their local dominance (see p73-74). The BBC is rumoured to be considering channelling its redundant gear to the community radio sector – keep an eye on the CMA website for news of this.

Second-hand studio equipment is available but can often be difficult to actually track down. The internet is always worth a look – www.mediauk.com/discussions/viewforum.muk?f=30 has a sales section – and gear is occasionally advertised in radio magazines.



As a rough guide, £20k will buy your station a good quality, professional standard set-up, including transmission equipment. As a bare minimum, half that figure is technically do-able with some luck and a lot of effort, but spending any less is likely to lead to future technical problems, breakdowns and hassles which will always occur at the most inconvenient of times.

A possible compromise if you're equipping your studio from scratch is to initially hire equipment and to use it both as a test bed – for your staff and volunteers to learn how to handle professional standard gear – and to gauge just what your station actually does and does not require. Some companies offer hire equipment alongside a sales option, supplying equipment on a trial/hire basis and allowing



your station to assess its suitability prior to making a more long-term decision. This route is particularly recommended for those embarking on their first RSLs.

Don't be tempted to rush into any decision when it comes to fitting your studio: visit equipment companies, see what they have to offer and see things in operation, ask questions, visit other stations and check out their set-ups, ask more questions, ask some more questions, ask further questions. The major annual trade fair – the Sound Broadcasting Equipment Show at Birmingham's NEC, which usually takes place in November – is well worth a visit, with free entry to the industry (yes, you and your colleagues are now 'industry') and offering a chance to check out the multitude of equipment options open to you. And with the increasingly high profile of community radio, expect a great reception (pardon the pun) as manufacturers warm to this exciting new sector of broadcasting. Meanwhile, the CMA are exploring whether suppliers might offer discounts to CMA members – keep in touch with them for updates.

CRIB SHEET

When equipping your studio:

- Put a lot of thought into what you need to pay for and what you don't
- obtain the best equipment you can afford. It will be worth it in the long run.

Your studio

A suitable room

Twelve foot by twelve foot is realistically the smallest space you can get away with for your main studio. Once you've found such a room, your next concern will be soundproofing it to prevent noise entering your studio from outside. This is achieved by putting a lot of material between the space in your room and the outside world. Triple glazing, thick walls and insulation are tried and tested routes to achieving this goal. This is expensive and, depending on your location, is not always necessary.

At the same time, you need to get rid of your studio's internal echo. This is often referred to as soundproofing but it's more correctly described as acoustic treatment – stopping any sound (in other words, the presenter's voice) bouncing back from the walls to the microphone by making your studio's internal walls as sound-absorbent as possible. Without proper acoustic treatment you will get the terrible affliction of 'the bathroom effect'. The famous quick-fix of attaching egg boxes to all flat interior surfaces does work to a degree, but uneven foam tiles and/or thick curtains work much better. As well as the sound-absorbing efficiency of the material you chose, another important factor is your sound insulation material's resistance to fire. Cardboard egg boxes are, frankly, a fire hazard, whereas specialist acoustic tiles will have been treated for fire resistance.

You should have a no drinking, no eating, no smoking studio policy. A low flying fizzy drink could take you off air, and smoke and spilt drinks are harmful to equipment. There are aesthetic considerations too. If your studio resembles the aftermath of a party at an electronics student's bed-sit, then important visitors – e.g. potential sponsors – will be decidedly unimpressed. Likewise, if one of your benefactors pops in to say 'hello', they don't really want to see the £20k's worth of equipment they paid for fizzing away under a river of spilt coffee, discarded clothing and a thick layer of dust. You will want your studio to feel homely but it's important that it has an air of professionalism as well.

CRIB SHEET

Your studio needs to be:

- Soundproofed if possible
- Acoustically treated
- Tidy
- A food and drink-free zone

The mixing desk

This is the control centre for CD players, microphones, mini-discs, pre-recorded features, outside broadcasts and the studio telephone line/s. All these components feed into the mixing desk and emerge as your broadcast. The first thing to consider when purchasing a desk is – which sounds obvious but is worth remembering – make sure that it's specifically designed for radio broadcasting rather than music production. Your basic requirements are level controls, the ability to listen to things before they go on air, a red light which automatically switches on when a broadcast is underway, and a feature which allows CD and other music players to be remotely controlled from the desk.

Your mixing desk must be up to the job in hand, but something resembling the command centre at NASA might frighten off newcomers as well as costing the earth and being over-accessorized for your requirements. Operatives can develop additional skills as their experience increases, but the essential operations of the mixing desk must be relatively simple to understand. One experienced community radio hand tells us that if a desk has a pretty array of 'EQ' knobs above the faders, he makes sure that they are set correctly and then tapes a slab of card over them – years of experience having demonstrated that community radio broadcasters have an audio death wish which drives them to reset EQ levels so that they end up sounding like they are talking from under a pile of dead sheep or down a steam telephone.

Another factor to consider is analogue versus digital. With the seemingly unstoppable march of digital equipment, prices are becoming increasingly affordable. As far as future-proofing goes, the digital option is the one to go for – finances

permitting – since the whole shebang will be controlled by updatable software. Loading software updates should be relatively simple as further funding for your station and technological advances become available. Although it might look pricey, don't write off digital equipment without having a long, hard look at the options and considering your station's likely position a couple of years into that five year licence.

Once again, hands-on experience is the surest way to find out which equipment is for you, so drop in on your nearest community radio neighbours and have a go on their kit.

Microphones

Deciding what sort of microphones to go for – and how many – depends on your programming. A specialist music show can run with just the one, but much of your community radio broadcasting will be speech based, and this requires multiple microphones – three or four at least. Complex productions like live round table debates can be conducted via a single, omni-directional mic, while pre-recorded drama requires many microphones. Decent, high quality microphones costing £100 or more each should be the norm for the presenter and first guest, but you can buy cheaper ones to have on hand for additional guests and as emergency back-up.

CD players

CD players produced by major players such as Sony and Denon and aimed at the club DJ market tend to be reliable, well-built and extremely rugged, as well as featuring auto-start and being controllable from your mixing desk. This is the kind of thing your station should be aiming for – equipment that has been designed to take a hammering in clubs night after night, which equates well with the treatment it will get in a typical community radio station. You'll need two CD players – expect to pay around £350 each. 'Broadcast quality' CD players are also available, often topping the £1,000 mark, but unless you are Radio 1, these really are overkill. At the opposite end of the spectrum there are domestic players. These under-£100 systems are designed to have their 'play' button pressed and CD drawer opened



just a few times a day. In your studio, that button and drawer will see action every few minutes for hour after hour – so don't expect them to last for very long.

Studio computers

Of course it is possible to create and broadcast radio without ever going near a computer (after all, stations managed fine for about a hundred years), but a decent PC offers immense improvements to your capacity. There are various jobs that your studio computer(s) can handle. First of all, you can use it to store jingles and play-lists, and to edit interviews and pre-recorded items. These sorts of tasks can be handled by any reasonably powerful computer that has a good quality sound-card and software such as Adobe Audition or Pro Tools (which seem to be the industry standard). Your PC should also be able to display any e-mails or text messages that listeners send in while DJs are on the air.

Your PC can also be used as a CD player, and these days almost every radio station uses a computer to play most of the music that it broadcasts. Songs are loaded onto and stored on your PC as audio files, and the computer then functions as a 'virtual CD player'. Using this system, DJs cue their tunes up on the computer, and need rarely venture near an actual CD player or turntable, which has the advantage that all of the music for a show can be in one place and there are no CD's to go missing. The entire operating system is amazingly simple, although as you'd expect, things do occasionally go wrong. Keeping your studio computer glitch and

virus-free is massively important, as is having your CD decks live, kicking and ready to fall back on should a hardware crash occur. Computers can also be used to play music and other material automatically (see p56).

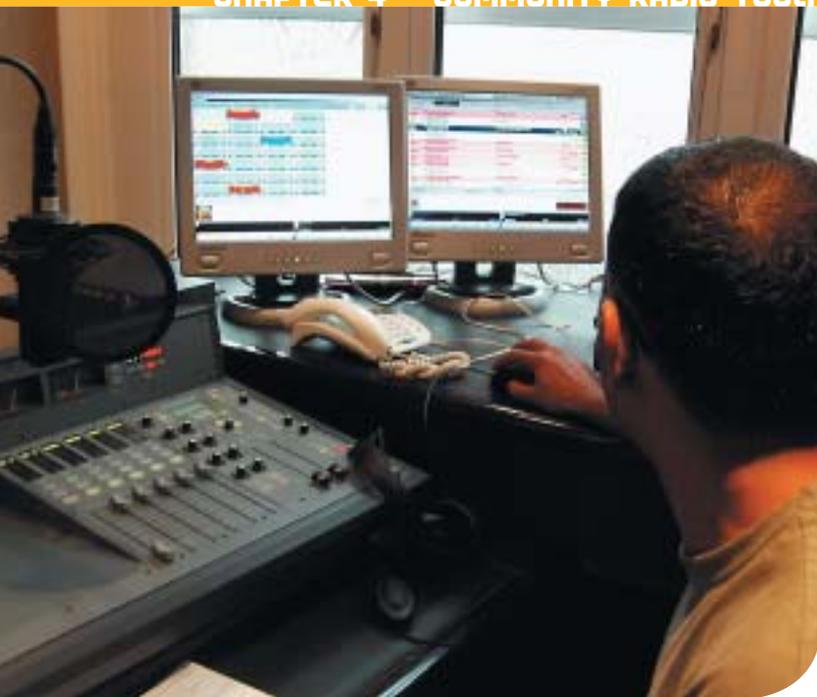
Finally, your PC can be used to record your station's output as required by Ofcom. Radio Regen uses the Mixopia Audio Logger Pro system but there are other programmes out there.

Mini-disc players

The main function of mini-disc players, or at least the portable versions, is to record interviews – the days of recording to tape are long gone. Having recorded the material, you would then usually transfer it from the mini-disc player onto a computer, and use the computer to edit it in preparation for broadcast. You might also use mini-disc players in the studio for playing edited packages that have been transferred back to mini-disc.

One thing your station should keep a collective eye out for when purchasing mini-disc equipment is the compatibility of different mini-disc formats. Sony in particular have begun tampering with their product lines in an effort to make mini-discs store more material and thus compete with iPods. As a result, certain new breed mini-disc players are not compatible with older models. This glitch can prove annoying, inconvenient and expensive, if it means that you are forced to replace incompatible machines.

More significantly, it does seem that the days of the mini-disc player are numbered. Some major manufacturers, such as Sony and Denon, have stopped making studio players altogether. The digital revolution is on the way, and hard drive recorders are now appearing on the market. Although currently relatively expensive, this type of device (where sound is stored on a memory card, similar to those found in digital cameras) is becoming increasingly affordable. Marantz already produces a hard drive recorder aimed at broadcasters and reporters. The rise of 'pod-casting' will probably drive this technology even further down in price. Or another option for recording audio is to use a laptop computer with a



decent external USB soundcard. This enables you to record good quality audio straight onto the computer's hard drive and is particularly useful for recording events or concerts.

Record decks

For most radio programming record turntables are utterly redundant. Most 'pop' records are now only released on CD, and you may well be playing most of your music from computer. However, vinyl is still crucial to specialist music programmes. Most DJs (that's DJs in the modern, club-oriented sense of the word, as opposed to music radio presenters) still opt for a pair of turntables with a small mixer when it comes to spinning tunes. There should be little agonising over this – the industry standard set-up is a pair of Technics SL1200s or SL1210s. Any colour you like, as long as they're silver or black. Budget for around the £800 mark for two decks and a mixer (which then feeds directly into your studio mixing desk). You might not see the value in investing in brand name equipment, but just tell that to the next 'hot' club DJ you want to recruit to your line-up – no Technics, no show.

If you're feeling particularly flush, you could also provide specialist DJ CD players, such as Pioneer CD-J 800 or CD-J1000. These allow a DJ to mix naturally between vinyl and CD, and would be connected to your DJ mixer rather than the mixing desk.

Studio telephone line

Your studio needs to be able to take external calls, so a phone line is essential. If you want to put calls direct to air, then a telephone balance unit is also required (also known as a telephone hybrid). The best known manufacturer of these units is a company called Sonifex – in fact, the company is so well known that their units are often referred to simply as a 'Sonifex'. It's an expensive piece of kit (currently around £600) and basically it converts your phone line into an audio feed so that you can chat on air, via the mixing desk, to your caller. Should you start to really find that the equipment budget needs spending up, another phone line and balance unit should be on the shopping list. There's nothing like having another caller lined up to follow on from the one that's currently on air, and you can only do this by having another phone line with its own balance unit. Indeed, most mainstream stations wouldn't consider less than six incoming lines.

And of course you don't want your phone ringing audibly while you're broadcasting, so opt for a flashing light instead. These flashing units are sold by high street retailers (mainly to people who are either hard of hearing or fond of blasting the home hi-fi out at volume 11), or more expensive professional units are available.

As an aside, while we're on the subject of phones, mobile phone signals can often interfere with your broadcast, especially if your handset is placed on top of studio equipment. A good general rule is to have a 'no mobiles even if they're set to silent' policy.

CRIB SHEET

Your broadcast studio will ideally have:

- A mixing desk, microphones and headphones
- CD players, turntables and mini-disc players
- A computer
- At least one telephone line

A second studio

If at all possible, your set-up should include a second studio in addition to your main broadcast studio. Commercial and BBC radio stations have at least two studios which they use in rotation. This means that a DJ can set themselves up without getting in the way of a preceding DJ. To be able to do this is quite a luxury, and you probably won't be able to afford two studios that are equally well-equipped, but some degree of technical back-up is invaluable, especially if you are broadcasting for 24 hours a day. A two studio option gives you so much more flexibility and extra leeway should a technical slip-up (or fully blown disaster) occur.

The most common arrangement – if finances and space allow – is to have a main broadcast studio and a separate production studio with a lesser technical specification. The secondary space can be used for pre-recording interviews or making jingles while the main studio is in use, and is always available in standby mode should your main studio CD players decide to go up in a puff of noxious smoke at the most inconvenient of times. If a second studio isn't affordable initially, try and ensure that future expansion is an option.

Even if a second studio is not an option – for financial or logistical reasons – it's a good idea to have a pre-recorded mini-disc or some form of automated computer programming ready to go just in case. A switch to transfer output from your studio to this pre-recorded material should be readily accessible.

If you want to turn your technical crew green with envy, take a trip to New Style Radio in Birmingham where they've got a full three studio broadcasting suite. But short of a Lottery win (or major Lottery capital grant) you are unlikely to be so well endowed.

CRIB SHEET

A pre-production studio:

- Is a good idea wherever possible

Between desk and transmitter

Audio processors

In order to 'level out' your audio signal, you will need to put an audio processor of some sort in between your mixing desk and transmitter. Without this piece of equipment you will be in danger of transmitting a signal which is illegally 'large' – this could interfere with other broadcasters' signals and land you a hefty fine from Ofcom. This equipment can also improve the sound quality of your broadcast.

Audio processors come in a number of varieties. Audio limiters cost around £100 and simply stop you from broadcasting a signal above a set maximum limit. Broadcast compressors are more expensive and actually even out your sound levels – they tone down overly loud parts of your broadcast and give a gentle boost to quieter sections. Specialist broadcast audio processors as used by mainstream stations are more expensive still (£1,500 upwards) and use sophisticated electronics to both control sound levels and make your station sound clear and 'punchy'.

To be honest, this isn't the most important piece of kit at your station, and if presenters and guests all watch their levels you can get away with just using an audio limiter. Presenters and DJ's with little experience, however, will need training in talking more quietly and/or playing records at a consistent level, and using a broadcast compressor can minimise this problem. If you do go for the compression option, setting the compressor up can be the source of endless debate. If you use high levels of compression to deal with inexperienced presenters, it tends to make voices sound unnatural and to highlight hiss and background noise in quiet bits. If you use too little compression, you will sound quieter and less punchy than other radio stations.

Stereo encoder

Also situated between desk and transmitter, this device converts your signal into stereo format, and costs about £500. You only need to get one of these if you want to broadcast in stereo, which may well not be a priority for you. You can also buy transmitters and audio processors with built in stereo encoders.

RDS encoder

RDS – or Radio Data System – is the system that enables you to transmit text messages (such as the name of your radio station) to a display on the radio set. This facility – which only works for FM broadcasts – is often found on newer car radios but isn't generally a feature on portable sets. To broadcast the extra RDS signals you need to connect an RDS encoder (costing about £800) to your transmitter.

Transmitters**Transmission equipment**

With transmission equipment more than any other area of equipment, you need to buy the most professional set-up that you can afford. Ofcom are understandably exacting when it comes to your transmitter, and the last thing you want is for your transmitter to break down just days into your five year licence. If you're broadcasting full-time, you really require transmission gear that has plug-in check points for testing equipment. This means that things like signal strength can be tested without interrupting your broadcast. Remember that if your transmitter isn't working properly you may be breaking the law.

Where to site your transmitter

If your station is operating with a temporary RSL licence, Ofcom rules restrict your mast height to 20 metres above ground level and your transmission power to 10 watts (generally) in built up areas, or 25 watts elsewhere. This ruling is meant to prevent your signal from travelling too far, but to some extent it's nonsensical (Voxbox 4.01).

If your station possesses a full-time licence, the relevant Ofcom ruling dictates the radius of your coverage, with 5 km from your transmitter being the norm, although you might be allocated more if you're broadcasting to a sparsely populated rural area. FM radio waves work on a 'line of sight' principle, which means that if they are unimpeded, they will travel as far as the horizon (with the signal getting weaker and weaker as they go). If there are several large buildings on one side of your mast, a relatively strong signal will be required to reach a radio 5 km away in that direction, but the same



signal will travel a far greater distance if it's just passing over flat parkland or open countryside. So if at all possible, don't put your transmitter in the shadow of a big building. Hills on the other hand may be unavoidable, in which case you may need to turn up the power setting on your transmitter to reach all of your community. In the case of full-time licences, Ofcom specifies a transmission power limit based on what is required to successfully cover your 5km broadcast area. This will usually be 50 watts, but you may be allowed to use more power if topography requires and frequency congestion allows.

VOXBOX 4.01

"The 20 metre rule for RSL masts is a funny one. Last year our preferred option for an aerial in Oldham was a tower block in the town centre, but we couldn't do that because the building was over the specified 20 metre limit. So what we actually did was put it on a house on a hill overlooking the town – so in terms of height above sea level it was about 200 metres higher than it would have been on the tower block and the 10 watt transmitter then broadcast as far as North Wales!"

Phil Edmonds, Technician, Radio Regen and Oldham Community Radio

Putting your transmitter and aerial mast on the same building as your studio is by far the cheapest and most convenient option. However if circumstances require, you can site the transmitter and studio in separate locations. This may be necessary because of the big building problem, or due to local planning issues or Ofcom rulings, or because your studio is not in the centre of your area of coverage.

You could site your transmitter at a commercial mast site, but this will be rather expensive. With some tactful negotiation, you might be able to use a

council-owned tower block, which could cost you nothing or just a nominal rent. If you do use this option, make sure that you consult with local residents and explain to them that the health concerns relating to mobile phone masts and signals do not apply to radio waves (so that they don't lump you in with the rapacious behaviour associated with those other folk who put up masts – multinational mobile phone companies).

Studio to transmitter link systems

If you do have to put your studio and transmitter in separate locations, you obviously need to link both sites. The simplest and cheapest option is to use a radio link. This involves sending a low powered signal from your studio to your transmitter on a different frequency to your broadcasting frequency. This link signal transfers your studio output to your transmitter in a narrow, directional beam which your transmitter then re-broadcasts. Due to the low power of the link signal, a 'line of sight' is required between your studio and transmitter site. You will also need a licence which is available for around £500 per annum from a Government-contracted agency – JFMG Ltd (admin@jfmfg.co.uk). Various frequency bands can be used for the link signal – you should liaise with JFMG and your equipment supplier to determine which option is best for you.

Another option for linking your two sites is an ISDN-type wire connection, but this is both less practical and pricier. At a very tight squeeze and with the correct software, you could use a dedicated broadband internet link, but this method is far from recommended.

CRIB SHEET

Your transmission equipment will include:

- Broadcast compressor
- Stereo encoder (if you're broadcasting on FM)
- Mast
- Studio to transmitter link system (if your studio and transmitter are separate)

Recording of transmission (ROT) system

Ofcom clearly states that all radio stations must record their entire output and hold this copy for 42 days from the transmission date. The main reason for this ruling is so that if Ofcom receives a complaint concerning your broadcast, the supposedly offending material is available for them to review and, if necessary, act upon. If for whatever reason you can't produce a recording when requested, your station can expect a fine or, in a worst case scenario, to have its licence revoked.

In days gone by, recording was direct to open reel tapes running really, really, really slowly. This has now been superseded by the video tape option. The general scenario here is a bank of three VHS recorders loaded with 4 hour long tapes set to long play (so that they have 8 hours recording time each) with each of the recorders set on timer mode so that they record in succession. Rather neatly, this equates to a full 24 hours of broadcast. Of course this only works if someone actually remembers to load all your machines with fresh tapes every day, which is not quite as easy as it may seem. If you use video recorders with Nicam Stereo, the quality of your recording will actually be quite decent. You're going to need over 100 tapes to record your 42 days worth, so a trip down to your local Poundland is probably the order of the day.

As with most studio equipment, the spectre of the digital age is looming ever larger in the ROT sphere. The modern alternative to a bank of constantly whirring video machines is, surprise surprise, a dedicated ROT computer, which will simply sit and chug away all day and night. Fingers crossed, your 42 days worth of material is then stored, date and time tagged and available at the touch of a button (and you can save on hard drive space by using a compression system). Things may however go wrong. In case your ROT computer does crash, you should use 'mirrored' hard drives (so broadcasts are stored on two hard drives simultaneously, just in case). And to minimise the risk of crashes, it's important to ensure that said computer is solely dedicated to this task. As for software, there are cheap and cheerful ROT systems available, but both the Audio Logger Pro and PowerLog programs are

reliable and up to the task in hand whilst still being reasonably priced.

The easy access to broadcast material that is made possible by using a digital ROT system is also helpful to programme makers. Presenters can use clips of previous shows in new output, or simply listen back to and review their shows with a view to improving them.

Above all, don't forget that for every hour you broadcast without recording, you're breaking Ofcom rules.

CRIB SHEET

Recording your transmissions:

- Is a legal obligation
- Can be done with an old VHS machine or three
- Is best done on a computer

VOXBOX 4.02

"There was one station that received a complaint, one that actually went to Ofcom, and then found out that the video system they'd been using for their ROT had stopped working. So some bright spark decided to broadcast the following days show, pretending it was the previous week, record it and send it off claiming it was the 'missing' tape. They got twigged and ended up in even more trouble, a huge fine in fact, than if they'd just said 'sorry, we don't have a recording'".

Phil Edmonds, Technician, Radio Regen and Oldham Community Radio



Automation

Using a computer automation system it is possible for your station to broadcast without anyone being in the studio. With the relatively low cost of hard drives these days, it's economical for your station to store literally hours of material (play-list tracks, interviews, documentaries etc.) on a computer programmed to broadcast the material when your station isn't staffed. If your station has specified it will broadcast around the clock, ergo through the night, computerised automation will be invaluable to you. Good use of automated programming can produce output that sounds fresh and full of that community 'vibe' even though your studio may be empty. You needn't just flick the switch to the 'jukebox' setting, you can cue in speech segments amidst the music – encourage your volunteers to make such segments especially for this purpose.

It is important that your station chooses the correct automation software. As with any other equipment, it's advisable to spend some time researching this and to check with other community stations to find out exactly what works for them. When you're shopping around, it's worth remembering that the cheapest deal is not necessarily the best deal as factors such as the level of technical support available are also important. One industry standard automation package is a program called Myriad from P Squared. This is a solid, good value system but alternatives are available.

CRIB SHEET

An automation system:

- Allows you to broadcast 24/7 even when the studio is empty
- Can be a huge asset to a community radio station

Maintenance schedule

Even with the best will and best equipment in the world, your station is going to need a maintenance schedule. Machinery can, and indeed will, go wrong. It's often the case with community radio stations that equipment receives not a second thought until the day it goes kaput. Financial constraints often come into play but even spinning a CD lens cleaning disc every month is a step in the right direction. And, just like when all your lovely equipment was initially installed, actually paying a specialist professional electronics technician to service your gear should be viewed as a long-term investment rather than a short-term financial burden.

You should arrange and adhere to a maintenance schedule, making sure that you keep a record of the checks that are undertaken and any work that specialist engineers carry out. This is particularly important in the case of your transmitter – it might come to your assistance if your hardcore hip hop hour suddenly begins to broadcast over the PA system of your local international airport (touch wood, this is a worst case scenario!)

CRIB SHEET

Maintaining and servicing your equipment:

- Must be a regular task

Your website

Once you've sorted out your equipment and you're on the air, you'll obviously want to publicise your new station via a website. Have a good think about just who's going to be looking at this and what they are likely to be looking for. This should allow you to decide exactly what you want your site to show and do.

Whilst there is an eternal website debate of good looks versus content, in our opinion, there's no doubt – functionality should be all. Your site needs to do the job of propagating a community vibe and letting the community know what you do. Get the content correct and then, if you've the technology and skills, add a nice gloss on top of that. Make



sure that your site is accessible to people with visual impairment – there are many free on-line tools at your disposal which can help you to do this.

Something else worth considering is that however complex the initial construction of the website turns out to be, the updating and maintenance work needs to be carried out as easily as possible. Keeping your website up to date is crucial – out of date show listings are a waste of time and make your station appear lazy and unprofessional. If the website is designed so that updating is easy for anyone given an hour or two of IT training, then you shouldn't ever be stuck with having to display irrelevant information because the technical whiz is off. Keeping the site ticking over and updated should be viewed as essential to your station.

As for what actually features on your site, well ... the world wide web is your oyster. Consider including presenter profiles (this will interest listeners and also make the presenters feel valued), a mission statement, details of any training your station offers, detailed show listings (with a brief summary of each show's content and, maybe, previous play-lists), a section informing listeners how they can get involved with the station, photographs from previous events, a gallery of volunteer photographs.

Your website should also have a section with background information, detailing things such as your organisational structure, the aims of the station, and the social gain that you are helping provide. This is the space where you should really nail your colours to the mast as a community station. You can also point out here that most of your contributors are volunteers, which is why your station doesn't sound like the nearest commercial radio clone on the dial.

A list of relevant e-mail addresses should also be readily available on-line. Many stations have a facility where listeners can instantly e-mail presenters while they are on air – again, this all helps with community spirit and a general feeling of inclusion for your local listeners.

As for non-local listeners, the way to reach them is via live web-streaming ('simulcasting'). Consider that Wythenshawe FM has regular listeners in Texas and Tenerife, and suddenly web-streaming seems a great idea. Currently, however, web-streaming is something of a minefield of licences and performing rights payments (see p82).

When it comes to discussion forums, remember that instant posting types really do require monitoring so perhaps aren't very practical for community radio stations with limited staff resources. Your function is to help buoy up the local community, not provide a platform for the village bigot to hurl insults at his neighbours, and it's very depressing watching your website degenerating into a shouting match between malicious anonymous visitors (or 'trolls' as they are known in web-speak jargon) and passionate supporters. A post forum, where postings are monitored prior to appearing on the site, is a more viable option, staff resources permitting, and can help you to enable local residents to air views and contribute to debate. Bear in mind that over-enthusiastic monitoring can seem irritating and patronising to friend and foe alike, and that there may be a fine line between keeping your web forum free of offensive and hurtful contributions, and stifling fair comment and criticism.

VOXBOX 4.03

"The object of community radio is obviously to get out and reach the community and the web is just another way to do that. The voice of your station needs to be heard and any media outlet strengthens your power of communication."

*Haydn Insley, Volunteer Support Worker,
Wythenshawe FM, Manchester*

CRIB SHEET

Your website:

- Will be your 'public face' to many listeners and interested visitors
- Should be useful, not just pretty
- Should be regularly updated
- Might include a simulcast web-stream

Further reading and links

A Broadcast Engineering Tutorial for Non-Engineers.
Graham Jones (Focal Books, 2001)

Ofcom Engineering Code

www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rl/commer/ar/engineering_code.pdf



MANAGING YOUR STATION

Managing community radio

Staff and volunteers

Roles and responsibilities

Managerial qualities

Human resources management

Motivation and stress

Marketing

Making friends



MANAGING YOUR STATION

Congratulations. Ofcom have recognised the brilliance of your license application. You've got your key partners in place and you are ready to replicate the thrill of your RSL broadcasts for up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You may be in for a surprise. Running an RSL tends to be a very intense experience. You run around like a headless chicken before your broadcast, run even faster while you are on air, and then you probably have a long period to recover and review your experiences. Permanent broadcasting is an entirely different matter – like switching from running a sprint to a marathon.

VOXBOX 5.01

“You can spot the few dozen folk who have been involved in running the pilot Access Radio stations. They generally have a happy grin, and still retain traces of a charismatic demeanour. But spend a bit more time in their company and you spot the red rims to their eyes, the occasional tic that betrays too little sleep and too much caffeine. But it's the thousand yard stare that's the real give away – these people have been places and seen things that no human being should ever have to see. And still they smile.”

Anon

You must maintain a steady pace, and to do that you must be aware of what your limitations are. There may be a strong temptation to attempt to do more than your resources will allow. In this chapter we will explain how to get the most from your volunteers and staff without anyone exhausting themselves or burning out. We will show how you can get the most value from your limited resources. We will look at how the relationships within your station – between volunteers, staff and directors – can be made to work for you rather than becoming problematic. And we will discuss how you can market and publicise your station with your listeners and your community.

Many of these topics are covered in great length in specialist textbooks. If you are new to voluntary sector management, your reading should stretch

well beyond this Toolkit. But for now, this chapter should offer you a useful overview of the range of expertise a station manager is likely to need.

Key principles

Be part of your community

A community radio station should be managed by the community, from the community and for the community. In practice this usually means a broad-based community partnership will form the board of directors and/or steering group. But you can't run a community radio station purely by committee. So turning the values and vision of the committee into efficient and effective day-to-day management is the key role of the station's manager or management team. It is essential that the manager knows as much as possible about the community culturally, demographically and with regard to local issues. This is an important point to consider when appointing (or applying for) community radio management positions (see p152).

There are also situations where community radio is brought to a community by an outside agency. All the 'community' criteria apply but they might evolve differently. If you are from an outside agency in that role, growing the community links might not be your most pressing operational priority but that does not lessen its importance. The task ahead of you in sowing the seeds for grassroots support, and ultimately management, is all the more important for the fact that you are not of that community.

You are not running a radio station

You are actually running a community centre, a training college, a refuge, a day-care unit, a debating hall and a social club – albeit one which just happens to make radio. You should be pleased to be serving all of those functions – they add up to the reason you exist. Your management team needs to have or gain all the expertise required to fulfil your role as a community radio station.

Broadcasting is only one part of the equation, and the quality or popularity of that broadcasting may be much less important than the quality and extent of your service to the community. Having said that, with your station serving so many functions, always keep in mind your core functions – what it is you are there to do. If activities are not funded, or not in keeping with your basic objectives, you should ask yourself why you are doing them (see p132).

Get your training right

Of all the tasks undertaken by a community radio manager, establishing and maintaining successful training schemes, whether formal or informal, will probably be the most important. The formal training you offer is likely to form a significant source of income for your station, and a good partner college may offer wider benefits of advice, support and resources. The training you offer should fit the needs of your volunteers and offer progression and personal development to whatever level their abilities and ambition allow (see Chapter 13).

Be firm and fair with your volunteers

The biggest difference between volunteer management and other types is that volunteers are there because they want to be involved, not because you are paying them. They didn't volunteer to be abused, exploited or shouted at. On the other hand, they must be aware of their duties and responsibilities. Be utterly transparent about the relationship between the station and its volunteers. They must know what they can expect from you, and the station must be clear what standard of commitment and behaviour is expected. Both parties must know what will happen if such agreements are breached (see p68-69).

Let community radio be your passion, not your obsession

If community radio is not your passion, you probably shouldn't be involved at all. Typically community radio staff and key workers are driven by their love of the medium and inspired by the potential to change lives and whole communities. But in the desire to achieve so much, it is all too easy to do too much. Staff and key volunteers will soon find themselves invited to meetings and events every night of the week. It is impossible to do it all. Community radio

stations around the country – including ours – have discovered to their enormous cost that exhaustion and burn-out are real risks, and can lose you the very people who have the most to offer (see p66-68).

Know when to talk, when to listen, and when to act

Community radio is by its nature democratic. In practice this doesn't mean people electing the steering group at the AGM then forgetting about it for a year, it generally means people standing up simultaneously and shouting at each other (or you) about the 'wheres, whats and whys' of station strategy and policy. Those voices need to be heard and considered and then, if necessary, acted upon. That does not mean that every opinion is equally informed or that every idea is equally realistic, and many will be incompatible with each other. The management need to know when to mediate, when to think, and when to stop listening and start acting. Your management structures need to allow someone the authority to take the final decisions and to be clear about what happens to community ideas when they are presented to the station. It's not enough to say 'thanks for your input' and file the letter (see p98).

Bureaucracy matters

It is dull, but filling in forms to apply for funding and monitor your activities, taking minutes at meetings and distributing them, logging volunteer activities and community contacts, filling in inland revenue returns, and performing all the other bureaucratic and administrative tasks involved in running a community radio station is absolutely vital. The temptation to not bother is always strong, and always devastatingly destructive (see Chapter 6).

CRIB SHEET

Community radio managers need:

- To be part of their community
- A wide range of management and community skills
- A firm hand and a calm head
- Good communication and diplomacy skills
- To be willing to do the dull stuff



Mixing staff and volunteers

While there are large variations within the sector, most community radio stations are run by a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Typically a group may begin as a purely voluntary project, but by the time it is receiving significant funding for training or community projects, it will feel the need to employ an administrator or project manager.

There is no official reason why a community radio station couldn't be run entirely by unpaid volunteers, but our experience suggests it is impractical.

Applicants for full-time community radio licences typically propose a staff of around three or four full time positions. That's three or four people who between them may need to be project manager, administrator, trainer, accountant, secretary, community worker, youth worker, technician, publicist, producer, diplomat, fund-raiser, social worker, counsellor, painter, decorator, carpenter, tea-maker, cleaner and, oh yes, broadcaster.

Management and administrative roles are not always especially appealing to volunteers. They are often selfless, thankless tasks. The staff are there to enable the volunteers to train, to broadcast and to serve their community, and get little of the glory themselves. With perhaps somewhere between 50 and 100 volunteers, that is a lot of human resources if used properly, and an awful lot of headaches if not. The managers of a community radio station may sometimes feel like the chauffeurs of a finely tuned limousine, but more often they will feel like they are herding hyperactive cats – an endlessly demanding and sometimes wildly frustrating experience. This is a lot to ask of an unpaid volunteer – especially if they have other career or family commitments. For a sustainable long-term future, professional management should be considered essential – although this is not to say that volunteers shouldn't be encouraged to be part of the management team.

The chemistry which develops between paid staff and unpaid volunteers is a key component in the success or failure of a community radio station. The relationship requires mutual respect, mutual awareness of responsibilities, needs and duties, and perhaps most importantly, mutual trust. All of these factors require your internal communications to be working well.

If the respect, understanding and trust between volunteers and staff break down, the station is in deep trouble. It is vital that neither staff members nor volunteers feel that one is 'outranked' by the other. The role of each is different, and equally important. Volunteers are the lifeblood of your station, without them your existence is meaningless. Volunteers become involved to help and support your station, not to be bossed around (see p68).

It's a common mistake to undervalue the range of skills, abilities, contacts and general usefulness of your volunteers. If you have a hundred volunteers, then you can be sure they will include people with professional experience in everything from plumbing to PR. There might be an accountancy graduate and an untrained, unemployed artistic genius who would love to draw some pictures for your flyers and posters. Often you won't know unless you ask, whether individually at point of first contact or through your internal communications such as a newsletter or notice board.

Managing a station is a 24/7 activity. You can't pay people to cover all that time, so you will be dependent on volunteers to some extent to keep the station running. This is also good for the culture at the station. If the volunteers feel that the station is theirs, a microphone is much less likely to walk out the door, and if it still does, everybody takes it personally, and there is outrage across the board. When you are struggling with few resources it is vital to have that goodwill. If you can build that family sense of everyone working together, when you can't do everything or something goes wrong your volunteers are likely to be forgiving. If everything is very policy led and hierarchical, as soon as anything goes wrong, they are very likely to blame you and your structures.

CRIB SHEET

The staff and volunteer mix should be:

- A healthy balance
- Based on mutual trust, respect and understanding
- A valuable mix of experiences and abilities
- Lubricated by good communication

Staff roles and responsibilities

Generally the less appealing tasks involved in community radio are the ones you have to pay people to do. Top of the list is usually administrative work – paying invoices and keeping track of budgets, maintaining output monitoring systems, and so on. Many community groups (not just radio stations) will employ a part-time administrator long before they employ a full-time project manager. Once up and running, full-time community radio stations will typically employ staff with responsibilities broadly as follows:

- Station manager;
- Administrator; Finance officer;
- Radio trainer; Radio producer;
- Community participation worker;
- Volunteer support worker;
- Technician; IT manager and trainer;
- Business development worker.

Usually those roles will be combined into a smaller number of positions, so one person might be employed as technician and volunteer support worker. Alternatively two or three part-time employees with different roles could replace one full-time specialist. You should also consider using freelancers for roles such as training that are more 'seasonal' (see p167).

Mixing the staff and the board

You need to be completely clear about the appropriate levels of involvement of the board. The board's functions should be:

- Representation of the community;
- Supporting staff/volunteers;
- Ensuring due diligence.

The role of a director is not to crawl all over the day-to-day activities at the station, which is likely to cause problems with authority and morale. And yet the responsibility of a director to ensure due diligence does entitle him or her to full access to the station's activities. It is a fine balance, but eventually returns to mutual respect and trust. The board are all-powerful, but should always remember that the secret of wielding power is knowing when not to use it.

What a manager needs**A clear basis of engagement**

Managers (even unpaid ones) need absolute clarity about how they are expected to perform their function. This should be broadly and clearly set out in the terms and conditions agreed when an employment contract is signed, although the finer details may be agreed as a matter of ongoing management policies. It must be totally transparent to each member of the management chain exactly what they have authority and responsibility for, and to whom they are accountable. A good manager needs all three, and needs to be able to distinguish between them.

Authority

As a manager you need authority to take decisions – in other words you need to have been given the power or right to undertake the activities necessary to do your job. You can't run a station properly if you need to approach the board for permission to buy a packet of paper clips or give a colleague a day off. This also works in reverse, decisions should not be taken by those who do not have the authority. Remember that the person who speaks with most authority is not always the person who has most authority. Be wary of the strident volunteers or ambitious junior staff members who take it upon themselves to act beyond their authority. If authority is undermined or exercised badly, so too are responsibility and accountability. Of course there will also be times when station staff do need to refer decisions up to board level. It is up to board and management to clearly establish the appropriate limits to authority, which will often depend on the relative experience and capabilities at each level. It is up to each station to decide where those limits lie.

Responsibility

If you are responsible for something, you are obliged or expected to do it. This is different to authority because it does not necessarily involve freedom to decide what is or is not done. A member of staff may be responsible for training volunteers, but not have the authority to decide the curriculum for the course. So the authority over training might reside with the station manager and the partner college, while the responsibility for it lies with the member of staff.

Accountability

You are accountable if you are obliged to answer, explain or justify yourself to those who delegate authority and responsibility to you. In any voluntary organisation, everyone from the newest volunteer to the most senior member of the board should be accountable to someone and know who that someone is. In the case of the board, legally speaking, that someone is Companies House and/or the Charity Commission, and Ofcom for sticking to the promises made in your licence. In a broader sense the board and the station as a whole are responsible to the community they serve, and your 'promise of performance' to Ofcom makes it clear that this is not just some 'good thing' to be given a token nod in passing but must be a structurally clear part of how your radio station runs.

The great community radio manager will also have:**Leadership**

Most management is based upon structures, ensuring that the group or station is organised in a way that helps ensure efficient and effective activities. Leadership ability is above and beyond such formal structures. A good leader can inspire others, bring out the best in their colleagues and volunteers, and create a positive, creative, happy working environment. A manager with poor leadership skills might perform their tasks efficiently enough, but will soon find it difficult to maintain the interest of volunteers and staff, who may drift away or under-perform at work. A great leader with poor management skills may gather a dynamic team around him, but the station is liable to be pulled in many different directions or find



itself focussed to an unhealthy extent on that one charismatic individual, which is obviously unsustainable (see p24-25).

Control

You are in control of your station if you are aware of everything that happens in your station, and have agreed to (or sometimes dictated) the activities of all your colleagues. It is possible to manage a project – sometimes for a surprising length of time – without really being in control of it. You can find yourself, by luck or judgement, overseeing a team who all have shared objectives and do their own jobs well, leaving you looking great. But if as manager you are not aware of how your colleagues work, how they are making their decisions and the processes they use, you could find yourself in deep trouble when something goes wrong or one or two colleagues are suddenly taken ill or leave their job. You generally only find out how well controlled a station is when something goes wrong. A good station manager is in control of their station without becoming a 'controlling influence' or 'control freak.' This is obviously a fine balancing act.

Maintaining control requires a wide range of skills, including the ability to organise time, personnel and resources, prioritise tasks, keep accurate records, communicate well with colleagues and maintain a cool head when all around you are losing theirs.

CRIB SHEET**A manager needs:**

- Authority
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Control

Line management

People involved in community radio often tend to be quite egalitarian types. For the most part they don't like to pull rank and order other people around. That is probably a very healthy attitude. The atmosphere around most stations is of everyone mucking in together, and staff will often do bits and pieces of each other's jobs on any given day. In those circumstances it is easy to lose sight of who has responsibility for what. Every buck has to stop somewhere. The classic management chain (see Figure 5.01) has the senior manager employed by the governing body, or board. The board are legally obliged to ensure good management and the manager's job is at risk if he/she doesn't provide it. There should then be a clear chain of responsibility, if not command, all the way down to volunteers. Everyone should be clear about what – and who – they have responsibility for.

FIGURE 5.01

The classic management chain



Human resources management

It's very easy for the management to become so wrapped up in the progress and problems of volunteers or hitting the next targets for funders that they forget about their staff. But to be a good community radio station, a project also needs to be a good employer, a factor with even greater importance if your lack of resources requires a greater call on the goodwill of your station team. Larger community radio stations might think about employing a human resources (HR) manager, or investing in the services of an HR consultancy firm of which there are many specialising in the not-for-profit sector (your local voluntary sector umbrella group should have a list). Another source of HR support for your staff could be a local business who might allow their HR team to help you as part of a 'corporate social responsibility' partnership (see p187). At the very least, station managers need to make themselves aware of all the issues involved in this important part of management. Human resources management skills include:

- Recruiting the best staff;
- Fulfilling your obligations under employment laws;
- Drawing up binding, fair and effective employment contracts;
- Ensuring the health and safety of employees;
- Ensuring good systems of staff support, supervision and appraisal;
- Drafting and enforcing equal opportunities policies;
- Establishing and enforcing staff disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- Overseeing entitlements, benefits, pensions etc.

The practice of human resources management at a community radio station should be no different to any other voluntary sector organisation, and you should look at specialist resources for detailed guidance (see references at end of chapter).

CRIB SHEET

Human resources management

- Is just as important in Community radio as anywhere else
- Should be considered in much more detail than we can provide here

Motivation and stress

It shouldn't be difficult to motivate your workers and key volunteers. Community radio changes people's lives for the better, and you can see it with your own eyes and hear it with your own ears. Nevertheless there will be times when things have been running less than smoothly, tempers are getting frayed, workloads spiral out of control and morale begins to dip. With anything up to five years of radio looming ahead of you, there are very few end points in a community radio project – moments you can sit back and applaud yourselves for a job well done, evaluate your performance and plan it better for next time. Typically a community radio station might have several dozen projects running simultaneously, consecutively or overlapping, and inevitably it will often feel as if everyone is playing 'catch-up' for most of the time.

People can react to stressful workloads in several ways. Some will do as much as they can, accept their own limitations, and sleep soundly at night. Others will look at their in-tray and think 'I'll never do all this, so what's the point of doing anything?' In such cases it is crucial that their line manager intervenes, either with an inspiring motivational pep talk (or more effectively, lots of little ones) stressing the employee's skills and talents and underlining how valuable they are to the station. More practically, re-negotiate their workload, or break it into smaller chunks with attainable targets, so it looks less intimidating. Many people work harder when they have less to do. Of course, it is preferable to give people compliments, encouragement and manageable workloads before they begin to despair, not after.

The other response someone may have to a large workload is perhaps even more dangerous: to try and do it all. Many community radio workers and even volunteers will be so motivated and enthused by the project that they never leave work. Or when they do, their thoughts (and radio) remain tuned to it (see Voxbox 5.02). This is simply unsustainable – the demands a community station can make upon you are literally endless. The result is stress, exhaustion, illness and eventually a letter of resignation. We have learnt to our cost the harm which burn-out can cause to individuals and stations.

VOXBOX 5.02

"Don't tune into the station all the time. It was an addiction I fell foul of when I first got into community radio. It made me very anti-social, because even if I was at home and had friends round, I would have the radio on, and wouldn't be engaged in the conversation. I'd be talking to a friend with one ear on the radio and suddenly – 'Hang on! What did he just say?' Eventually my partner threatened to throw the radio out the window."

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

CRIB SHEET

Motivation:

- Is essential to run a community radio station
- Can lead to exhaustion, stress and burn-out

Spotting stress and burn-out

Preventing stress and burn out is in your own interest if you want to sustain a good staff team, but it is also your legal obligation under Health and Safety at Work laws. Stress affects different people in different ways, and there are no hard and fast rules for how people will react, but keep an eye out for the following clues in your colleagues and yourself:

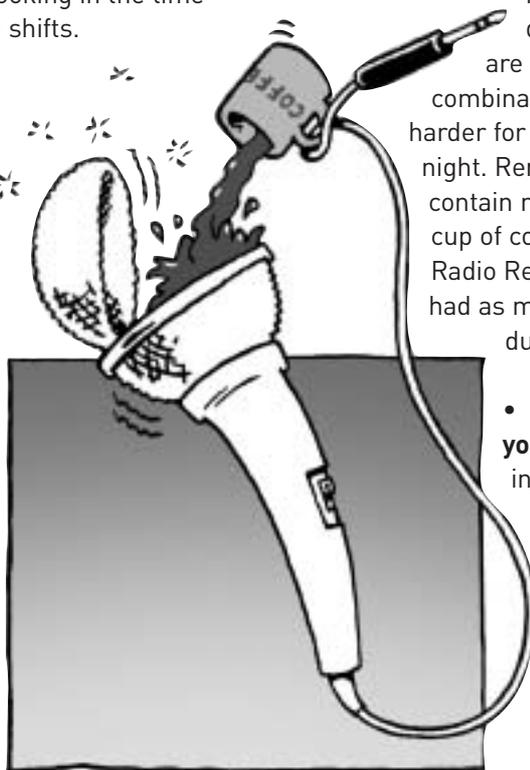
- Illness and absenteeism. Stressed people get ill more often as their immune system is weakened. Especially look out for regular headaches, back or muscular pain, palpitations or chest pains and stomach upsets, all of which are commonly (although far from exclusively) stress-related;
- Sleep problems. If you can't sleep at night for worrying about the Myriad automation system, alarm bells should be ringing;
- Anxiety, depression, panic attacks, or (less seriously) irritability and a changing attitude or demeanour;
- Low energy levels and tiredness;
- Conflicts in personal life and relationships;
- Changing drinking habits or intake of recreational or prescription drugs;

- Adrenaline addiction. People can get hooked on the buzz which accompanies stress. If someone seems to be deliberately seeking out demanding projects and extra workload, ask yourself why.

Avoiding stress and burn-out

Just as different people react to stress differently, so different people need different strategies to keep their stress levels down. Here are some useful pointers:

- **Avoid a stress culture at work.** It is easy for a pattern to develop at a station where the staff work 12 hour days, come in at weekends, and spend their evenings at community meetings. If one or two employees act like this (especially management) it can easily become seen as the norm, rather than the exception, and others will feel obliged to match up. Senior management should set a good example by going home during daylight hours. Occasionally.
- **Take time back.** If you know there's going to be a series of late nights or weekend work sessions for a specific project, put a limit on them and take back the time owed before you forget why you did the extra hours – by booking in the time off when you book in the extra shifts.
- **Watch your flexi-time and holiday records.** If a member of staff has built up 90 days of flexi-time or has only taken two days holiday in six months, their line manager should really intervene and send them home. The term for this addiction to being at work is 'present-eeism'.
- **Have a laugh.** Laughter relieves tension which in turn reduces stress. Make sure your workplace is a fun place to come in to each day. Within limits, obviously (and nervous laughter or laughing at nothing doesn't count).
- **Make the station as neat and comfortable as possible.** Not necessarily sofas in every room, but try to reduce clutter and chaos, which is a significant contributing factor to a stressful environment.
- **Manage your time.** Time management is crucial to a relaxed working environment. Make sure your deadlines, targets and projects are spread as evenly as possible through the year, and learn to organise your days and weeks.
- **Manage your money.** If you can keep on top of your budgets, cash flows and accounting, everything will be much, much easier.
- **Deal quickly and effectively with personal disputes** and arguments that develop between staff or volunteers.
- **Have a quiet space** where staff can retreat to work in peace or catch their breath over a cup of tea or coffee. But...
- **Reduce your caffeine.** High caffeine consumption increases the heart rate, as does stress. The two together are an unhealthy and unhelpful combination. Caffeine also makes it harder for you to unwind and sleep at night. Remember many fizzy drinks contain more caffeine than a strong cup of coffee. Some smug staffers at Radio Regen swear blind they've never had as much energy since they dumped caffeine.
- **Leave work at work when you leave.** Maintain other interests and find time to do whatever makes you happy – so long as it has nothing to do with radio. Leave plenty of time for a long soak in the bath at the end of the day.



- **Compartmentalise.** Do what you can in the time you have to do it in – prioritising and planning your work to maximise your efficiency. However motivated and efficient you are, there is only so much you can do, and if you start to lose sleep as a result of that inevitably overflowing in-tray, you'll only get less work done. So put your work in a mental compartment and make sure that there are other compartments in your life that are important to you – they might be the ones that keep you sane.
- **Never give out your home or personal mobile number.** If you have an emergency staff contact procedure, get a dedicated phone and have a formal rota for shifts on-call. Make sure they understand that emergencies do not include such disasters as running out of sugar.

CRIB SHEET

Stress and burn-out:

- can be seen coming
- can be eased or avoided

Managing volunteers

In Chapter 10 we will go into detail about how to support, supervise and help volunteers. Much of this work will be conducted by support workers, trainers, producers etc. But volunteers are so central to community radio that their role, their needs and their position needs to be firmly built into your management structures.

In one fundamental respect volunteer management in community radio is different to other areas of the voluntary sector. Community groups generally have management (including the board and paid staff), volunteers and the clients who use the services they provide. In most cases – think of a community crèche or older persons' centre – attracting volunteers to serve tea or babysit toddlers is a difficult task. Volunteer management textbooks often work on the assumption that volunteers are rare and valuable creatures who must be cosseted and treasured, while there will probably be an excess of potential clients/users desperate to access the services the group provides.

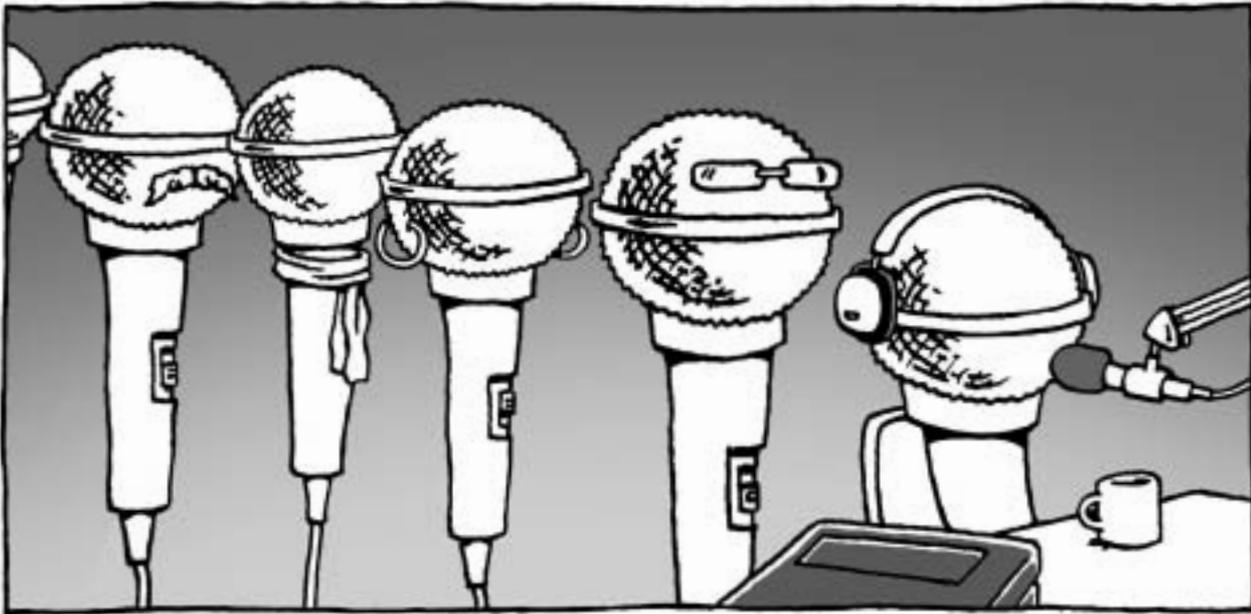
The nature of community radio is that the benefits to the volunteers – the experience, training, thrill and fun of making radio – in some ways outweigh the benefits to the 'clients', who in our case are the listeners (important though they are). The result is, hopefully, a long waiting list of would-be volunteers. Which is not to say that you can 'use and abuse' your volunteers because there'll be another one along in a minute. Volunteers ARE the heart of your operation: no volunteers = no radio (unless you are over-enamoured with the output of your automation software). Treat your volunteers well, nurture them and allow them to fulfil their aspirations – but cotton wool need not be part of your toolkit in doing so.

The driving ethos of community radio is that access to the airwaves is a human right. But when there is a queue, every volunteer who exercises his or her right to the airwaves is preventing someone else from exercising theirs. It's also worth bearing in mind that running a community radio station may cost around £50 per hour. If someone is availing themselves of such a valuable resource they should be expected to act responsibly and behave decently. If a volunteer is causing trouble on or off air, obstructing the progress of the station and other volunteers, or otherwise behaving inappropriately, you must have systems to deal with this.

The best starting point for the relationship between management and volunteers is a clear, extensive, mutually-agreed set of rules and responsibilities, ideally gathered into a signed volunteer agreement.

Rules and agreements

Creativity, self-expression and the airing of alternative and unheard voices are all crucial to successful community radio. Your volunteers need to be able to express themselves in their own way on air and off, but you do need to set boundaries. A volunteer might make brilliant radio, represent alternative sections of your community, draw in large numbers of listeners, attend every volunteer meeting and always wash her coffee cup, but if she routinely swears on air or fails to lock the front door when leaving the station she is a liability.



Your DJs should remember that there's a queue of volunteers waiting to take their slot.

One way to think of this is that the station provides the volunteer with a blank canvas upon which they can paint – but that canvas, even if it's really huge, is already bound by a frame. They can paint whatever they like, providing they do not exceed the limits. The frame itself has a lot of detail. Some of it is behavioural – the standards of behaviour which everyone at the station is expected to adhere to. Other details are procedural – what the volunteer should do if they can't make their show or there is a technical failure in the studio, for example. Much of it will be about what happens on air, with basic explanations of broadcast regulations and legislation around libel, obscenity etc. and station policy on those standards, which may well be more strict than the legislation requires (see p109). The volunteer should commit themselves to a certain amount of time and activity, for example two hours broadcasting activities and two hours of non-broadcast support activities each week. You may also wish to include an agreement about the content of whatever radio the volunteer is making. You need some recourse if you offer someone a show to present issues relating to the elderly, and the volunteer decides to play 60 minutes of heavy metal instead.

You do not want your station to feel like a prison or a school. You don't want to treat your volunteers as

criminals or children – even if they are! So it is not enough to say 'here are the rules. Obey them or you're in trouble.' Your volunteer agreement needs to spell out the rules, but just as importantly it needs to spell out why the rule is in place and what will happen if it is breached. Clarity is the key and consideration for others the touch-stone. Some breaches of the volunteer agreement – such as physical assault or vandalism – should probably carry an instant ban from the station. Other breaches – such as failing to turn up for a scheduled show – might be best dealt with a 'three strikes and you're out' type of policy. Minor offences such as use of offensive or inappropriate language might best be dealt with through a firm but friendly chat.

CRIB SHEET

The volunteer agreement:

- Should be extensive, clear and formal
- Should specify the limits to volunteers' autonomy and creative freedom
- Should explain what the rule is
- Should explain why the rule is there
- Should explain what will happen if it is breached

Volunteer induction

If you're busy and recruiting a lot of new volunteers at once, you might be tempted to print out half a dozen pages of rules and regulations, thrust them into the hand of a new volunteer and send them on their way. But the volunteer may be reluctant to admit to literacy, language or comprehension problems, or more commonly just never get around to reading them. So an induction session is vital – this would normally encompass not only a line-by-line reading of the volunteer handbook, but if necessary also a tour of the station, introductions to members of staff and so on. The induction should be formally organised and offer an opportunity for the new volunteer to ask any questions about the station and its policies. By the end of it the volunteers should feel like they have joined a team, if not a family.

Besides the rules concerning behaviour and broadcasting requirements, the induction should also explain:

- What the volunteer can expect from you in terms of support and training;
- An overview of community radio;
- An overview of your station and your stated aims;
- Equal opportunities policies;
- Health and safety policies;
- Details of any expenses or benefits available.

The induction is also a very good time to conduct your 'skills and needs' assessment – where you find out what the volunteer has to offer the station and what they need from it (see p138).

Consistent policies

No sane person likes having to discipline volunteers. They are not being paid, they are generally nice people, maybe you even socialise with them after work. The prospect of calling them into the office and giving them a dressing down or informing them that they have been barred from the station is not a pleasant one. The temptation to let lapses and breaches of the rules slip past is often very strong. It is also very dangerous.

Community radio stations are like ants' nests at times, with volunteers bustling around each other and working in close proximity. They talk, they

gossip, and they know more about what is going on than many managers would care to imagine. One consequence of that is that they know when someone gets away with mischief and when they don't. If volunteers think they might get away with swearing on air without reproach or consequence, of course they are more likely to do it. And if one volunteer breaks a rule or policy, others will soon do likewise and station discipline begins to dissolve along with your authority. It becomes much harder for you as a manager to then clamp down once the rot has taken hold. It should be clear that disciplinary proceedings are hard and fast, not made up on the spot by the station manager. If they even sense that the latter is the case, they may become angry and confused about any disciplinary action.

As a general rule, a community radio station needs to balance the rights of the individual volunteer with those of the group and the station as a whole. A well laid-out set of policies and grievance procedures should go most of the way to ensuring this balance. Just be careful not to allow yourself to become involved in a protracted quasi-legal dispute with one disgruntled individual.

CRIB SHEET

Your disciplinary policies should be

- Consistent
- Consistent
- Consistent

Supporting the sinner

Having established a culture of good behaviour, it's important to remember that your duty to support, care for and improve the lives of your volunteers extends even to those who are in breach of the rules. In extreme circumstances (violent behaviour, theft, criminal damage to station property) you may need to ban a volunteer for life, but this will be very unusual. For most disciplinary lapses the appropriate sanction should also include scope for rehabilitation. To take a hypothetical example, a volunteer may fail to turn up for her show on three occasions in close succession, without letting anyone know that she was going to do so. She has



been given a first and second warning on the previous occasions, and the station policy is that she should lose her show until the next round of schedule allocation in three months' time. While those three months are passing, it would be very healthy if the volunteer can be given not less but more supervision and training. Then when she re-applies for her show she has a better grasp of routine, a better understanding of the problems caused by non-attendance, and because her skills have improved, she will enjoy making radio more and so be more motivated to attend.

Many breaches of station rules, on air and off, will be the result of ignorance, which is a product of insufficient training. This may be particularly true with regards to your equal opportunities policy and offensive language. The classic argument about whether a comment is a harmless joke or a gross insult is revisited on a regular basis in every community radio station (and probably every other work and social space). If someone exceeds what you consider to be acceptable limits, explain to them clearly where the boundaries lie – they may genuinely not understand why offence has been caused.

There may be more serious cases too. It is probably the case that the volunteers who are most likely to break the rules of their agreement are also those most likely to have a chaotic or abusive home life, physical or mental health issues, substance abuse problems, or other social or personal issues. If such problems are interfering with their ability to make radio, then you should help them to access the help they need from specialist agencies or services (see p135).

In this area, like so many others, you have to find a balance you can live with. You want to offer a patient, understanding and supportive attitude to one

individual, but you also need to run a safe, secure, successful community radio station for everyone else. You could offer opportunities for a wayward volunteer to improve their behaviour but they might simply refuse to change their ways. You have to know when to admit defeat, recognising the point where however much you want to help you simply cannot.

CRIB SHEET

Supporting wayward volunteers:

- Is as important a part of your job as supporting model volunteers
- May often come down to education and training
- Can only do so much and for so long

Marketing

Marketing is yet another task that you think can be put off until the mythical day when there is money and time to spare. Of course that day never comes, and in the meantime your station is going unnoticed by many of your potential volunteers, partners and listeners.

You need to market your station to maximise the benefits it can offer your community. Marketing can soak up as much energy and money as you have available, but it can be effective even with very limited resources. It takes many forms:

- **Word of mouth.** This is the most powerful tool a community radio station has at its disposal. Encourage your volunteers and listeners to tell their friends. Network at local events. If you attend a meeting, make sure everyone knows who you are, where you are from and what it is you do – wear the T-shirt!
- **Publicity materials.** There is a reason why every radio station from the smallest commercial operator to Radio 1 gives away window stickers, T-shirts, balloons etc. – it works. Every car with a sticker is a little moving billboard for your station, every T-shirt is a walking advertisement. And the cherry on top is that the people to whom you give such freebies are even grateful for the privilege. If costs are tight, look for a reciprocal deal with a

local print shop who may give you a discount or gratis rate in return for on-air advertising or having their logo displayed on the materials. Alternatively one of your partners or funders may be willing to sponsor promotional materials in return for a 'supported by...' mention.

- **Piggybacking.** Talk to your partner organisations, local businesses, agencies etc. about ways in which you could get yourself mentioned on their publicity materials. If an agency does a regular show, make sure they mention it in their own publicity. If you have specialist DJs on your station who also play clubs and bars, persuade them to get your station name and logo on the flyers. For example, any school class on air brings with it the families, friends and other carers of each pupil in it – possibly another few hundred listeners.
- **Advertising.** While it may feel painful to pay for newspaper ads, billboards or other commercial advertising, sometimes it is a worthwhile investment. In particular if a station is new and needs a sudden influx of listeners or volunteers, a well-placed, well-designed advertisement can be highly effective.
- **Outside events.** If there is a local community festival happening, you should be there – ideally with a full road show, but if that is not viable, host a small tent with your DJs or at the very least set up a stall with publicity and information about your station. Hosting special events in bars or clubs – whether that's a nightclub or a Darby and Joan club – can help you reach different audiences, and may even earn you some money.
- **Branding.** We will discuss on air branding in the Programming chapter (p128) but it is equally important in the material world. Your station should have a recognisable logo and 'house style' on every piece of stationery, letterhead, web page, promotional item, newsletter, banner, poster or whatever. This will help people to recognise and remember your name. This includes having some control over the hand printed flyers of self-publicising shows – one of our 'regulars' thought he was doing us a favour by printing off a few

thousand flyers for his club night with many mentions for his radio show. But the inevitable picture of a scantily clad young woman did little for our equal opportunities policy.

- **Media relations.** Be on good terms with the local media. You might be unlikely to get much support from other radio stations (however sympathetic they might be – see below) but local newspapers and magazines are different. Build up friendly relationships with local journalists. Often they are over-worked and under-resourced, and if you can present them with an interesting story for minimal effort they will be only too happy to print it. If you can provide them with a good quality, hi-resolution photograph to accompany it they may well bite your hand off. With smaller local papers especially, you should always offer a human face for every story. They won't be interested in your social gain statistics (however impressive you might think they are) but they will be interested in the local volunteer who has overcome a disability to complete an accredited training course, or the missing cat which was found after its heartbroken owner rang your phone-in show. Such human interest stories – which community radio stations generate on a daily basis – are a fantastic source of free publicity. If your local newspaper seems particularly supportive and enthusiastic, try to persuade them to carry your weekly schedule on their radio and TV page, perhaps in exchange for you plugging them. Many papers buy their schedules in directly from an agency, but others have some flexibility.
- **Website.** Your website may be the closest thing you have to a public face, so try to make sure it is attractive, informative and easy to use (see p57).
- **Your message.** It's worth having a snappy phrase or two which you can use at every opportunity on air and off to sum up who you are and what you do. Ideally you want something that captures the essence of community radio and your station in particular – 'making a better town by making a better sound' or something similarly cheesy.



Out to launch: Wythenshawe FM takes to the air.

Launching

Be sure of your output before you have a launch event, after all, why market a sound that doesn't show your true potential. Give yourself time to iron out the wrinkles before you invite the town to tune in. No one's going to mind if you 'launch' a month after actually going live. That said, don't wait until everything's perfect – it never will be.

CRIB SHEET

Marketing:

- Is crucial to help you find listeners, volunteers and partners
- Is not necessarily expensive
- Can take many different forms
- Is not something to do once everything else is sorted out

Relationships with other radio stations

Few organisations can be as useful to you as other radio stations, whatever their size or nature. You should have excellent relationships with other community radio stations – at least those far enough away that you will never be competing for the same licence or advertisers. The Community Media Association is the hub of the network, and if you actively involve yourself in the CMA you will be able to meet and share experiences with a large number of colleagues in the community sector.

Relationships with the BBC and (especially) commercial stations may be more delicate. On the one hand you are competing with them for listeners, and to a small extent possibly even for advertising revenue (despite Ofcom's best efforts – see p35). On the other – you have much to offer them. Let's consider each in turn.

The BBC is a public service broadcaster and its remit goes beyond broadcasting to the public. The

BBC's current Charter places a demand upon the corporation to involve itself in local community development work. There are few easier ways for BBC station directors to do this than by involving themselves in community radio groups, to which they could offer training, supervision, resources and endless wisdom. Radio Regen is currently negotiating a formal mentoring system with the BBC for our senior managers, which could offer enormous value to our staff. As we go to print, the BBC nationally is talking to the CMA about exploring the many ways BBC local stations and community radio stations can enjoy many happy collaborations (see Voxbox 5.03). This goodwill might even outlast the renewal of the BBC's Charter.

Community radio stations are a great potential source of new talent in all areas of radio production. Commercial and BBC stations often struggle to find recruits who aren't identikit white, middle class, media studies graduates. Community stations also offer a route to grassroots community news – providing stories which can otherwise pass under the radar of large media outlets who are accustomed to working to press releases from government, big business, the PR industry and large non-governmental organisations (NGOs). So there is not only a strong ethical argument for the mainstream radio sector to work with you, it also delivers tangible benefits to them – it's right and it works!

At present it seems that whilst BBC stations are already involving themselves in community radio groups across the country, many commercial stations are proving much more difficult to persuade – particularly if the community station is carrying advertising. Good networking, gentle diplomacy and a growing awareness of the nature of community radio should hopefully mean that this will change in the not-so-distant future. Make yourself known to larger local commercials, stress your social gain achievements and the fact that you are not trying to put them out of business, and you may well find the reaction is: 'That sounds great. Is there anything we can do?' Even the smaller stations might come on board once they get used to you and realise that your different sound isn't going to empty their share-holders' coffers.



Presenter Jill Daley will be fronting VIP on Air's programming on BBC Radio Scotland.

CRIB SHEET

other radio stations:

- May be nervous of you, especially smaller commercial stations
- Can be extremely useful to you
- May decide you are extremely useful to them

Finally, even in the belly of the most corporate beast of a huge mainstream radio station, you are linked to them by the little word 'radio'. Small radio is where a lot of their staff came from and all but the most jaded cynic amongst them will feel an empathy with a broadcaster trying to get by on two bits of string and a used phone card. Even if the station policy might not endorse helping you out, don't be surprised if the staff will do so under their own steam.

VOXBOX 5.03

"Radio Scotland has been one of our partners from the start – they've given us training and support and we've worked with them on a number of outside broadcasts and so on. But now they have commissioned us to produce a weekly 30 minute programme that focuses on blind issues. For the first time blind people in Scotland will have their own programme they can tune in to, which is a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness of the issues for the rest of the population, and to encourage equality, and of course it's an incredible opportunity for our volunteers to make radio on a national platform. It's a very equal partnership, they haven't been patronising at all. They have been a wonderful resource for us and we have provided them with talent and good programming. This brings community radio to a national audience, and hopefully other BBC stations will take this up as well."

Kerryn Krige, VIP On Air, Glasgow

Further reading and links

General management

Just About Managing? Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups (4th edition). Sandy Adirondack (London Voluntary Service Council, 2005)

Managing Without Profit: The art of managing third-sector organisations. Mike Hudson (Directory of Social Change, 2004)

The Good Governance Action Plan for Voluntary Organisations. Sandy Adirondack (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2002)

Managing Recruitment and Selection. Gill Taylor (Directory of Social Change, 1997)

Planning Together: The art of effective teamwork. George Gawlinski and Lois Graessle (Planning Together Press, 1988)

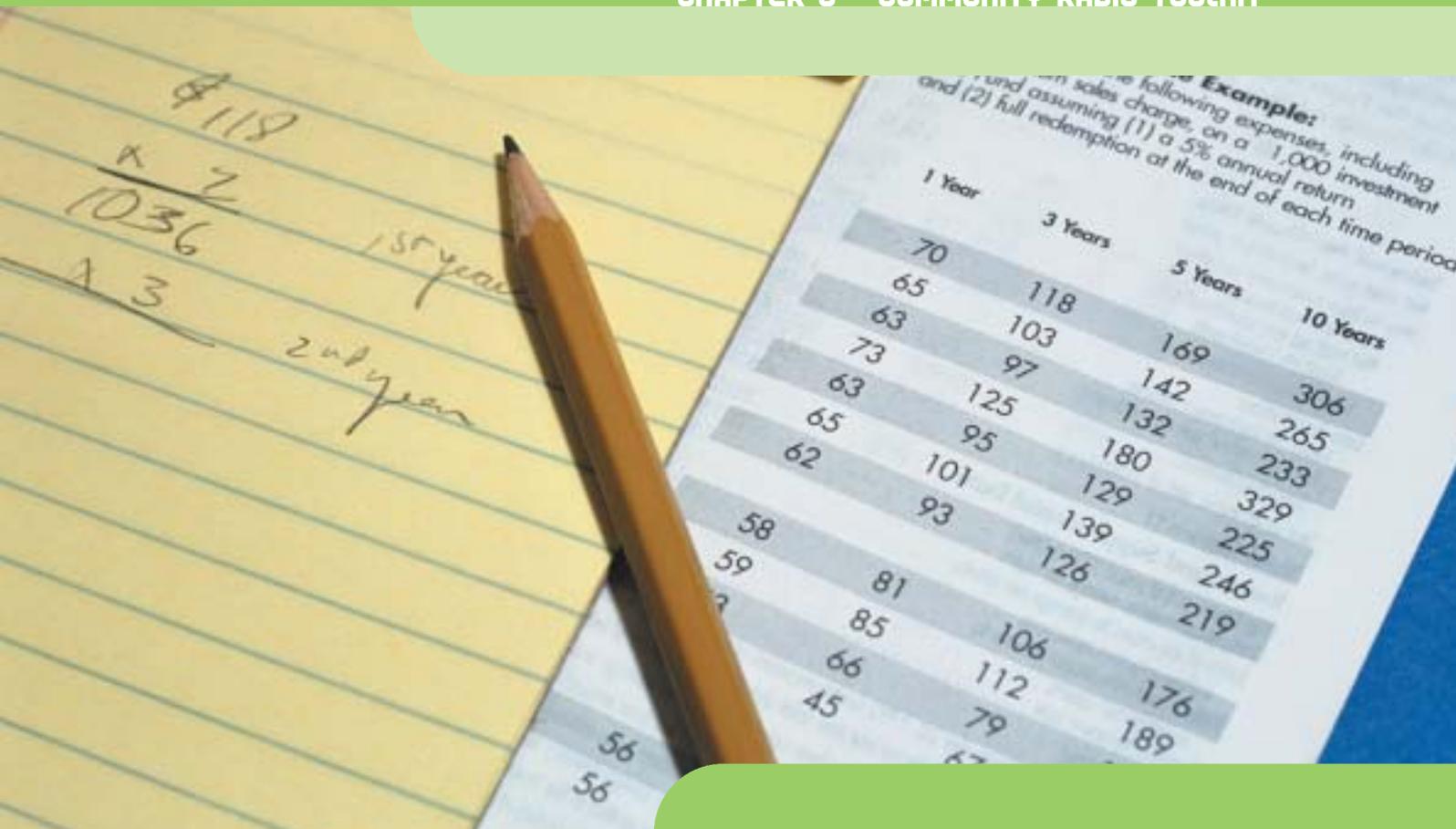
www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/html/rmp/contents.htm

Managing Volunteers

www.volunteering.org.uk
www.vde.org.uk

Marketing

www.mediaguide.org.uk
www.volresource.org.uk/briefs/market.htm



MONEY AND MONITORING

Penny pinching

Finance

Budget management

Broadcast licence fees

Monitoring and evaluation



MONEY AND MONITORING

Community radio is a greedy beast. However many resources – financial, material or human – you may have at your disposal, a community radio project will swallow them up, burp and ask for seconds.

Managing on low resources

A 24 hour commercial radio station might typically employ 30-40 full-time staff. A community station is attempting to produce a similar volume of output with many more broadcasters to manage, not to mention a host of additional social and pastoral responsibilities, with perhaps 10% of that number of paid staff. The demands for equipment, facilities and marketing resources are endless. What's more, community outreach work, education, training, volunteer development and other social gain-related activities tend to be self-generating – the better you are at doing them, the more people will seek your help. Sooner or later you have to draw a line under your spending. The question is how you can get the best results from the least expense.

Look at the big picture

While good management of a well-designed project can sometimes generate miraculous results from minimal resources, it is important that you give yourself a realistic chance. The overwhelming majority of station costs are entirely predictable. Hypothetically, if a station has an annual turnover of £100,000, as much as £95,000 of the costs may be predicted in advance.

Expenditure can be categorised as 'fixed' or 'variable':

- Fixed costs – whatever you cannot change: rent, business rates, insurance etc.;
- Variable costs – some bills (especially telephone), emergency repairs, special events, stationery, marketing etc.

Staff costs are fixed when your employees are on permanent contracts, but will be variable if you have staff as freelancers or on temporary contracts.

Like your expenditure, your income can also be described in different ways:

- General income – money which can be spent as you see fit. This may come from general fund-raising, business activities (e.g. selling advertising or services) or general donations;

- Core funding – money you are given to keep your station running to cover the basic costs of staff salaries, premises etc.;
- Project funding – money which is provided for a particular purpose, such as running a community drama project or conducting outreach work with a specific section of the population.

While the vast bulk of your station income will go on staff salaries and fixed costs, it is often the apparently trivial budgets that cause most anguish. When a studio CD player breaks and there isn't £100 spare to repair it, the stress and inconvenience caused can be out of all proportion to the money involved. We will return shortly to the larger picture of budget management, but first we'll consider ways to keep your variable costs down.

CRIB SHEET

When managing your station remember that:

- Your resources are never as plentiful as you need
- Your spending is mostly fixed, predictable
- Your resources may come from earned income, core funding or project funding

Look after the pennies ...

With several over-worked members of staff and dozens of enthusiastic volunteers coming and going at your station, it is incredibly easy for the petty cash supply to be eaten up, whether literally in the shape of chocolate-covered Hob Nobs, or metaphorically with a ready supply of blank mini-discs or stamps. At Radio Regen we try to avoid the use of petty cash altogether – maybe it's just us but it never adds up at the end, and the time and aggro expended in trying to track down that missing receipt for teabags is just not worth the sums involved. Instead we use an expenses system which is pump primed by giving an expenses advance to those staff who buy a lot of teabags.

Someone at the station needs to make themselves deeply unpopular with their unashamed stinginess. While you really should supply your volunteers with a sack of teabags from the cash and carry, if they want to drink Lapsang Souchong they can bring their own. Keep an eye on the itemised bills and try to instil a culture of cost-awareness at the station – small details such as switching off lights and equipment in empty rooms or not filling the kettle to the top every time it is boiled will actually make a noticeable difference to the year's electricity bills and will be a constant reminder to everyone at the station that money is tight (plus maybe saving an inch or two of the polar ice cap). There's nothing as sobering as explaining that replacement 'pop' shields can't be bought because the station spent too much on bottled water.

Make sure that all volunteers understand that if equipment is lost or damaged, it cannot always be replaced. Focus people's minds on the need to treat every microphone and every machine with the utmost care and respect. And keep a very tight eye on your phone bill. This is one expense that can suddenly rocket if someone at the station – whether thoughtlessly or selfishly – makes some long calls to a mobile phone or overseas (our record at Radio Regen to date is a £54 call made to the Congo). You may want to consider blocking calls to such numbers on the station phone, if you can.

Never pay for anything you can get for free

One of the great strengths of community radio is that people want to help. A station manager needs to be utterly shameless in asking for favours, donations or freebies – just remember "It's for charity!" If your team of volunteers includes a joiner and you have a broken door, just ask (see Voxbox 6.01). If the volunteer is happy to use their skills to help you out, that's fantastic. But always be gracious with refusals – it isn't fair to pressurise someone into working for you for nothing, even if they do get a show once a month.

Check whether there is any form of LETS (Local Exchange Trading Scheme) operating in your area. These schemes allow individuals and groups to trade skills and services for tokens instead of cash,

and as a radio station, you have a lot to offer. You could, for example, run a regular slot about services needed and offered on the scheme on your community programmes, in return for an agreed number of tokens which could be traded in for maintenance work or other basic favours.

Some newcomers to radio imagine that buying records and CDs is a major cost for radio stations. In fact there should be no need to spend a single penny on them. Record companies employ publicists (either on their own payroll or contracted specialists, called 'pluggers' in the trade) specifically to send new releases to radio stations. At present, some record labels are more willing than others to include community radio stations on their mail-out of new music. Some are yet to be convinced that a community station is anything more than a hobby project or pirate. As the sector grows in volume and profile we would hope this should change.

One significant development is the arrival of free download services specifically aimed at the radio industry such as www.musicpointuk.com, which allow record labels to get their music to you without even the cost of postage. Small independent and specialist labels might not routinely send out promotional music, but they also tend to be flexible if your station is offering to publicise their music for free. As ever, if you don't ask you don't get.

VOXBOX 6.01

"The building we are in now was an old boatshed that we renovated. When we first came in there were no partitions, no doors, no floorboards in some places. It was horrendous. We had a lot of help – many of our volunteers are tradesmen, plumbers, joiners and so on. They helped us, and we give them some advertising, so it benefits them as well as us."

*Kathleen MacIver, Station Co-ordinator,
Isles FM, Stornoway*

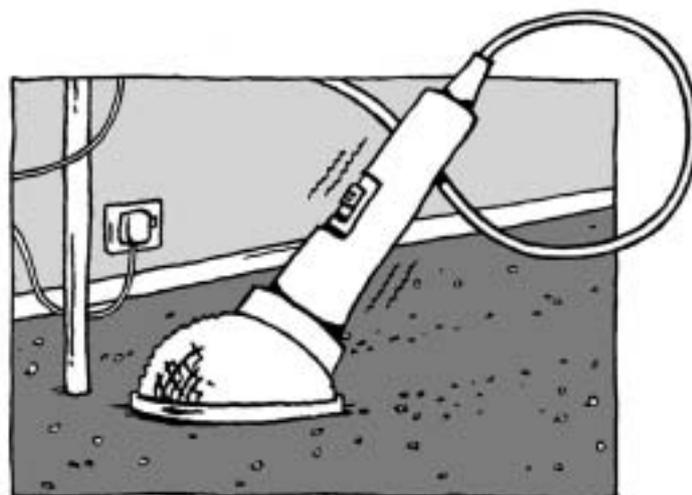
Never do something for free if you can get paid

With your place at the very heart of your community, you will regularly be approached by other groups, agencies, businesses, charities etc. wanting you to do things for them, whether it's broadcast a message, publicise an event, or borrow your facilities. There is always a temptation to say yes, especially to well-intentioned community projects or charities. But don't assume that these groups are completely cash-strapped. Their staff have probably read a similar book to this one and are following the maxim above: 'never pay for anything you can get for free.' Don't be embarrassed to ask them if they have a budget available for publicity or hire of facilities. If they have, then you are entitled to your share. If they haven't, you may well end up agreeing as a favour anyway, but try to get an assurance that the favour will be returned in some way at a later date. If you are offering a service to another group you may wish to try a pilot scheme first for a minimal or zero charge, but be clear what is being offered and for how long. If the arrangement is to continue, then you are entitled to be asking for payment.

Asking for payment from like-minded groups shouldn't trouble you – they can always say no, and you'll be no good to them if you go belly up by being too generous with your services. Even if nothing comes back to you, the request is a way of placing value on the services you offer.

Help each other out ...

The nature of a community radio station is that everyone tends to muck in together. If you save money by not hiring a cleaner, it is incumbent on everyone to do some cleaning occasionally (Voxbox 6.02). More seriously, a large number of the tasks required to run a station fall outside the remit of any one particular member of staff. The words 'someone else's problem' or 'more than my job's worth' should never be uttered at a community radio station, everyone needs to support everyone else and one person's problem is everyone's problem.



Is hoovering the studio in your job description? Perhaps not when funders are visiting...

VOXBOX 6.02

"A woman from a funding agency visited the station for a meeting early one morning, and when she arrived I was doing the hoovering. My colleague introduced us and we chatted for a bit. Then she asked me what my job was and I told her 'station manager'. She looked really puzzled, and asked 'so why are you doing the hoovering?' I answered, 'because the floor was dirty.'

*Alex Green, Station Manager,
ALL FM, Manchester*

... but not too much

It is very easy for staff members to get sucked into a tornado of minor tasks – nailing down loose carpets, hoovering (!), settling personal squabbles, undertaking lengthy face-to-face support with troubled volunteers etc. It is crucial that paid staff remember what it is they are being paid to do. Your station will thrive or struggle according to your performance in your key tasks. If an employee is being paid to conduct outreach work and liaison with other community groups, then that is what he should spend his time doing. If he can do that well, and still have time left over to help a volunteer make a jingle then so much the better, but the work must be prioritised.

CRIB SHEET

When your financial and other resources are tight:

- You must keep an eye on bills and spending on 'bits of pieces'
- Never pay for anything you can get for free
- Never do anything for free if you can get paid
- Your staff and volunteers will be stretched – everyone must remember their job priorities

Basic financial management

There are two principle strands to financial management:

- Budget management i.e. making sure that your expenditure matches your budget projections;
- Projecting income and expenditure. Your Ofcom application form (see Chapter 3) will have spelled out in broad terms where you expect to find the money it will take to run your station.

Budget management

You need to ensure that the money you are spending at the station, day-by-day and month-by-month, is no more than your budgeted amounts. Your station will have dozens of different budget lines, for both core expenditure items (like rent and phone) and expenditure that is specific to a particular project (like the cost of workshop trainers or leaflets to publicise a particular event), and you must make sure that every penny that is spent is recorded and allocated to a budget.

The opportunities community radio offer are so extensive that staff members and volunteers will always be coming up with brilliant ideas which 'won't cost much.' They soon add up to a large hole in station funding. The one question that station managers need to ask their colleagues more than any other is... 'and who will pay for that?'

To keep track of what money is being spent against which budgets, you should use a computerised accountancy package. It is possible to keep records

of income and expenditure using simple spreadsheets, but as you expand this will become unduly complicated and inflexible and will invite confusion and errors. The money and time required to learn a basic computerised system is an excellent investment. QuickBooks is one industry standard that your accountant will understand and which is also very easy for a non-finance expert to use.

Using a system such as QuickBooks, every item of expenditure is given an expenditure account and a project class. So you might have bought some folders for your training project, which you would code on your accounting system as Stationery/Training, or paid a volunteer for the refugee project for the cost of their child care, which you would code as Child Care/Refugee. Some costs might be shared between projects, so if the training and refugee projects shared an office, for example, the cost of the office rent would be split between them when entered on your accounting system. Then, almost at the touch of a button, your accounting system can produce expenditure reports telling you how much a particular project has spent and on what, or how much you've spent in total on a particular item, like stationery, across all of your projects. As well as being invaluable for internal monitoring purposes and for producing accounts easily at the end of each year, funders are also very fond of expenditure reports, so the easier they are to produce, the better.

Both your funders and your accountant like to see that a receipt or invoice has been filed against every, that's *every* expense. If ever you think this is onerous, summon the mental image of a steely eyed auditor from Government Office descending on you and asking to see your audit trail – it *will* happen to you. Before you 'go live', ask your accountant to help you set up a basic system to help you do this. They really shouldn't charge you (much) for this as it will make their job so much easier when they come to do your books. Tell them it's a good will gesture as we've heard some accountants actually have this in their vocabulary.

Another essential tip for good budget management is to make sure that you know exactly what money you have spent, even if the invoice hasn't arrived yet.

It isn't at all unusual for an invoice from a supplier to go missing, or for a freelancer to forget to invoice you for months. And if you don't notice that you haven't paid for these things, you might decide to use your apparent under-spend on buying something else that you actually couldn't really afford. So keep a list of any items or services that have been ordered or commissioned, and check them off as you pay for them. In this respect, you might want to operate a central ordering system, or delegate the ordering of regular supplies to just one person. In a similar vein, staff should be encouraged to submit regular expenses claims. In terms of your budget management, it really isn't very helpful to get expenses claims going back a year or more and adding up to possibly hundreds of pounds (really, it can happen, are we paying our staff too much?) As well as the difficulty this causes with your budgeting, you might also have submitted the final expenditure claim for the project concerned.

Strange though it may seem, budget management often involves ensuring that you spend enough and not too little money. Most local authority grants, for example, must be spent by a particular date, usually the end of their financial year (the end of March), and this money absolutely cannot be carried forward to be spent in the next financial year. So if you are in receipt of such a grant, you must spend the money by the date specified. The rules on what constitutes spending money vary – in some cases, an invoice indicating that the activity took place before the cut off date will suffice, in others you will have to provide a bank statement to prove that you received the invoice, wrote the cheque and that the cheque cleared your account by the required date. If you don't spend a time-limited grant in time, your local council will most definitely not be happy to have the money returned to them, since they will then have to return the money to central Government, and will be in danger of having their allocation reduced in future years.

In terms of sticking to the budgets that you set yourself, most grant funders will insist that you spend their money on the items that you detailed in your grant application, sometimes to a high degree of accuracy e.g. allowing no more than 10%

divergence from the figures in your original budget. But with some other funding (e.g. Service Level Agreements – see Chapter **) the funders couldn't care less what you spend their money on so long as you deliver their outputs. The result of the latter is that if you happen to come in under budget, any surplus is yours to use elsewhere on the station (more Lapsang Souchong perhaps).

You will often find that local authorities and other mainstream agencies are looking for ways of spending money towards the end of a financial period, and you may well be able to help them to do this. But think carefully before you accept such grants. £20,000 to run a community outreach project may be very welcome, but if you then have to complete the project in 2 weeks, you will find that spending money can be very hard work.

What's in your budget

But exactly how much will it all cost to run our station, we can hear you asking. Well, obviously, that depends – on how many staff you employ, on how big and posh your premises are, on how many of your volunteers you pay child care expenses to etc. As a very rough guide, we currently reckon on about £100,000 a year to run one community station. Perhaps more usefully, take a look at Table 6.01 which lists the items that you need to consider including in your budget (and the approximate amount that we spend on each item at one station each year).

Broadcast licences

Two items that your budget must contain are the fees for your PRS and PPL licences. PRS and PPL are music copyright agencies which look after royalties for musicians and record labels respectively, and you must obtain a PRS licence and a PPL licence if your station plays any music. For RSL broadcasts, these licences cost in the region of £40 each per day, but thankfully these fees were greatly reduced for stations with Access Radio pilot licences. The basic charge to the Access stations was £500 per annum per licence to play as much music as they liked, as long as they didn't make big profits in the year (do your sums, that's quite a

TABLE 6.01**Example: Annual community radio station budget**

Item	Cost	Notes
Staff		All staff costs included employers' National Insurance contributions
Station Manager	26,500	Full-time
Programme Organiser	21,500	Full-time
Volunteer Support Worker	15,500	Full-time
Community Participation Officer	9,000	Half-time
Administrative Officer	6,000	2 days per week
Finance Officer	4,000	1 day per week. Radio Regen actually has a full-time Finance Officer who works across several projects
Staff travel expenses and volunteer lunch and travel expenses	2,000	Including the cost of tea, coffee and bottled water
Staff training	500	Lots of training is free but you should budget for this all the same
Office/premises		
Rent	9,200	Including service charge and building insurance
Rates	400	With 80% mandatory charity discount
Water rates	300	You have to pay for rain water disposal even if you don't have a water supply!
Gas/electricity	1,500	
Cleaning	1,000	
Waste disposal	200	Payments to waste collection contractors and for waste paper recycling service
Sanitary waste disposal	150	Cost of renting sanitary waste disposal unit
Annual fire extinguisher service	50	
Insurance	1,000	Employers' liability insurance and equipment insurance
Alarm system	600	Maintenance contract and monitoring system
Office and studio phones	2,200	Rental and call costs for three land lines
Station mobile	250	For out of hours emergency use only
Internet	1,000	Rental of phone line and fees to internet service providers
Stationery	1,000	
Sundry premises	600	Toilet paper, cleaning materials, keys ...
Technical/licenses		
PRS	600	Music copyright licence
PPL	600	Music copyright licence
JFMG	600	Broadcast link licence
Ofcom	1,100	Broadcasting and WTA licences
IRN news	120	News syndication service
Equipment repair/servicing	1,000	
Technical sundry	250	Miscellaneous leads, plugs and mini-discs ...
Other		
Advertising and promotion	1,000	You could spend much more than this ...
Annual accounts	1,200	This will vary depending on the size and complexity of your income and expenditure
Total	110,920	

discount!) It is hoped that the same scale of fees will continue for community stations with permanent licences, and the Community Media Association is in the process of negotiating a deal which will hopefully offer fair recognition of community radio's small size and limited resources.

The copyright agencies are still deciding the appropriate level of fees for community radio stations that simulcast their output on the web. At the time of writing, the CMA has requested that a similar fee is charged as for the analogue licence; PPL have provisionally agreed, and we would expect PRS to follow suit. In the meantime, the official advice to community radio simulcasters is to alert PRS and PPL to your activities until a formal request for payment is made. Bear in mind however that it's possible that the agencies will back-date their request for a licence fee – not good for your budget management. Keep a close eye on the Toolkit website and www.commedia.org.uk for updates.

Full-time community radio stations also have to pay two licence fees to Ofcom. The first of these is an annual Broadcasting Act licence fee, which is £600 per year plus a percentage of your commercial revenue. Since the percentage amount due is offset against the £600, you are actually very unlikely to have to pay any more than this. Note that the Broadcast Act licence fees for all radio broadcasters are currently being reviewed so the amount may change in the near future. The second licence fee payable to Ofcom is a Wireless Telegraphy Act (WTA) licence fee. The cost of this licence currently ranges from £226 to £509 per annum depending on the population size in your broadcast area and whether you are broadcasting on FM or AM.

Projecting income and expenditure

In our experience it is practically impossible for a community radio station to have all of its annual core funding in place at the start of each financial year – never mind for the next five years. Ofcom don't expect it, and neither should your board. Obtaining funding tends to be an ongoing process, with bits of money arriving here and there through projects, grants, fund-raising and various windfalls.

To prevent this leading to serious financial problems, the person in charge of your finances needs to be able to identify how fully-funded the station is today, and how under-funded it will be in several months time. Good financial planning will enable you to see budget shortfalls coming long before they arrive, giving you plenty of time to look for alternative streams. So if you are looking ahead over a full year and still have a shortfall of perhaps 25% of your turnover, you needn't panic. On the other hand, if you are looking only three months ahead and cannot see how staff wages are going to be paid, then a crisis meeting to develop an action plan is probably in order – if not full blown panic. This is far preferable to suddenly finding your cheques bouncing.

Matching resources to tasks

You can get the most out of your resources with a well-motivated (but unstressed) team of staff and volunteers (see p66) and a careful eye on the purse-strings. But that should not detract from the need to have a well-financed project with resources that are (at least nearly) adequate for the tasks you have set yourselves. Your initial Ofcom licence application should be realistic about what you hope to achieve and how it will be funded (see p42), and that includes stating what positions you intend to fill.

The premises you choose can make a difference to your core costs, of course – if you can find a community centre which can provide enough space to host your station for a minimal rent then you give yourself a head start, financially. But of all your variable expenditure, staff salaries are the most flexible. If you find yourself short of £15,000 in the coming year and cannot find funding to cover it, the only way you can realistically save that sort of money is with a redundancy. However that would inevitably impact on the ability of the station to match objectives set by Ofcom or your funding agencies. It's also a poor way to run any form of enterprise, if staff do not feel their position is secure they are unlikely to show the dedication, commitment and motivation you will need from them. And besides, the law ensures that in most cases it's pretty difficult for an employer to simply click their fingers and dismiss employees.

The secret then, is to ensure that you can find enough resources to do what you have promised to do. More details on finding these resources in Chapters 13, 14 and 15, but a word first on the recurring theme of core funding.

Finding core funding

Core funding is the money you will need to keep your station running – salaries, rent, bills etc. It is obviously essential to any community radio station. As we explain on p175, some funding agencies are reluctant to pay core costs, and only offer ‘project funding’ to pay for specific activities or functions. When you are getting your funding in place, if you don’t include claims for core funding you could find yourself awash with cash to perform particular functions, but without a studio or station to work in.

Some community stations have a parent group or charity (such as an existing community centre) which can guarantee core funding. They are lucky (if less than fully independent). If your core funding is in place, or you have a realistic strategy to find it, you are well on the way to running a successful community radio station. If you don’t you could find yourself on a rocky path.

When applying for grants from funding agencies, you should always seek core funding. This will probably mean an application budget which includes part of the cost of your core administrator, manager, technician and premises – which is complicated, but necessary. Say funding is available for a project to broadcast health advice to young mothers. A part-time outreach worker’s salary is included, plus a budget for materials. But that part-time worker has to be supervised, taking up the time of a line manager. That should also be included in the budget. The project takes over the training room for two hours a week, meaning it can’t be used for other – possibly lucrative – sessions. The engineer has to maintain the studio when things go wrong, eating into his time and workload. And so on, across the station.

Even a small project might take up a few hours a week of every physical resource and every member of

staff, so the application should include these costs as well as the ‘headline’ project worker. If funders refuse to comply with such reasonable requests, you should seriously consider declining the funding. The project could end up costing you more than it is worth. Some funders, such as the Big Lottery Fund, are now talking along these lines (calling it Full Cost Retrieval) but at the time of writing their sister organisation Heritage Lottery Fund point blank refuses such budget lines in some of their applications.

A community radio group might consider itself lucky if it finds 50% of its annual income from a single source (the maximum allowed by Ofcom). However there are advantages to several smaller funding streams running simultaneously – funding would usually be more staggered, which helps cash flow, and if one source dries up, it is unlikely to close the station. Multiple funding streams also help your independence should a major funder seek to exercise undue influence.

CRIB SHEET

Core Funding:

- Is different to project funding
- Is harder to find than project funding
- Is crucial to financial management

Cash flow and overdrafts

Cash flow is one of the biggest headaches for any community project. It is reasonably straightforward to calculate how great your expenses will be over the next financial year and also that you can raise enough money to cover it all. But if the money isn’t going to reach your bank account for another six months, what will you do to pay staff wages next week?

The solution is to plan not only how much money you will receive, but when you will receive it. The secret of healthy cash flow is getting the money in before it goes out. Unfortunately that is often easier said than done. Payments from funders and partners can fail to arrive when expected, or you may only secure some of your funding at the last minute. You will inevitably end up spending money for project X on staff for project Y – this is not a problem as long as

you know that project Y will receive its funding at some point so that the books balance at the end of the accounting period for each project.

The traditional remedy for cash flow problems is an overdraft at the bank. Unfortunately many banks – even those which make ethical and social responsibility claims – will flatly refuse to offer such facilities to community and voluntary groups. Sometimes even waving a promissory letter from a major funding agency will not budge them. It is worth bearing this in mind when first opening your bank account. If you go to a bank manager offering him an account with a £100,000 annual turnover, you are negotiating from a position of strength. Insist upon overdraft facilities as a condition of opening the account, and you will often find banks are more flexible than they first claim.

Another option is to talk to a major partner in your station, such as the local council or college, and see if they might advance you your running costs against guaranteed grant income. It costs them nothing and it enables them to have a role in facilitating a vital service for their community. You'll never know if you don't ask and they might even say yes – both Manchester City Council and Manchester College of Arts and Technology have performed this vital role for Radio Regen at times of need (thank you very much!)

CRIB SHEET

Cash flow

- Needs to be carefully managed
- Is very difficult to manage without overdraft facilities

Monitoring and evaluation

When running a community radio station, it is not enough to make great improvements to your community and the lives of your volunteers. You have to be able to prove you have made those improvements – to your funders, to Ofcom, and not least to yourselves. The way you do this is with project monitoring (recording exactly what is done or 'what we did') and evaluation (making judgements about the information recorded or 'was it any good?')

It's very easy to get caught up in the exhilarating side of community radio – making programmes, training volunteers, working with dynamic community groups. But unless you make a good job of the rather dry business of recording your activities, your funding will soon dry up and it will count for nothing. If you approach it in a calm, organised fashion, it need not be a painful process. There are two areas which funders will want you to account for yourself:

- Spending – have you spent the money as you promised you would?
- Performance – have you achieved what you said you would?

In most cases your accounting system should take care of the former (see p79). Your annual audit of accounts will require you to keep a paper trail to record every item of spending, and each of those should have been apportioned clearly to one budget. It is your performance monitoring that is likely to prove more problematic. Typically, a community radio station will need to be able to answer the following questions to a variety of funders:

- How many individual volunteers have used the station and how much?
- How many volunteers have been through training schemes, and which ones, with what duration and with what results?
- How many volunteers and trainees belong to specifically targeted sections of the community (e.g. with disabilities, from particular deprived wards, from specific ethnic groups etc)?
- How many (and which) community groups have been helped?
- How many other visitors have you had to your station, and to what purpose?
- How many local businesses have been helped and how?
- How many schools have participated and how?
- How many jobs have been created/safe-guarded?

Strangely, at Radio Regen, in six years of community radio monitoring for dozens of different funders, we have never once been asked to report on our broadcast output. That is perhaps a useful reminder of the relative importance of community and radio activities, at least as far as funders are concerned.

CRIB SHEET**Project monitoring:**

- Is how you prove you are doing as you promised
- Is an essential chore

Plan ahead (or find out what they need to know in good time)

Before you even accept a grant, you should read the small print. What information will the funder need back from you? Some want only quite general statistics and outcome measures, others will ask for extensive detail. The amount of monitoring required often shows little correlation to the size of the grant involved, and in extreme cases you may judge that a grant of a few hundred pounds is not worth it if you have to report back every volunteer's height in centimetres and their grandmother's maiden name.

Assuming you've taken the cash, begin collecting the information you need at the very outset, and continue as you go. Much of it may already be available, since ideally you should collect all the information you might reasonably need about your volunteers when they first sign up – age, sex, employment status or occupation, education, disability, illness and access information, ethnic origin and so on. You should then require volunteers to sign in and record the nature of their activity each time they visit the station. Just that simple system will cover many of your monitoring needs.

However you organise it, try to ensure that volunteers and partners aren't being asked for the same information repeatedly on several different forms – if for no other reason than that they will become much more reluctant to fill in any of them at all. It is already hard enough getting many volunteers to sign an attendance sheet. There is also the vexed question of letting the volunteers know why you need the information without giving the impression that you are being paid as a result of their work making radio on the station. Far fetched? It's happened to us. You need to make it clear to volunteers that without the information you are requesting, the station closes – providing the information should be second nature to them.

The ideal would be a single data collection questionnaire which volunteers could complete once and then update with every activity session and at the completion of the project. In practice, at Radio Regen we have yet to design such a form satisfactorily, and we have the piles of paper to prove it.

Many grants will have their own unique monitoring conditions attached. Be quite clear what these are from the outset and get them agreed in writing. There is nothing worse than having to track back through six months of station activities because a funder has suddenly told you (or you have suddenly noticed) that they need to know whether a volunteer was supervised by a trainer for 25% or 50% of their studio time and you hadn't been recording that information. We cannot stress enough how vital it is to be clear exactly what monitoring you will need to conduct before you begin a project. It can be just about impossible to do it retrospectively.

CRIB SHEET**The information you will need for monitoring:**

- Should be considered when accepting funding
- Should be recorded from the beginning of a project, not once it's over

Evaluation

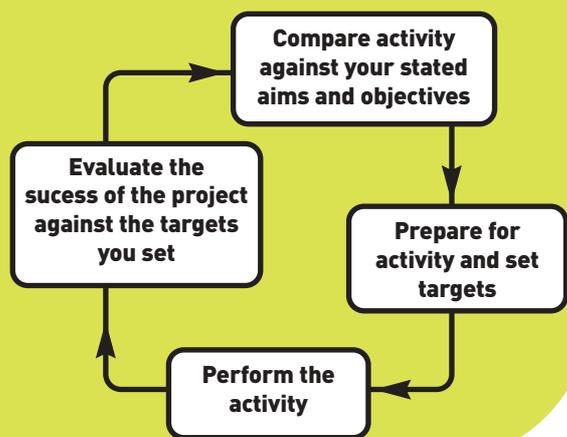
Monitoring is the process of recording what you do for the benefit of others – usually funders. Evaluation is what you do for your own benefit and sometimes for funders, to improve your performance as a station, and it is another task that is easily forgotten about. Perhaps you are obtaining results which look great on paper and tick all the relevant boxes for your funders and Ofcom alike. But what do your volunteers think? Are they bored by your training, unhappy with your schedule and alienated from each other and the staff? What do your listeners think? Do you even have any? Evaluating your performance is key to identifying your shortcomings and failures and building on your achievements and strengths.

Everything you do must be constantly measured against your stated intents as a station. If your mission statement says you are going to change the lives of local residents, ask yourself how much change you see around you, and whether your day to day activities are responsible.

One popular way of thinking about evaluation is as a spiral (or more simply) a loop (see Figure 6.01). Every time you consider beginning a new project or changing your activities at the station, you should compare that activity against your stated aims, prepare for the activity and set targets, perform the activity, measure the outcome and compare to targets, review and evaluate the performance, then compare the results to your stated aims.

FIGURE 6.01

Evaluation loop for new activities



Although in theory that looks complex, in practice it is mostly common sense. Here's a purely hypothetical example. You spot some grant money available to increase the profile of over-65s in the media. What happens next?

1. You ask yourselves whether this fits in with the core objectives of your station and whether or not to begin the loop;
2. You plan outreach work and training aimed specifically at that age group, and set targets for recruitment, training and broadcast hours;

3. You apply for and receive funding, recruit and train volunteers and they begin broadcasting their own show every Tuesday;
4. You examine your monitoring data and evaluate the project against the targets you originally set yourself (and which you agreed with the funders);
5. (and 1.) You ask yourselves whether the project (in practice) fits with the core objectives of your station and whether or not to continue.

If the organisational culture is to routinely think about activities in this kind of way, evaluation quickly becomes an integral part of your station, rather than an additional chore.

Some funders will require you to undertake a formal project evaluation and perhaps also to publish and disseminate the resulting evaluation report. If possible, you should employ an external consultant to carry out this work – your project managers will probably not have the time or necessary expertise to carry out such a research exercise, plus the resulting report should be more objective and carry more weight if it hasn't been produced 'in-house'. Most funders will be happy for you to include the cost of an evaluator in your project budget. Some easily avoidable pitfalls:

- **Choose your evaluator with care.** There will be dozens of consultants and academics keen to carry out the evaluation, so make them work for it. If the project is sufficiently large, put it out for tender. Once you've short-listed, do some detective work – talk to previous clients (not just the one at the top of the bidders' reference list) and read some of the bidders' previous reports. Beware, anyone can call themselves a consultant and we've seen some incredibly shoddy evaluation reports in our time.
- **Define crystal clear terms of reference** e.g. exactly what is being evaluated, how it's being evaluated, what input is required from you etc. You also need to make it clear to the evaluator that whilst they are producing an independent report, they will need to refer certain things back to you. If



they are producing a report based on interviewing volunteers, for example, you will want to check the volunteer statements that they use in the report – the evaluator may not have realised that a particularly vociferous and negatively opinionated volunteer is actually someone with a personal grievance. You shouldn't cramp the independence of the evaluator but you need to insist that the information they present is valid.

- **Build the evaluation into the project from day 1.** The report will be as good as worthless if the evaluator ends up scurrying around for the data once the project is over.

Evaluating your audience

Anyone involved in community radio will confirm that when you meet someone and tell them you are from a community station, the first question they ask is 'so do you get many listeners?' The usual answer is, 'erm, we don't really know.'

Ironically, it is one of the few questions that Ofcom don't ask. Community radio (thankfully) is not about chasing every listener at the expense of other social gain targets. However there will come a time when you need to get some idea of who is listening. Some funders might insist upon asking. If you intend to sell advertising or sponsorship to any significant extent, then your clients will certainly want to know.

BBC and commercial radio stations find out their listings from a company called RAJAR (actually co-owned by the BBC and the commercial radio network) which uses sample surveys to calculate how many listeners each station has. Community radio stations are usually too small (geographically) to obtain remotely accurate results using RAJAR, even if you could afford their fees.

You will have some idea of the popularity of your station from the feedback you get anyway – the phone calls, e-mails, website hits and so on. You should invite such feedback at every opportunity. If you are brave you could hold public meetings on a regular or sporadic basis where you invite your listeners to come and tell you what they think. Be warned, it may not always be an entirely inspirational occasion – it's human nature to want to complain about what we don't like before we applaud what we do. Nevertheless it can be a highly enlightening and useful process – assuming of course that you take the feedback on board and use it to improve what you do.

Ultimately there is no substitute for well-conducted research among a random sample of your community. There are many market research companies who would gladly conduct a survey in your specific area. The costs are generally extravagant, but if you are bringing in large sums of money from advertisers it may be worthwhile. That way there will be a certain credibility to the figures.

In practice, you will probably end up doing it yourself, or if you are very lucky, persuading a school or college to take it on as a class project in social sciences, media studies or statistics. An audience survey would normally either be done using a phone and a directory, or a clipboard and a smile.

Another approach when asked about your listening figures is to reply that you know what you do works – that the partners you work with want to continue their partnerships and that volunteers keep coming back to do their shows. They wouldn't do it if something wasn't working. Some 'user testimonials' are always useful to back up this line of argument.

Designing your audience research

First of all you must ask yourself what it is that you want to know. Do you just want to know the raw number of listeners you have, or the proportion of radio listeners at any one time? Do you want to know what the listeners think of you? Which sections of the community like you most – by age, sex, social class or ethnicity? Do you want to know which parts of your schedule are more or less

popular? Do you want to know why those who don't listen to you choose not to?

All those questions are valuable, but remember that the more questions you ask, the more data you will have to analyse, the longer it will take to conduct the survey and the harder it will be to persuade members of the public to participate. Keep your focus on what you really need to know.

Ideally an evaluation questionnaire should be written and delivered by people with no vested interest in the station. It is easy to skew the results by accident or design – to take a silly example, a researcher can ask the question: 'would you say your local community radio station was A/ Interesting B/ Fascinating or C/ Amazing' then report back how wonderful everyone thinks they are.

More seriously, the psychology of market research is very subtle. You can actually change the results of surveys by changing the wording of questions or even the order in which you ask them. So if a survey were to start off by listing all the station's social gain achievements and asking whether the interviewee thinks each one is a good thing or not, the effect is to make the interviewee feel more supportive and positive about the station, making it more likely they will say nice things on the later questions. Such flaws often creep into market research unintentionally, and they can work against you just as often as for you.

Make sure that any data you capture is usable – by avoiding the recording of general comment and by using multiple choice options that enable you to extract those vital percentages.

While it may be tempting to try to manipulate results by framing the questionnaire in a particular way, audience feedback is incredibly useful to community radio, and you will find the value of getting accurate results is much greater than the value of getting positive results. Hopefully you will get both.

CRIB SHEET

Audience research is;

- Useful but not crucial
- Hard to get
- Easy to manipulate if it is not independent
- Possible to do well, and easy to do badly

Further reading and links

Financial management

A Practical Guide to Financial Management for Charities (2nd edition). Kate Sayer (Directory of Social Change, 2002)

A Practical Guide to Charity Accounting (2nd edition). Kate Sayer (Directory of Social Change, 2003)

Stress management

Achieve! Personal effectiveness in the not-for-profit sector. Mark Butcher (Directory of Social Change, 2003)

Managing Workplace Stress: A best practice blueprint. Stephen Williams and Lesley Cooper (John Wiley Sons, 2002)

www.mindtools.com/smpage.html

Monitoring and evaluation

The Complete Guide to Creating and Managing New Projects (2nd edition). Alan Lawrie (Directory of Social Change, 2002)

Get It Right First Time: A self-help and training guide to project management. Peter James (Russell House Publishing, 2005)

Market and audience research

A Newcomer's Guide to Market and Social Research: www.mrs.org.uk/mrindustry/downloads/newcomers.pdf



ACCOUNTABILITY

Representation

Companies and charities

The board

Involving the community

Feedback



ACCOUNTABILITY

A community radio station that is not truly madly deeply responsive to the needs of the community is not a community radio station. A community radio station that waits for the opinion of the community before it does anything will shrivel up and die through sheer inertia.

Somewhere between those two extremes lies the ideal balance of accountability and managerial freedom. Finding that balance is an ongoing and demanding challenge for any station. This is another area where what we ought to be doing as community radio stations is mirrored by what we are required to do by the Community Radio Order and the Ofcom criteria.

Your accountability structures will allow (and require) the station to genuinely represent and serve the needs and wishes of your community – and to prove that you are doing so. They will also guarantee that every volunteer, staff member and director is properly serving the needs of the station and therefore serving the community. There are a number of important organisational requirements for any community radio station:

- **A good legal structure.** You need to decide how your station will be legally structured – as some form of social enterprise or as a charitable company (see below). Will your accountability functions be carried solely by the board or will there be another link, such as a representative steering group?
- **Clear distinction between authority and accountability** (see p63-64). A station manager may not need permission to order a packet of paper clips, but must be able to explain to the community (if asked) why those paper clips were necessary.
- **Clear responsibilities.** The structure of the station should specify whose job it is to buy paper clips (see p64).
- **A good board of directors.** The board has the right to take on as much management responsibility as it likes. But if a director does

want to be responsible for the purchase of paper clips, he is obliged to do so efficiently and reliably and to buy a suitable brand.

- **Clear internal communication.** It should be very easy for anyone in the organisation to find out who bought those damned paper clips and why. Good, clear reporting is especially important between staff and board.
- **Good internal co-operation.** If the staff, board and/or representational committee are in conflict, it will be almost impossible for accountability systems to be effective. Where possible there should be some crossover, so staff representation on the board for example is highly desirable. If your station is a registered charity this is legally forbidden (with very limited exceptions), but 'observer status' is a useful substitute. The station manager will usually be a necessary participant as they control the flow of information – they are usually the person with the most detailed knowledge of paper clip supplies.
- **A sense of perspective.** If your board of directors and staff spend much more than a nano-second discussing the purchase of paper clips then, let's face it, you have a problem.

Sort out all of the above for the community and reporting to funders and other partners should be easy. They actually care about paper clips.

CRIB SHEET

Accountability:

- Is how you ensure you serve the community you claim to serve
- Requires good organisational structures

Company structures

There are several different ways in which a community radio station could be organised legally. There is no ideal solution, and different models would be better suited to different stations. There are advantages and disadvantages to all, and the benefits and drawbacks of each can be hard to weigh up. Establishing your status and drawing up your constitution involves some of the most important decisions a community radio group will ever make, so you should discuss your precise circumstances with legal experts and specialist advisers. Your local voluntary sector umbrella group should be able to put you in touch with appropriate specialists.

Ofcom will consider your application for a community radio license if your organisation meets two criteria:

1. It is a 'body corporate' – that is, it has a legally recognised structure
2. Its constitution prevents any profit from being distributed to shareholders

This means that your organisation must be one of the following:

- **A company limited by guarantee.** This is a not-for-profit registered company which doesn't have any shareholders and doesn't distribute a profit to its members;
- **A charitable company.** This is a company limited by guarantee that has also registered as a charity. You could also be a charitable company with a trading arm;
- **A co-operative.** Also known as an Industrial and Provident Society;
- **A Community Interest Company (CIC).**

Your organisation could also be a registered company limited by shares if its constitution prevents the distribution of profit to shareholders. This option is not ideal, but it is legally acceptable to Ofcom.

Not-for-profit companies, co-operatives and CICs can all be described as **social enterprises**.

Company limited by guarantee

This is by far the simplest and quickest way to establish a not-for-profit company. Legally it is identical to any other type of company but with the restriction that profits must be returned into the organisation rather than be distributed to shareholders or directors. The advantages of this structure include:

- Easy to set up;
- Less regulated than a charitable company;
- No restrictions on trading activities (unlike charitable companies);
- Able to bid for grants available to non-profit organisations;
- Structures can be created to represent the workers, volunteers and the community and to ensure that the board has to respond to suggestions from these groups;
- Can borrow money to further its objectives;
- Only one board, set of accounts, AGM etc. to worry about (unlike a charitable company with a trading arm);
- Able to take advantage of the growing amount of funding available for social enterprises.

The disadvantages include:

- Missing out on the many funds which are only available to charities;
- No exemption from VAT or tax, although some local authorities are willing to grant rates relief to not-for-profit companies (and other forms of social enterprise) as if they were charities;
- Directors of the company can theoretically obtain personal benefit by drawing disproportionately large salaries.

CRIB SHEET

Companies limited by guarantee:

- Have much greater freedom than charities
- Miss out on the financial benefits that are given to charities

Charitable company

The main advantages of registering your not-for-profit company as a charity are financial and include:

- Tax, VAT and rates relief. Charities are exempt from corporation tax, get an automatic 80% discount on their business rates and don't pay VAT on certain supplies;
- Better access to funding, some of which is only available to charities;
- Free advice from the Charity Commission on all legal and constitutional matters;
- Ofcom requires less explanation and justification of the organisation's non-profit/social gain status.

Between them, these add up to a significant financial advantage. However the drawbacks to charitable status will be felt elsewhere. These include:

- Less flexibility in management structures;
- Restrictions on the involvement of staff in station planning and activities;
- Relatively cumbersome processes to establish and register yourselves (although if you base your Memorandum and Articles of Association on the Charity Commission's model document or upon that of an existing community radio charity, it will be much easier);
- Restrictions on trading activities. In particular, a charity is only entitled to earn a certain percentage (see Factbox 7.01) of its total gross annual income from trading (as opposed to revenue derived from its charitable activities). If it exceeds that limit all of its profits become taxable.

FACTBOX 7.01

Permitted income from trading for charities

Total gross income of the charity	Maximum permitted trading (annual amount)
Under £20,000	£5,000
£20,000 to £200,000	25% of the charity's total gross income
Over £200,000	£50,000

Source: Charity Commission

If you are a charitable company and you are heading for the dizzy heights of the Ofcom 50% commercial revenue ceiling then the restriction on trading activities can be alleviated by establishing a separate trading arm of the charity.

This trading arm is owned by the charity but is a separate legal entity. It will have a separate board, hold its own AGM, and produce separate accounts. The trading arm will donate profits to the charity (and get tax relief) but the charity cannot subsidise the trading arm. Even premises must be paid for at a market rate, so the trading company would have to pay rent to the charity (assuming they are based in the same building). Staff who are shared between the charity and its trading arm must draw two separate (part-time) salaries. So setting up a trading arm does introduce various administrative complications.

CRIB SHEET

Charitable status:

- Is relatively complex and cumbersome
- Will probably involve establishing a separate trading arm
- Makes it clear where you're coming from and that you can't run off with the 'family silver'

Co-operatives

Co-operatives (registered with the Registry of Friendly Societies and legally classed as 'industrial and provident societies') are trading organisations which work for the benefit of their members – whether they are its employees or, as with a community radio station, the wider community of volunteers, partners, staff and clients/listeners. Every member of a co-operative has an equal say in the running of the business. The freedom to trade is as wide with a co-operative as with a limited company. This might appear to be the perfect model for a community radio station, but in practice there are often great problems with co-operatives:

- Very democratic, but highly unwieldy in their decision making and prone to schisms and executive deadlock;
- Will not attract tax or rates relief;
- May find it difficult to attract funding.

CRIB SHEET

A co-operative is:

- A less appropriate structure for community radio than it might appear

Community Interest Companies

From the summer of 2005 it will be possible to register your organisation as a Community Interest Company (CIC). This has been specifically designed as a legal structure for not-for-profit social enterprises with charitable aims. Whilst a CIC is still legally defined as a company, it has more clearly defined not-for-profit features which formally lock the company into using its assets and profits to benefit the community. This should offer several benefits:

- The CIC structure offers the guarantees required by funders and lenders that money will be correctly used. This should make attracting funding and securing overdrafts considerably easier;
- A CIC's assets are more securely guaranteed and the company has better protection against abuse of resources relative to other social enterprises;
- CICs may also qualify for additional tax relief under the Community Investment Tax Relief scheme;
- CICs may also have a special status when mainstream services open bids for tenders. It has been proposed that they will be given a 'must consider' category – see the Department of Trade & Industry website for details.

It may be worth keeping a 'watching brief' in the short-term but once any teething troubles have been overcome, the CIC may soon become the natural company structure for new community radio groups.

CRIB SHEET

A community interest company structure is:

- Brand new and so far untested
- Likely to make it much easier to attract funding and loans than other forms of social enterprise

Your board**Recruiting the perfect board**

The nature of your board will go a long way to defining the nature of your community radio station. It will need a variety of talents, skills and experiences. While the creative visionary who first proposed your community radio group will probably be there, a board made up purely of creative visionaries will soon run aground (creative types don't often make the best managers). Instead you need to find the people with the best range of skills, and fill any gaps by training board members in particular areas, as you would with any other staff or volunteers. Your board should include people with the full range of expertise required to create and run a great community radio station:

- **Financial.** A trained accountant or experienced financial manager is essential to keeping a good grasp of your accounts;
- **Legal.** If you can persuade a company/employment law specialist to join your board you will soon see the benefits, not least saving a fortune in legal bills;
- **Marketing and networking.** Although a professional marketer is useful, the best people for this role are often community or charitable sector veterans. So many opportunities are found through personal contacts and networking that this should be a top priority for your directors;
- **Fundraising and applying for grants;**
- **Business management;**
- **Community development.** Many of the skills required in community radio are directly transferable from other community work;
- **Broadcasting.** Someone else with a bit of knowledge of broadcasting regulations and programme making is always useful.

In addition, these experts should also represent particular sections of your community (ethnically, culturally etc – see below).

It must be noted however, that different community radio projects have very different ideas as to what a perfect board looks like. Bradford Community Broadcasting, by any measure one of Britain's most successful community stations, has achieved its position with a board drawn entirely from the volunteer

base, with none of the ‘great and good’ drafted in for the sake of expertise. What this approach lacks in range of skills, it has made up for with dedication, accountability and a strong bond to the community.

Duties, responsibilities and liability

However experienced your board may be, you need to ensure that they understand their legal duties and responsibilities as a company director. In recruiting members of your board, you must ensure they are completely aware of what is expected of them and the possible consequences if something goes wrong.

Limited companies have limited liability – if the company goes under, directors are only financially liable to the extent of their own financial stake in the company, which in the case of companies limited by guarantee is usually a token £1. There are rare circumstances in which board members (whether the directors of a limited company, co-operative or CIC, or the trustees of a charity) can become personally liable to prosecution or financial penalties. These are primarily:

- Negligence or breach of statutory duties in carrying out the station’s activities (such as submitting annual accounts to Companies House);
- Continuing to trade when the company becomes insolvent;
- ‘Breach of trust’ (fraud, theft, unauthorised activities etc) if the company is a registered charity.

Providing the board conduct their duty of ‘due diligence’ – that is doing their utmost to ensure that everyone at the station is behaving properly and honestly – the financial risks involved in becoming a director or trustee should not be a concern.

Potential board members are much more likely to be put off by the time and effort required. Inevitably, many of the people in your community who would be most useful to you are similarly useful to other committees, boards and community groups. Don’t bully someone onto your board if they won’t have time to attend meetings and offer additional commitments to the station, and whenever a new board is set up or new board member arrives there should be a clear understanding of how much commitment is required. Someone might have such relevant

expertise that they are a valuable board member even though they can only attend a few meetings a year, but in most cases you should ask for and expect considerably more involvement than that.

At Radio Regen, which is a charitable company, the Board of Trustees meets every six weeks. There are nine Board members, recruited for their diversity of skills and commitment to our aims. Apart from attending the Board meetings, some Trustees have to be available each week to sign cheques, others support the senior management more regularly, joining them at strategic meetings or being available for advice, and others are only seen every six weeks – a varied level of involvement which seems to work for us. That said, Radio Regen is a larger than average community radio organisation – smaller, less well-staffed organisations might need a higher level of hands-on involvement from their directors.

CRIB SHEET

Your board:

- Should contain a wide range of skills and experience, not just community radio enthusiasts
- Should be at little personal financial risk if they conduct their duties properly
- Should be clear about their level of commitment to the station

Community representation

From Ofcom’s point of view, the single most important function of your company structure is representing your community. You have to show a formalised relationship with your community, allowing opportunities for participation in setting the direction and management of your station. If you don’t show how you will do this, you will not receive a community licence, but more importantly you will not be operating as a community radio station should. Good community representation is essential to your proper function and also to your public image and status within your community. It is not only the ‘right thing’ but it clearly demonstrates to residents that your station is part of the community.

You have a choice as to how you arrange this.

Broadly the two options are:

- A board of directors that is strongly representative of the community;
- A separate representative management committee or steering group that works closely with the board.

VOXBOX 7.01

***“One of the things we’ve learned at Radio Regen is that you can’t just parachute into the community and start a community radio station. If I could go back two or three years and do it again, one of the main things I would do differently would be to get the community far more involved in the steering group from the outset. It’s something we’ve learned our lessons from. It’s not that we haven’t been involved with the community from day one, but we would have benefited from more weight and authority in what we were doing.*”**

If you get it right, it gives you the authority and the backing of the community. If anyone says ‘you don’t represent this community’ you can say to them well look, here’s our steering group – tell me they’re not from the community. It validates what you are doing in the community and it gives you the support you need.”

Alex Green, Station Manager, ALL FM, Manchester

If you opt for a representative board (rather than a steering group), there will be a clearer and simpler management structure and decision making will be eased, but often at the cost of broader democratic involvement. If you choose this option, it will be vital that your board represents your community both demographically and functionally – a board of grey-suited, middle-aged white men could never claim to represent the interests of an inner city multicultural community. On the other hand, even the most culturally and socially diverse board is still useless if it is deaf to the needs and wishes of the wider community and has no clear mechanisms by which those wishes can be heard and acted upon.

Similarly, the representative board will fail the station if it lacks the skills to manage and support the staff.

Unless you get your community research and consultation right at the beginning (see Voxbox 7.01 and p25) you will always struggle to be properly representative, and unless you keep referring back to the (often changing) needs of the community, you can stagnate and become locked into activities which are imperfect at best, and utterly irrelevant at worst. When your board is being elected or appointed, everyone must be aware that representing the community is one of its most important functions.

The alternative – a separate management committee or steering group – also has potential pitfalls. You may find that their priorities or wishes are very different to those of the board and conflict between the two committees could be disastrous. It also means that there will be more meetings, more minutes, more memos and more work.

These problems can be minimised by clear division of responsibility. It is vital that the two committees have separate powers, and are totally clear about what is their responsibility and what is the business of the other, to avoid confusion and duplication of work. When ALL FM created the company structure that enabled the station to become independent of Radio Regen, it opted for a division between broadcast issues and operational management. Members of the Steering Group, chosen specifically for their close ties to various sections of the community, have considerable input into and limited control over scheduling, programming and the nature of the radio produced at the station. The Board members – chosen for their skills, experience and knowledge – take responsibility for all financial, managerial and day-to-day business. The legal ownership rests with the Board but the Board is constitutionally obliged to take notice of what the Steering Group says.

This model was chosen as the best one for ALL FM’s large, complex inner city community, but is by no means the definitive one. Other stations will find very different systems offer an equally good balance between representation and efficiency.

Problems with representation

It's easy to talk about representing communities but much harder to do it effectively. Your board and/or representational committee will probably be formed from a mixture of representatives elected at the company AGM and appointees chosen because of their expertise or their role at the station or in the community. An elected committee may be representative of the wishes of the meeting which elected them, but that is no guarantee that they represent the wider community. They may just be those with the loudest voices or the most enthusiasm.

Even appointees may be problematic. There can be a temptation to think that just because someone is a woman of e.g. South Asian origin, that she automatically speaks on behalf of all women and all ethnic minorities. In practice communities of any nature are endlessly complex, and can be riven with internal suspicion and politics. Hopefully it is part of the role of community radio to transcend and if possible help heal these divisions, as the experiences of Desi Radio in Southall demonstrate (see Voxbox 7.03). But this is unlikely to happen unless all sections of the community feel that they have a stake in the future of the station.

Your representation should not be driven by statistics (a 40% Ruritanian community should not mean you have to have a 40% Ruritanian Board) but by the idea of giving due weight to representatives if they actually do represent a significant community within yours. There needs to be a balance between making your board highly representative and making sure that it has the skills and commitment to enable your station to do its job.

CRIB SHEET

Community representation:

- Needs to be at the heart of any community radio station
- Can be built into your board, or a separate committee
- Needs to be balanced with effective management
- Is as complex as your community

The role of staff

For all the importance of community representation, it should not be forgotten that it will be the station staff (and particularly senior management) who have to keep the station running and put into practice the decisions made by the board or steering group. Invariably it is the staff who will have the best grasp of what can be achieved and what cannot, and they will often be the first to identify problems which need to be addressed. It is vital that they not only respond to the agenda set by their representative committee but also implement changes.

The perennial problem with representational committees is that they want to do more than resources allow. It is up to senior management to lay out options as to what is achievable. A steering group will make much better decisions if they are given a choice of possible options and their implications, rather than a blank slate to suggest whatever they like. In return, it is the manager's duty to be open to creative thinking and new directions from the community, and to respond accordingly, rather than going through the motions and then doing exactly what he or she would have done anyway.

A good relationship between committee and staff will be underpinned by respect and the openness that flows from that. The committee will respect the knowledge of the practicalities that the staff possess and the staff will respect the authority of the committee.

CRIB SHEET

Station staff:

- Must be responsive to the wishes of community representatives
- Must provide the board with clear information about what is achievable within available resources
- Must do their best to implement community decisions

The role of volunteers

To a large extent, the volunteers are the radio station. If the station isn't structured in such a way that their voices can be heard and responded to, it is unlikely to keep many volunteers for long. Your volunteers are the frontline of your community, and so their needs and wishes should be paramount. While they will have a role in electing their representatives on management and steering committees, there is a strong case for giving them much greater input than that.

Although Ofcom makes no demand that your volunteers have an official say in the running of your station, you might wish to give them one anyway. One useful step would be to establish a formal volunteers' group or regular meetings where they can raise concerns, problems and ideas with staff and board

members. Volunteers can sometimes feel intimidated by grand titles like 'manager,' 'director' or 'steering group' and prefer to raise problems with their peers. Just be sure that any such group has genuine input into management decision-making, and is not just there as a forum to let off steam – this is likely to lead to resentment and be counter-productive in the long-term. The volunteers' group has to be a genuine system for addressing grievances and bright ideas, and should be fully explained to every volunteer as part of their agreement and induction (see p138). Needless to say such a group is unnecessary if, as in Bradford, the volunteers make up most of the Board.

A good volunteers' group can sometimes be an enormous boon for a community radio station. It is amazing how many problems can be solved by a large group of enthusiastic volunteers (see Voxbox 7.02).

VOXBOX 7.02

***“For the first year of the Access pilot at Wythenshawe FM and ALL FM, we tried to maximise the benefits – throw as many people as possible on air and enjoy it as much as we could. We had about 160 volunteers, a crazy schedule all the time, and that was when we got the first inkling that the RSL model doesn't work long-term because we were close to losing staff through exhaustion and burn-out. When the pilot was extended, a new station manager came in and quite correctly judged that we couldn't cope with that level of activity. He made a decision to reduce the broadcast hours and therefore the workload on both stations, cutting the evening and weekend schedules.*”**

The volunteers' response was remarkable. There were some fiery meetings and the ALL FM volunteers actually took it upon themselves to do something about it and take practical steps to reduce staff workload, principally by taking over the running of the station in the evening. As a result, the schedules stayed almost unchanged, and have since been extended later than they ever were. It just shows that if volunteers really want something to happen, they will make it happen.”

Alex Green, Station Manager, ALL FM, Manchester

That said, be wary of letting a large group of volunteers run the station. They inevitably have less understanding of the complexities of community radio than a board that represents the whole community. In most cases they will be much more focussed on broadcasting and be less interested in social gain targets. There is also likely to be a degree of self-interest – the success of their own shows will probably be the most important thing to them. Squabbles and in-fighting are real risks, particularly whenever there's a new schedule being planned. From the management's point of view, there are many more pressing questions than whether DJ Mimi Me gets to keep her late night experimental electronica show, but never forget that happy volunteers are effective volunteers. They are also an incredible conduit back into the community – word of mouth of the alleged mistreatment of a volunteer, or of incredible successes, goes straight back to the listeners and the station's standing can live or die by it.

CRIB SHEET

Volunteers:

- Should be represented in the running of your station
- Can perform wonders if you'll let them

Representing your funders

Your funders will generally want no more from your station than that you hit your targets and provide good project monitoring and reporting. In some cases however funders may want more, possibly even a say in the running of your station. This is likely to happen when a single organisation (such as a local authority or larger community group) has played a significant role in establishing your station in the first place. In such cases, a seat on the board is a reasonable request.

While in most cases such a relationship would be entirely natural and healthy, beware of conflicts of interest. For example, it may be in the station's best interest to move away from dependency on one large financial source towards more diverse streams of income. The funder may see it differently. You must therefore ensure that the person concerned understands that their obligation as a board member is to ensure the best possible management of the station, and if a conflict of interest does arise, a tactical abstention is the best route for all concerned. The CMA circumvents this issue in their 'Council' by being very clear that members sit in a personal capacity, not as representatives of their organisations. Most local authorities have strict guidelines limiting board-level involvement of their staff precisely because of the conflict of interest that this can bring. This can be resolved by allowing 'observer status' to such bodies.

CRIB SHEET

Your funders:

- Probably won't be represented in the running of your station
- May have conflicts of interest if they are

Feedback

While your formal structures should ensure that you broadly represent the wishes and needs of your community and meet your obligations to Ofcom, they are not the whole story. Much of the most useful and important input you receive may not come through AGMs and board meetings, but from

little scraps of paper dropped into your suggestions box or passing comments picked up from your website or conversations. The manner in which you collect and respond to your feedback will go a long way to determining how responsive to your community you really are.

It is vital that you respond to feedback fully and fairly. The people who make the effort to contact you by any means will be justifiably upset if the response is non-existent or a belated standard note saying 'thank you for your comment which has been taken into consideration'.

It might be tempting to shy away from generating too much feedback, especially if you are nervous about what you might hear. You might think it is enough to sit back and wait for brickbats or plaudits, and to deal with them as they arrive. The problem is that you will only hear the opinions of the pushy and the seriously aggrieved. If you can make it as easy as possible to offer feedback and actively encourage it, you will get a much fuller, more useful picture.

Listener feedback

In Chapter 6 we addressed audience surveys, which are a useful way to get statistical data on the listeners you have. But often listeners' opinions are too nuanced to be accurately represented on a questionnaire. While surveys will give you a broad idea of who is listening to your station and what they think, your feedback will tell you much, much more. Some ways of generating listener feedback include:

- Encouraging it on air. Train your presenters to actively encourage phone calls, letters and e-mails. You could even host a regular show where listeners phone in and discuss the station with management. Community radio pioneer Lol Gellor of the Hackney-based Sound Radio at one time hosted a weekly 'Mea Culpa' show where he dealt with all manner of comment from his station's community. Although initially producing vibrant and useful radio, the show had to be dropped following a decline in the number of callers. This may be a tribute to Lol's peerless station management skills, but more probably

demonstrates that feedback – like a police officer or a late night taxi – is never around when you need it;

- Hold open days and public meetings;
- Have a discussion forum on your website (p57).

Partner and business feedback

Local groups, agencies, services, schools, colleges, advertisers, business customers and all your other partners are crucial to your success, and responding to the feedback you get from them will be a useful way to polish your performance. Positive feedback is also an essential tool in attracting future partners or customers. You are likely to be in ongoing discussions and negotiations with many of your partners, so a lot of this feedback will come through conversations – you will inevitably chat about which aspects of your collaboration have worked well or less well. But again, it does no harm to encourage the process. For example you could:

- Design a simple satisfaction questionnaire that can be completed in a few minutes over the telephone or when a partner visits the station. The questionnaire should involve both ‘graded’ answers (e.g. a scale from “very satisfied” through to “very unsatisfied”) and ask open ended questions that allow for new and different ideas;
- Keep a comments book at the front door, as well as whatever registration, monitoring and attendance forms you may need;
- Include a feedback form or request with invoices, reports or other communiques you send to your partners;
- Get any compliments in writing!

CRIB SHEET

Feedback:

- Is a crucial aspect of your responsibility to your community
- Should be responded to fully, politely and swiftly, and acted upon where appropriate
- Should be encouraged at every opportunity
- Can be useful for marketing and attracting partners

Sticking to your principles

Accountability, democracy and community representation are wonderful things and sit at the heart of good community radio. But they can also pull you in many incompatible directions and generate a host of unreasonable or impossible demands. There may even be circumstances where the apparent wishes of your community are actually opposed to the stated aims and objectives of your station. To take a (we would hope) purely hypothetical example, it is possible to imagine a community where racial or sectarian tensions are running high, and where there is deep suspicion or even hatred between two or more sections of the community. A community radio station devoted to bringing the whole community together may face outright hostility from a significant percentage of people on each side who are resisting closer integration and co-operation. In such cases obviously the station must hold true to its ideals. For an example of this please stay tuned to Radio Regen’s new work on developing community radio in the divided community of Burnley.

Even in less extreme cases there may be a case for limiting the amount of feedback you seek (see Voxbox 7.03). Desi Radio in Southall, serving the religiously, socially and culturally diverse Punjabi community of Southall, Middlesex, deliberately excluded dissenting voices for long enough to establish their identity and cement their founding ethos. Only once the ground rules were established did they begin to discuss the finer points of station policy with the community. The result has been a groundbreaking, highly popular and (now) fully accountable radio project.

Whatever the nature of your community and however they are involved in the running of your station, you will have to continually remind yourself and your team of your founding principles, your *raison d’etre*, and your promises to Ofcom as to what you will or will not deliver. To borrow an analogy from an earlier chapter, if you provide a solid frame and canvas, you can allow your representational systems to paint some beautiful details. Without a frame and a canvas, things are likely to get very messy.

VOXBOX 7.03

“Southall is all divided on religious lines. You will have caste institutions and religious institutions, and you will have Pakistani and Indian institutions and they are all very antagonistic. India and Pakistan have fought so many wars and our history is always written as one group against another. We wondered if we can travel and overcome all this with our common language. Then we thought of our folk music, which is common to everybody, it transcends all barriers – even beyond Punjabis to the world at large. It is versatile, cohesive and interactive. It related to all the cultures, all the lands, all the people. That was what we presented to our own people. When we started we would play songs and people would complain ‘hey, this is a Pakistani song’ because it was being sung by a Muslim and we would reply no, this is a Punjabi song. They would say ‘that person is not talking properly, take them off the air.’ In the early days we got a lot of angry phone calls and then slowly people realised music is a healer, it gives you fun, entertainment, it is non-threatening. Through the music we are bringing tremendous change. This is why all religious fundamentalists oppose music and dancing, because it brings people together.

The gender balance was another difficult issue for us. We were told it was immoral for women to be coming in here and doing shows on their own, especially at night. We had to stick to our guns and say sorry, we are not going to stop women from doing programmes, they can come any time they like. There was a lot of fear and uncertainty about males and females working together. In Punjabi communities women have often been separated or not given a voice. Desi Radio opened the doors and now 90% of our volunteers are female. They have found a platform and found a voice. Speech programmes in particular were very difficult at the beginning. It was all so antagonistic. For the first six months we just didn’t open any lines. We didn’t talk to anyone and just let the music speak.

Eventually people came to understand what we were about, the suspicion subsided, and now our surveys say that 85% of Punjabi speakers in West London listen to Desi Radio.”

Ajit Singh, co-founder and Programming Manager, Desi Radio, Southall, West London

CRIB SHEET

Being accountable to your community:

- Is at the heart of community radio
- But is still less important than staying true to your founding ideals, visions and dreams

Further reading and links

Company structures, constitutions etc

Voluntary But Not Amateur: A guide to the law for voluntary organisations and community groups (7th edition). Ruth Hayes and Jacki Reason (London Voluntary Service Council, 2004)

Boards that Work. David Fishel (Directory of Social Change, 2003)

Governance Stories: A practical guide to setting up your management committee and sustaining its work. Shirley Otto and Jo Clifton (Russell House, 2005)

The Good Governance Action Plan for Voluntary Organisations. Sandy Adirondack (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2002)

Community Interest Companies

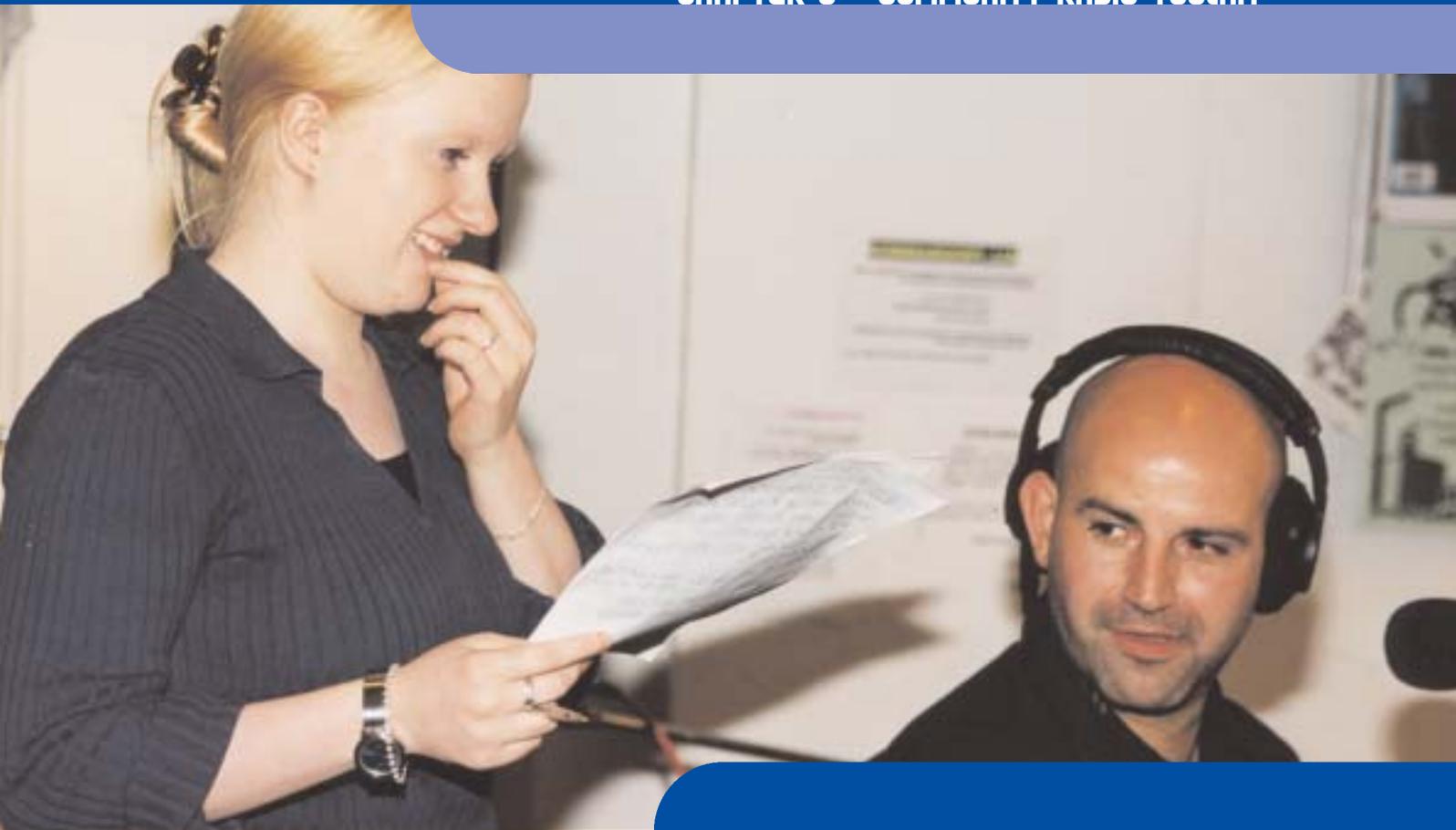
www.dti.gov.uk/cics/

Governance and Participation project

www.gandp.org.uk

General advice

www.askncvo.org.uk



BROADCASTING RULES AND LAWS

The law

Libel, contempt and partiality

Ofcom regulations

Recording of transmission

The Advertising Standards Authority Code

Damage limitation



BROADCASTING RULES AND LAWS

Everything broadcast at your station must adhere to three sets of rules:

- **The law of the land;**
- **Ofcom and ASA regulations;**
- **Your own station rules.**

With so many inexperienced broadcasters, any community radio station theoretically sits on a precipice of legal action. The most important laws covering broadcast radio are those addressing libel, contempt of court and political impartiality at election times. It is vitally important that presenters and in some circumstances even guests understand the broad principles of broadcasting laws, and that station management fully understand their legal obligations and, just as importantly, what to do when there is a transgression. The induction, volunteer agreement and training should all stress that a single careless slip of the tongue could result in the closure of the station.

The law

Libel

If anyone says anything which defames an individual or organisation, the presenter and the station could both be sued for libel. A successful law suit could bankrupt a station overnight. To our knowledge there has never yet been a case of a UK community radio station being judged guilty of libel, and that is a credit to the sector. But it is no reason for complacency.

A statement is considered defamatory if it 'unfairly damages reputation by exposing a person to hatred, contempt, shame or ridicule or makes a person likely to be avoided or shunned'. The legal benchmark is whether a 'reasonable person' or 'right thinking member of society' would consider the victim less favourably as a result of the comment.

There are many misconceptions about libel:

- Libel does not prevent a broadcaster from reporting facts about an individual or organisation, providing they can prove them to be true (and the burden of proof lies with the accused).
- A comment is no less libellous just because it has already been made elsewhere. If a newspaper makes defamatory comments and a radio station reads the story on air, the radio station can be held to account – whether or not the newspaper is also sued.
- A comment can still be libellous even if it is reported as a rumour – or even if it is reported as being untrue. So the comment 'Someone has just phoned in to say that Joe Bloggs the window cleaner has been washing windows with dirty rainwater, but we know for a fact he fills his bucket from the tap' could still be held to be libellous as it is repeating a defamatory comment.
- The word 'allegedly' is no defence. In fact the opposite is true, a court may well consider it proof that the broadcaster was aware that the comment may be unjustified.
- A comment can be libellous even if the victim has the immediate right to reply and deny.
- Specific (and true) allegations are not libellous, but generalising from them can be. If presenter A says 'Joe Bloggs washed my windows with dirty rainwater this morning' that would not be libellous (if true). If presenter B adds 'yeah, he's always doing that' this is a libel, if Joe Bloggs can demonstrate that he sometimes uses clean water.
- You can libel someone without naming them. Imagine a presenter says 'we hear a certain local tradesman has been filling his bucket with rainwater again, if you see someone armed with a ladder and bucket in the High Street area, watch he doesn't splash your shoes.' If Joe Bloggs can convince a court that a reasonable person would take this to be referring to him, he can successfully sue.



"I hereby sentence you to be taken from this place to serve three years presenting the pre-breakfast 'Rise'n'Shine with a Smile Show'"

- Context is everything. A joke made on a comedy sketch show is much less likely to be considered libellous than a report on a news broadcast. You can't rely on this however – if a court judges that the listener may not have realised the show was meant to be funny (and we've all heard comedy shows like that) the libel could still stand. Context also applies to the programme or programme part – the court will not take a statement out of context if the whole of the rest of the item or programme would have undermined the reasonable person's belief in the contentious statement.

The defence against a libel claim can take three forms:

- **Justification.** 'We were justified in saying this because it was true in substance if not fact.' ...If the substance is sufficiently true, a court may overlook minor details of fact.
- **Fair comment.** If the contested remarks are statements of opinion rather than fact, it's an acceptable defence to say that the comment was based on fact and was made in good faith, without malice and on a matter of public concern.
- **Privilege.** A complex legal defence based on public interest, which normally only applies to the reporting of parliament, court activities, public inquiries etc. In common law it is based on the principle that a person may have a moral, legal or social duty to inform others about a third party. Defences of privilege rarely succeed in court.

British libel law is so complex and nuanced that not even specialist lawyers can always be sure which way a court will decide. The consequences of a libel can be so severe that the only sensible approach is to play safe at all times. Drum the following mottos into your presenters' heads:

"If in doubt, leave it out"

"Engage brain before opening mouth"

A final fact may serve to strike the fear of court into the most radical amateur shock jock – the person committing the libel can be sued in the same sitting as the radio station.

Contempt of court

Most people are broadly aware of the libel laws, even if they are vague or confused about the legal details. Contempt of court on the other hand is easily forgotten about, even by experienced broadcasters. This is rather frightening, as contempt is a criminal rather than civil offence, and you can not only be heavily fined for it, you can be sent to jail.

In general terms, contempt of court laws are there to ensure that the media do not prejudice fair trials. Most obviously this refers to court reporting – what journalists say about the day's events at a trial. Court reporting is a specialised journalistic skill that should not normally be undertaken by a community radio volunteer without extensive professional training. But contempt of court can be committed by any broadcaster at any time between a person being charged with an offence and the end of a trial. It happens whenever someone passes judgement on a current court case or broadcasts information which may prejudice jurors – for example, revealing the defendant's previous convictions. Presenters can easily forget that the type of comments made daily in every pub and bus queue in the land can get a broadcaster in deep trouble.

For example, during the trial of Dr Harold Shipman at Preston Crown Court, two presenters on the city's main commercial station, Rock FM, made comments suggesting that the accused was 'guilty as sin' and should 'just admit to it'. Fortunately for them, their management acted swiftly in correcting their comments on air and suspending the presenters

from broadcasting. The judge at the subsequent trial told them that only this prompt response had spared the presenters a prison sentence.

As with libel, the only safe approach is extreme caution. It is a good idea to forbid your presenters outright from discussing any on-going court cases in process or pending. Hosts of phone-in shows in particular need to understand the importance of cutting off a contributor at the first hint that they might be about to comment on a case.

Political impartiality

Most of the rules regarding political impartiality are Ofcom regulations rather than laws, but in the run up to elections (parliamentary, European, local government and regional assembly) the Representation of the People Act places particular restrictions on radio stations. Broadly, you are obliged to offer equal access to ‘main candidates’ and recognition of ‘other candidates’ in reports and debates. Currently the interpretation of this is that the ‘main parties’ are Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and (in Scotland and Wales) the main nationalist parties. In Northern Ireland they are OUP, DUP, SDLP and Sinn Fein. Occasionally there may be local circumstances in which an independent or minor party has significant electoral support and they can also be classed as ‘main’ candidates. In practice this means:

- If you invite one candidate to contribute to a programme you must also give the same opportunity to their main rivals;
- If you refer to one or several candidates or parties in a particular ward or constituency, you must also list all the other candidates and parties standing;
- Recorded clips of candidates (for example, an excerpt from a speech at a public meeting) must be balanced in such a way as to not give unfair advantage or disadvantage to one candidate;
- In phone-in shows, care must be taken to ensure that all views are represented fairly (although not necessarily to identical mathematical balance, minute by minute);



- In general, stations should ‘satisfy themselves’ that parties and election issues have been treated with due impartiality.

Once again, the safest route is to expressly forbid your presenters from talking politics during election campaigns, except in well planned, carefully organised ‘campaign special’ programmes. While Ofcom might lack the resources to monitor your output at election time, you can bet that the candidates and their friends won’t. Don’t let this put you off doing your best to promote political debate in your community, but you must devote proper resources to this issue so that you obey the law.

Also see the summary of Ofcom rules below.

Other laws

A community radio station is unlikely to encounter many if any of these, but bear in mind that a station and its presenters can also break the law by violating:

- The Official Secrets Act
- The individual’s right to a private life under the Human Rights Act
- Incitement laws (to violence, to racial hatred etc.)

CRIB SHEET

The law of the land:

- *Forbids you from libelling any individual or organisation*
- *Forbids you from prejudicing a court case*
- *obliges you to be impartial at election times*
- *Is not to be messed with. If in doubt, leave it out*

Ofcom regulations

Until the summer of 2005, the Ofcom codes for radio broadcasters were divided into three categories:

- Programming including news and current affairs
- Sponsorship
- Engineering

While the Engineering Code remains unchanged, the first two have now been merged into one Broadcasting Code for both radio and television operators which includes more clearly specified rules for protection of the under-eighteens.

The Ofcom Broadcasting Code

The Broadcasting Code applies to all of your broadcast material. In some respects the rules are quite specific, in others they are frustratingly vague. Issues of decency and obscenity in particular are entirely dependent on context. A song lyric which would pass unnoticed at 11.00pm might generate outrage and serious complaints at 11.00am, and Ofcom recognises this. It is worth remembering that there is still no 'watershed' on radio. Instead broadcasters are asked to make judgements about what is appropriate for the audience at any time of day or night. The Code declares its objective as finding a balance between the right to free expression of opinion, allowing adults to make informed choices about what they will see and hear, and protecting audiences, particularly young people, from offence or harm.

The Code is simpler than it was, but is nevertheless still a weighty document. Many of the legal obligations upon a radio station (such as adhering to the law and keeping a recording of transmission) are specified elsewhere and are no longer repeated within the Code. At first sight, it appears that the new Code places less emphasis on abstract issues of 'taste and decency' and more emphasis upon protection from harm. It will be fascinating to see how this changes the nature of judgements made against (or indeed in favour of) broadcasters. It is standard to use the rule of precedent (i.e. previous judgements) as a guide to the limits of acceptable practice. It may be many months or even years before it becomes clear how the application of the new Code will differ to past experiences. In the



meantime, it would be highly advisable for community broadcasters to assume that transgressions that have been punished in the past will continue to be punished in the future.

The Broadcasting Code is now divided into 10 sections:

- Protecting the Under-Eighteens
- Harm and Offence
- Crime
- Religion
- Due Impartiality and Due Accuracy and Undue Prominence of Views and Opinions
- Elections and Referendums
- Fairness
- Privacy
- Sponsorship
- Commercial References and Other Matters

It's essential that you download and devour all 89 pages of the Code, however unappealing that prospect might be. As an introductory guide, here are some of the more relevant issues raised in each section.

Protecting the Under-Eighteens

- Material that might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of people under eighteen must not be broadcast;
- Radio broadcasters must have regard to times when children are most likely to be listening (e.g. breakfast and early evening schedules);
- If under-eighteens are involved in programme making, their physical and emotional welfare and dignity must be preserved at all times (a big issue for youth community radio);
- You must take care not to broadcast material that may lead to the identification of young people involved in criminal cases, and particularly sexual offences, whether as witnesses, victims or defendants;
- At times when children are likely to be listening,

and unless there is very strong editorial justification, radio broadcasters must avoid portrayals or discussion of alcohol, drugs, smoking and solvent abuse; violence, anti-social and dangerous behaviour; use of offensive language; issues of sex and sexuality; the occult and paranormal activity;

- Competition prizes must be appropriate to the age of the target audience.

Harm and Offence

- Factual programmes must not mislead the audience;
- Material which may cause offence must be justified by the context. 'Context' includes the editorial content of the programme, the time of the broadcast, the extent to which the nature of the material can be brought to the attention of the audience and the effect of the material on listeners who come across it unawares;
- Programmes must not include material which condones violent or seriously anti-social behaviour;
- The broadcast of material about the occult and the paranormal is bound by specific rules;
- Competitions should be conducted fairly.

Crime

Broadcasters must never:

- Condone, incite or encourage criminal activity or public disorder;
- Broadcast information or convey techniques that would be of use in criminal activities;
- Make payments to convicted criminals or anyone involved in criminal proceedings that relate to their conviction or such proceedings.

Religion

- Broadcasters must exercise responsibility when dealing with religious issues;
- Religious beliefs must never be subjected to abusive treatment;
- The nature of religious programming must be made clear to the audience.



Due Impartiality and Due Accuracy etc.

- News, in whatever form, must be broadcast with impartiality and accuracy;
- Significant mistakes in news items must be corrected on air at the earliest appropriate opportunity;
- The newsreader or reporter must not express personal opinions on matters of controversy;
- Views and matters of fact must not be misrepresented;
- Programmes based upon a presenter's personal opinion must be clearly labelled as such;
- Matters of political or industrial controversy must be covered with impartiality and encompass both (or all) sides of the dispute. If the other side won't comment, you must be able to show that you gave them fair opportunity to do so, and refer to their point of view.

Elections and Referendums (see also p104)

- Due weight must be given to the coverage of major parties during the election period. Broadcasters must also consider giving appropriate coverage to other parties and independent candidates with significant views and perspectives;
- Candidates in UK elections and their representatives must not act as news presenters, interviewers or presenters of any type of programme during the election period;
- If a candidate takes part in an item about his/her particular constituency or electoral area, then candidates of each of the major parties must be offered the opportunity to take part. (However, if they refuse or are unable to participate, the item may nevertheless go ahead);
- Any constituency or electoral area report or discussion must include a list of all of the candidates that are standing and the name of the party that they represent or, if they are standing independently, the fact that they are an independent candidate.

Fairness

- Broadcasters must avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organisations in programmes;
- Except in exceptional circumstances, if a person is invited to make a contribution to a programme they should give 'informed consent' – that is:
 - be told the nature, content and purpose of the programme and be given a clear explanation of why they have been asked to contribute and when and where the programme is likely to be first broadcast (if this is known).
 - be told what kind of contribution they are expected to make e.g. live, pre-recorded, interview, discussion, edited, unedited etc.
 - be informed about the areas of questioning and, whenever possible, the nature of other likely contributions.
 - be made aware of any significant changes to the programme as it develops which might cause material unfairness and which might reasonably affect their original consent to participate.
 - be told the nature of their contractual rights and obligations and those of the programme-maker and broadcaster in relation to their contribution.
 - be given clear information as to whether and how they can request changes before broadcast.
- If a contributor is under sixteen years of age, informed consent must come from a parent or guardian;
- Contributions should be edited fairly;
- Makers of factual programmes should satisfy themselves that material facts are complete and accurate;
- Fictional programmes or drama should not unfairly portray any real individual or organisation;
- Allegations of wrong-doing or incompetence should be accompanied by a right-to-reply for those involved;
- Deception of interviewees should only be used when there is strong public interest and if there are no alternative methods available;
- If the purpose of a deception is entertainment (e.g. practical jokes and 'wind-up calls') then written consent of the 'victim' must be obtained before broadcast.

Privacy

- Infringements of privacy must be warranted by public interest – e.g. exposing crime, or protecting public safety;
- An individual's private address or contact details should not be broadcast without permission or strong public interest justification;
- If an individual or organisation's privacy is being infringed, and they ask that the recording or live broadcast be stopped, the broadcaster should do so, unless it is warranted to continue in the public interest;
- Conversations or telephone calls may only be recorded with the participant's permission, unless warranted by public interest;
- People in distress, whether or not in a public place, must be treated with sensitivity and should not be put under pressure to participate in broadcasts;
- People under the age of sixteen should be protected from invasion of privacy, irrespective of their place in, for example, a notorious family or an event at school, and should not be questioned about private matters without parental consent.

Sponsorship

- News and current affairs programming may not be sponsored;
- You may not take sponsorship from anyone who is not permitted to advertise (see p185), with the exception of gaming and betting companies (and these may not sponsor programmes aimed at under-eighteens);
- Sponsors may not have influence over the content or scheduling of programmes;
- References to the sponsor within the programme must be editorially justifiable;
- Sponsorship must be transparent to the audience, and clearly distinct from advertising.

Commercial References

- Broadcasters must maintain editorial independence from advertisers or other commercial interests;
- Products or services may not be promoted through 'product placement' or similar means;
- References to brands providing products as prizes for competitions must be brief and secondary;

- Appeals for money for charities or the station itself are permitted, but it must be clearly specified for whom and for what purpose the money is being raised.

CRIB SHEET

The ofcom Broadcasting Code:

- Came into effect on July 25th 2005
- Must be read with great care by station managers, trainers and programme managers, who must explain its main points to all broadcasters
- Contains rules on everything from sponsorship to séances

Recording of transmission (ROT)

Under the terms of every broadcast radio licence, it is specified that 'Ofcom can require a company to provide it with a tape and/or transcript of broadcast material at any time up to 42 days after the broadcast was made.' If Ofcom receives a complaint about anything you have broadcast, you will need to be able to submit a copy of your broadcast for their consideration and judgement. If you are unable to do this, you are likely to face a heavy fine and possibly lose your licence (or at least find it unlikely to be renewed). There are many ways you can record your transmission (see p55) but the less scope for human error you have in your ROT system the better – Ofcom will not accept 'Fred forgot to put the tape on' as a valid excuse (see Voxbox 4.02, p56).

CRIB SHEET

A recording of transmission:

- Must be kept for forty-two days after broadcast
- If it isn't, you may face a heavy fine or even the loss of your licence

The Ofcom Engineering Code

The Engineering Code (see p48) ensures that your radio station adheres to the technical obligations surrounding radio transmission equipment. It also sets out inspection procedures and other important information for your station technician. He should know the Engineering Code inside out. Everyone else can happily ignore it but obey the technician when he starts quoting it.

CRIB SHEET

The Engineering Code:

- Should be read closely by the technician
- Can be comfortably ignored by everyone else

The Advertising Standards Authority Code

In 2004, responsibility for ensuring that radio advertisements comply with the law was handed over from Ofcom to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), bringing radio into line with TV, cinema, billboards etc. The ASA code is designed to protect consumers from misleading or offensive advertising, and to protect businesses from unfair advertising by their competitors. The Code applies to every advertisement carried on any radio station and is overseen by a committee called the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP). The document is even more detailed and complex than the Ofcom Broadcasting Code, and anyone involved in making or broadcasting advertisements on a community radio station should read the entire document closely. As an overview, the code spells out:

- What sort of advertisements need to be cleared in advance by the Radio Advertising Clearance Centre and which need only be cleared by station staff (since all ads must be cleared by someone before broadcast) (see p185);
- That advertising and editorial programming must be clearly distinguishable;
- That advertisements must not be misleading or dishonest;
- In what circumstances advertisements can or cannot refer to rival products;
- Advertisements must not offend taste and decency;

- How advertisements can and cannot be worded;
- In what cases there are particular restrictions on advertising practice (e.g. with advertising aimed at children);
- The restrictions on political and religious advertising;
- Specific restrictions on how various products, such as financial services, can be advertised;
- Restrictions on how, when and which sensitive products can or cannot be advertised (e.g. sexually-related products, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, firearms etc.).

The entire document is 70 pages long and far from gripping reading, but a copy should be close to hand at any community radio station which carries advertising.

CRIB SHEET

The ASA code:

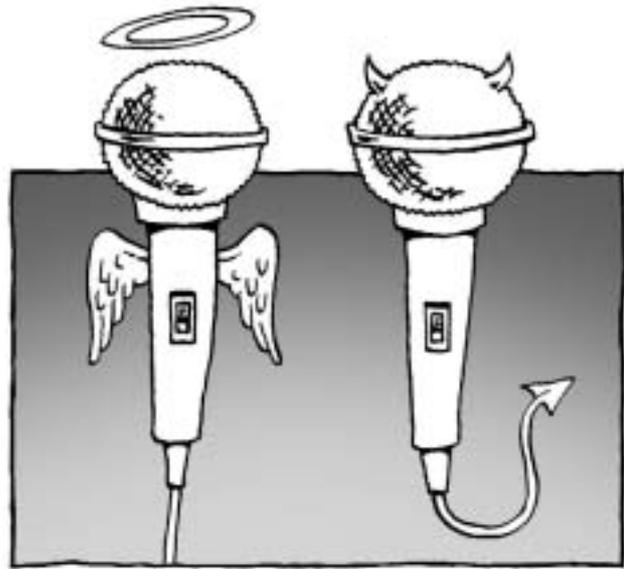
- Should be read in its entirety before you accept advertising

Your own rules

While station management and licence applicants need to be totally familiar with the law and Ofcom and ASA regulations, you probably won't want to inflict all of this on your volunteers. Instead you should take the key components and make them into an easily understood set of broadcasting rules. These will form a central part of your volunteer agreement.

To protect yourself from Ofcom complaints, you should really set the standards of behaviour higher than the regulations demand. This will give you a 'buffer zone' that allows you to rebuke or discipline a volunteer presenter before their behaviour generates a complaint to Ofcom. In particular your rules should cover:

- **Swearing and obscenity.** We would recommend forbidding it altogether. In our experience some volunteers will break this rule on a regular basis, particularly if they host specialist music shows in genres where 'parental advisory' stickers on records are common. But if you notice a high



A sense of mischief should be natural for any community station, but make sure that you stick to the rules

frequency of swear-words on a particular show you should give the presenter a dressing down, which should be formally noted in cases where there has been a complaint (firm action prior to Ofcom calling you to investigate a complaint could lessen penalties). Most single releases with obscene lyrics will come with a 'clean' radio edit, and where available this should be used. Audio editors such as Cool Edit will make it relatively simple (although time consuming) to bleep out or reverse swear-words and the right volunteer will enjoy this sort of remixing.

- **No preaching.** Whether religious or political, it is dangerous to let presenters believe that they have a soapbox when they are on air. This is not their privilege. If they wish to air their personal opinions they should do it in the right place at the right time. It is one thing to have a volunteer contribute to a debate where there is a structured balance, but it is quite another for them to interrupt their late night lounge show with an extended rant about their local MP. Of course if a show is plainly labelled as a soapbox or platform show then there could be exceptions but remember that there are specific Ofcom rules on religious and political output.
- **Drug references.** As with swearing, references to drug use are common in some musical genres. Again, Ofcom would take into account the context

VOXBOX 8.01

“The rules are so vague, when we started we were told that there was no watershed, but that some stronger language might be acceptable late at night. A lot of our material, both guests and music, is quite edgy. So we’re always asking what can we get away with – not so much with Ofcom, but more what can we get away with without the Station Manager phoning in and shouting at us. We once played a record called ‘Free the Airwaves’ by the American folk singer David Rovics which had the lyrics ‘F**k the FCC’. I thought if it had been British and about Ofcom maybe not, but that this was all about multinational corporations owning radio stations and so I thought it was quite appropriate and acceptable for a community station. Next thing Phil Korbel (Radio Regen’s Director) is on the phone saying ‘take that off immediately.’ Whoops! And then we had a poet in the studio at the time, and she was asking ‘well can I do this poem?’ and I was saying, well that’s got the F-word and that’s got the C-word, erm, have you got any about daffodils or anything?”

Now we over-compensate I think. Whenever we have guests in we have to explain you can’t say this or you can’t say that. It puts us in a difficult position sometimes, trying to get the balance of not getting the station into trouble without stifling debate.”

*David Kay, volunteer presenter,
Under the Pavement, ALL FM, Manchester*

Phil Korbel adds:

“My concern with that song was that the swear-word was in the chorus and could easily have been edited out. If they’d asked, I might have been happy for the poet to continue as it was a live broadcast and carried artistic justification. Community radio should be the home for radical output and it’s very much up to the broadcaster to make sure that their mission to push the envelope doesn’t take the station off the air. It can be done.”

(e.g. time of day and the nature of the likely listenership) but it is safer to ask your presenters to avoid such records whenever possible.

- **Lay down specific rules for potentially problematic shows.** At ALL FM there is a fortnightly show entitled ‘Under the Pavement’ (Voxbox 8.01) which serves the ‘activist’ community of the area. This programme discusses and publicises community, environmental and political activism, sometimes in controversial areas such as animal rights. We would argue that such a show is entirely justified under the remit of a community radio station, but obviously it can sail close to the wind regarding Ofcom rules on impartiality. In such cases it is vital that the presenters see their role as facilitating debate within the community. They should maintain a balance of viewpoints, offer opportunities for response, and keep a healthy distance between their role as presenters and their own personal opinions. It is one thing to announce that there is a political demonstration in the area next weekend, quite another to urge listeners to attend. Remember that the more controversial a subject of discussion might be, the more likely it is to generate complaints.

CRIB SHEET

Rules for volunteers

- Should be tighter than ofcom rules and the law
- Should be clearly spelled out in your volunteer agreement
- Should be clarified with presenters of potentially controversial programmes

What to do when things go wrong

When Ofcom receives a complaint about a broadcast, it will always investigate. If it decides the rules have been broken, it has the power to issue a fine or in serious cases to take away the licence. Ofcom will consider the seriousness of the offence, but just as important to it will be the station's response to the transgression.

To take a famous recent example, when Elton John turned the breakfast-time airways blue during an interview with Chris Moyles on Radio 1, Ofcom was inundated with complaints. Ofcom issued no punishment because of the swift and professional reaction of Moyles and his bosses. Ofcom's statement said 'in view of the nature of the error, the on-air apologies and the action taken, we consider the matter resolved'. Their reaction would certainly have been very different if it had been the presenter who swore. Even the reputation of Elton John will have been a factor – Radio 1 could not have reasonably predicted an experienced mainstream media performer like him to behave so inappropriately. Had John Lydon or Noel Gallagher been invited on at 9.00am and committed the same offence, the reaction may have been less sympathetic.

Whenever they receive a complaint Ofcom will want to know:

- What happened? They will ask for a recording.
- How did the situation arise? Was it predictable or planned in advance? What procedures did you have in place to stop it happening?
- What was done to remedy it? Were apologies broadcast? How did you react to any complaint received at the station? Was the presenter disciplined?
- How are you ensuring it won't happen again? Have you offered re-training? Have you changed or tightened your rules and procedures?

If you can give satisfactory answers to those questions, Ofcom is highly unlikely to punish any but the most serious transgressions.

Above all, don't attempt to cover up or mislead any Ofcom investigation. They will certainly consider that a much more serious offence than the original one.

One final hint for this chapter. Ofcom, via its website, will allow you to subscribe to their Complaints Bulletin, which reaps rewards to any programmer who can spare ten minutes a month to scan through it. The Bulletin is mostly dull and TV-orientated but the radio gems are in there and will make you wonder why the radio station ever did what they did and sometimes how on earth they got away with it.

VOXBOX 8.02

"In the first RSL I was ever involved in, I produced the promo package which included such gems as 'If you want formulaic pop pap, you should try tuning to [a well known local commercial station]' with this formula adapted in order to insult as many broadcasting rivals as possible.

Unsurprisingly we had a call from the Regulator. We produced the ROT and the whole jingle package on DAT and then took cover expecting the wrath of the law to fall on our young shoulders. When judgement came it was actually in our favour because a) we were plainly having a laugh, b) we insulted everyone and c) we didn't take ourselves seriously either – one of the jingles for our station ran: '??? FM, a radio station that disappears up its own bottom!'"

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

CRIB SHEET

When things go wrong:

- Act swiftly and decisively
- Remember that ofcom are as interested in what happened before and after as they are in the offence itself

Further reading and links

Legal matters

Media Law. Peter Carey and Jo Saunders (Sweet & Maxwell, 2004)

McNae's Essential Law For Journalists. Tom Welsh et al (Oxford University Press, 2005)
(this title is principally aimed at print journalists, but is nonetheless an invaluable guide to the law on libel, contempt etc)

www.rad10.com/news/so_sue_me/
www.newsdesk-uk.com/
www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/ProductionV11.doc
news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1268966.stm

A quick BBC guide to contempt of court

Ofcom's Broadcasting Code

www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode/?a=87101

Ofcom's Engineering Code

www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rl/commer/ar/engineering_code.pdf

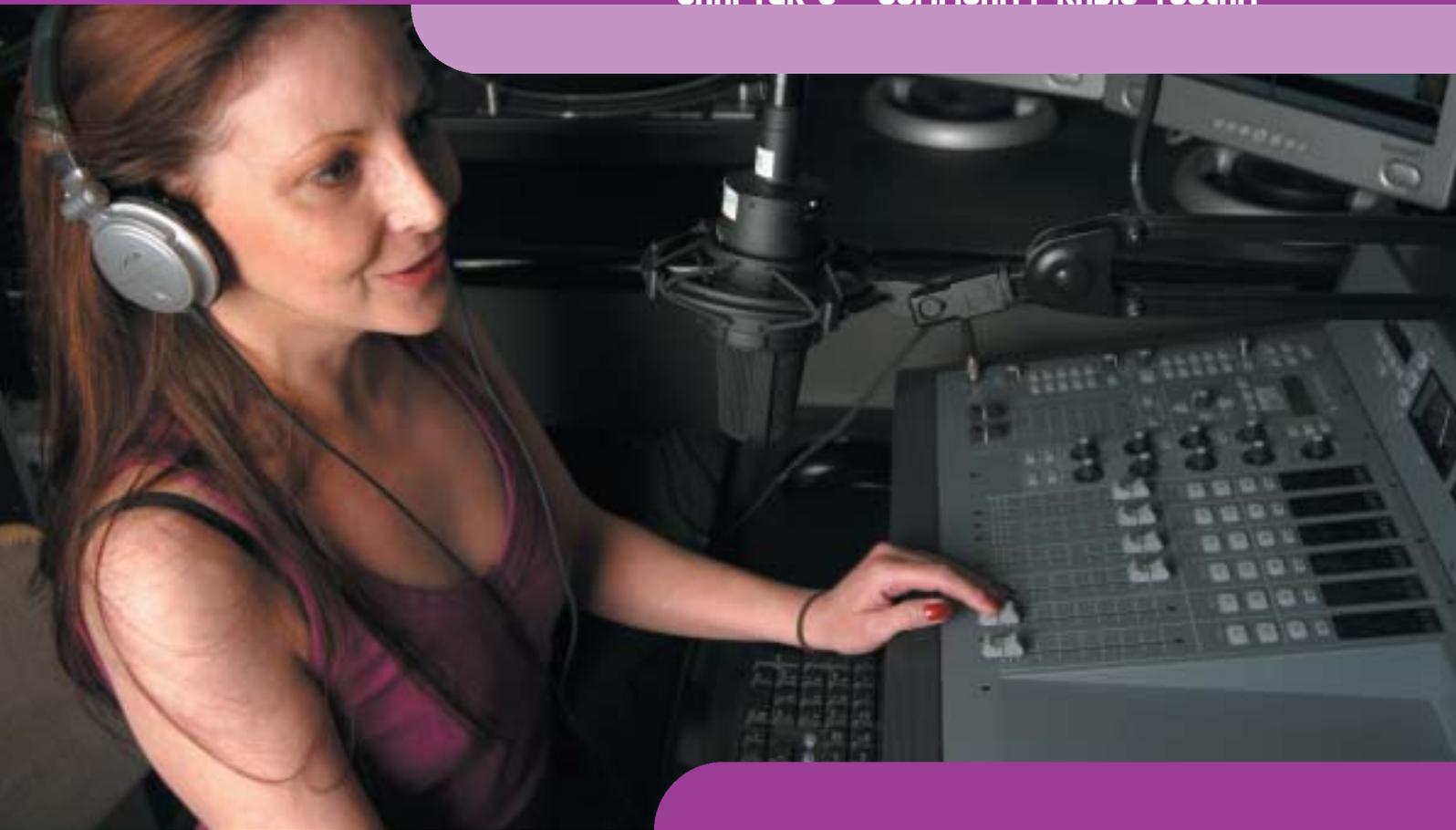
Full BBC editorial guidelines

Extensive and not always applicable to community radio

www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/

'Under the Pavement' radio show

www.underthepavement.org



PROGRAMMING

Broadcasting and narrowcasting

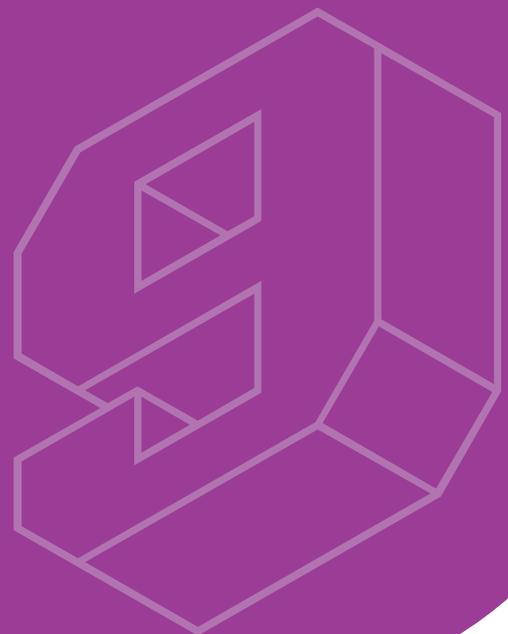
Listening habits

Output quality

Speech and music

Schedule rotation

Branding



PROGRAMMING

Commercial and BBC radio stations are all engaged in an unseemly scramble for the ears, attention and loyalty of the radio audience. They justify their existence and/or make their profits by attracting the largest possible number of listeners. Community radio stations should have a different attitude. As we have said before (and will say again) it is not our job to be popular. It is our job to be necessary.

Having said that, for all the importance of community involvement, training and other aspects of your social gain activities, it is the quality and nature of your broadcast output that will be noticed and hopefully appreciated by the vast majority of your wider community. While it is possible to run a community radio station by opening your doors to your community and letting things run their course, we believe that to get the maximum benefit it is necessary to have programming policies. These should guide you towards the type of radio programmes that your community wants and needs.

This chapter will seek to draw your attention to the many issues that must be considered and decisions that must be made when you are planning your broadcast schedules.

Broadcasting not narrowcasting

The word ‘broadcast’ literally means to scatter widely – to throw something out to the world. The overwhelming majority of radio stations don’t throw their output randomly out at the world, but instead target it very specifically at a particular demographic – people of a particular age, type, social class etc. In media jargon, they don’t broadcast, they narrowcast.

The reason for this is very simple – it is how you get the most listeners. People generally want to know what they are getting from their radio. They have a clear idea in their head of what types of music or speech they want to hear, and that is what they will look for on their dial. If they keep hearing what they want to hear then they are unlikely to tune out. While there is a percentage of listeners who are open-minded, have very broad tastes or simply

don’t care much what they hear so long as there is a constant murmuring noise coming out of the box in the corner, they are considerably outnumbered by those who only want to hear a particular genre of pop or type of speech.

Some community radio stations have opted to maximise their audience by narrowcasting to a greater or lesser extent. Whilst narrowcasting can apply to any area of programming, it is most clearly seen in different stations’ approaches to their music play-list. For example, in their 2005 community licence application, Stockport’s Pure Radio specify a musical play-list of guitar-based pop and rock, judging that this is the single most popular style of music in their community and that it is poorly supplied by existing local radio stations (see Voxbox 9.01). This is an understandable approach, but not without its issues.

According to Pure’s own research, 29% of Stockport’s population prefer this type of music. If a large number of that 29% choose to tune in to Pure, the station could attract a very healthy listenership in numbers, but how healthy is it in other respects? The most ardent fans of rock music tend to be white males in their thirties and forties. So although the listening figures might be good, do they reflect the ranges of age, gender, ethnicity and social class in their community? Are the listeners it attracts the type of listeners with the most to gain from a community radio station? Does a rock-dominated output make volunteering at the station an attractive proposition for a teenage girl of Asian origin, or an isolated pensioner? It is vital that if a station chooses to concentrate on one genre in the daytime, it makes extra efforts to reach out to other sections of the community at other times, and

VOXBOX 9.01

“We’re covering community issues, but we think it’s very important that we reach a broad audience. We originally aimed to play ordinary mainstream pop music but the Radio Authority (as was) stopped us from doing that because we trampled on [the only very local commercial station] Imagine’s territory too much. So we looked for a new musical format and decided that guitar-based music was the way to go. It appeals to a nice broad audience, and it means you don’t have people listening to you for two records and then thinking ‘Oh I don’t like that’ and switching off.

We do have specialist shows in the evening and we have shows aimed at teenagers and under-13s, and we have a lesbian and gay programme – so we do still make an effort to hit everybody at some stage in our broadcast. But in the daytime we are aiming at a broad audience. If you’re trying to get a community message across it’s very important that there aren’t only three people listening.”

*Dave Stearn, Station Manager,
Pure FM, Stockport*

ensures their social gain achievements are not restricted to fans of that particular genre – something Pure FM demonstrate admirably.

The alternative approach, designing your programming and schedules so that there is something in it for everyone, is of course equally problematic. In attempting to be all things to all people it is possible to become nothing much to anyone. Finding ways of persuading some listeners to switch on without causing others to switch off is a difficult, but not impossible task. The variety found on community radio stations is one of our stronger selling points, and goes a long way towards demonstrating why we are fundamentally different to our commercial and BBC equivalents. When listeners are so accustomed to strictly formatted and play-listed radio stations, some can be shocked and alienated by what they hear. Thankfully others will be thrilled to find a station that is different to all the others.

Making yourself relevant in some way to every member of your community is a difficult challenge, but one that we feel community radio stations should at least attempt to tackle.

CRIB SHEET

Radio programming:

- Can be aimed at everyone (broadcasting) or at one section of the community (narrowcasting)
- Narrowcasting will probably attract the greatest number of listeners
- Broadcasting will reach a wider range of listeners
- Variety in programming sets community radio apart from other radio stations

Understanding listeners

Different communities have different tastes and habits, but there are some broad rules that apply to radio listeners whoever and wherever they may be.

Listeners behave differently at home, in their cars and at work:

- At home most people tend to leave their radios tuned to the same station for days or weeks on end. They are often impressively loyal to their favourite station and refuse to listen to any others. However there are keen radio-heads who will actively seek out programmes that are of interest to them. Many radio stations are aware of a different group of listeners in the daytime to evenings and overnight;
- In the car people constantly hop between channels without caring much which station they are listening to;
- At work people mostly want unobtrusive background music and undemanding chat that will not take up too much of their attention.

At different times of day there are different proportions of listeners at home, driving or working. To reach as large and wide a section of your community as possible, you need to decide how you will organise your output.

Key times

- **Breakfast.** More people listen to the radio between 7.00am and 10.00am than at any other time of day. If you can attract listeners with your breakfast show then you should have a good chance of keeping them through the day. Your breakfast show presenters have the most important and prestigious job of all your broadcasters. Just what makes good breakfast radio is a highly debatable question however. There is a fine line between an energised and energising host who puts smiles on faces and makes everyone glad to have got out of bed, and an irritating so-and-so who yells and giggles constantly. Finding the balance is never easy (as Radio 1's experiences over the years have proved – one listener's Chris Moyles is another's migraine) but bear in mind that the role should probably go to the most talented and popular presenters you have.
- **Lunch-time.** This is another switch-on time for many listeners. As at breakfast-time, they mostly don't want to be overly challenged or provoked over their sandwiches, so again a mainstream approach to your programming is probably desirable – light chat, popular tunes and a friendly attitude.
- **Drive-time.** Although you may struggle to keep drivers tuned in for long, there are so many people listening to the radio in their cars between 4.00pm and 6.00pm that you can reach a lot of people, which is immensely important for your public profile. A good drive-time show should be a mix of the informative and the entertaining, and be designed with the listenership in mind. They will probably be listening closely to what you play and say, so there is some scope for thoughtful features and intelligent discussion, but bear in mind that listeners will be tuning in and out on a regular basis so keep everything short, snappy and varied.
- **Evening and night-time.** Later in the day listeners are more likely to be looking for programmes that reflect their specific tastes and interests. Listeners tend to be younger and fussier. They are also likely to be listeners who will not hear your station at other times of day. A broader range of specialist programming in the evenings will broaden your reach to your community.

This leaves plenty of hours free for the types of community programming (schools, community action, health and disability issues programming etc.) which make up such an important part of your role as a community radio station. It is your task to ensure that this programming is as entertaining, fascinating and useful as possible to try to keep your listeners switched on and tuned in from morning to night. Try to avoid creating 'switch-off' points when your scheduling lurches suddenly from mainstream pop radio to death metal hour or a serious political debate (a station broadcasting in one main language would find the same effect by switching languages). Your scheduling should flow naturally and smoothly through the day and the week.

CRIB SHEET**Radio listeners:**

- Have different habits at home, at work and in the car
- Switch on at key times of the day

'Community' versus 'radio' (revisited)

As we noted in Chapter 2 (see p16), the relative importance of community issues and radio production issues is a continual and healthy source of tension in community radio. Radio is a wonderfully democratic medium and a presenter and producer with the most basic equipment and minimal budget can sometimes make programmes as inspiring and polished as any BBC-produced, Sony Award-winning production. Assuming the talent is at your disposal, often the only obstacle is the time and effort required for training, education, research and preparation. Of course you want your broadcasts to sound as good and professional as possible. But never let that override your other commitments. There are three aspects to the programming at a community radio station:

- Quality of process – how much benefit is there to the individuals and groups who are making the programmes?
- Quality of output – how good are the radio programmes you broadcast?
- Impact in the community – how valuable are these programmes to the wider community?

Occasionally you will make programmes that excel on all three criteria, but more often there will be some kind of pay-off between them. The volunteers who will gain most from making radio may not be the volunteers who will make the slickest broadcasts. Likewise the programmes with the greatest community impact may be presented by radio veterans who have learned as much as they will ever want to learn about creating radio and for whom 'self-improvement' is a non-issue.

At every community radio station there will be a slightly different attitude to the relative importance of each factor, and even within stations there will be enormous differences between shows. We will discuss quality of process at great length in Chapter 13, so let's concentrate for now upon quality of output and community impact.

Quality of output

Of course you want your radio to sound as good as possible, and to not care about quality altogether would be suicidal for a community radio station. Even the most sympathetic listeners have limited patience with endless stretches of dead air, whistling feedback, distortion, mumbling, shouting or any of the production disasters that can happen on air. But having said that, scrappy radio can sometimes be fantastic to listen to. Playing a record at the wrong speed or pressing the wrong CD button may be embarrassing for any radio DJ, but it never really did John Peel any harm. With a community radio station, most listeners will be aware that presenters are amateur volunteers and audiences will be tolerant of and (to a point) amused by moments of chaos. Please note – moments of chaos.

Anyone coming to community radio from a commercial or BBC background will have a culture shock in store. Rather than highly trained professionals creating meticulously planned, researched and scripted programming, community radio volunteers are often thrown on air after only a few hours training and a brief chat about content. To a large extent they will learn on the job. They need space to make errors without an overzealous manager pulling them off the air.

Nevertheless there are some particular mistakes that are common and, in most cases, easily avoided with basic training:

Dead air

Broadcasting silence is the worst thing a presenter can do. Listeners will quickly re-tune to another station. In our experience dead air is more commonly caused by a faulty automation system rather than a faulty human being, but some presenters do need reminding that long silences must be avoided (see Voxbox 9.02)

VOXBOX 9.02

"We had one presenter who week in, week out, would have gaps at the end of her tunes. Eventually I asked her what the problem was, why she couldn't be on the mic and cueing up the next record before the other one finished, and she said breezily: 'Because I'm too busy dancing!'"

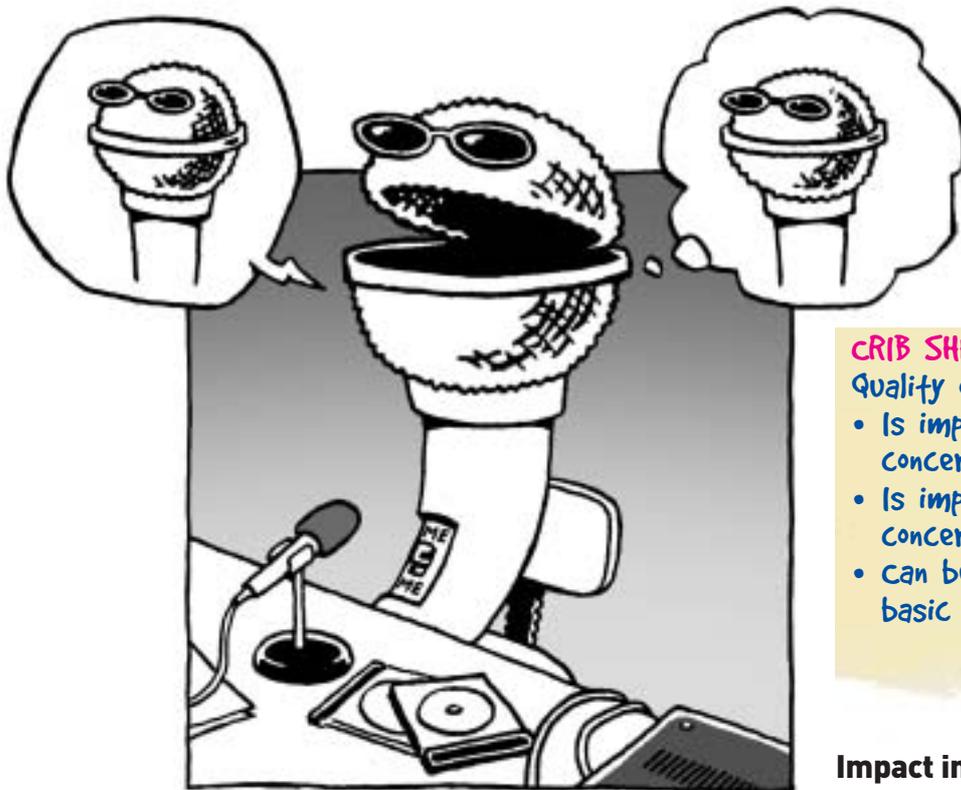
Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

Quiet or loud voices

In the overwhelming majority of cases, when a presenter is speaking at the wrong volume it will be because he is not wearing headphones as he speaks. This makes it almost impossible to judge the volume of one's own voice – headphones off is a mark of sloppiness and a vital discipline for any presenter – using your ears needs little training.

Inappropriate talk

Radio presenters almost by definition love the sound of their own voices. Presenters should know what an appropriate amount of talk is between records or – in speech-based shows – between planned features. Another common mistake is for co-presenters to be so amused by the banter between themselves that they forget they are making radio and make inane, boring small talk about their private lives. Or get into a furious row with each other on air and shout personal abuse across the microphones. While this might occasionally make for great radio, in practice it is best avoided.



"DJ Mimi Me"

Me Me Me

Presenters (particularly of specialist music shows) can easily forget their role as the presenter of your radio station, and think of themselves only as host on their show. They must commit themselves to station 'idents' and other on-air branding (see p128). You can measure the ego of a presenter by counting the number of times they mention their own name compared to the name of the station. Also discourage presenters from talking over records (particularly vocal tracks). Even hip hop and garage MCs need to let the music breathe occasionally. Bear in mind that some listener may love that tune and talking over it can be very annoying. (See Voxbox 9.02).

VOXBOX 9.02

"I play late night ambient and electronica, and often I use John Barry's Midnight Cowboy theme as a background talk-over track to keep the music flowing between records. One night I got a phone call from a listener who said 'Look mate, I love these tunes you've been playing, but could you do me a favour? Midnight Cowboy is my favourite piece of music ever and you've been talking over it all night. Could you just bloody shut up and play it please?'"

*Ally Fogg, a.k.a. Enchanted Gordon,
Café del M12, ALL FM, Manchester*

CRIB SHEET**Quality of output:**

- Is important but not the over-riding concern for a station
- Is important but not the over-riding concern for the listeners
- Can be significantly improved with some basic dos and don'ts

Impact in the community

The impact you have will hopefully take many forms. Your mere existence should be of considerable value to many community groups and the people they serve. You should make a significant difference to the lives of many of your trainees and volunteers. But your programming should have additional value in its own right.

Of the four key mandatory gain requirements in the Community Radio Order 2004, three refer partially or wholly to output:

- The provision of radio services to individuals who are otherwise under-served;
- The facilitation of discussion and expression of opinion;
- Promoting better understanding of the community.

The first places an obligation upon you to be as diverse as your community. 'Under-served' individuals can take many forms depending on the nature of your community, but in a complex inner city community they are likely to include some or all of the following:

- Members of ethnic minorities;
- Non-English speakers;
- Economically marginalised people;
- People marginalised by sexuality or identity;
- People with alternative lifestyles;
- People with disabilities;
- Those whose interests and hobbies are not represented on non-BBC local radio;
- Those whose musical tastes are not represented on non-BBC local radio;
- Or it can be as simple as people without a non-BBC station local to them, which could apply in many rural communities.

The penultimate of these – providing for non-mainstream musical tastes – is in terms of social gain the least important on that list. Nobody ever lost their home or got beaten up for lack of a Throbbing Gristle record on the radio. However it will be the number one priority for the vast majority of potential volunteers who approach your station. The urge to play music is very strong, particularly among the young. But even if you have 50 people approaching you wanting to play hip hop for every one who approaches you wanting to host a disabilities magazine show, that doesn't mean that hip hop is 50 times more important than a disabilities show. Of course you may pick up more listeners with a non-stop banquet of whichever musical genre grabs the most attention in your area. But that should not detract from your obligations to the rest of the community.

You must balance your role as a facility – allowing people to make the radio they want to make – with your role as a provider – bringing radio to those who really need it.

CRIB SHEET

Providing radio to under-served individuals involves:

- Establishing who is actually under-served in your community
- Much more than catering for under-served musical tastes

Speech output

Generating discussion and expression of opinion is not usually a great problem for a community radio station. Usually this will take the form of:

- **Studio discussion and interviews.** One or more presenters plus one or more guests. Usually centred around a particular subject;
- **Debates.** Larger showpiece discussions which may combine studio and phone-in formats or even outside broadcasts;
- **Phone-ins.** Usually one presenter and as many listeners as possible.

Studio discussion and interviews

Call something a discussion show, and as soon as a presenter opens his or her mouth to speak, discussion begins. Your job is to make it as interesting as possible for the audience. Your listeners may want to hear about activities in the local area, news about health or education services and informative items about teenage pregnancy or gun crime, but they also want to hear some good music and be entertained. Community output will be unfamiliar to most people and may not immediately seem an attractive prospect. So concessions need to be made to their expectations and patience. Here are some suggestions to keep your discussion shows lively and popular:

- Break up the discussion with music. Where appropriate use songs with a suitable or matching theme. And be wary of insensitive choices. Radio folklore is filled with tales of presenters saying things like: "...and we'll return to our discussion of traumatic adoption experiences right after the La Belle Époque classic, Black is Black, I Want My Baby Back...";
- Make sure the presenter always has plenty of back-up questions or points of discussion in case conversation runs dry;
- Keep the topics moving along. If people are not interested in one topic, they may simply ignore it for a few minutes, but if the topic hasn't changed soon you will lose them. People will stay tuned for 30 mins on six different subjects which they are not interested in, but won't stay tuned for 30 mins about one subject which they are not interested in. People don't mind being bored too much, so long as they get regular variety in their boredom;
- Get different voices on air. One-to-one chat can rarely be sustained for more than five or ten minutes by any but the most skilled and fascinating interviewer and interviewee;
- Talk naturally and intelligently. Community radio offers a wonderful chance to talk to people as they want to be talked to, not yelled at by a hyperactive brat or patronised by an old Etonian;

- Research and brief your presenters on your guests, whether celebrities or not. There are few words more guaranteed to get an interview going badly than: ‘So, it seems we have a new guest in the studio, who are you then?’;
- Be ambitious with your invitations. Many celebrities, politicians, pop stars etc. are happy to be interviewed at a community radio station if they are in the area and have the time – sometimes because they want to help, often because they crave publicity;
- With high-profile interviewees, particularly political guests such as the local MP, invite questions from your listeners in advance and pick out the most interesting – crediting the listener of course;
- Be prepared to let interesting discussions run. Despite earlier warnings, use your common sense if studio guests are generating a captivating discussion. Give yourself some flexibility in your programme schedule;
- Above all, remember that a discussion is a two way process at least. The worst radio you can broadcast is a monotone monologue. Never allow guests or presenters to read from a page or bring anything more than the sketchiest notes into the studio;
- The presenter’s role is to represent the listener, not to bang on about their hobby-horse, or keep putting their oar in for the sake of it.

CRIB SHEET

Discussion shows:

- Should be served in easily digestible chunks
- Should provide variety, including musical interludes
- Are not the same as monologue shows

Debates

Debates are a particular type of discussion show based around a single topic or theme. While most discussion shows will be non-confrontational – presenter and guests talking around a subject and conveying information – debates are centred on points of argument and dispute. Topics of debate are by definition controversial, and so make great radio, but the Ofcom obligations for a radio station to be politically neutral (see p104-106) must be your priority. A debate needs to involve a minimum of two guests holding opposing viewpoints and one presenter/chair who must strenuously strive to be impartial and fair to both sides of the argument. The best radio debates will usually have more than two guests and will also bring in points of view from listeners or, if the debate is an outside broadcast, the live audience.

Some useful tips for hosting a debate are:

- Debates take a lot of organisation. Plan them with care. It’s better to hold debates occasionally and well than it is to hold them often and badly.
- Get an experienced or well-trained chair. Authority and impartiality are crucial if a debate is not to descend into chaos. The chair needs the strength to tell some people to stop talking and the skill to encourage others to start. They should be well informed on the subject but know when to feign ignorance.
- Topics don’t have to be local. You are promoting discussion in your community by talking about foreign policy or immigration just as much as by talking about the need for a new zebra crossing.
- If you are in a studio with only one phone line and the line gets busy, it’s often better to have someone off air taking down the callers’ points, then reading them out. It gets many more people involved.
- Give out a number for text messages, again to be read out. There are also means of doing this via the web.

- You can host a public debate with only three microphones – one at the front table and two on ‘walkabout’ in the audience.
- Break up debates with the occasional record or interlude.
- Be prepared to clear the schedules. Sometimes the only time a showpiece debate can happen is in the evening, when your regular shows may have to step aside. Make sure all volunteers know this might happen to them some day.

CRIB SHEET

Debates:

- Make great radio
- Make a significant contribution to your social gain achievements
- Take a lot of organising
- Can be as large or as small as you like
- Should be done occasionally and well, rather than often and badly

Phone-ins

Many types of discussion show can have input from telephone callers being put through to air, but the dedicated phone-in show is a different beast. It is one of the most popular radio formats in the world, and some commercial stations broadcast little or nothing else, 24 hours a day. They can be truly compulsive listening and they can sometimes be utterly awful. The key to a good phone-in show is the presenter. If he or she has charisma, wit, intelligence and a great radio manner, a phone-in show can be a huge success. Without those gifts the show is at the mercy of the callers, who are unlikely to be uniformly witty and wise.

Community radio volunteers will sometimes include one or two who fancy themselves as Howard Stern or other (mostly American) ‘shock jocks’ who entertain their listeners by engaging their callers in a battle of wit and rudeness, with the emphasis on humiliation and point-scoring rather than healthy discussion. This is not a particularly desirable format for community



radio, partly because the volunteer is unlikely to have the skill to make such radio work, but also because such programmes are likely to prove corrosive to the relationship with your listeners. Phone-in shows should ideally be:

- Friendly and non-aggressive – although a little controversy never hurts.
- Centred around a particular topic. Presenters sometimes think it will make great radio to just ask callers what they’ve been doing today and what’s on their mind. It rarely does, and it can be harder to generate calls that way.
- Conducted through a switchboard, or at least a couple of lines. It is almost impossible to have a nicely flowing phone-in show through only one line. You need someone off air taking the calls and queuing people up.
- Hosted by a well-trained presenter. He or she needs particularly good training in legal issues and Ofcom codes, and needs to be prepared to cut a caller off if they are about to, for example, commit libel or spout obscenities.

CRIB SHEET

Phone-in shows:

- Can make great radio
- Can make really terrible radio
- Need good presenters – you can’t rely on the callers
- Require more than one line
- Need to be hosted with sensitivity and care



News

News is the one form of speech broadcasting which is separate to discussion. When you call something a news programme you take on particular responsibilities within the Ofcom Code (see p106). Your news must be accurate and impartial, and it may not carry sponsorship. Note that there is a significant difference between discussion of the news (which can be as informal and flippant as you like) and actual news broadcasting which must be formal and under strict control. That's not to say it has to sound like the BBC, just be clear what's a news bulletin and what's not.

VOXBOX 1.03

"In one of our earlier temporary stations a very promising trainee was assigned to read the news on the Drive-time show. He took to the task of prepping, researching and scripting with the energy we'd come to expect from him but at ten minutes before the first bulletin he took me to one side and said 'Phil, you can't expect anyone to respect the news if I read it in my accent'. The guy did have a dead strong Manchester accent but I said 'They'd better learn to' and told him to get on with it. Accent snobbery has no place in community radio."

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

National and world news

Obviously a community radio station will not have the resources to run its own international news desk. Any pretence at doing so (for example by reading out stories from newspapers or the internet) is deceitful and may breach copyright (it can be a nice regular feature for breakfast presenters to discuss 'what the papers say', but don't brand it as your 'news' spot). In practice, if a community station wants to run full news broadcasts they must beg, buy or borrow them from elsewhere. The principle options are:

- **BBC.** If you have a good relationship with your local BBC station, they may be willing to let you carry their news broadcasts – providing your station doesn't carry any spot advertising. This can have the great advantage of bringing local news with it. Keep an eye on the CMA website for news of whether this relationship has been formalised across the BBC.

VOXBOX 1.03

"My finest hour to date might have been a live link to Baghdad's first ever Internet community radio station last year during the Indymedia show for Sheffield Live! www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/sheffield/2004/07/294867.html

We knew this broadcast was happening at the same time that we were on air and with a small amount of technical juggling we managed to get the Baghdad feed out on FM and out on our Internet stream. We chatted to the Baghdad studio using Internet Relay Real Chat and the Iraqis there gave shout outs to various relatives that they had in Sheffield.

What amused the Iraqis was that our studio was taken out by a power cut about 45mins before we were due to air but, of course, we managed to get the show out in the end.

Around the same time we also managed to link up to some US streams that were covering the Republican National Convention but the Baghdad link was amazing."

Bill Best, Sheffield Live! and CMA Technical Operations Manager

- **Independent Radio News.** This is the default choice for most commercial stations, and is more chatty and showbiz-based than the BBC. You can get this through a Sky Digital box and it is often possible to get permission to broadcast it in return for carrying some national advertisements.

Community news

Carrying national news may please your listeners (although not all) but it plays no part in your social gain objectives. Community news will do. But be warned: if you brand a programme or item as 'community news' then you must assume that the same authority, impartiality and accuracy is required as would be required of a national BBC bulletin. The producers and presenters of community news must be made aware of basic journalistic standards and must be especially aware of libel and contempt law (see p102-103). While you may have roving reporters bringing you hot scoops from the street, in practice your community news is likely to be generated by your partner organisations within the community, especially schools, religious organisations, campaign groups etc. If you can persuade them to give you regular updates on their activities, this in itself can generate enough material for a snappy daily news spot or longer weekly show. Be wary of over-scheduling community news however, the chances are that there won't be all that much of interest happening every hour even in the most vibrant and populous communities.

CRIB SHEET

News programmes:

- Must be treated with care and respect
- Cannot be sponsored and have restrictions on adjacent advertising
- Can be piped in from other national and international news services
- Community news should be treated with the same care and respect as national news

Programme sharing

While of course you will be responsible for generating most of your output yourself, the wider community radio sector offers a useful source of sometimes superb programmes. Full shows or shorter items can be borrowed from or shared with other community stations through these sources:

- The Community Media Association is currently developing a network that will allow you to pull down whole shows or clips from the web for broadcast. This will of course also offer a prestigious opportunity for your own volunteers to have their best work shared around the country;
- The Radio Bank – the Government's source of material, particularly around health and safety issues and public health. Other health and social service agencies sometimes make special items for free broadcast;
- One World Radio and InterWorld are websites where you can download and broadcast superb on the spot reporting from communities in every corner on Earth, including some excellent material about community media itself;
- Collaborations with neighbouring community stations on very occasional special broadcasts. But don't do this too often – Ofcom are obliged to enforce diversity on the airwaves;
- Podcasting (downloadable audio programmes made available to all on the internet) may also prove to be a fascinating source of grass roots opinion from across the world. Do not presume that the presence of the audio on the web gives you permission to broadcast it however – you need to contact the producer for their permission (which they will probably be overjoyed to give to you);

In your Ofcom application, you have to be clear how much shared material you're using. As a proportion of the total it should be negligible – you are expected to be generating your own material – but used carefully, shared programmes can give real depth to your scheduling. And don't worry if suddenly you go over the allocation in your licence application – Ofcom won't fuss if it's marginal, and if it's more, tell them about it and why you feel it enhances your output.

Music programming

Music versus speech

In your application to Ofcom you are obliged to specify what proportion of your output will be speech and what proportion music. There are wide variations in what community licence applicants specify, but typically they promise a balance of around 70% music to 30% speech. That leaves plenty of time for all your discussion and the promotion of your community but enough music programming to attract a healthy audience. Once you have made your promise to Ofcom, nobody will count up the minutes, but they will refer back to your promise with each annual report, so if you initially promise 80% speech then arbitrarily decide to begin broadcasting 80% music, serious questions will be asked.

In setting your ratio of speech to music, it's worth bearing in mind that in very general terms, the more music you play, the younger your listenership will be. Older people tend to prefer speech broadcasts, younger people prefer music (although Angel Radio in Havant and the Isle of Wight would beg to differ on this point). In our view the best community radio is a hybrid of speech and music rather than, for example, only hosting speech in the daytime and only playing music at night. And remember that although young people may tend to prefer music shows, they also have an important contribution to make to your station's speech output.

One factor to take into account is that speech is generally more resource hungry – the time it takes to make any well constructed hour of speech far exceeds the same programme length of music. So don't just make your planned ratio what you want it to be – be sure that you can deliver it as well.

CRIB SHEET

The music vs. speech ratio you specify:

- Can be weighted as heavily as you like in either direction, providing you meet your ofcom obligations
- Should not be changed without ofcom's permission
- Will affect the type of listeners you attract

Play-lists

The music you play will alter the audience you pick up, so think carefully about what the typical play-list at your station will be (see p114-115). If you want it to reflect your whole community, it will probably have to be quite varied. At ALL FM, for example, the play-list is divided between 'Gold' (classics), 'Community' (representing the full range of nationalities and ethnic origins in the area) and 'Choice' (current hits plus the presenter's or listeners' picks). If you are trying to keep large numbers of listeners in the daytime you need to find some consistency and routine. By concentrating much of the non-Western music in specialist shows (which will pick up healthy audiences in their own right), it is possible to have a varied and lively daytime play-list which is mainstream enough not to alienate listeners but still incorporates the occasional African, West Indian, Asian or Irish tune, for example, giving the station a unique and we hope attractive musical identity. When you consider that the most listened to radio station in the country, BBC Radio 2, has a musical policy which is in its own way even more eclectic than this – comfortably spanning Oasis or Doves at one end and Lionel Richie or Frank Sinatra at the other – this is unlikely to be too much of a stretch for listeners, once they get used to it anyhow.

It is up to you how authoritarian you want to be with regard to your play-list. Many BBC and commercial radio stations will prescribe exactly which records presenters must play, or give them a very narrow list to choose from. This is certainly the easiest way to ensure the music played at your station matches your policies and to give the listener a consistent station sound. But it is also likely to lead to frustration for presenters and listeners alike. The best approach is to have a small number of station favourites from the current hits at any given time, and encourage the presenters to play them regularly between their own choices. You might choose these records because:

- They are by a local artist;
- They are part of a local scene;
- They are popular records with your listeners;
- The artist has supported your station;
- They fit perfectly with your station identity (for example, Punjabi MC's 'Mundian To Bach Ke,' a

blend of Asian vocals and urban dance beats, was a regular feature of ALL FM's daytime schedule a full year before it hit the pop charts);

- They have a message or spirit which is in keeping with your station ethos;
- They have been pressed upon you by your volunteers – who may have their ear closer to the ground than you;
- They have a 'killer hook' – that melody that won't get out of your skull;
- They simply sound great to you.

It is important that the person picking out records for a daytime show has a good ear for a tune. If you have an otherwise brilliant presenter with the musical taste of a dung beetle, you may have to diplomatically steer them towards a more suitable selection. If ever there was a place to leave your ego at the door, music programming is it – you choose for the station not yourself. Getting the flow of music right is important too, you wouldn't normally want to crash straight from Chris de Burgh into Motorhead, but if you want to keep fans of both tuned in, you will have to find space for each somewhere in the schedule. Take some chances too – in community radio you do have the editorial leeway to give a tune that you are convinced will grow on the audience the time to do that growing. The shareholders won't be there telling you to clear your desk for trying to broaden music horizons. That said, for every daring tune, play a safe one.

A good tip for increasing the 'buy in' of daytime presenters to the play-list is to involve them in its construction.

CRIB SHEET

Your play-list:

- Should reflect your station
- Should please your listeners
- Shouldn't stifle the choices of your volunteers
- Will help you get listeners and should be part of the everyday set up for volunteers – not an optional add-on



Specialist shows

In the vast majority of cases, the presenters of specialist music shows will have complete control over their play-list. The role of the station is not to choose the right music but to find the right presenters. You want people who:

- Are willing to learn radio skills as well as turn up and play records;
- Are willing to contribute their time to the station, beyond turning up and playing records;
- Have a genuine passion for their musical speciality. If someone only has 50 records they will soon begin to repeat themselves or wander off their remit;
- Will link you to local music and club scenes. This is good for your reputation and profile and will help attract celebrity guests.

But specialist presenters often bring their own problems. These include:

- **DJs who forget they are on the radio.** Many specialist DJs have a club background and the concept of talking into a mic or playing station idents, jingles or ads is alien to them. You should agree how many consecutive records they can play before back-announcing the names of records, repeating the station name, frequency, phone number etc. (see p128) There's also a very different dynamic to a 'club mix' than to a radio play-list. A radio presenter is unlikely to have the time to build through ten tracks to an immaculate peak that has the punters bouncing off the ceiling, and your listeners are more likely to be sober than those in a club. So select your radio tunes to stand on their own, at normal volume and to appeal to the un-intoxicated.
- **DJs who forget they are in public.** For some specialist presenters there might be little in the way of instant feedback, so the only people she

knows are listening are a small group of friends. This is dangerous because it is easy to slip into in-jokes and bad broadcasting habits, including a dismissive attitude towards the Ofcom Code. Don't spy on your broadcasters, but listen in to all of your specialist shows occasionally and casually mention your attentiveness ("Hi it's me, just wanted to say the show sounded great last night") is a useful preventative measure.

- **Presenters who don't feel part of the family.** If a volunteer only comes into the station on Mondays at midnight and sees nobody else, he may feel alienated from the rest of the team. He may have unaddressed needs and feel unsupported, or he may be more slapdash with station rules and property. Have some form of regular supervision session with all your volunteers. Attendance at station meetings and social gatherings should be strongly encouraged.

A community radio station could easily have 50 or even 100 different specialist music shows on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly rotation. This is a fantastic opportunity to put unlikely things on the air (as London's Resonance FM demonstrates on an hourly basis) so there is no excuse for predictable programming. If there's a fan of Himalayan nose flute music among your volunteers then let him have a monthly show. You might be surprised how many other nose flute fans there are out there. Specialist shows are a fantastic way of reaching out to sections of the community who would not normally be interested in your station, and a handful of flagship specialist shows can work wonders for a community radio station's reputation. Use them well and they will form one of your strongest hands.

CRIB SHEET

Your specialist shows:

- Will reach different audiences
- Will be presented by volunteers with different issues to your daytime folk
- Should be as professional and polished as possible
- Should be as varied as possible

Access versus quality

Community radio stations are obliged to open the airwaves to members of the community. As a general rule, the more people you get on air, the harder it will be to keep the quality high – simply because the training, support and most importantly broadcasting experience you can offer will be more thinly spread. Wide access will mean more people have a stake in your station and more will have friends, neighbours or family involved – but on the other hand you may keep fewer regular listeners as specialist audiences often take time to grow. There is no perfect balance: some stations may have a 'come hither come all' policy where the broadcasting hours are allocated as widely as is practically possible. Others will have daily presenters on flagship shows and weekly spots elsewhere, meaning as few as 20 or 30 volunteers could dominate the schedule. There are some scheduling tactics and tricks that will help you find the right balance for your station:

- You don't need to give everyone their own show. Give newer volunteers a role on another programme – co-presenting with a regular host or presenting short features or segments within magazine shows;
- Don't put new recruits in high-profile time-slots (Breakfast, Drive-time etc). – it's not fair on them or the listeners. The potential switch-off points (for example after the Breakfast or Lunch-time shows) should be treated with caution too;
- Encourage DJ double acts and teams;
- Your specialist music shows can double (or quadruple) up on one time-slot, so you could have four different heavy metal shows but the listener won't really notice or care. Metal fans will learn that they can always tune in at 10.00pm on a Wednesday and hear their favourite sounds.

CRIB SHEET

Balancing access and quality:

- Is unavoidable. More of one means less of the other
- Can be eased with smart scheduling and programming policies

Rotating schedules

The easiest way to increase your access is to rotate your schedules regularly. If there is a large demand for access to your station you are morally obliged to accommodate that demand. A schedule rotation is not the same as a schedule shuffle. It unfortunately means telling some or even all of your volunteer presenters that they cannot continue with their show (at least for a certain time) because someone else needs their time-slot. Just how you do it doesn't really matter, but it is crucial that the volunteers know exactly where they stand, and that they do not think that they personally are being victimised because suddenly they are taken off the air. This means making sure that everyone knows what the rules are for schedule rotation, and that you don't break them. Volunteers must understand that there is more demand than there is availability, so a show on community radio is a privilege not a right. Either of the following approaches is reasonable:

- **Running rotation.** Whenever someone starts a new show they are given a fixed term (perhaps six months or a year) after which they will automatically finish;
- **Pre-set rescheduling points.** Once or twice a year you throw out the entire schedule and start again with a new one.

Whichever approach you take, it is unlikely that you will have such a constant stream of brilliant, ready-trained new volunteers that you can regularly take all the old faces out and bring only new faces in. In practice you will probably want to give some of your existing volunteers different shows or time-slots; keep others where they are; and drop some of your less successful shows and volunteers who have shown less commitment and application. You will also find that re-drawing the schedules is a frustrating and time-consuming process – trying to fit different shows into time-slots that suit everyone, like pieces in a three-dimensional jigsaw. You really won't want to do it more than once or twice a year.

Probably the best approach to a total reschedule is an application system, where every existing or potential volunteer presenter is required to apply or re-apply for a show. Let them know what grounds you are deciding on. These may include:

- **Demand.** If you have a long queue of experienced and talented volunteers all desperate to present your Breakfast show or a Saturday night hip hop show, then it is not fair to let just one person hog that spot forever. But if only one volunteer is keen to present between 1.00am and 3.00am on a Tuesday, then it is pointless to take her off.
- **Dedication.** The process of making community radio is more important than the output (see p116-117). If a presenter reaches a certain level of competence then loses interest in training and self-improvement, it is reasonable to prefer another presenter who may be less competent now, but is showing real dedication and progress.
- **Commitment.** It is entirely fair to reward commitment to your station. If a volunteer is willing to mentor other volunteers, come in to make tea, wash dishes, attend meetings, do some filing or lock up at 3.00am, it is entirely reasonable to take that into consideration when handing out the shows. It can make a significant difference to the amount of help you get from your volunteers too.
- **Behaviour.** If you have had regular problems with a presenter not turning up, say, or smoking in the studio or being abusive to staff and volunteers, of course you can take that into consideration. It is a good incentive for good behaviour.
- **Representation.** You will want as many different sections of your community as possible to be represented on air. If you have only one or two disabled applicants, you will probably want to consider that in your decisions. Likewise ethnic minorities, sexualities, music types etc.
- **Ability.** Last, and probably also least, is how good the presenter is at making radio. It is often not fair to judge on quality, partly because it is subjective and your opinion might be coloured by your personal relationship with the presenter, but more because it is unfair on newcomers who haven't had the same experience. For all that, we'd be dishonest if we didn't acknowledge that some shows could be just too good to lose.

After your decisions are made, you should make clear exactly why your decisions have been reached, especially with those who have not been given a show. An appeals procedure must be in place if a volunteer feels unfairly treated. Unsuccessful applicants should be given every opportunity to keep training and volunteering off air (or as part of another programme team), and be given the greatest possible amount of support and guidance towards making a successful application next time round.

CRIB SHEET

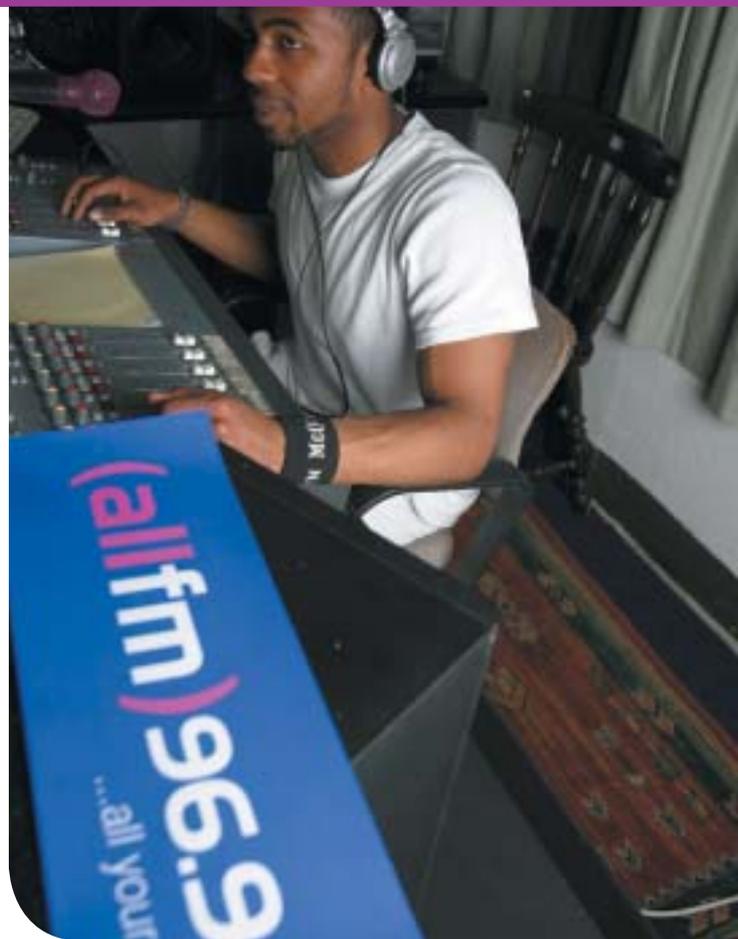
Schedule rotation:

- Is often essential for a community radio station
- Can be done continuously but is easier to manage in one go
- Should take into account the value of the show to the presenter, the value of the presenter to the station and the value of the show to its listeners
- Places a responsibility on you to offer support to those who have to move aside
- Might not be necessary if your volunteer pool is small

Station branding

Giving your station output a recognisable brand identity is a great way of bonding with your listeners, improving the station's image, team-building and helping the flow and coherency of your programming. It is also relatively cheap and easy to do.

Many presenters, particularly in marginal time-slots, may not think of their shows as being one small part in a larger picture, but as a self-contained bubble. They may not mention your station name and frequency at all, and never think of playing a station jingle or trailer for another show. This is an abuse of your hospitality as station facilitators. While any mention of branding can induce anti-corporate revulsion in some community activists and volunteers, it's a simple fact that your



station will develop a public image and identity whether you like it or not. Branding is one way in which you can steer and shape this to your own ends and to the benefit of your community. And if they're still not listening, a gentle reminder that more listeners for the station means more listeners for their show too should do the trick.

Ways you can improve your on-air branding include:

- **Regular name/frequency checks.** It is vital that listeners know what station and frequency they are listening to, or they might not be able to find you next time (it is also an Ofcom regulation). There is nothing simpler for a presenter than saying 'you're listening to Anytown FM on 96.2' every time he goes live. Nevertheless, too many presenters can go for hours without doing so. Remind them and cajole them into it if you need to.
- **Common features and style to your jingles.** It is very useful to have a single slogan or catchphrase that goes on every sting, trailer or jingle. Likewise there should be some common features to all your jingles, whether it's the same five note melody singing 'Anytown FM' at the beginning or end, or just a simple musical chord or sound effect. Your individual shows should make their own jingles, but give them one or two small elements to incorporate. Or use

'doughnut' jingles where the beginning and end remain unchanged and the volunteer can change the 'filling'.

- Make a varied range of jingles available for different times of day and different types of show – but all must be instantly recognisable as an 'Anytown FM' jingle.
- Keep stressing what it is you do. Casual listeners or those who find you by accident on the dial need to be told regularly that you are a community station, making radio by, for and from this community. It will change their appreciation of what they are hearing.
- Collect celebrity station idents whenever you do an interview or have a special guest. 'Hello, I'm Judy Finnegan. You are listening to Anytown FM on 96.2.' Instant Tinseltown glamour!

CRIB SHEET

Station branding:

- Is needed to let casual listeners know who you are
- Is needed to let casual listeners know what you are
- Need not be too tacky or intrusive
- Should be appropriate to the nature of your programming
- Should help to give your broadcasts a familiar, friendly feel

Cross-trailing and promoting the station

Like branding, cross-trailing and promotion is easily ignored by volunteers and forgotten about by busy managers. With a vast body of volunteers who rarely see each other or interact, they'll often turn up, do a show and go home. But a radio station has endless opportunity to promote and advertise itself. You want listeners who find your station through a late-night music show to be attracted back the next evening and the morning after. Cross-trailing is the best way to sell yourself to your listeners.

The programming manager must insist that volunteers understand that one of their principle duties – even one of the criteria for keeping their show – is promoting other shows on the schedule and other activities at the station.

You should expect your presenters to:

- **Listen to the station in their own time.** Otherwise they won't know what they are talking about.
- **Refer to the shows before and after theirs.** It is simple good manners for presenters to thank and credit the show that has just preceded them when they come on air. More importantly they should encourage listeners to stay tuned for the show after. If a presenter arrives at the studio 30 minutes before his show, he should immediately pop into the studio and say what is coming up on the next show.
- **Refer to shows elsewhere in the schedule.** If a daytime presenter plays a rock tune, it's worth saying 'if you liked that tune check out The Riff Raff Rock Show on Wednesday at midnight.' Or playing a trailer for that show.
- **Talk about the station.** If presenters are short of things to say, chatting about other programmes or the community activities of the station is the best use of that airtime. Have a clipboard or notice-board in the studio with suitable announcements and news.
- **Play community announcements and adverts.** Presenters have received a wonderful gift of a radio show. It is the least they can do to devote a few moments to the things that keep the station afloat.
- **Never say goodbye.** Listeners will take a terminal 'goodbye' as a cue to switch off. A better turn of phrase would be something like 'I'll be back next week but until then here is DJ Next with ...'

CRIB SHEET

Cross-trailing and promotion:

- Strengthens your station identity
- Increases the number of listeners you will get
- Should be the duty of every presenter
- Will only work if all presenters feel and act as part of a team

Further reading and links

Radio Production. Robert McLeish (Focal Press 2005)

Presenting on TV and Radio: An insider's guide.

Janet Trewin (Focal Press 2004)

Researching for Television and Radio. Adele Emm

(Routledge 2001)

Modern Radio Production: Production, programming and performance. Lewis B O'Donnell et al

(Wadsworth 2003)

The Community Radio Order 2004

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20041944.htm

On-line guides

www.communityradiotoolkit.net

www.commedia.org.uk/learning/radiomodules/

[www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/html/rpp/](http://www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/html/rpp/Index.htm)
[Index.htm](http://www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/html/rpp/Index.htm)

www.rad10.com/

Shared programming resources

www.showcase.commedia.org.uk/

www.radiobank.co.uk/

www.interworldradio.net/

radio.oneworld.net



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

The community centre

Offering support

Know your limits

Appraisal and supervision

Induction

Mentoring



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

A community radio station will attract volunteers and visitors like bees to honey. Very quickly your premises will turn into some kind of cross between a radio station, a day care centre, a school common room, a karaoke competition, a café and a sitcom.

The radio station as community centre

The people hanging around will be spectacularly diverse, of all ages, races, classes, creeds, lifestyles and abilities. Trying to get them to bond together as a team, to reflect the type of common purpose, improvement and co-operation you want to see in your community at large is another essential task of the management and staff team. If you can generate that sense of common purpose you will find it easier to maintain volunteer interest and to create a culture of care and support where everyone is charged with helping everyone else out.

VOXBOX 10.01

“When we set up ALL FM and Wythenshawe FM, we’d done four RSLs in the run up, and some of us had a lot more previous experience at the BBC or wherever. So we thought yes, we know radio. We also knew that RSLs were bloody hard work but that you recover from them. We thought we knew what we were in for.

The killer change was that the volunteers didn’t go away. We had set up a community. And it wasn’t only a community of people who wanted to hang around and make radio; it was just a community of people who wanted to hang around. Somewhere safe, warm and dry to have a brew, where there are people to chat to.”

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

A station’s function as a community centre can be a healthy and necessary one. But it must operate within strict limitations if you are to avoid conflict and to not lose sight of your prime function – making radio to serve the wider community. Here are some general dos and don’ts:

- Do provide a welcoming and friendly environment for volunteers and visitors;
- Don’t allow volunteers to hang around constantly. They will soon start to irritate staff and other volunteers, and they will keep other volunteers away from resources. A top limit of 15 hours a week attendance at the station fits nicely into the DSS benefit rules and is a suitable benchmark. Be prepared to send volunteers home when necessary;
- Do give them something to do while they’re there. It will make them feel useful and help you too;
- Don’t allow a small number of volunteers with serious needs to dominate all your time and attention (see p134);
- Do let some volunteers turn up once a week, do their show and go away again, if you are sure they are not being neglected or neglecting their obligations;
- Do remember that your volunteers will sometimes have other issues and needs – when this detracts from their ability to make radio it becomes your problem;
- Do be aware of your own limitations when dealing with complex problems;
- Don’t only accept volunteers who are capable, reliable and safe. Not only would you be failing to fulfil your role as a community station, you might also be cutting yourself off from some brilliantly talented broadcasters who have the most to gain from your existence;
- Do be completely clear with your volunteers about what the rules are and why they exist.

CRIB SHEET**The community radio station:**

- Is also a community centre
- Shouldn't become such a successful community centre that it interferes with making radio
- Will attract some people with extensive social and personal problems
- Should welcome some people with extensive social and personal problems

The volunteer dynamic

As we've said before, volunteers are central to any successful radio station, but don't for a moment think that the volunteers, individually or as a body, stay the same as the months go by. They are engaged in an activity they feel passionately about, one that in many cases changes them, and in achieving this we have observed a 'group dynamic' at play.

When you start, spring is in the air as the euphoria of the station getting on air envelopes one and all in the sweet smell of adrenaline. As time goes by, some of the novelty and excitement fades and volunteers, if they didn't have one before, find a voice. That's the problem with empowerment.

The role of staff

It should not be the role of staff to make radio; it is their role to create the right circumstances for members of the community to make radio. This is easier said than done however, and sometimes you might find yourself making radio as a means of supporting volunteers.

Enabling members of the community to make radio not only covers all the managerial, fund-raising, business management and radio production duties covered elsewhere in this book, it also means addressing the personal needs of the volunteers. To some extent this task falls to all staff at a station, whatever their nominal role might be, but most stations will specify a staff position with responsibility for volunteer support. At the Radio

Regen stations the staff have had to become involved in issues as diverse as:

- Personal accommodation. (At the extreme, our staff have accompanied a volunteer to court to overturn an eviction notice that would have left her homeless);
- Physical health and welfare;
- Mental health issues;
- Personal hygiene. (This is a very common problem when you have large numbers of people using a small, stuffy studio, and it is obviously difficult to address. A written policy within the volunteer agreement does help);
- Benefits problems and financial crises;
- Child care problems;
- Immigration and residency problems;
- Domestic violence;
- Literacy, numeracy and language problems;
- Criminal charges;
- Addiction problems.

Of course interventions in many of these areas require professional expertise beyond the capabilities of community radio staff. But knowing where to find and how to access the right services is an important skill in its own right (see below). At a less significant level, there will be an endless stream of arguments between volunteers, and minor problems with relationships, employment, family life and other relatively mundane issues which can nevertheless impact severely upon a volunteer's ability to make good radio. A supportive shoulder and some ready helpful words in such situations are essential tools for anyone working at a community radio station.

It is important to remember that some volunteers may have profound problems but believe that they are none of your business. The radio station may be the one place they can come to forget about their problems. You have no right to barge in where you are not welcome or needed. On the other hand, there may come times when the volunteer's personal issues intrude so severely into their behaviour at the station or ability to make radio that you have to say 'OK, either you let us help you sort this out, or we will have to ask you to stay away from the station until you have sorted it out yourself.'

It's worth bearing in mind that some volunteers, for cultural or just personal reasons, will only feel able to discuss their problems with someone of their own sex, or in some circumstances even from their own religious or cultural background. It is therefore useful to have more than one member of staff with at least partial responsibility for volunteer support.

Station staff must learn when it is appropriate to get involved, when it is appropriate to refer people to other services, and when it is appropriate to politely tell the volunteer to go away and stop bothering you (quite often, it must be said).

CRIB SHEET

The staff at a community radio station:

- *Have a duty to support and care for their volunteers*
- *Must recognise that problems of any kind can affect a volunteer's behaviour or capabilities*
- *Shouldn't barge in to people's lives when they are not welcome*
- *Need to learn when to get involved and when not to*

Drawing the line

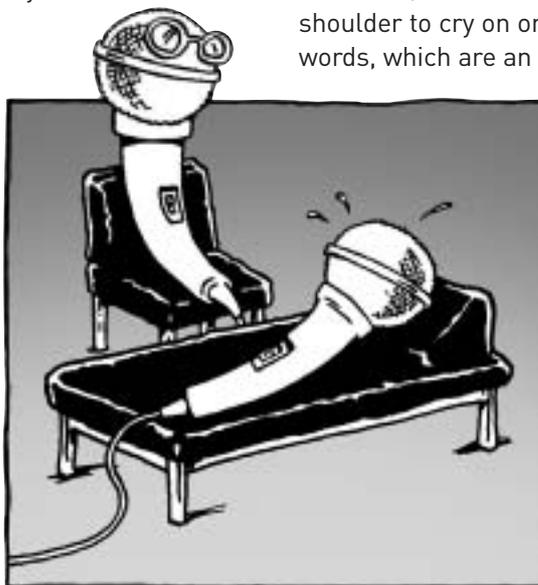
When volunteers have problems you need to know:

- When to start intervening;
- When to stop intervening.

The first point may be obvious – when he comes to you and asks for help or she explains that she can't do her show this week because the bailiffs are camped outside her door. Often though the situation will be much less clear. A volunteer's behaviour may be becoming erratic or anti-social. You may spot warning signs of substance

abuse, depression or anxiety (see p137), or simply that the volunteer seems unhappy and troubled. Generally with new volunteers you are reliant on them to tell you about any issues they have, but as you get to know your volunteers better you will notice any changes in their attitude, behaviour, appearance etc.

As a community radio professional you have to be clear about where your expertise lies. You are (presumably) not a trained counsellor, lawyer, doctor or social worker, and should not dabble in those areas. Counselling and psychiatric services in particular are a massive unmet need in deprived communities and often among community radio volunteers. There can be a temptation for sensitively minded individuals to think that counselling is 'something I'd be good at' and start digging around in a volunteer's traumatic childhood. This is incredibly dangerous for both parties and must be avoided – and it can also be spectacularly time-consuming. Even offering apparently common sense advice to volunteers with psychological problems can be fraught with danger. When stations take on volunteers with diagnosed mental health problems, it is often worth the support officer inviting them to bring in a caseworker from their psychiatric care team (for example a community psychiatric nurse) to discuss their proposed commitment to the station or just to make contact. Of course, counselling is different to offering a shoulder to cry on or some friendly supportive words, which are an important part of your job.



Be wary of making commitments or promises that you cannot deliver. It's crucial that volunteers understand how much you are able to do for them and you avoid any dependency developing. There is a fine line between a constructive working friendship and an intrusive dependency. Staff should keep the supportive relationship at work but not be tempted to give

volunteers their personal phone number or meet away from the station. They also need to be able to forget about it when they leave work.

Station managers should also have a clear policy regarding close personal friendships or physical relationships between staff and volunteers. While in practice it is usually impossible to ban these (birds, bees and even educated fleas do it) it is worth insisting that any such relationships are reported up to a line manager or the board. There are rare circumstances where staff-volunteer relationships can be considered an abuse of position, and management are entitled to be kept informed as part of their duty of protection to the volunteer. More commonly such relationships may cause a (perceived or real) conflict of interest when shows or other opportunities are allocated or disputes arise between volunteers.

In most cases you will hopefully help volunteers solve their own problems or help them access agencies who can. Very occasionally there will come times when you have to admit defeat. If a volunteer's behaviour causes genuine threat to the safety and sense of security of your staff and other volunteers, to your property or your broadcasting licence, you may eventually (or even swiftly) have to bar them from the station. Whatever sympathy you have for their background problems, your first priority is always the safety of your colleagues and the future of your station.

CRIB SHEET

The support you give your volunteers:

- Is potentially limitless, so you have to learn where to draw the line
- Should be limited to your knowledge and training. You are not a social worker, lawyer or counsellor
- Should not continue away from the station
- Should not extend to endangering the safety of other people or property



Identifying and accessing other support agencies

When you help a volunteer access support or advice from other agencies, your role will often be as advocate. Many vulnerable people struggle with the bureaucracy and complexity involved in finding an emergency NHS dentist or getting the benefits they are entitled to. Often all they need is someone to help them obtain the correct forms and help fill them in. In other cases it is more complex. Accessing expensive and extremely limited drug rehabilitation treatment, for example, is going to take spectacular powers of persuasion. Even then you are unlikely to make much of a dent on the queue. However in many cities and some towns there are agencies that specialise in advocacy work for such cases. If you can't access the service needed yourself, identify other agencies that possibly can. In urgent cases, friendly local councillors or your MP's office can be extremely helpful and may make a phone call on your behalf.

Community radio stations are in an unusually fortunate position when it comes to accessing external support. You may well already have working partnerships with many of the agencies you will need, and that usually means personal connections. Don't be afraid to use them. When you are seeking help for a volunteer you want to be able to bypass the switchboard and ring up your contact, tell them the nature of your problem, and ask who the best person to talk to is. Politely remind them of the value of community radio to their own function, and stress the value of the volunteer to the station. It can take time to build up such relationships, but in most cases it will be worth persevering. Ideally you want to be on first name and direct line terms with someone at:

- Local health providers;
- Social services;
- Housing authorities;
- Housing associations;
- Education providers;

- Youth services;
- Legal aid solicitors;
- Service users groups;
- Benefits and welfare advice centres;
- Debt advice centres;
- Immigration advice centres;
- Housing and homelessness advice centres;
- Citizens Advice Bureaux;
- Drug and alcohol agencies;
- Community psychiatric services.

CRIB SHEET

When accessing external support:

- It may take as little as a phone call or it may drag out over months
- You should use any personal connections you have through your work
- If you don't know how to access the services you need, look for someone else who does

Appraisal and supervision

The most common way you will identify problems developing for a volunteer is in the supervision you give. 'Supervision' in this context does not mean constantly leaning over their shoulders and watching their every move. Instead it means offering regular face-to-face contact to identify any problems the volunteer may be having or any additional help or support he may need. Supervision and appraisal are of course vital for training in broadcasting skills (see Chapter 13), but they serve a valuable function in personal support too. They should be designed around process (i.e. what is being done) rather than outcome (what has been achieved on paper). It's worth having a formal appraisal system where every volunteer has a meeting with a staff member at regular intervals (monthly, or quarterly at the outside) but in addition it is good practice to try to spend a few minutes chatting informally with every volunteer whenever you get the chance.

There should be records kept of formal appraisals, and these should include information regarding 'soft outcomes' – those changes in an individual that are hard to quantify with statistics and training records:

- Appearance, grooming, personal hygiene etc (significant as a measure of self-esteem);
- Self-confidence;
- Judgement and decision-making;
- Communication skills;
- Social and inter-personal skills;
- Organisational skills;
- Ability to get up in the morning and other attendance issues;
- Standards of behaviour.

Making a note of such soft outcomes should give you a valuable insight into the progress a volunteer is making, and if there is no progress or the volunteer appears to be going backwards, some efforts should be made to establish why. It may be something simple and easily resolved – perhaps their alarm clock or washing machine is broken – but there may be deeper underlying problems in play. Measurement of soft outcomes is also often useful – or even essential – for your own (and your funders') monitoring and evaluation systems (see p84-87). In asking such questions it is vital that you explain why you are collecting such information and that a high degree of confidentiality comes into effect when it is stored. If it is likely that soft outcomes need measuring for a funder, do let the volunteer know why and that any data passed to the funder will be made anonymous.

Involving volunteers in the design of this data collection – suggesting areas of behaviour that might change in the course of volunteering – will increase their sense of ownership of the process.

CRIB SHEET

Your appraisal and supervision systems:

- Are key to identifying problems early
- Should be more concerned with process than outcome
- Should pay attention to soft outcomes
- Should be a mixture of informal chats and formal sessions

Recognising unmet needs

Many different agencies are willing to train voluntary sector workers in identifying possible problems and spotting needs. If they can't offer face-to-face training there should certainly be a ready supply of hand outs and other information. Any volunteer support worker should seek out training in the following areas:

- **Literacy and numeracy.** Adult learning centres, including your partner college, should have basic skills assessment courses.
- **Mental health problems.** Your primary mental health care team, your local MIND office, and other voluntary sector groups should all be helpful.
- **Drug and alcohol abuse.** Again both the statutory drug and alcohol teams and voluntary sector agencies should have help and advice to hand.

In other areas, for example problems with money or housing, you would normally be reliant on the volunteer bringing it to your attention spontaneously or in answer to questioning (see p138). You must build a relationship of trust with your volunteers that will allow them to discuss embarrassing personal issues with you. It's a difficult but necessary task.

CRIB SHEET

Recognising needs:

- Is a skill in itself that needs training
- Will often require a trusting relationship

The role of volunteers

When a community radio station is running well, volunteers should not be passive recipients of training, support, management and services but actively involved in all of them. This can include a role in supporting their fellow volunteers, which should be encouraged at every level, from making each other cups of tea to assisting with radio production, from offering help with IT and other technical problems to sharing any other relevant skills they may have.

This type of low-level co-operation should spring naturally from a good working environment. When people are happy and inspired in their own activities they invariably feel more inclined to help others with theirs. If an atmosphere develops where

volunteers don't feel like they are sharing resources (whether that's broadcasting time, staff support, IT access or teabags) but instead feel like they are competing for them, co-operation is likely to go out the window. So fostering a good team spirit is crucial. Things that can help include:

- Social events and parties;
- Regular volunteer meetings – although this won't help if meetings are negative, stressful or boring;
- Making sure everyone is introduced when they cross paths at the station;
- News and information about your volunteers in newsletters and other internal communications;
- Systems that make it easy for them to contact each other – e.g. pigeonhole system, message book or internal email.

The potential support role of volunteers can go even further – very often situations arise where the volunteers will end up supporting the staff. This may be as simple as reversing the role of

supportive shoulder. Many's the time a stressed out staff member will be helped through a difficult day by a sympathetic volunteer who is available to accompany him for a break or go somewhere for a sandwich and a chat at lunch-time.

At a more practical level, every community radio station should seek to involve at least some volunteers in management and administration tasks. This will ease the workload on paid staff and free up their time to expand and extend the activities of the station. There is always a temptation for staff to think that they don't have time to train volunteers in administrative tasks. It is always quicker to do something yourself than it is to teach someone else how to do it. But in the long term it is time well invested. While it's unlikely there will be many volunteers begging to do the accounts, you can never





be sure what hidden talents they may have unless you give them the chance.

If some of the volunteers are at least aware of the basics of your management systems, they will have a fighting chance of stepping in if the doomsday scenario arises and the station suddenly loses much of its funding or several staff members simultaneously leave the station or fall ill.

CRIB SHEET

The role of the volunteers includes:

- Supporting and helping each other
- Supporting and helping the staff
- Involvement in the management of the station
- Being ready to take over from staff if a worst-case scenario occurs

Volunteer induction

As we saw in Chapter 5, good induction is essential if you are to have a healthy working relationship with your volunteers. It should be the opportunity for the volunteer to learn everything she needs to know about the station, with particular regard to the rules, and the rights and responsibilities she will have. At the same time, it is vital that the station staff learns everything they might need to know about the volunteer. This will include:

- What skills and experiences can they offer?
- What skills and experiences (beyond broadcasting) might they want to develop?
- What issues in their private life might intrude on their involvement?
- What health problems or attendant issues might the station need to know about?
- What learning or support needs do they have?

The induction needs to stress that the answers given to these questions are confidential, that they are only being asked so that appropriate support can be offered, and that the answers they give will not count against them in any way. Obviously such questions should be asked tactfully in a one-to-one situation, not in a group.

As before, the data collected at the induction can be retained for use in any 'soft outcomes' monitoring that you conduct.

CRIB SHEET

Induction is vital:

- For the volunteers to get to know the station
- For the station to get to know the volunteer

Mentoring

Mentoring is a highly effective one-to-one support system that can be valuable for volunteers and staff alike. It involves a senior, more experienced partner accepting responsibility for supervising the progress of a more junior one. Primary roles of a mentor are:

- Setting development goals and monitoring progress towards them;
- Listening to problems and concerns about radio work or other life issues;
- Offering advice and ideas for change;
- Assisting with skill development (coaching, tutoring etc.);
- Acting as a role model and inspiration.

A good mentor will need:

- Good listening skills;
- Self-confidence;
- Patience;
- Reliability, dependability and trustworthiness;
- A friendly attitude;
- Empathy;
- Neutrality (i.e. have no personal vested interest in the progress of the partner);
- The ability to step back when necessary;
- Confidentiality;
- A sense of humour.

A good mentee (no really, that's what they're called) will need:

- Commitment to progress;
- Clear sense of direction and personal goals;
- Trust in the mentor;
- Openness and honesty.

CRIB SHEET

Mentoring:

- Is a formal, long-term, one-to-one support system which can take a while to establish but repays that time investment many times
- Can be useful for staff and volunteers
- Requires commitment, honesty and friendliness

Establishing a mentoring system

The most effective and enthusiastic mentors are usually those who have been/are being mentored themselves. If you can establish a system at the earliest possible opportunity, then it will quickly become self-sustaining. In practice, the early days of community radio stations tend to be highly chaotic and finding mentors when all the volunteers may be new and nervous won't be easy. Nevertheless the sooner you can start the better.

Becoming a mentor is not an insignificant commitment. You can't order anyone to do it or insist upon it – the relationship is highly unlikely to be effective if you do. So all you can do is encourage (or plead with) your more experienced volunteers to consider it. Stress that the mentor also has much to gain from the relationship; it can be a highly educational, rewarding and inspirational role to take. More cynically, it looks great on their CV – but this probably shouldn't be their primary motivation. The key to successful mentoring is partnering the right people together. The chemistry of a great partnership is impossible to quantify or predict, but some factors to be considered are:

- Experience in relevant role (i.e. broadcasters should normally be mentored by broadcasters, managers by managers etc.);
- Gender, age, race, religion etc. – obviously these

may not be relevant in many cases, but beware of culture clashes or sensitivities over lifestyle;

- First impressions. Before formalising a mentoring relationship, send the potential mentor and mentee off for a cup of tea and a chat somewhere. They will soon tell you if there's a personality clash.

CRIB SHEET

Establishing a mentoring system:

- Should be done as early as possible
- Involves pairing the right mentor with the right mentee

What does mentoring involve?

The two partners should work out between themselves the best way to make the relationship work, but typical practice would be:

- Regular meetings (maybe monthly or thereabouts), usually somewhere away from the radio station but ideally not at either partner's own home either;
- Occasional phone calls, e-mails etc.;
- Emergency support when a crisis develops – the mentor should be easily obtainable but the criteria for what constitutes an emergency should be clear.

The last function in particular can be fraught with danger. If the mentee begins to make excessive demands on the time or emotional strength of the mentor, the relationship can quickly become unhealthy. The formal mentoring agreement (see below) sets out procedures as to what should happen if the mentor feels unable to offer the amount of support needed.

The mentoring agreement

Although the practice of mentoring should be informal and flexible, the relationship should be underpinned by a formal agreement negotiated between the mentor and the mentee, usually under the guidance of the station management. This will set out:

- How much commitment will be required from each partner;
- What expectations each should have of the other;

- What rights and responsibilities each has towards the other;
- What happens if either partner fails to keep their side of the deal;
- What happens if either partner feels the relationship is becoming unhelpful;
- How and when the mentoring period will end. It's not good to let mentoring relationships fizzle out, so set a date (maybe 12 months ahead) when both partners can review their progress and, if they wish, make a renewed agreement.

CRIB SHEET

Mentoring requires:

- Regular meetings and other contact
- A non-dependant relationship
- A firm, clear mentoring agreement

External mentors

With volunteer mentoring agreements, it would be normal for both partners to be volunteers at the same station. With staff, that can be very difficult, the staff team would usually be too small for any kind of mentoring to be practical. Finding an appropriate mentor for senior management in particular is especially difficult, as there are unlikely to be many experienced community radio managers in the area willing to take on the role. There are however, many people with vast experience in either community or radio, if not both. The mentor for a community radio station manager may not know much about broadcasting or Ofcom licences, but have extensive experience of volunteer management, fund-raising, finance, training etc. Alternatively she may not know the community sector but may have extensive experience in radio production and media management. This is where your relationships with other stations (see p73) become most valuable. At present we are hoping to involve BBC managers as mentors for our own senior staff. As the community radio sector grows, we hope it will become commonplace for experienced station staff and even volunteers to offer mentoring to other community radio projects in their area.

CRIB SHEET

External mentors:

- Are extremely useful
- Need not be community radio specialists, but it would help if they were

Further reading and links

Volunteer management guides

Essential Volunteer Management (2nd edition).

Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch (*Directory of Social Change, 1998*)

Recruiting Volunteers (2nd edition). Fraser Dyer and Ursula Jost (*Directory of Social Change, 2002*)

Volunteers and the Law. Mark Restall (*Volunteering England, 2005*)

On-line guides

www.volunteering.org.uk

www.vde.org.uk

www.askncvo.org.uk

www.do-it.org.uk

Mentoring

The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships. Lois J Zachary and Laurent A Daloz (*Jossey Bass Wiley, 2000*)

Implementing Mentoring Schemes. Nadine Klasen and David Clutterbuck (*Butterworth, 2001*)



ACCESS AND DISABILITY

The Disability Discrimination Act

Disabilities

Access and usability

Personal support

Fair employment

Programming on disability



ACCESS AND DISABILITY

A community radio station exists to offer access to the airwaves and opportunities for self-improvement to those who need it the most. It is sad that even in the 21st Century this all too often means people living with disabilities.

Community radio offers enormous opportunities to disabled people. Disabled people offer enormous benefits to community radio. It is essential that stations don't just make the minimum effort required to stay within the law and to get the token involvement of one or two such volunteers, but instead place the needs and involvement of disabled people at the heart of everything they do. Our sector should be a shining beacon of best practice. Obviously we all want to treat everybody with respect and decency... but in the case of people who have a disability, we might not always know how to do this. Tackling this issue means understanding the various problems that disabled volunteers, staff and listeners might face, and making every effort to alleviate them. And it means communicating freely and listening closely to their wishes and needs.

CRIB SHEET

The involvement of disabled people:

- *Should be at the heart of community radio*
- *offers great opportunities to disabled people and the station alike*

Your legal obligation

As a service provider and (presumably) as an employer, your station is legally bound to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). In simple terms, this says that you must not discriminate against a disabled person (described as someone with "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities") and that you must offer the same access and opportunities to disabled people that you do to everyone else. As we noted above, compliance with this law should be seen as a bare minimum standard for a community radio station, but of course you

need to understand your legal position too – not least because a successful complaint against a community radio station under the DDA could lead to a compensation lawsuit which could be a financial and PR catastrophe for any community station.

Since October 2004, all organisations providing services to the public, whether paid for or not, are obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their facilities in order to make it possible for a disabled person to use them, or to allow a person with a disability to be employed there. Just what is 'reasonable' is of course a very big question. In the event of a complaint, the Disability Rights Commission (or for staff complaints, an employment tribunal) would intervene, with the principle intent of finding reconciliation rather than fault. Issues which would be considered would include:

- The size and wealth of your organisation;
- The consideration and priority given to the problems of disabled people;
- The efforts already made to increase access and provision to disabled people;
- How many disabled service users you would be reasonably expected to encounter;
- What alternative arrangements are offered to service users.

In short, they would apply common sense and expect you to do likewise. Because the letter of the law is vague, you are forced to comply with the spirit of the law.

To take a hypothetical example, a station may have its studio on the first floor of a building with no lift. If a wheelchair user wants to host a show and is told 'sorry, we don't have the facilities,' then there would be a high chance of a successful complaint. However if the station had made real efforts to find a more accessible but alternative home within their limited budget, if the volunteer had been offered the

opportunity to pre-record shows at the nearby partner college, and if the station could be shown to have made extensive efforts to involve volunteers with disabilities in other ways, then the chances of a complaint being upheld would be minimal. You are not obliged to make changes that are impractical or beyond your financial means.

CRIB SHEET

The Disability Discrimination Act:

- Forbids you from unfairly discriminating against current or potential service users or staff on the grounds of disability
- obliges you to make reasonable adjustments to allow as much access and opportunity as you can to people with disabilities
- Does not demand the impossible or the unaffordable
- Has few hard and fast rules, but calls for common sense

Disabilities

One lesson that you quickly learn in any community sector project is that you must always expect the unexpected. This particularly applies to access issues. Sometimes the volunteer with what may appear to be the most extreme and multiple disabilities can quietly get on with things, casually brushing away your offers of support and assistance at every turn. Others with apparently minor impairments will be unable to function without significant emotional and practical support. Nevertheless there are some broad categories of disability that community stations should be prepared to encounter:

- **Mobility.** Most obviously this means wheelchair users, but may also include those who walk with difficulty or only with assistance.
- **Visual impairment.** The blind and partially sighted have a particularly close relationship with radio – for obvious reasons. They are likely to be your most avid group of listeners and should be involved in making radio too.
- **Dexterity.** Although generally overlooked in disability and access literature, many people have conditions which make fiddling with small buttons (an essential ability in most radio studios) extremely difficult. This could be caused by muscular or orthopaedic problems (e.g. arthritis) which make finger movements painful and difficult, or it could be a result of trembling hands – a symptom of several chronic illnesses and a side-effect of some common prescription medicines.
- **Learning difficulties.** This is a broad category which spans everything from mild literacy problems through to severe Downs Syndrome, so generalisations are difficult. Appropriate interventions and support must be offered at either end of the spectrum (see Voxbox 11.01).
- **Mental illness.** As we discussed in Chapter 10, awareness of mental illness needs to be at the centre of your volunteer support strategy. It's worth bearing in mind that the mentally ill are the group most commonly discriminated against. There is often an unreasonable fear and prejudice of the mentally ill and staff should take care to ensure they are not isolated and marginalised within the station.
- **Deafness.** No, it's not a joke. While the profoundly deaf are unlikely to show much interest in radio, they are considerably outnumbered by the partially deaf and hard of hearing, who may well wish to be involved.
- **Other disabilities.** Epilepsy, asthma and many other long-term illnesses can cause genuine obstacles to participation in the station. Be prepared to offer whatever support and facilities may be required and be sure to have a hard and fast no-smoking policy if only to assist those with respiratory problems.

In all these cases and others, you need to find a good balance between anticipating and being prepared to meet the particular needs of any volunteer or staff member, and spending a huge amount of time and resources on providing facilities or making changes which are never used or needed.

VOXBOX 11.01

“About three years ago we started working with a learning disabled project called 119 Project. We did a workshop every week, and initially it was just a small activity project. From that we began to realise the potential that was there in some of those people. From that grew a project called Radio119 which is an independent group working within our project. They are not a learning disabled project, they are a radio project in their own right. They produce reports for broadcast on BCB, and we think it’s the first time that learning disabled people have had a voice in the media. That’s been really exciting. We didn’t know where it would go, and we couldn’t have imagined what would happen when these people get the opportunities. We have one guy who is autistic and the doctor had told his mum at one point that he would never even speak. He’s now not only doing a lot of independent work on the computer and editing suite, he has also broadcast a show on the radio. It just shows that whoever you are, if you have the right opportunity, how much you can achieve. That’s what community radio can do.”

Mary Dowson, Director and CEO, Bradford Community Broadcasting

CRIB SHEET

The disabilities you may encounter:

- Are as wide-ranging as the disabilities in your community
- Will each raise their own unique problems

Improving access and usability

The physical layout and design of your premises, the usability of your facilities and the special needs of disabled staff and volunteers should be paramount in every decision you make from day one. These should certainly be major considerations in your choice of location and premises, and any time there is a re-arrangement of offices, furniture, decoration etc. They should also be under constant inspection – it’s almost inevitable that from time to time someone will move a desk without thinking of

the implications. It’s better that someone notices and moves it back before a wheelchair user needs to get across the room in a hurry.

The areas in which you should consider the needs of disabled service users include:

Approach and entrance

There should be:

- Parking for disabled drivers (ideally reserved bays) close to the premises;
- A highly visible and easily found door. Try to avoid situations where a partially sighted person has to read a tiny nameplate on a buzzer system or negotiate a maze of corridors to get in;
- A street-level entrance/ramp for wheelchair users;
- A wide entrance for wheelchair users;
- The door should be easily opened. It shouldn’t be excessively stiff or heavily sprung, and the door handle must be within reach of a wheelchair user.

Once inside

There should be:

- Wide doors and corridors;
- Clear passageways through rooms, particularly if they are ‘through routes’ or used by several people at once;
- Clear floors, without clutter, raised mats, rugs or (especially) trailing wires and cables;
- Disabled toilet facilities;
- A lift if necessary.

Design and décor

Try to:

- Decorate simply. Doors (or doorframes) should be a different colour to the walls. People with visual impairments can be disoriented by complex colour schemes, and have difficulty distinguishing between walls, doors etc.;
- Beware of hanging fittings (e.g. lights) at or below head height;
- Have strong, preferably natural lighting in all rooms;
- Make sure all permanent signs are large and have good contrast.

Alarms and emergency evacuation procedures

- Alarms should be visible and audible;

- Emergency evacuation and fire alarm procedures must include provision for disabled staff, visitors and service users. Disabled users should be included appropriately in drill procedures.

Resources

The equipment, support materials, internal communications and other resources which your staff and service users need should be:

- **Easily readable.** Printed materials should be large type and have good contrast. Braille or audiotape translations may be needed (many libraries and colleges offer a Braille translation service);
- **Easily seen and reached.** Don't keep important files on high shelves, never place notices seven feet up a wall or store stationery in the cellar;
- **Easily used.** Obviously it may not be possible to have all your studio equipment redesigned and rebuilt to allow perfect access, but be prepared to make whatever efforts you can or whatever changes become necessary due to the needs of a disabled volunteer. Some changes – such as adjustable computer desks for wheelchair users – are relatively straightforward but make a huge difference to your usability.

Adapting to individual needs

The money and effort which can be spent on improving access and usability is endless. However much you might want to, you will not be able to do everything. There are some issues, such as wheelchair access, which are almost certain to arise sooner or later and should be considered as absolutely fundamental to your function as a community radio station. Others – for example translating learning materials into Braille or onto audiotape – may arise but you will probably want to wait until they do so before investing in them, otherwise you may find they are out of date and need changing before you have used them. Often the changes needed might be less predictable. We know of a community group who once needed to black out windows to allow access to a user with the light-sensitive skin condition porphyria, which is not something you can reasonably plan for. What is crucial is that you are prepared to make whatever changes are necessary to make your station accessible to anyone.

CRIB SHEET

Your station must be:

- Easy to enter for disabled users
- Easy for disabled users to navigate inside
- Helpfully designed and decorated for disabled people
- Safe to use and safe to evacuate for disabled people
- Flexible and adaptable when needs arise

Communication and personal support

There is no point in having the most accessible facilities if the human touch is not there. Treating people with respect, understanding and compassion is an essential component of your access policies. The way station staff and volunteers talk and relate to each other, regardless of their health or impairment, will go a long way to establishing how welcoming and attractive your station will be for people with disabilities. There are no hard and fast rules as to the language you use – tone of voice is often a bigger factor than the words used – but here are some guiding principles:

- **People are described by their disabilities, not defined by them.** So it is more respectful to talk about 'people with disabilities' or 'disabled people' than it is to talk about 'the disabled.' And you don't provide access to wheelchairs and guide dogs, you provide access to wheelchair users and blind people.
- **Avoid pity or excessive admiration.** The phrase 'aren't you brave?' won't go down too well.
- **Don't go to extremes.** Many disabled people find nothing more annoying than being told they're 'just differently abled' or talking to someone who delicately skips around the issue or refuses to acknowledge that they have disabilities at all. Impairments are a fact of life and should be treated as such.
- **Clarify the preferred means of communication.** If someone has problems with hearing or speech, find out if they'd prefer to use a notepad or a sign interpreter, for example.
- **Avoid disempowering terms.** Words such as 'cripple', 'handicapped,' and 'spastic' have hopefully been consigned to history, but at a

more subtle level, phrases like ‘confined to a wheelchair’ should be avoided.

- **Don’t avoid talking altogether.** It is better to risk saying the wrong thing than to say nothing at all.

If people have mobility impairments:

- Sit down before talking to a wheelchair user so you are at eye level;
- Never touch a wheelchair without asking the user first;
- Never tidy or move crutches, frames or sticks.

If people have visual impairments:

- Introduce yourself when you speak;
- Say when you are ending a conversation or leaving a room;
- Be prepared to offer a guiding arm (not hand) when walking;
- Never interact with a guide dog without asking the owner first.

If people have hearing or speech impairments:

- Find quiet places to talk;
- Look the person straight in the face and talk clearly;
- If a sign interpreter is involved, talk to the person not the signer.

Support workers

In most cases a disabled volunteer will want to do as much as possible himself, but there will be times when this is simply not practical and a helping or guiding hand is required. In some cases the volunteer will have their own support worker (either a personal assistant or a professional case-worker such as a community nurse) in which case there should be no problem. However, it may be necessary for the station to provide such personal assistance whenever the volunteer is at the station. It is the role of this support worker to provide as much or as little input as is needed or wanted to allow the volunteer to achieve as much as he wants to. Let’s take the example of a blind volunteer hosting a show. He may want to plan the programme, invite guests, and speak on air – a worthwhile challenge in itself. A support worker or team would be needed to prepare the show, change records, drive the desk etc. Or he may want to learn how to operate the desk by touch, use a voice activated computer to create his own

jingles and pre-records, and have total autonomy over the creation and delivery of the show. Be prepared to go as far as you need to if you are going to help your volunteers meet their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

CRIB SHEET

The way you talk to and work with disabled people should be:

- With respect, understanding and compassion
- Not patronising or insulting
- As non-intrusive as possible. Let them get on with it if you can

Fair employment practices

As we noted earlier (see p142) if you employ people you are bound by the DDA and must not discriminate against employees or potential employees on the grounds of disability. And as we said above, this should be considered the absolute bare minimum requirement of a community radio station. Your station should:

- Consider disability in every aspect of employment. Your equal opportunities policy should commit you to fair practice in recruitment, retention, training, appraisals, grievance procedures and career development.
- Offer disability awareness training to staff (see below).
- Involve staff with disabilities in all staff activities, professional or social.
- Be aware of schemes and programmes providing funding and assistance for workers with disabilities such as the Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme.
- Bear in mind that employees may develop disabilities after they begin working for you. Stations may have to adapt their practices or facilities when needed.
- Have Health and Safety procedures that take account of staff with disabilities.
- Remember that addressing the access and usability issues mentioned above should also ease the day-to-day workload of staff members in supporting people with disabilities.

CRIB SHEET

As an employer:

- You are bound by the Disability Discrimination Act
- You should treat everyone equally, regardless of their abilities

External support and advice**Disability awareness training**

There are many agencies, voluntary groups and other organisations who will offer disability awareness training, either on general issues or on specific disabilities. These are often free or offered at discount rates to not-for-profit organisations. Your local voluntary services umbrella group should be able to put you in touch. Ideally all members of staff and senior volunteers should be offered (and in some cases instructed to take) such courses, but as a bare minimum there should be at least one person at each level of management who is fully trained and aware of all the issues.

Access audit

Since the 'reasonable adjustments' section of the DDA came into effect (see p142) there has been a rapid expansion of commercial firms offering access audits to businesses. These identify shortfalls and problems with your access policies and offer advice for improvements, which can be extremely useful, but also rather costly. As with disability awareness training, if you look around you may find agencies and organisations that can provide a similar service at minimal or no cost. Either way it can be useful to get an external assessment of your facilities and policies since this may spot potential problems and solutions that you have missed.

Other local groups and partner organisations

Within your community there will be disability charities, rights and awareness campaigns, support groups and other organisations that should already be involved to some extent at your station (see p26). These groups can offer you valuable feedback on the services you offer, ways in which you could help local people with disabilities, and other help and advice. Make sure groups with involvement in

disability issues are at the heart of your station and then use them as a resource once they are.

Funding

There are usually grants available for statutory adjustments and improvements to your levels of access from the local government, national government and charitable sectors. There is also a lot of funding available for projects involving people with disabilities, some of which may include money for equipment and resources. If your access is not as good as it might be, make extra efforts to seek out such funding.

CRIB SHEET

Beyond your station:

- There is a lot of training and support
- There are external assessors and auditors
- There is funding to be found

Disabilities and programming**VOXBOX 11.02**

"I think of my show as being about real people, giving a voice to people who haven't got one – sometimes quite literally. I've done shows with people using Liberator machines – the kind of thing Stephen Hawking uses – giving them the chance to make their opinions heard on the radio, which they would never get otherwise. I've done shows with sign translators. You have to explain what's going on because it's a bit like ventriloquism on the radio, you get these long pauses, but that's OK. It was really inspiring stuff."

Vicky Richardson, presenter

'Access All Areas', ALL FM, Manchester

A community radio station has two responsibilities towards people with disabilities in your community:

- To involve them in making programmes
- To make programmes which serve their interests

The two should not be considered interchangeable. Don't assume that because someone uses a



Station Manager Kerry Krige (right) works with presenter/producer Allan Russell in VIP on Air's main studio. VIP on Air has the only fully accessible broadcast studios in the UK.

wheelchair or has a visual impairment they will only be interested in making programmes about disability. They may well want to play hip hop or act in a drama. Equally someone who has no impairments may wish to be involved in making a disabilities action show – although it is always advisable to have at least partial input from people with disabilities into such shows.

The extent of your programming which is targeted at members of your community with disabilities is obviously up to you. We would suggest that one show per week is the bare minimum. At the opposite extreme is Glasgow's VIP On Air, an on-line station which has won a five year licence. This is made by and for people who are blind or partially-sighted, and all programming is aimed specifically at them (see Voxbox 11.02). Most community radio stations find a balance between those poles. The content of your disability community shows might include:

- Welfare and services advice and news
- Listings and previews of special events and social occasions
- Feature programming about particular disabilities, campaigns, current affairs etc.
- Real stories from real people (see Box **)
- Issues surrounding caring and disabilities in the family
- Humour and comedy created by people with disabilities
- Involvement of special guests and celebrities with relevant experiences
- Talking newspapers and books for the visually impaired

Above all, your programming should be led by disabled people themselves. They know better than you what their needs and wishes are and where you can best help.

VOXBOX 11.02

“Our station has had a huge impact in ways that we maybe didn't think about in the beginning. Just simple things like blind people being able to access the daily newspapers at more or less the same time as everyone else means a huge amount to our listeners. Blind and visually impaired people have real problems finding employment – across the UK about 80% of adults of working age are unemployed. In a relatively short period of time we have helped 15 different people move on from the station into full-time employment or training which for us is a phenomenal achievement. We have broadcast from the Vision 2005 conference, which is the world's leading conference on blind issues. We brought that conference directly to our listeners who could never have accessed that any other way. We even had a reporter accredited at the Gleneagles G8 Conference this year. Gill was the only blind reporter in the whole of the world's press pack.”

Kerry Krige, Station Manager, VIP On Air

CRIB SHEET

Programming for listeners with disabilities:

- Can be as extensive as your resources and ambition allow
- Should be led by people with disabilities

Further reading and links

www.ddaguidelines.com/

www.disability.gov.uk/

www.radar.org.uk

www.access-association.org.uk/

www.mind.org.uk/Information/

www.rnib.org.uk

www.helpisathand.gov.uk



DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

What is community development?

Community partners

Outreach work

Language barriers

Youth development

Religious communities



DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

A community radio station can and should flourish into a dynamic, bustling, effective and valuable neighbourhood resource. It can be actively involved in changing lives and improving our villages, towns and cities forever. Just as easily, it could become little more than a club for anoraks and hobbyists or worse still a screen for covert profiteers.

Wasting the opportunities for social gain offered by community radio is an abuse of privilege. The Ofcom regulations might feasibly be satisfied by a small group of regular volunteers broadcasting for a few hours a day with lots of community service announcements and interviews with local residents – just enough to tick the right boxes on a licence application form. Your conscience should not be satisfied with that. When you are granted a community radio licence, you receive it on behalf of the community you represent. In other words, the radio station doesn't belong to you. It belongs to your community – you simply run it on their behalf.

You must prove that you are accountable to and representative of your community before you will be granted a licence (see Chapter 7). Your company structure should plant you firmly in your community and specify that the needs and wishes of the people you serve are heard. But this may not be enough.

There is a natural temptation for new community radio projects to set up, throw open the doors and see who comes in. The first individuals through the door will probably be pub and club DJs, hospital radio DJs, experienced community activists, local councillors, politicians and the other people who, in many ways, need your facilities the least. In Chapter 13 we will look at ways to reach beyond those driven by enthusiasm or vested interest, to reach the individuals who will benefit most from your station. Exactly the same is true of community groups.

A new community radio station should instantly attract the attention of council services, health agencies, housing providers and other large and well-funded service providers, many of whom will employ people specifically to co-operate and connect with community groups like you. This is a great thing of course, and many of these

organisations will become your key partners (see p26). But don't be fooled into thinking they are the whole story.

The groups and sections of the community that need your station most may be the ones that don't come to you. Maybe they don't have the time or the personnel to meet up with you. Perhaps they are already over-committed and fear that involvement with radio would just mean more work and more bureaucracy. Or perhaps there are sections of the community that simply have no one to represent them at community level. There may be no Chinese community centre or gay and lesbian group in your town. In such cases it is your duty to make extra efforts to ensure that these parts of your community are not excluded from radio too. This doesn't mean just broadcasting at them, it means bringing them into the station to broadcast for themselves as well.

Good community development is at the very heart of good community radio. Get it right and you will find everything else falls into place. Fail to get it right and you will never fulfil your true potential.

CRIB SHEET

Enabling your community to develop:

- *Is one of the main reasons you exist*
- *Requires you to be part of your community*
- *Requires your community to be part of you*
- *Involves connecting with hard to reach sections of your community, not just the better organised groups and agencies*

The benefits

Good community development not only means you are serving your function as a community station, it is also highly beneficial for your station's own future. Here are just some of the ways you will benefit from good community outreach:

- **Better local image.** If you develop a reputation (fairly or unfairly) as an insular or aloof little club then it will become harder to persuade other community groups to become involved, so making you look even more like an insular club. It's a downward spiral;
- **More and better talent.** The most talented broadcasters, reporters or producers may be lurking in the shadows of your community. It's in your interest to seek those people out;
- **More support and back-up.** Community groups tend to help each other. Between them they have access to just about everything you might ever need. If you need a trestle table for a stall at a fete, you can be sure that one of your partner groups will have one. The more partners, the more resources;
- **Better access to your community.** Other groups will bring you into contact with people you might never meet otherwise;
- **Better output.** There are interesting things happening in your community. Awe-inspiring stories of human triumph and adversity, issues of intense local interest, local personalities who can captivate your community. The better your reach into the community, the more likely you are to uncover these people and stories and turn them into great radio;
- **Better skills.** Within other community groups there will be a large number of volunteers or staff who have enormous skills and experience to share with you. If you are involved in a mutually beneficial partnership you are much more likely to be able to tap into them;
- **Better funding.** There will be many streams of

funding that you cannot access because you are not a school, a youth service, a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) organisation or whatever. If you can team up with such groups for joint projects, you can often find money you would otherwise miss out on;

- **Better credibility.** The broader your involvement in your community, the more credible you will look to local power-brokers. The more necessary you make yourself, the more important it will be for funders to support you.

Benefits to your partners

The benefits that other groups can gain from a community radio station are as wide-ranging as the ways in which they may be involved in the station. That involvement might be as little as sending an occasional e-mail with details of a public meeting to be read out, or it might be as much as a long-term project partnership with shared staff and resources. We believe that the more a partner group puts into community radio, the more it will get out, and the better the station will perform.

Let's take the example of a school jumble sale. A radio station could fulfil its basic obligations to the community by publicising the event in advance and then reporting how much money had been raised afterwards. But the opportunities are so much greater than that. If a class from the school were to learn how to use the necessary equipment to make their own ad or announcement, record interviews with delighted jumble-buyers and PTA organisers on the day and turn it into a radio project, the event could become a serious learning opportunity for the children involved. It could be formalised as a project on any number of courses across the curriculum, from media studies to ICT to English. Attendance might improve. Children become enthused. Then when the school sees the benefits of the collaboration, it will be more inclined to invest resources (and possibly even money) into your station in the future.

As a bonus, you will be broadcasting great radio that perfectly fulfils every aspect of your remit. You will attract new audiences and reach more people in your community. You will be behaving as a community radio station should.

CRIB SHEET

The benefits of community outreach:

- Are extensive for you and your community alike
- Include accessing more funding, resources and support and helping to secure your future

Laying the foundations for community outreach

It is tempting and not exactly surprising for a new community radio group to throw all its energies into getting on air as soon and as often as possible, through RSLs, web-streaming etc. But even at this early stage that should be only one part of the equation. Long before you apply for a community licence, you should already have forged strong relationships with your key partners (see p26). Your community outreach and development work should already be underway. If you can obtain strong constructive input from the greatest possible number of community partners at an early stage, this can be used to guide your plans and eventually your Ofcom application in the most useful direction. If you allow your prior assumptions and prejudices to guide your vision, you may invite trouble at a later date when you suddenly find you had misjudged your community and that you need to make a significant change of direction. You will also find that unless you are properly embedded in your community in your early days, you will spend months and years attempting to justify and prove yourself to a community that may be suspicious or confused about your purpose and motives.

Know your community inside and out

The best way to know a community is to be part of it and to live in it. Your station should of course be full of people who do. But communities are usually complex and contain a variety of problems, issues and opportunities that might not immediately spring to mind – even if you live bang in the middle of it. Extensive research is called for if you are to serve your community as well as possible. Think about:

- Census records and other demographic data available at the library;

- University and college libraries and research departments;
- Voluntary sector umbrella groups;
- Your key partners, who may have conducted similar research.

Finding community partners

Some community radio stations will grow out of existing community groups, so it is possible that many of your community partners will already be in place. For most people, one of the first steps in establishing a station has to be an extensive and exhaustive community research exercise. Someone will need to spend a lot of time identifying (or finding someone who has already identified) who is doing what in your community already, who is providing which services, and which community needs are not currently being addressed (see p153). You should be making contact with:

- Community and voluntary groups and campaigns;
- Statutory agencies; trades unions; faith groups;
- The business sector (via Chambers of Commerce, local business federations and major employers);
- Other groups – sport and hobby clubs, social clubs etc.

Many of their contact details will already be gathered by voluntary sector umbrella groups and your local library – although in practice such lists can often be out of date, incomplete and unreliable, so they can only ever be a starting point. From there it is a matter of investigation and patience:

- Ask your existing partners for the details of other groups or agencies that they work with;
- Ask your volunteers which other groups they are involved with;
- Keep an eye on the local press and community action networking newsletters or websites;
- Keep an eye on notice-boards at the local library and elsewhere;
- Attend community events and meetings and network with other attendees (we have found Ward Co-ordination and community network meetings very useful in this way);
- Look for obvious gaps in your contacts book (e.g. if there is nobody from a particular ethnic minority or no input from people with disabilities

for example, you need to actively seek out those sections of the community);

- Get named contacts and get to know them – nothing quite works like first name terms.

Some organisations will be more easily approached than others. Some may prove impossible to engage with altogether, perhaps because they cannot see the immediate benefits of getting involved, are completely overstretched or they may have an insular approach to their own work and not want to get involved with the wider community at all. Some faith groups and religious leaders are considerably easier to persuade than others. Fundamentalists of any belief might not want to become involved in a project that might also celebrate secular culture, pop music and alternative lifestyles. In such cases it might be worth trying to find a supportive member of the group or faith concerned and getting him or her to do some advocacy on your behalf. Sometimes you will just have to admit defeat, but often it is a question of patience and persistence.

Consult with the community

Your research will tell you who your community are. To some extent it may tell you about their needs. It won't tell you what it is they might want from you. The organisations you contact will express their own wishes, but there will almost certainly be sections of your community who are not represented by anyone, and you will have to make the effort to go to them. This is community consultation – making sure that nobody gets left out.

Community consultation is another example of a small but lucrative industry that has attached itself to the community development and regeneration process. Local authorities are obliged by law to offer independent proof that their investments in communities are welcome and effective. So private companies and research units (most of which seem to be reputable and well regarded, it must be said) have sprung up offering to tell providers exactly what communities think of the interventions which have been made or proposed. These companies often also market themselves to community groups and non-statutory service providers.



It would be entirely understandable for a community radio station to commission such a consultation. But it would be costly, and there is a lot to be said for the station to do this work itself. The actual process may tell you more about your community than the results. A community consultation – at least in a station's early days – should be aimed at two specific questions:

- What does the community need from its community radio station?
- What does the community want from its community radio station?

Getting the answers to those questions is not as easy as it appears. Since community radio is largely new to the public and most people are not aware of its potential, if you simply stop people in the street and ask them these two questions, the answers would mostly be: "erm, nothing much I can think of right now" and "good tunes and no annoying DJs." That really doesn't take you very far (although you should never forget the latter!) So you have to find ways to get past people's stock responses to get useful input. The ways in which this can happen include:

- Structured interviews designed to identify individual needs and wishes – including the needs that they might not immediately expect a radio station to be able to fulfil
- Group discussions and focus groups. These are excellent for raising issues of conflict and disagreement within your community and getting a sense of where the consensus may lie.
- Shorter interviews conducted with a much larger sample group. If you ask 5,000 people the same few questions, some useful answers will emerge eventually. Even if it takes a long time to find them.

- Invitations for feedback and input. If you are already functioning and broadcasting, use your platform to ask people what they want. Or call a public meeting which people can bring their ideas to. Just be aware that those who shout loudest aren't always those whose need is greatest.

However you conduct your community consultation, the same guiding principles apply:

- **Only consult on what you are happy to change.** If you are committed to playing 70% pop music but need to know what community service output you should be broadcasting, then don't ask about music.
- **Be careful and competent.** An incomplete or inaccurate community consultation can send you in the wrong direction. Make sure you ask questions that give you useful answers, not the answers you want to hear.
- **Make your data useable** – don't ask too many open questions but give your respondents a range of answers from which you can derive statistics – e.g. only 5% of the community want annoying DJ's.
- **Be representative.** Whichever methods you use to consult your community, make sure the voices and opinions you hear represent the full spectrum of your community – especially those parts of the community that don't push themselves to the front of the queue.
- **Use what you find.** A community consultation is only useful if its findings are actually acted upon. Anything else is window dressing.

CRIB SHEET

In your early days:

- **Conduct extensive research into your community and its needs**
- **Find out what community groups are out there**
- **Engage with other organisations and establish how your projects could be mutually beneficial**
- **Make sure that you speak to those who have nobody to speak for them**



Sustaining your outreach work

In the early days, a community radio station may have to be positively evangelical in selling itself to potential partners and members of the community. You will be operating on promises and potential, rather than a good track record. You will be straining to find every section of your community and bring them on board. You will be working hard to mould your station into one that is useful, effective and representative of the community you serve. This may feel like an uphill struggle when you are new and have a small amount of airtime to your name.

As the months and years go by the nature of your outreach work will need to change. You will continue to find more community groups that are just starting up or that had previously been uninvolved. Your research in this respect will have to be ongoing, as communities and their needs can change surprisingly quickly and you must keep up. There will always be yet more sections of the community that you had previously overlooked that you will want to bring into the family. But the work stretches beyond that too. It includes:

- **Evaluating and monitoring your partnerships.** You need to keep talking to your community partners to ensure that you are providing the service they need and that they are happy with the relationship. Your partners will appreciate opportunities to offer feedback, especially if it is a formalised approach (such as a set questionnaire) that also demonstrates your excellent organisational qualities.
- **Increasing involvement.** It is natural that both you and your partners might want to start out tentatively, without too much commitment of time, effort, resources or cash. But as successful projects are notched up, you should want that level

of involvement to increase. A community group might only want the occasional announcement to begin with, but you can then suggest that they come into the studio as guests, then as guest presenters, then perhaps eventually as hosts of their own show. Just beware of pushing too far or too fast. You don't want to overstretch your partners and risk losing them altogether.

- **Improving involvement.** You can help community groups achieve their objectives. To do so you first need to understand what their objectives are – don't make assumptions about their priorities. Tailor their involvement to their needs (and of course to yours too.) Work to constantly improve their practice both at the radio station and in their other activities too. The more self-sustaining their input is, the more time saved for your team – even if you have to invest your time to train them at first.
- **Using your track record.** Once you have conducted some successful projects it should become easier to sell similar projects elsewhere. Your pitch is much easier if you can go to a school and say "we can help improve your pupils' performance, behaviour and attendance – and we know we can because we have already done it at the school down the road."
- **Keeping a balance of fun and function.** Some organisations will be delighted to get involved, simply because they have one or two members of staff or volunteers who think making a radio show would be much more fun than whatever it is they usually do on a Wednesday morning. That is natural and healthy. But make sure they don't have such fun that they forget they have a duty to serve their own community, and a duty to the station to produce useful and enjoyable programming.
- **Not relying on just one or two enthusiastic individuals.** With funded projects or service contracts in particular, if only one teacher or project worker is driving the partnership, if that person moves employment or falls ill, the whole project could collapse. This could have serious financial consequences. Try to ensure that the

wider partner organisation is supportive and kept informed, even if their engagement is, as is often the case, driven by one enthusiast.

- **Bringing in service users as well as service providers.** If left unchallenged, many agencies will think they have an opportunity to lecture listeners about their services and make some announcements. This can mean terrible radio. Encourage all partners to involve their service users and members of the public in the making of radio, for the sake of the listeners if nothing else.

CRIB SHEET

Your outreach work:

- Involves continuing the hard work you did at the beginning
- Requires you to maintain a dialogue with all your partners and keep them happy
- Involves constantly increasing and improving your work with partners
- Should be self-generating. The better you do it, the easier it is to do, thanks to your track record
- Involves making sure you get the best out of your partners, in order for them to get the best out of you

Ethnic representation

The Community Radio Order 2004 (see p17) encourages stations to include ethnic minorities in their work. In many urban areas, serving communities where English is not the first language is one of the most useful and necessary functions of a community radio station. This is particularly important with refugees and asylum seekers, who often face problems of isolation, extreme poverty and post-traumatic stress and also have to suffer negative stereotyping, media demonisation and often outright racism.

Work with minority language communities takes two forms:

- **Supporting that community.** This is partly off air – assisting individuals with e.g. training and

employment, and providing the other benefits that working with a community radio station can give, as with any other volunteer (see Chapter 10). And it is partly on air – giving advice about services and health, providing community news etc. and providing the companionship that hearing one’s first language spoken on the radio gives.

- **Promotion of that community.** Every ethnic minority has much to offer the wider community in terms of culture, commerce, common interest and friendship. A radio station can bring that to the fore through the involvement of that community in the station’s output outside of ‘their’ programmes. Furthermore, if the radio station offers an internet stream or simulcast (see p58) it can offer a great opportunity for expatriot communities to keep strong links with their country of origin, which is often very important for local community pride.

VOXBOX 12.01

“The presenters of our Somali show originally walked in off the streets to one of our RSLs in Hulme before moving on to us. They were refugees and asylum seekers who at the time had no group to represent them at all. A genuine community built up around their show and now, a couple of years on, they are setting up their own community group, with funding from service contracts and paid staff.”

David Armes, Community Participation Officer, ALL FM, Manchester

Making initial contact with minority language communities can be difficult. This tends to be less about language itself – there will always be someone who speaks good (or good-enough) English who you can talk to. A more common problem is finding a route of communication. Who do you approach? With established minority groups there will usually be ethnic community centres or representative committees, but with more recent arrivals the community may be dispersed and unorganised. It is worth building good connections with agencies and services that work with new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and beyond that, use your

common sense. If you know that there are recent arrivals from Somalia living in a particular area, get a few sentences of invitation translated into Somali and pin it up in the Post Office window or ask the owners of a local African café if they know of anyone who may be interested in getting involved. Informal outreach like this can often be more effective than official channels of communication.

Non-English language programming

Community stations in highly culturally diverse areas (Manchester’s ALL FM, Bradford Community Broadcasting and Hackney’s Sound Radio, for example) may serve a community (or communities) with 30, 50 or even 100 different first languages. It may be literally impossible to find space on the schedules for them all, but it is a worthy ambition. Just how you fit your non-English broadcasts around the rest of your scheduling is only for you to decide. Some guiding principles might be:

- Schedule non-English programming at the same time each day. Listeners know that if they tune in at certain times on any day of the week the programming will usually be non-English or bilingual.
- Bearing the above point in mind, it is still important to find appropriate times or days of the week to broadcast to the relevant population. Different cultural communities may have different points of the week when – because of days of worship perhaps – they are more or less likely to be able to listen to the radio. This will be important for your listeners and potentially your advertisers too.
- Proportionality doesn’t matter too much. What does matter is that as many different languages as possible are represented, whether they comprise 0.3% of the population or 30%. We may get ten times as many listeners to a programme in Urdu than we do to a programme in Edo, but the value of the programme may be ten times greater to the Edo speakers. That said, if there is only one space on the schedule, it is probably right that it goes to the larger community.



- Encourage minority language presenters to make regular concessions to English speakers, even if that is only a station ident: "You are listening to the Xanekin Show on Anytown FM 87.5 community radio, broadcasting to the Kurdish-speaking community of Anytown every Monday from 7.00pm-9.00pm." Apart from anything else, dial-surfing listeners are often intrigued by non-English language programming and keen to find out what it is and which station they are tuned to.
- Perfect translations are rarely necessary. Shows in which one person says something in one language and then someone else translates it word for word tend to be dull and very difficult to listen to at length – you may end up alienating speakers of both languages. However bi-lingual feature items or short interview spots can make great radio if used in short bursts.
- Non-English programming should be part of the station identity and brand, not a separate 'ghetto' schedule. Cross-trailing and branding (see p128) should include programmes of all languages. It is something to be proud of, not to put up with.
- Don't restrict your presenters to narrow community interests. It is patronising to assume that people from Albania will only want to hear Albanian music or issues directly related to Albanian culture. The presenter of ALL FM's Potwari language show is a keen dub reggae enthusiast, and divides his show equally between the music of Kashmir and the Caribbean, thus the show's title – 'Riddim & Raag'. That's a fine example of community radio sitting at the cutting edge of modern multiculturalism.
- Ensure that your presenters understand that station rules and laws surrounding broadcasting (libel, incitement, contempt etc.) apply equally to non-English output. While you may not speak the

languages being broadcast, stress that if there is any complaint you will get a translation of the show from the ROT and take any appropriate action necessary, including disciplinary proceedings.

- Don't worry about losing audiences. Yes, some listeners will hear a foreign language spoken and turn off. Others will let the radio babble away for ages before they even notice that it is not babbling in English. You will also pick up listeners from foreign language communities who will stay with you through the rest of your schedules. Above all, remember our favourite slogan: 'Don't be popular. Be necessary.'

CRIB SHEET

Your work with ethnic minorities and non-English speakers:

- Should be on air and off
- Involves support and promotion of those communities
- Should be as far reaching as possible, but not necessarily proportional to the size of communities
- Should make allowances to English-speaking listeners, but doesn't need simultaneous translation
- Is crucial to your mission to be necessary

Working with young people

The biggest problem that most community radio stations have with young people is keeping them away. Radio is an attractive activity for many youngsters and you may be inundated with children and teenagers wanting to train and broadcast. Some community stations (e.g. Takeover Radio in Leicester) are run entirely by and for young people. This is one of the most effective and rewarding sections of the community to work with and most stations will want to involve as many young people as possible. Working with youngsters does raise its own problems and issues however, and can be more demanding than working with other sections of the community. Different skills and different approaches may be needed. Here are some of the issues to think about:

- **Child protection.** Any member of staff or volunteer who works directly with people under the age of 16 – but good practice suggests the age of 18 – needs a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check before they begin. Anyone who does not have a CRB certificate should not be in any way involved in work with young people and should never be left alone with them. This may raise difficulties if, for example, an adult volunteer and a minor are working on unrelated projects on different computers in the same room at the same time. In practice it may be necessary to specify times when young people will be at the station and asking other volunteers to stay away between those hours.
- **Behaviour.** It is a fact of life that children often act like, well, children. Their attention span may be shorter than adults, they may get bored or distracted more easily. The temptation to horse around (especially when excited) can sometimes be irresistible. Keep training and production sessions short and snappy with lots of short-term goals and targets to keep their sense of achievement and engagement high. Nobody wants to be seen as a disciplinarian, but sometimes a stern word is helpful and the doubly clear setting of boundaries is vital.
- **Listen to what the young people want to do and give them as much autonomy as possible.** But it's important that this is backed up by training in good radio skills, and that young broadcasters understand their responsibility to the listeners to produce enjoyable shows. Young people aren't always the best judges of editorial content, although often they will astound you with their instincts.

Also remember that whilst younger people may tend to prefer to listen to music output, much of the best and most necessary radio actually made by them is feature, magazine and discussion programming. Young people are rarely given the platform and opportunity to discuss the world as it affects and appears to them. It is important you don't just succumb to the immediate pressure from the young people themselves to make music shows.

Schools and youth services

Many community radio stations will work directly with young volunteers, either individually or as part of after-school or holiday schemes. However, the most effective tactic is often to form partnerships with organisations that already exist to work with young people. These generally fall into the following categories:

- **Schools.** Can involve you either within their formal classes or as part of their extra-curricular activities (see p170).
- **Statutory youth services.** Mostly local authority youth services, social services youth departments and any independent or community groups who are funded to provide such services.
- **Voluntary youth groups.** Youth clubs, Scouts, Guides, young people's faith groups, arts clubs, youth drama clubs etc.

The experience of working with each may be very different. Youth work tends to be less formal than school projects, and often aimed less at learning goals and more at diverting, entertaining or simply containing sometimes difficult youngsters. And of course any two groups, any two schools even, can be substantially different to each other.

Whatever their nature, these organisations will all have stated aims and objectives, and involvement with a community radio station can help them to achieve these. Such partnerships will often bring the advantage of trained specialist staff (teachers, youth workers etc.) who will supervise the young people, easing many of the problems raised by working with such groups. And they may also be able to help you financially, either by paying directly for the services you offer (see p191) or by opening new channels of funding (see p174).

Whatever the nature of your work with children and young people, bear in mind that they are as diverse a section of the population as the adults in your community. They are as varied in their tastes, interests and abilities, have as many cultural and religious differences, and can't be categorised simply as 'the kids.' You must represent the full spectrum of your junior community just as you do with their parents.

VOXBOX 12.02

***“Community radio has to be about taking risks. Sticking an eight year-old in front of a microphone is taking a risk. Things will go wrong, and when it does go wrong you can’t get stressed about it, you just have to get on with it. It’s absolutely barmy when you think about it. To say we’re going to take an eight-year-old who’s at risk of exclusion and give them a radio show – that is madness, but it’s a nice kind of madness. It goes with the territory. You have to sit down and explain the score, that they are responsible, and in 99.9% of cases they rise to that challenge really well, and they end up making really cracking radio. We did a programme on fashion recently, and a young listener phoned in saying that they didn’t have designer clothing and that they were getting bullied because of that. This great conversation emerged on air, the presenter dealt with it with great sensitivity, and it was fantastic, just because it was two children talking about subjects that mattered to them.*”**

“Community radio engages with its audience. We had one presenter recently who went on air and said he hated the Crazy Frog record. He said he wouldn’t play it unless he got a hundred texts in the next hour. It took fifteen minutes. For a small radio station that’s a serious response! Another presenter on air said he was really hungry and could somebody send him a pizza. Twenty minutes later, Domino’s turned up on the door with two massive pizzas. It hadn’t been ordered by a listener, it was the shop themselves who’d been tuned in. That is the power of community radio.”

Robin Webber-Jones, Trust Manager, Takeover Radio children’s station, Leicester

CRIB SHEET

Working with young people:

- Is one of the most rewarding and effective functions of a community radio station
- Requires close attention to child protection and legal checks
- Requires particular skills and training
- Can be done directly or through services and partnerships with other groups
- Should reflect the wide differences within the youth community

Working with religious communities

People with religious beliefs make up a sizeable proportion of any geographical community, and religious groups, places of worship and faith-based agencies tend to be among the most active and visible community groups around. Moreover religion is an important part of many people’s personal and social lives. A community radio station that refuses to engage with religious groups risks alienating itself from a significant section of the population

and their needs. On the other hand, religious broadcasting can alienate (and often infuriate) people of different or no faith. There is no perfect balance, and different stations must draw their own policies according to the nature of their community. There are many grey areas in such issues, and many close judgements need to be made along the way. Radio Regen’s policy is broadly as follows:

- A community radio station is an appropriate place for religious groups to promote their activities and events, but not their beliefs to the exclusion of others. We will not allow preaching or evangelical broadcasting. This often causes distress to broadcasters who feel a strong urge to share their own ‘good news’ with others, but is a necessary rule if you are not to lose the support of the parts of your community who have a different definition of ‘good news’.
- Individual behaviours and lifestyles (for example, with regard to sexuality) should never be condemned or criticised on religious or moral grounds.
- Religious issues can and should be discussed and debated, but only within the normal rules of neutrality and balance. Ideally, controversial issues should have both (or all) points of view represented, with a neutral host.

- Broadcasters should be particular sensitivity when referring to religions other than their own. Particular religious beliefs should never be singled out for criticism – doing this would land you in big trouble with Ofcom.
- Religious music is welcome if it is programmed for its musical rather than religious value.
- Faith-based broadcasts are clearly and frequently branded as such. People need to know the context of what they are hearing.
- Secular, humanist and atheist viewpoints have just as much right to be represented as any other moral system or religion.

Radio Regen has taken these views in an effort to be fair and to facilitate its mission of representing the whole community. There are religious groups amongst the first round of UK full-time licences and obviously those groups will have a different standpoint. We would advise any religious group holding a licence to pay full attention to Ofcom's rules over balance and impartiality.

CRIB SHEET

Working with religious groups and individuals:

- Is an important and useful function of a community radio station
- Doesn't mean your studio has to become a pulpit
- Requires sensitivity to listeners of all beliefs including none

Setting limits to community outreach

Community development is an endless task. There will always be more organisations, groups, agencies and clubs out there waiting to be found. There will always be people who would benefit from what you offer. You could always do that bit more with your existing partners. Staff with responsibility for community development must pay particular regard to the dangers of stress and burn-out (see p66), as there will always be another evening meeting to attend, another early morning phone-call to make.

You must be realistic about what you can achieve. That means being realistic about how many groups

and individuals you can feasibly find and make contact with, but also how many you can accommodate with your facilities, staff, airtime etc. There is little point in having a contacts book that brims over with the names and numbers of local organisations if you then can't offer them anything.

Building the capacity of your partner groups to make radio without your input will be a good investment in time. Those groups who are themselves willing to spend the time getting to that stage could also be the ones who deserve more of your attention.

Prioritise the work that you think is most important. Be flexible in what you offer potential partners and how you approach them. Sometimes your priority will have to be reaching out to the organisations that can provide the best funding opportunities. Other times you will be motivated purely by an immediate pressing need among one section of your community. There is no simple rule as to where to draw the line. Set attainable targets for community development and think about your achievements, not your failures. There should be plenty.

CRIB SHEET

Your community development work:

- Is potentially infinite
- Has to stop somewhere

Further reading and links

The Well-Connected Community: A networking approach to community development. Alison Gilchrist (The Policy Press, 2004)

Community Work. Alan Twelvetrees (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001)

www.csvcommunitypartners.org.uk/resources/good.html

A comprehensive resources library

www.cdx.org.uk

The Community Development Foundation

www.cdf.org.uk



TRAINING INDIVIDUALS

The importance of training

Training methods

Non-radio skills

LSC and training revenue

Schools partnerships

Professional development



TRAINING INDIVIDUALS

Everything you do as a community radio station, from publicising the local crèche to creating ground-breaking broadcasts, from offering opportunities to the disadvantaged to encouraging local entrepreneurship, all of it depends at some level upon your commitment to developing the skills, abilities and confidence of individuals.

Your broadcasters and their support teams are the frontline in the battle to enable your community to improve itself through radio. They are the public face (or more accurately, the public voice) of your station, and the better they get at it, the better you will do.

Unless you are bringing in people with little or no radio experience and helping them develop into skilled broadcasters, you are not functioning properly as a community radio station. Training and personal development are the heartbeat of community radio.

The better trained your volunteers are, the more value they will have to your station, and the more value your station will offer to them. Furthermore, well trained volunteers will use their experience to the benefit of others at the station and in the community at large (see Voxbox 13.01).

Your training will take two forms:

- Formal courses, accredited or not. If the courses are accredited, you will probably deliver them in partnership with a local FE college (see p168-169);
- Day to day support, including formal or informal mentoring schemes (see p138-140).

Training and individual development may principally be aimed at creating good broadcasts and broadcasters, but to achieve that, it must address many more issues than just radio skills. Good community broadcasters need:

- **Radio skills.** Including practical use of studio equipment, IT, recording kits etc., but also an understanding of media and broadcasting principles;
- **An understanding of legal obligations** (see Chapter 8);

- **Commitment and dedication.** The training must instil a sense of responsibility, including arriving on time, attending when expected and behaving in a mature fashion on air and off;
- **Teamwork and respect.** Radio is rarely a solo activity, and the ability to work as a team, compromise when necessary and show respect to colleagues is a vital part of the equation;
- **Confidence and self-esteem.** These are essential attributes for a good broadcaster, and many trainees need nurturing in this respect. Needless to say, some others need dragging back a little.

Squeezing all of this into a few hours or days of training is no easy task, and it is made considerably more difficult by the additional hurdles to learning that many community radio volunteers may face. These may include:

- Disengagement from learning. Community radio trainees often arrive with poor academic achievements, and often have a lasting distrust of 'teachers' and a lack of confidence in their own ability to learn;
- Literacy and numeracy problems;
- Language problems;
- Difficult life circumstances, including family or child care problems, financial crises, criminal justice constraints (such as probation, bail or ASBO conditions) or innumerable other possible personal problems;
- Physical or mental health issues or disabilities.



VOXBOX 13.01

“Our soap opera ‘Parkway’ was funded originally – then the funding ran out but everyone was so passionate about it they wanted to keep it going. We had one volunteer who was trained through the soap and was able to take over all the writing, both writing herself and co-ordinating other writers. We’ve got another volunteer who edits it. The writing is getting better and better. We’ve had kids who have come to us with serious literacy problems and their reading is amazing now, a year later. It’s had a huge impact on all those involved. It’s also brought people to us who were interested in drama and who otherwise would never have come near the radio station. We now have amazing resources that have come to us directly through that show. We have a waiting list of people wanting to get involved, four new writers, eight new actors, we literally can’t fit them in.”

*Christine Brennan, Station Manager,
Wythenshawe FM, Manchester*

Faced with this rather intimidating list, community radio groups may be tempted to take the easy route, to cream off the most obviously talented, well-balanced, enthusiastic applicants and back away from more challenging recruits. This would be a mistake on several levels:

- You are obliged to offer access to the airwaves to the excluded and marginalised. Very often this means the people who are disadvantaged or troubled in other areas of their lives;
- The potential to change lives is often much greater with ‘difficult’ trainees. Community radio is unlikely to make a huge practical difference to the life of a well-educated, well-paid

professional, at least in comparison to that of an unemployed, unqualified school-leaver;

- Often the trainees who start out the most quiet, shy or troubled will blossom into the best community broadcasters. This effect has been noticed again and again by community radio stations across the country and you’d be daft to ignore this talent for the sake of an easy life.

The good news is that a successful training and personal development system is eminently achievable. If you get it right (and that may take time) you will find that it quickly becomes a constant source of vitality, ideas and new talent – the lifeblood of your station.

VOXBOX 13.02

“We have just taken on ten community reporters in paid positions, funded by ESF. Each one is from an EU-designated disadvantaged area. We are training them to report from those areas. It should be of huge benefit to the individuals, to the station, and to the areas. It is giving those people opportunities that go way beyond what most people would ever have expected them to achieve in their lives.”

*Mary Dowson, Director and CEO, Bradford
Community Broadcasting*

CRIB SHEET

Training and personal development:

- **Must be at the heart of every community radio station**
- **Involves a lot more than just radio skills**
- **Must overcome many hurdles to individual development and learning**
- **Must be accessible to all, not just the best adjusted and educated**

Training methods

The trainer's role is to enable students to learn for themselves, it is not to drum information into a reluctant skull. This is made possible with a variety of techniques:

- Drawing out ideas, perceptions and opinions from the learners. Knowledge 'sticks' better if it emerges from the students' own intelligence and experience – the 'light bulb' effect;
- Encouraging students to learn from each other and to teach each other, rather than having everything dictated from on high by the trainer;
- Using learner-centred activities and 'stimulus' materials to encourage this process: group discussions; questionnaires and quiz sheets; practical examples of radio materials etc.

Making radio is a mostly practical activity and so it makes sense that the best training will be experiential (that is, learning something by experiencing it). Practical exercises must be at the heart of community radio training.

It is vital to remember that all trainees are individuals and no two people will learn in quite the same way. One student may prefer to receive their knowledge through written hand-outs, another may prefer to take things in by ear or practical application. Your training sessions should accommodate all their needs where possible.

CRIB SHEET

Your training should be:

- Centred around the needs of the learner
- Designed to tease out knowledge and skills from the trainee, not to drum it in
- Practical and based around hands-on experience
- Flexible enough to accommodate a variety of different learning needs

Planning your training

The training scheme you devise must be tailored to the nature of your community and the needs of your station. As you repeat the exercise it should be under constant revision, which will allow your training to evolve into the ideal format for you. If the training is to be accredited there will usually also be some input from your partner college as to their requirements (see p168-169).

It will probably take (at least) several full days to cover the most basic territory required to get someone on air. Radio Regen stations achieve this by offering new volunteers a five day (actually 10 half days) accredited core skills course. For those who wish to take studies further, Radio Regen also conducts a 10-12 week foundation course and a fourteen month-long course in radio production at Level 3 (i.e. as difficult as an A-Level).

In general terms, a basic community radio broadcast and production syllabus should include:

- Show planning, research, scripting;
- Voice and microphone technique;
- Interview technique;
- Using technology (including studio desk, IT & relevant software, mini-disc recording etc.);
- Making jingles, ads and trailers;
- Legal obligations.

As noted above, many of the most important outcomes of community radio training are not however directly related to radio skills, but are broader life skills that are nonetheless essential to making radio. These so-called 'soft outcomes' will rarely be formally taught (although see non-radio skills, p166) but will be expected to develop as a by-product of learning to make radio. These soft outcomes include:

- Ability to work in a team, respect shown to others;
- Better developed discipline and self-motivation;
- Better time-keeping;
- Improved communication skills;
- Boosted self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Greater willingness to take responsibility;
- Improved personal or career aspirations and ambitions.



While you would rarely pass or fail a trainee on the basis of these outcomes, they are worth recording for your own evaluation purposes. A confidential questionnaire submitted at the beginning and end of a training course will give you a good insight into the trainees' own sense of achievement and development, while an assessment by the trainers can offer an external view.

You need to apply common sense in how you incentivise/enforce attendance and self-discipline. Sometimes students won't be able to attend, and may need unofficial sessions to top up lessons. Even if these do not count towards the immediate accredited qualification, keep records and notes on all sessions, as it may be possible to use these sessions as credit towards other future training modules.

Your training needs to meet several criteria. It must be:

- **Inclusive and suitable for all.** It is vital that your training does not have strict entry criteria, and should be set at a level of difficulty that does not exclude those without existing educational attainment. It must be designed to let people succeed – given the right attitude and commitment – rather than setting people up to fail. Bear in mind that it must be equally suitable for more educated graduates, who should not be allowed to get bored or ignored. Projects should challenge students at their own level, not at the lowest common denominator. Just another of community radio's many balancing acts;
- **Collective.** On purely financial grounds you will not be able to train people one-to-one. Accredited courses may require classes of 16 or more. But community radio is a communal activity anyway,

and it is desirable to have plenty of team exercises and group activities;

- **Participative.** Making radio is a hands-on experience. Learning to make radio should be the same. Community radio training should never just be based around lectures or traditional classroom methods, but must be as practical as possible;
- **Accessible.** Wherever possible your training must be available to people whatever physical (e.g. disability), educational (e.g. language and literacy) or practical (e.g. child care) obstacles they may face. An initial assessment of trainees should alert you to any accessibility issues. You may then need to work with specialist partners in catering for their needs, which in some cases may require the provision of additional simultaneous support e.g. Braille translations of teaching materials. In others cases, a preliminary course (e.g. in literacy or English language) may have to be undertaken first. In many cases your partner college (see p168) may be able to assist with specialist learning materials, educational support (such as literacy classes) or practical help (e.g. a crèche);
- **Integrated with your broadcast schedules.** There is little point in training volunteers if they will finish the course and then have to wait for a year to get on air. Time your training alongside your schedule rotation (see p127) so that your trainees can put into practice what they have learnt before they forget it. Learners should be offered a ladder of experience into their on-air life – starting by assisting on other shows and graduating to their own show.

CRIB SHEET

Your training schemes:

- Should cover all the basics of radio production
- Should cherish 'soft' outcomes
- Must be inclusive, accessible and participative

Non-radio skills

Simply by training volunteers in radio, there will often be measurable improvements in such areas as language and literacy skills (see Voxbox 13.01). It is possible to go further. With the right human and material resources, community radio projects can offer basic skills training specifically in such areas as:

- English as a foreign language;
- Literacy and numeracy;
- Information and communication technology (ICT).

Of course the hook is that you use radio as the context for this training. So a course in literacy can be constructed around scripting, presentation, research, telecommunications, audio editing and so

on. All the activities that go into making radio are fantastic learning tools, and the opportunity to learn at a radio station may be the deciding factor in bringing someone back into education and training.

From your own point of view, such courses can also earn you money through the LSC income that they generate (see p167) and open new routes to engage with those who feel excluded by their basic skills. Hopefully such people would go on to participate fully in further training and broadcasts.

Your training should also embrace what it means to be a community broadcaster. It should contain accessible and empowering work on equal

VOXBOX 13.03

“I suppose the tale to tell should be about ‘Fred’, the 15 year old lad who was excluded from school for general unco-operative behaviour and stealing. His youth worker bought him in one day with a “can you do anything with him?” look on his face. He sauntered in, hands in his pockets and attitude on his face, giving all and sundry the eye from under the shadow of his baseball cap. “Can I help you?” in my best community worker voice elicited a grunt, but he didn’t leave. In fact he was there again the next day, just hanging around. We thought he had come to nick all of the gear, but he didn’t (well, he couldn’t as we’d nailed everything down).

After a few days, he managed to squeeze a couple of words out and we set him up in the corner on a little portable desk with a mic, a CD player and a recorder. He spent the next week with a set of headphones on chattering into the mic with his back to the rest of the room – I’m sure all he was saying was “biddy, biddy, biddy”, but maybe I’m just too old – Eminem eat your heart out! After a while and a bit of squeezing-blood-from-stones conversation we sat him at a PC to start to edit his MCing, just using a simple free download audio programme.

The next day I walked into the studio to see Fred leaning over “Bill”, a 72 year old “I-don’t-do-technology” volunteer, helping him to edit a show on a PC. I looked twice and got Bill to check his pockets, but he still had his wallet and also a new attitude of “I can do technology”. Two weeks later, an article in the local paper caught my eye – Young MC promotes MC competition – with a picture of Fred. The article covered the progress of Fred and his mum who had approached the Council, negotiated a free venue, gathered a range of prizes from local businesses, recruited judges and issued press releases.

200 kids attend the event, it’s a resounding success (well, no-one died). Two months have passed and funding has been found for an MC/DJ school as an adjunct to the radio project. The local young offenders institute is asking if they can refer early release prisoners to the project, the school is asking if they can refer more pupils to us, Bill is now a bit of a technical whiz, editing and operating his own shows and Fred still hasn’t nicked anything from the studio!

I suppose it makes it worth working 35 days straight without a break!”

Matthew MacDonald, Project Manager, Diversity Radio, Lancaster

opportunities and discrimination, it should enable the learner to realise the creative options that result from the station not being editorially constrained in the same way that the BBC and commercial stations are (not all breakfast DJs need to sound like Chris Moyles after all), and it should equip learners with the critical tools that get them questioning the media clichés that surround them.

CRIB SHEET

Non-radio skills training:

- Can be combined with radio skills training
- Can be an additional income-generating activity for a community radio station
- Will increase participation in your station
- Should enable an explosion of original radio

Your trainers

With community radio in the UK being such a recent innovation, there are not huge numbers of experienced trainers with the necessary knowledge of the sector to be able to design and conduct good training suitable to our sector. Whilst the numbers are gradually increasing, it may often be difficult to find suitably qualified trainers. They ought to be:

- Trained as professional trainers;
- Accustomed to community settings;
- Experienced in radio.

It would be usual to have one trainer in full-time charge of each course, but guest tutors (local BBC staff, for example) may also conduct individual sessions. You might also be able to recruit trainers from other, longer-established community media projects nearby. If you are working with a partner college to deliver accredited training (see below), the college will usually take care of your tutors' employment contracts and wages, and they may also be able to contract out their own teaching staff to teach on your courses.

The ideal long-term solution is for your training programmes to reach a high enough level that trainees themselves can go on to train as trainers. Check with your local voluntary sector umbrella

group, but there are normally innumerable courses for trainers in every area.

Above all, when finding and appointing your trainers, look for people with a personality and attitude that is right for community radio. Patience, compassion, empathy and a sense of humour are far more important attributes than any number of paper qualifications. We have seen some very experienced broadcasters flounder for lack of these attributes.

CRIB SHEET

Your training staff:

- Should be qualified trainers
- Must have a good understanding of community radio
- May need to be recruited from colleges or from outside your area
- May eventually be your own trainees

Turning training into revenue

If the training you deliver can be accredited – that is, registered to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) under the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) – it should attract revenue from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). As well as the financial benefits, accrediting your training will offer an additional benefit for your trainees, who will receive a nationally recognised certificate such as a City & Guilds or BTEC for their efforts. There are two ways to go about getting your training accredited:

- Work with the LSC (and possibly other organisations) to establish yourself as a training centre. You would need to fulfil extensive criteria to ensure that your training and facilities are suitable for accredited training, and you would receive regular inspections from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). It is a major operation to establish yourself in this way, but potentially very lucrative. For every student you train you would receive a payment direct from the LSC.
- Form a partnership with a college that is already a registered centre. They will have quality assurance

systems in place that will cover your work. You might not get inspected directly from the ALI but would operate as an independent annexe of the college. The college would access the LSC money, enrol your trainees as their students, and give you a percentage of the LSC income. That percentage would have to be negotiated, but the college might retain something like 40% of the funding to cover their fixed operating costs.

A lot of training can be accredited if you:

- Explore what qualifications are already available, and tailor your training to fit the learning outcomes of those courses. You could for example conduct a BTEC National Diploma in Media Production (or units thereof) by tailoring your activities to fit the Diploma's precise learning outcomes. You can research the courses available via the websites of the many awarding bodies such as City & Guilds and Edexcel. Access to some of these websites requires a pass word which could either be obtained from the body or a friendly college contact.
- Design a course and get it accredited yourself. You can create your own courses with awarding bodies such as the Open College Network (OCN) and NCFE. Note though that some OCN courses may not be in the National Qualifications Framework so may not attract LSC money, but many NCFE courses are.

Negotiating the alphabet soup of qualifications and accrediting bodies is not simple. You must get expert advice. There are bodies that specialise in helping organisations to establish accredited training. Generally the higher profile the accrediting body the tighter the monitoring will be, and the more stringent the educational and bureaucratic demands. Your partner college is better connected and placed to negotiate the maze than you are.

The actual process of accrediting training can be exhausting – usually involving a formal application, a panel presentation and some degree of negotiation, revision and moderation until everyone is satisfied that your training will match your desired learning

activities to their desired outcomes. It is time consuming, but if you are going to use the training many times then the investment will be worthwhile.

CRIB SHEET

Accrediting your training:

- Will earn you money
- Will be good for your trainees
- Can be done by tailoring your training to an existing course
- Can be done by designing a good course then getting it newly accredited
- Requires expert help

Your partner college

In finding a partner college and building a good working relationship, it is important to remember that what you are offering them is of real value. They should be pleased to hear from you and as eager to build a partnership as you are. You bring several advantages:

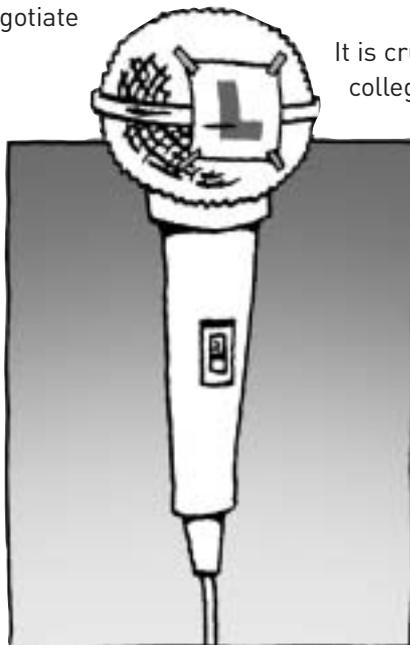
- Colleges need students, it's how they earn income and survive.
- You may well attract the type of students that they normally wouldn't. Community radio stations attract volunteers who might not otherwise be drawn to education and training. Currently, colleges have a strong obligation to get new adult learners to take their first Level 2 qualification for example. You can help them with their 'broadening participation' targets.
- The college also has motivation in terms of social gain – they would like to be seen as playing a significant role in supporting and developing projects in their community.
- The college needs publicity to attract students. A partner radio station may offer them cheap recruitment notices.
- They may want to use your station as a platform for their own media and performance courses and for work experience etc.



You have a lot to offer a college, so it's really important that when you begin to negotiate with them, you ensure that they understand your value to them.

The college will want to know which courses you intend to run and how many learners you expect to start and finish each course. They will calculate how much money this amount of training will generate from the LSC, and you can then negotiate precisely how much of that will be available to you. As mentioned above, many colleges will operate on the basis of retaining as much as 40% of the LSC revenue that you generate for their fixed costs. They will then also deduct the direct costs of your trainers, student enrolment etc. from the remaining 60%, with the balance from this 60% passed to you to cover your training costs. You must be absolutely clear about who is paying for what before you start – even if the level of detail seems daunting. Remember that if you don't get the students, you won't get the money.

If you can find a friendly contact within the college it can be useful to have a champion on the inside who will argue for your participation and help smooth any bureaucratic bumps, but it does seem that most colleges are now very wise to the advantages brought by community partnerships. The hardest step is often getting hold of the right person to talk to in the first instance.



Bear in mind that you do not need to partner up with the nearest college, you can shop around if you feel that the local institution is not right for you or is unco-operative. There are obvious advantages to a partner college being nearby (if you wish to share facilities, for example) but these could sometimes be outweighed by a better or more lucrative partnership from further afield.

It is crucial when negotiating with your college that you guard your independence. A college might look askance at some of community radio's activities, which may have little apparent financial value. Your relationship with your partner should be close and mutually beneficial – it might even be worth having a representative of the college on your board – but don't allow yourself to be taken over.

In all dealings with colleges, bear in mind that they can be large, unwieldy and heavily bureaucratic institutions. This could lead to problems through late payments, lost paperwork, rapidly changing staff and so on (in such a situation, try to ensure that you undertake as many of these functions as you can). However the benefits of a good partner college to a community radio station may include significant career benefits for your trainees and long-term financial security for your station, which is more than worth the hassle.

CRIB SHEET

Partnering with a college:

- Is as valuable to the college as it is to you
- Needs tough negotiation
- Can mean dealing with lots of bureaucracy

Other training opportunities

There are other organisations that could benefit from your training. For example UK Online Centres (training centres for internet and web development) might want to use parts of your training for their own recruits, since audio content is a growing element of many on-line activities. They might let you use the centre as a training venue, or you might be able to share training courses.

Look out for other community media organisations or similar projects conducting training in your area. Even if the whole of your training is not appropriate for the other group, if you can share modules you can also share costs, and such partnerships will help cement and strengthen your place at the heart of your community.

CRIB SHEET

Community radio training:

- Can be useful for other projects too
- Can draw upon the training resources of other organisations

Educational partnerships with schools

Earlier in the Toolkit we discussed the advantages of forming partnerships with schools from a community development perspective (see p158). Schools should be anxious to form partnerships with a community radio station because of the access it gives them to the airwaves and to the community they serve. This aspect of the school's function in a neighbourhood is being more and more heavily stressed by Government. In turn, schools help radio stations connect with their communities, particularly the younger people within them. It's a marketing gift too – every class you get on air brings the pupil's family and friends closer to the station. Every community radio station should want to have input from every single school in its area.

It is important to remember that a community radio station can play a crucial role in curricular education too. The application of radio as a learning tool in schools is limitless. Some of these applications are obvious – one GCSE in Media



Studies has a module in community radio, for example, others in radio advertising. English and drama departments can also use radio as a practical application of lessons. It is not difficult to imagine how much more captivating such subjects will be if the students are actually making real radio for actual broadcast to their family, friends and neighbours. We have also found great enthusiasm from schools in the use of community radio to deliver their 'citizenship' curriculum and as a motivating activity for 'disaffected' pupils.

In our experience, many teachers are extremely enthusiastic about incorporating the possibilities opened up by a community radio station. It may even be possible to get your local education authority to fund the training of teachers in community radio. This allows the teachers themselves to take charge of radio production classes. This is a wonderful way of enabling individual development within your community, and helps you meet your obligations to one very important section of your community – the young. Bear in mind that if any station staff or volunteers are to work alone with young people, they need a CRB check and to be fully aware of child protection practices – not only for the safety of the children, but also for their own protection (see p158). If however people from your station are working with a teacher, then a CRB check is not necessary.

If you are going to work with a school, you need to be very aware of the incredible workload faced by most teachers. This has a knock-on effect of making communication between many teachers and their external partners pretty hit and miss. Build this in to any delivery schedules for school projects (and don't even think about starting work with a school in the run up to an Ofsted inspection!).

CRIB SHEET

Partnerships with schools:

- Are useful for both you and the school
- Can aid education and learning
- Can help individual development of pupils

Ongoing training and professional development

After your station has been running for a couple of years, you should find yourself with a pool of trained, accredited volunteers. It is in their interest and yours to encourage them to do more training. There will be plenty for them to learn:

- New or more advanced equipment;
- New software packages;
- Advanced radio skills;
- Media studies;
- Sound engineering;
- Radio engineering;

At Radio Regen we are about to begin a Radio Production Foundation Degree course that uses community radio, and there may be other courses springing up in your area or nearby. If there isn't, look at starting one yourself.

Some community radio volunteers will be so taken with their experience that they will wish to pursue a career in radio or other media. Build relationships with your local BBC and commercial stations – it may be possible to persuade them to allow some of your volunteers on their own internal training courses. Look for any routes to external support and development you can find.

There may also be non-radio courses that your volunteers could take that would be very useful to your station and to their personal development:

- Youth work;
- Volunteer management;
- Book-keeping and accountancy;
- IT support.



In short, whatever might be of value and interest to both the volunteer and the station could be appropriate. There will often be funding available to you as a community group that will allow you to invest in the broader development of your volunteers.

Of course the majority of your volunteers will be satisfied with just enough basic training to get them on air with confidence – and if that is enough for them, then great. But your duty to help volunteers progress and develop should still not end there. A volunteer should be encouraged to continue to develop and improve their skills throughout the whole period of their involvement with your station.

And don't forget the staff. They will all benefit from continuous professional development in all aspects of community radio management. Radio Regen is launching a series of such qualifications (sorry for the shameless plug – there may well be other providers by the time you read this) delivered by distance learning. Your team will be learning new skills all the time anyway, so it's in everyone's interest to have them evidenced and accredited.

CRIB SHEET

Training for your team of volunteers and staff:

- Should be available at increasingly high levels
- Should be an opportunity, not an obligation
- Can extend beyond radio skills
- Should be continuous

Further reading and links

Basic Training for Trainers: A handbook for new trainers. Gary Kroehnert (McGraw-Hill, 2000)

The Trainer's Handbook. Karen Lawson (Pfeiffer Wiley, 1998)

www.communityradiotoolkit.net

www.commedia.org.uk/library/training/html/rmp/contents.htm

www.csv.org.uk/

www.radioregen.org



FUNDING COMMUNITY RADIO

Grants

Successful grant applications

Advertising and sponsorship

Setting boundaries

Advertising ethics

Any other business



FUNDING COMMUNITY RADIO

As a community radio station you cannot earn more than 50% of your revenue from commercial activities and advertising. You cannot receive more than 50% of your income from a single funder. You will be very lucky to access all the money you will need from grants and donations. So the chances are you will need to do all of these things and more in order to survive and thrive.

In other words, community radio is forced into a mixed economy. Typically, a station's finances will be kept afloat by some combination of the following:

- Grants;
- Advertising and sponsorship;
- Other commercial activities;
- Local fund-raising, support in kind and donations;
- Contracts for services (see Chapter 15);
- LSC-funded training (see Chapter 13);

Grants

Grants are the principle source of income for most community radio stations. There is an endless list of trusts, charities, local, regional, national and European government pots, and innumerable other funders who may be willing to grant you small or large amounts in return for agreed outcomes. They range from the enormously wealthy and powerful (European Social Fund, Lottery Commission) to small local memorial trusts.

Funders don't throw money at organisations because they feel sorry for them, they invest in projects that they believe will get results. Your relationship with your community and listeners opens up unique opportunities for social and economic regeneration funding, educational funding, health, community cohesion and social welfare funding and much more.

It is one thing to know that the money is out there. It is another to identify precise grants that may be available to you and persuading the funder to give you the money. Good fund-raisers develop an intuitive sense for where money might be available. The process of identifying and applying for funding can be so time consuming that you could spend

every minute of the working day doing it, so it is crucial that you are smart about identifying which grants are worth applying for.

As a general rule, you are unlikely to find many funders that will pay you simply to make community radio, but you will find funds that will pay you to do many of the things that you need to do in order to make community radio – training, community development, youth work, tackling joblessness etc. (see p83). Such project funding should include a contribution towards your core staff salaries and other overheads. Most of your activities should be highly appropriate for grant funding, and if they are not you should really ask yourself some questions about the nature of your activities.

Some starter tips for finding funding:

- Visit your local voluntary sector umbrella group – they should have someone who advises on fund-raising who will talk you through your options;
- Sign up to e-mail lists, newsletters and bulletins, such as the Charities Information Bureau, NCVO's funding newsletter, Artsnet, Mailout magazine etc.;
- Think about how you could tailor your activities to make them more attractive to funders;
- Network with/talk to individuals involved in awarding grants and funding;
- Talk to the liaison or outreach workers employed by larger funding bodies. It is their job to find people to give money to and they will be delighted to explain how your project could fit into their funding criteria.

CRIB SHEET

Finding funding:

- Is an art in itself, and you improve with experience
- Needs eternal vigilance and alertness
- Requires you to think about what you do and how you do it

Making the right contacts

At local levels, many decisions about funding are made by a relatively small number of local VIPs, including councillors, executive officers and other local dignitaries. Winning the favour of these people will be useful for identifying potential sources of funding – it’s not uncommon to find out about grants from conversations that begin ‘have you heard about the new...’ Such networking may even help your grant applications through. Although most grants are awarded on a tick-box scoring system, at some stage there may well be a human value judgement made about whether one project is more worthy of funding than another. If the people on the committee know your station and are already convinced of your worth, that must help.

Of course you must stay within the rules of fair play and honesty. You won’t do yourself any favours by plying committee members with gifts or sending them bottles of whisky at Christmas. But there is nothing wrong with inviting key players to visit your station and wowing them with the energy and activity on display. Nothing sells community radio like seeing it in action. If you are clever you can find out what particular interests your visitor has (youth work, public health, community arts or whatever) and draw particular attention to your activities in those areas. Little touches – for example, sending your councillor or MP a congratulations card (and invite to interview) on their re-election, regardless of their (and your) political allegiance – are entirely legitimate tactics in getting your project noticed and remembered.

Politics with a large ‘P’ is of course to be avoided at all costs. Your station could get in deep trouble if it is perceived to be too closely tied to one political party at local or national level. One of the dangers

of ingratiating yourself with political players is that they may sometimes try to bring you onto their side in their own political battles. This must be avoided. But playing politics with a small ‘p’ – negotiating, networking, bridge-building, conversing, cajoling and persuading – is an invaluable skill for those who run community radio stations. It is all about building your reputation and building confidence in your ability to deliver, and can reap great rewards.

CRIB SHEET

Networking with local power-brokers:

- Will significantly improve your chances of finding funding
- Should stop slightly short of bribery
- Should never spill over into taking sides on political questions

Core costs versus project funding (revisited)

As we noted earlier, it is relatively straightforward to find project funding – money you are paid to carry out specific projects which achieve particular outcomes. Finding someone to pay you simply to run a community radio station is much harder. There is little point in bringing in £100,000 in project funding if you still have no money to pay the electricity bill or the wages of your station manager.

Some core funding is available. The Government has established a Community Radio Fund which exists for precisely this purpose – to provide general financial support to new community radio licence holders in running their stations. This is welcome of course, but the amount of money available at the time of writing remains disappointingly small in comparison to the size of the emergent community radio sector (£500,000 for the current financial year, with perhaps 100 new stations being licensed in that period.)

Your local authority might also be able to help you to cover your running costs – some of them maintain specific core-funding budgets for voluntary organisations. But we have never heard of a community radio station that covers all of its core costs through direct core funding. The gap must be filled by a combination of other commercial

activities (advertising etc.) and/or by squeezing money for core costs out of project funding.

In budgeting grant applications for specific projects, it is reasonable to expect that around 15-20% of the money should go towards your fixed running costs. Or, put the other way round, you should add 20-25% to your project cost total to cover your fixed running costs. To justify this core funding, a degree of creativity is sometimes required on the application form. It may be that the grant-awarding body will not pay for core costs if they are described as such and just added on to the cost of the project as a fixed percentage, but it will happily pay for a few hours a week for the time of each member of staff – if it is demonstrated that the administrator, station manager and producer will all have some input into the project. Or it may be that funders won't pay a contribution to the overheads of the station, but will pay rent for facilities used by the project. The end result is exactly the same, it is only the wording that needs to change.

There is nothing fraudulent or dishonest about this approach – you will deliver the promised outputs for the funder in a manner that matches their rules, and the money you claim will be spent on delivering the project. Indeed the liaison or outreach workers employed by the funder will often happily talk potential applicants through the best wording to achieve the desired results.

Many funding bodies (e.g. Big Lottery Fund) understand that voluntary sector organisations need a contribution to their running costs to deliver a project, others specifically rule out such funding (e.g. the Heritage Lottery Fund). If funders will not contribute to your core costs, you should consider whether it is really feasible to run their project, even if their funding would allow you to buy some new equipment and employ a new project worker. Although it may be painful to turn down the possibility of money, sometimes it is necessary to do so. Think of core funding as the foundations of a building, and project funding as the bricks and mortar above ground. If the bricks are built too high and the foundations aren't deep enough, the building will blow over at the first huff and puff from the Big Bad Wolf.

CRIB SHEET

Funding your core costs:

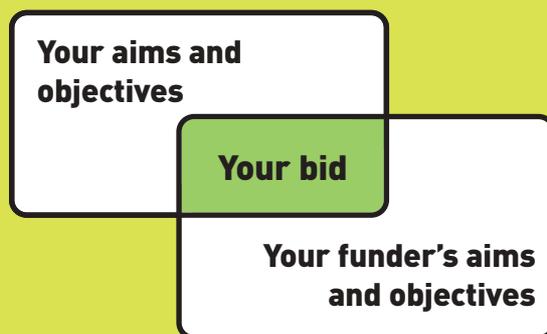
- Is essential if you are to survive
- Can be partly done through specific core funding grants
- Will mostly be done through allocating a percentage of your project funding to core costs
- Requires creativity in your grant applications

Successful form filling

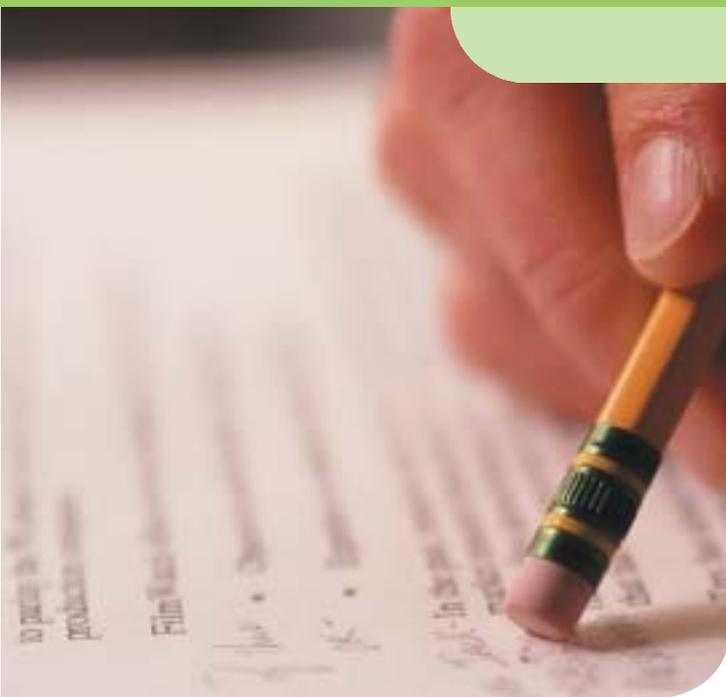
Your community radio station has been established with a particular mission, to improve your community and provide access to the airwaves. Funding bodies have their own mission, to provide the finance required to achieve particular aims. The place where those missions overlap is where a successful bid will be born (Figure 14.01).

FIGURE 14.01

The Grant Applicant's Venn Diagram



Before beginning to fill in an application, you need to be sure you are quite clear about what the funder's needs are. Usually the fund will have been established to achieve very clearly defined goals. The exceptions to this are usually smaller charities that can be rather vague about their aims and are merely looking for good ideas. Even with these, you need to work out what type of projects they like to fund and push the right buttons.



Every grant application needs to be unique, carefully tailored to the nature of the funding on offer. Nevertheless there are some golden rules:

- Read everything before you begin: the form, the documentation, the guidance notes and the website;
- Talk to the liaison or outreach officer at the funding body, if there is such a person. They are employed to help you access the money and will be only too happy to help;
- Find previous successful bidders to that fund and ask if you can read their application. (But don't then use un-edited chunks of it in your bid!);
- Put yourself in the shoes of the person reading the form. You are not feeding this information into a sausage machine, someone will be opening your envelope and reading the contents. Take care with your presentation, spelling etc. If there are word limits, stick to them. If there aren't, don't waffle. Bear in mind this person will have a stack of envelopes to wade through. It is your job to get yours to the top of the pile;
- Don't presume knowledge;
- Tell them about the most impressive parts of your project early on. Catch their attention. Where it asks you to make an introductory statement, sell yourself as enthusiastically as possible;
- Don't think you have a right to any funding. You might be performing the most valuable function in your community. Your community might have been oppressed and repressed for generations, but that does not give you any right to the funders' money – they can only operate by rigid criteria. However worthy your project might be, unless you tick the right boxes it counts for nothing;
- Don't get carried away with claims and ambitions. You may have to restrain your passion

for the project and be clinical and realistic about what you can achieve;

- When your application is being judged, this is often done through a scoring system, with each answer being given a certain number of points. Some funders will tell you how much each box is worth, and if they do, use that to guide the detail and care you pay to each answer;
- Don't leave it to the last minute before the deadline – post gets lost and e-mail servers crash;
- Get someone who doesn't know your project to read through your application. But give them plenty of time to do it;
- Write in plain English – never presume knowledge but don't treat them as idiots. Don't try to prove how clever you are with long words;
- Use a clear layout for the longer parts of your application (e.g. using bullet points or bold to highlight) – this won't score you extra points but will help a reader to follow your argument;
- Double-check that you have included everything needed (accounts, documentation etc.) and that the form is signed and dated.

In all your applications, bear in mind that grant-awarding bodies really do want to give their money away. They will think they have failed if they do not receive any applications that they can accept. Your applications should always be framed in terms of the opportunity you offer the funder to achieve their stated objectives.

CRIB SHEET

Filling in grant application forms well:

- Is a science and an art
- Requires a full and detailed understanding of the funder's purpose and mission
- Gives the funder a welcome opportunity to give you money. You are not trying to mug them, you are trying to help them

Advertising and sponsorship

To generate income in this way your station will need to run as a business. Your business activities may be more or less restricted if you are structured as a charity or a non-profit distributing social enterprise (see Chapter 7), but the principles remain the same.

It may seem somewhat distasteful to talk about business in the context of a project such as community radio, dedicated to improving communities and fuelled by an ethos of voluntary action and social engagement. This should be the very opposite of capitalist enterprise. But being businesslike should not mean being 'corporate', commercial or crass. It may mean that you need to be hard-nosed, even ruthless at times, but only so you can use your resources and your ideals to get the most out of your station. Your community should thank you for that. A community radio station that is run poorly as a business will soon become a poor community radio station – in every sense. It is possible to earn revenue as a community radio station without losing your identity and ideals.

CRIB SHEET

Running a community radio station:

- *Involves raising and earning money in a wide variety of ways, including commercial activities...*
- *...which requires you to be businesslike...*
- *...but does not require you to sacrifice your identity or principles*

Community radio as social enterprise

Whether you are a charity or a not-for-profit company, what you are doing by carrying out commercial activities is offering services, raising revenue, and re-investing this money into your project to promote social gain. This, by most definitions, makes you a social enterprise.

The emergence of social enterprise over the past two decades has been spectacular. This is largely because of political changes – particularly the use of independent companies to deliver services which

until the 1980s and 90s would have been delivered directly by local or national government. Even the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) admits that it has no idea how many social enterprises are currently active in the UK, but including charitable trading arms, estimates are as high as 700,000 – and growing by up to 10% per annum. Their activities range from waste management and recycling to housing provision; from child care to hospice care.

Despite their prevalence, there is still a lot of public ignorance about what a social enterprise does. People expect you to behave as a charity, cap perpetually in hand. Or they imagine you as a purely voluntary organisation, and are offended that any staff member would take a fair wage to do something for the public good. Worst of all, they may imagine you as an entrepreneurial parasite, creaming the public purse for personal gain.

The truth is actually more mundane than this.

Social enterprises:

- Work like any other business, albeit in socially beneficial industries
- Trade, employ staff, and seek to turn a profit
- Invest any profit back into the company (or spend it in pursuit of the company's goals) rather than allocate it to directors, owners or shareholders

Being a social enterprise, you have some advantages. Local and national government have a vested interest in encouraging the success of social enterprises, and there is a wide variety of support on offer. This occasionally takes the form of financial support – particularly with start-up costs – but more commonly with legal and business advice, training and so on. While some funding bodies (usually charitable trusts) still restrict their grants to registered charities, there are increasing numbers of funders willing to issue grants to non-profit distributing companies as well.

It is worth remembering that social enterprises do not necessarily need to be accountable to anyone, but community radio stations do. A company with only one or two directors could function entirely honourably, distributing profits within the community and doing excellent work, but it would

not be grounded in its community in the way Ofcom would require. So working as a social enterprise is an important part of your identity, but not the whole story.

VOXBOX 14.01

“I think the ethos of social enterprise is key to community media. You’re working, but you’re working to everyone’s benefit. When I started thinking about setting up this project, I went to Business Gateway and said look, I have this business idea for a not-for-profit enterprise, with a community development ethos, and we won’t be looking for charity, we’ll be operating as a business but reinvesting our profits into the community. The man says ‘you are crazy! Do you know how much money you could potentially make out of this?’

I told him I don’t want to, I just need enough for my wages. He said ‘you’re mad.’ So I was about to give up when I heard about the School for Social Entrepreneurs, and I thought that’s it! That’s me! I felt like I’d come home.”

Mark Kelly, Subliminal Directions community media project, Fife

CRIB SHEET

Social enterprises:

- Are socially-beneficial companies that reinvest any profits in their own activities or for the benefit of the community
- Are supported by local and national government
- Are not necessarily accountable to their communities in the way you must be

Setting your boundaries

Chasing money can be a dangerously addictive activity. The more money you attract, the more you spend and the more you need. There can be a sudden high that comes from a successful contract negotiation. Like any addiction, it can distract you from the more important things in life and eat away at your sense of perspective.

It’s vital that you don’t let pursuit of money distract you from your core functions of providing access to the airwaves and social gain to your community. All of your business activities should complement and support the good work that you do. In an ideal world you would look for ways to be paid to do things you want to do, never do things simply because someone will pay you to do it.

Unfortunately the world is far from ideal, and every community radio station will find there are compromises that need to be made. There are also endless value judgements to be made about the ethics commercial activities such as advertising (see below).

The staff (or volunteers) making such decisions need a clear framework to guide them. Some sort of code of practice needs to be agreed through the station’s representational structures. This could be a simple set of guiding principles or a detailed ethical policy (there are advantages and disadvantages to either approach), but there must be some set of standards to which proposed business arrangements can be compared. At their most basic, a community radio station should commit itself to:

- Ensuring that the pursuit of social gain and access to the airwaves is always top priority;
- Only undertaking activities that are not detrimental to the welfare, happiness and reputation of the community;
- Never undertaking activities that would be detrimental to the reputation, good standing and popularity of the station;
- Never undertaking activities that would be seriously divisive within the community or cause unreasonable offence to sections of the community;
- Never undertaking activities that are seriously detrimental to wider social justice or the environment.

Even within these broad limits there will be endless arguments. If a company wanted to give you a thousand pounds to promote the conversion of your local park into an asbestos dump, your decision should be (hopefully) straightforward. But what if an airline offers you a prize of ten free flights to Florida? Does the airline's excessive contribution to global warming outweigh the marketing opportunities for the station and the personal benefits to your listeners? It must always be possible for the person making such decisions to refer up to the board or representative committee for the final decision. Your management and accountability structures must take this into consideration.

CRIB SHEET

Your ethical policies:

- Should be in place before you need them
- Should help you make tricky decisions
- Should be backed up by consultation and management structures

What you are selling

In one sense, the services and resources you have to offer are quite simple: publicity, audio production, training, expertise etc. But that is not what makes you unique. The one advantage that you have over all your business rivals (whether they are commercial radio stations, rival service providers, other media or whatever) is your place and status within the community.

You offer a unique relationship with your listeners, the type of trust that comes from a sense of ownership that cannot be built by outsiders. You also offer access to sections of the community that can't easily be reached by other agencies or other media (indeed the jargon for such parts of the community is 'hard to reach'). Your position in your community has a real value to potential clients – you can offer them a service they need and make it possible for them to do their job better. This has a real cash value to them, which in turn should mean revenue for you.

Your community standing should be at the heart of all your advertising pitches. You can reach specialist

audiences for businesses selling to particular sections of the community. That may be members of particular ethnic groups, fans of particular styles of music, or groups with particular shared hobbies or interests. Moreover, community radio audiences may be more attentive than commercial equivalents and sympathetic to businesses that choose to invest in the station.

Since your relationship with your listeners is crucial to every aspect of your business activities, you must never allow those business activities to destroy it. That means not alienating your listeners with excessive or inappropriate advertising, not letting your programming be led by financial, rather than editorial concerns, and not sacrificing your community identity to the pull of filthy lucre.

CRIB SHEET

Your relationship with your community:

- Is central to all your business activities
- Should never be sacrificed to your business activities

Advertising (either in the form of 'spot ads' or the commercial sponsorship of particular shows or strands) is how commercial radio stations (attempt to) make money. Their equation is simple: the more listeners they attract, the more advertising they sell and the more money they make. With community radio, it isn't that easy. We need to not only consider what is of benefit to the station, but also what is of benefit and interest to the community.

Some community radio stations have been highly successful in attracting advertising. At the time of writing, Desi Radio in Southall earns the maximum 50% of its revenue this way, and has a six month waiting list of would-be advertisers. New Style Radio in Birmingham has had similar success (see Voxbox 14.02). On the other hand, there are large variations from station to station and Ofcom are wary of extravagant claims of advertising income by new community licence applicants. Especially in the early days, it is by no means assured that advertisers will come rushing to you. It may well be

that you need to prove your worth as a community station through other means of funding before you can begin to earn significant revenue in this way.

When you do run advertising, there are some ugly questions that soon arise:

- Ethical concerns. Do you want to help sell products that may be harmful to your community, wider society or the planet?
- Editorial concerns. Will your pursuit of advertising revenue affect your decisions around programming and scheduling?
- Impact on volunteers. How will running advertising affect their motivation and commitment?
- Impact on listeners. Will the advertising annoy your listeners and even cost you listeners?

CRIB SHEET

Advertising and sponsorship

- Can be extremely lucrative for your station
- But may not be as lucrative as you think
- Is often a necessary evil
- Raises problems as well as money

VOXBOX 14.02

“There’s no secret to our success with advertising. We realised early on that we had a niche market, we’re the only black radio station in Birmingham at the moment, so we look at entertainment within the black community, local authority services targeted at our community, that kind of thing. We haven’t really been that successful compared to commercial stations, because most of our ads are for people who couldn’t afford to advertise with mainstream advertisers. We see it as part of our community service remit to help businesses within our community and help keep our listeners informed of what’s going on. We probably give away as much of our advertising as we sell.”

*Martin Blissett, Station Manager,
New Style Radio, Birmingham*

Advertising and ethics

There is nothing in the regulations to prevent you from taking large sums of money from infamous multinational companies, but is that what your community really needs? In many cases the answer will probably be no. But where do you draw the line? There will always be close calls. These might include:

- Personal morality. Would you accept an advert from the local Ann Summers party organiser or a market stall selling violent DVDs?
- Controversial industries and local employers. You may have a large local factory with questionable environmental credentials, but which provides the best employment prospects in your town and has a generous policy of donations to local community causes. You might not want to risk making powerful enemies by snubbing their offers to advertise.
- Trade-offs between ethics and community interest. The local pub may be the social hub of the community, but selling alcohol could hardly be described as an ethical business. Likewise, publicising the local organic butchers may be welcomed by some, but not by Hindus or the local animal rights group.

There are no right and wrong answers to these questions, but your ethical policy should provide guidance. The best policy is to be open and consistent in all your decisions, and be prepared to justify why you accept one ad but not another.

CRIB SHEET

Ethical questions:

- Need to be considered before you take advertising
- Require an open ethical policy
- Come in all shapes and sizes
- Are rarely clear-cut

Advertising and editorial freedom

Commercial considerations should affect your editorial policies as little as possible. Decisions about the radio you broadcast should be based on the wishes and needs of your listeners and volunteers, not the needs of advertisers.

There will be times however, when minor changes to your scheduling can have a significant impact on your advertising revenue and you would be foolish not to consider them. For example, if there are a large number of Asian businesses looking to reach their own customers, you might want to place your special interest/foreign language shows at a time in the schedule when Asian housewives are listening – perhaps early afternoon rather than mealtimes, when the radio will be turned off in many such households. This does not undermine your obligation to provide access to the airwaves or to serve under-represented communities. In fact it may do the opposite. By listening to the needs of your advertisers you can pick up some useful advice about how best to serve your community. Their concern is the same as yours – to attract the largest number of listeners from particular sections of the community.

That is not to say there may not be conflicts of interest between the station, its listeners and its advertisers. While it is useful to be open to suggestions, your advertisers should never dictate or interfere with the content of your shows, indeed the regulations state that advertisers and sponsors must have no influence on these matters. Presenters and guests should be free to broadcast as they see fit. If broadcasters want to discuss the health benefits of yoga, they should do it for its own sake, not because the station has won (or is chasing) an advertising contract from the local yoga class. You must also keep a close eye on Ofcom and the Advertising Standards Authority's rules on this subject.

We would also warn against volunteer presenters being too closely involved in their own advertising or sponsorship. Shows and strands should be sponsored, not presenters. For example, imagine that a specialist DJ has a good relationship with a local record retailer, who sponsors her to the tune of say £50 a show. If you then have a disciplinary

problem with that presenter, would a decision to suspend her be worth £200 a month? Or more mundanely, how would the money affect your schedule rotation policy? You should never be placed in the position of having to make those decisions. It is highly desirable to have volunteers actively involved in finding advertisers and sponsorship. It may even be worth considering offering a small commission to volunteers who do persuade their employers, friends etc. to advertise. But it must be clear that any contracts signed are between the advertiser and the station, not tied to one presenter.

CRIB SHEET

Editorial freedom:

- Should not be sacrificed to advertising revenue...
- ... but the needs of raising commercial revenue should be taken into consideration when other factors are equal
- Can be compromised if individual presenters are sponsored rather than the station

Volunteers and advertising

The relationship a station has with its volunteers is crucial to its success. You depend on your volunteers to function properly as a station, in everything from broadcasting to washing up. Your volunteers come to you because they want to be involved in radio, but also because they believe you are working to serve and help their community. Commercial advertising does not always sit easily with that ethos. If it begins to look like you are more interested in helping people sell things than you are in improving your community, their motivation may be adversely affected. Or more commonly, they may not want to spoil the flow of their impeccably mixed drum and bass show with an advert for the local Sure Start nursery scheme.

The key, as ever, is communication and participation. If volunteers are consulted about any changes to your policy on commercial advertising, if they understand and agree with the reasons why



you take advertising, then they are likely to be co-operative. If they feel like unpaid cogs in a money-making machine they are likely to rebel.

Some advertising is more appropriate for some shows than for others, of course – you won't want to advertise a youth service during a show for senior citizens, for example. So you will already be thinking about which adverts to run on which shows. Careful placing of your advertising is good for the clients, but can also give you room for manoeuvre if particular presenters have issues with particular adverts. A vegetarian should not be compelled to run an advert for a butcher's shop, for example. In rare cases (such as ALL FM's Under the Pavement show – see p110) commercial advertising may be downright incompatible with the editorial content of the show. In such cases, it is important that some alternative content – such as station trailers and jingles, community notices or announcements for non-profit services – are run in their place. This will keep your broadcasting identity intact, and prevent other presenters feeling like special favours are being given elsewhere.

CRIB SHEET

Your volunteer presenters:

- May not really want to play adverts
- Must be informed of and agree with the reasons why you need advertising
- Should have their feelings respected if they object to particular ads

Advertising and listeners

Different listeners have very different attitudes to hearing advertising on a community radio station. Some take a purist view and turn off in disgust at the first suggestion of an advert. Others will have been brought up on commercial radio and scarcely even notice it. Most fall somewhere between. They accept that radio stations – even community ones – need to earn revenue to get by, but will become disillusioned if the advertising is too frequent, too intrusive or too inappropriate. There are ways to minimise the negative effects:

- Don't swamp your broadcasts. Commercial radio may play 15 minutes or more of advertising in any one hour. If you can limit your advertising breaks to once or twice per hour, listeners will be much more tolerant;
- Group adverts together. It is much less irritating to have three minutes of advertising once in an hour than it is to have thirty seconds of advertising every ten minutes;
- Use a standard format for your ad breaks – for example by always having a station sting at the beginning and end;
- Make your adverts sound as good as possible. If your ads are pleasant or amusing to listen to they will be much less objectionable than if they are rough and clumsy;
- Don't allow presenters to complain about playing adverts or apologise for it. That merely plants doubts in listeners' minds;
- Have enough adverts in rotation at any one time that listeners don't get sick of hearing the same one ten times a day, seven days a week.

CRIB SHEET

Listeners:

- Have an infinitely varied tolerance for advertising
- Should not be driven away by advertising
- Should be considered in all decisions about on air advertising

Finding and keeping advertisers

Even the largest commercial stations will rarely have advertising clients beating down the door. Instead they employ teams of salespersons to spend all day telephoning potential clients and persuading them to advertise. A community radio station is unlikely to have that resource. That means you need to find advertisers in other ways. You might want to:

- Encourage every member of staff, volunteer and supporter of the station to be constantly on the lookout for potential advertisers. Whenever anyone is talking to a local business person or trader, the question 'so who do you advertise with at the moment?' should come up. Some people are better (or more shameless) than others at doing this, but everyone can be involved;
- Network at gatherings of local businesses and keeping close links with business umbrella groups;
- Prepare a well designed media pack containing information about the station, your ideals, your listeners and the advertising packages and rates you offer. Include an audio CD with examples of your advertising. If any potential client shows an interest, get it to them the next day;
- Use your advertising spots to attract more advertisers – a 'you're listening to this, so are your customers' type of ad;
- Offer free or discount trials for first time customers until you prove your effectiveness;
- Consider advertising partnerships with any local community newspapers or other community media.

Different advertisers will have different needs, different requirements and different expectations. Some may employ marketing professionals who know more than you about the process and jargon of media advertising. Others may be sole traders who have never advertised anywhere before and need to be guided through every step. All of them will wish to be dealt with in a professional and businesslike manner.

Your initial dealings with advertisers will set the tone of your relationship so make sure you are in control. Go in with a check-list or questionnaire to nail down your brief as to what the client actually wants:

- What message do they want to convey?
- Who are their target audience?
- What tone do they want (Humorous? Friendly? Urgent? Authoritative?)

The answers to these questions will form your creative brief. This will then go to your production team (perhaps trained volunteers) who will create one or more scripts or dummy ads for the client to approve or request any changes they feel are necessary. It is worth being clear about how much time and how many resources will be put into creating their advert – you won't be able to spend weeks with one client as they continually change their mind or grumble about tiny details.

As you develop a professional relationship with your client they will tell you about the effectiveness of the ad and their satisfaction with it. It is worth following up your advertising contracts with a short questionnaire. If your client is delighted with the effectiveness of the advertising, you can use that to woo future clients. If they are less delighted, you can use that knowledge to examine where you went wrong and improve your performance.

Both you and your client must have realistic expectations, and understand that adverts are rarely instantly effective. It is widely assumed that listeners must encounter an advert at least six times before they notice it. It may then take several more encounters before they act upon what they hear. Advertisers often find it is the second or third week of broadcast before they notice the effects of their effort, but that those effects can last much longer than the advertising period.

CRIB SHEET

Your advertising clients:

- Will probably need to be actively sought out
- Will expect a professional and businesslike relationship
- Should have realistic expectations
- Should be consulted afterwards for evaluation and promotional purposes

The ASA Code and script clearance

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Code for radio broadcasters (see p108) must be adhered to. If it is contravened, the ASA will refer offenders to Ofcom, which can then issue fines or revoke the licence of repeat offenders.

The ASA Code demands that radio advertising scripts are checked for Code violations before broadcast. In most cases this check can be performed by a designated member of staff at the station. The station is also expected to request and retain substantiation of factual claims (“the cheapest chips in town” for example). There is also a long list of services and products which if advertised have to have script clearance by a committee called the Radio Advertising Clearance Centre. The categories requiring this central copy clearance are mostly in areas of obvious sensitivity: anything with a sexual content (including AIDS-awareness notices); drugs services; alcohol; health and medical matters; gambling and so on. Clearance is also required for any adverts that are aimed at children or that feature children’s voices.

CRIB SHEET

The ASA code:

- Must be adhered to
- Requires you to keep evidence for any factual claims made in your ads
- Requires that scripts for all adverts are cleared before broadcast either by the ASA centrally or by a station staff member

Quality control

One useful tip for attracting advertising is to become passably good at it. Radical, huh? Maybe not, but it is depressing how many radio ads (and not just on community radio) are woefully under-prepared. Your clients are unlikely to be recruiting advertising agencies to create a perfect 30 second work of persuasive art. More probably they will want and need you to make (or help to make) the ad for them. If you create adverts that are dull and ineffective, you are unlikely to generate the kind of

testimonials and word-of-mouth recommendations that you will need to attract future clients. An advert with a ‘wow’ factor will do wonders for your client relationship.

If there is no one at the station with experience of marketing and advertising, it would be worth someone putting in some time with reference books and research.

In planning an advertisement, very often your role will be to imagine yourself in the role of the listener. Your client may have a long list of things he would like to convey. You may have to explain that often less is more, and that listeners really don’t care that the local baker has a new 5000 watt mega oven that is his pride and joy – they want to know that the bread tastes good.

The most widely accepted model of effective advertising is the AIDA model:

- **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, **A**ction

In other words, you must first make the listener aware of the product or service, then make them interested in what you are saying, then make them actually want that product or service, then make them do something about it – visit the shop or phone the number. That’s a lot to achieve in 30 seconds, but if you look at advertisements in any medium (from radio to TV to billboards), it is possible to see the same strategy underpinning many very different ads.

CRIB SHEET

Your adverts:

- Should be planned strategically
- Should be designed around the listener, not the client
- Could follow the AIDA model

Other commercial activities

A radio station is a fantastic commercial resource. There are businesses and agencies who may want to use it, and providing it doesn't interfere with your core functions as a community station, you can exploit that for financial advantage. Some of the ways you can earn additional income might include:

- **Audio products.** Whether as content for a website, a soundtrack for a promotional video or as a self-contained audio product.
- **Corporate events.** Many companies have 'away days' where employees are given the opportunity to learn Tai Chi, go paint-balling, or indulge whatever whim the managing director has dreamt up that month. Learning to make a radio show is an appealing activity for such occasions, and with so many transferable skills involved, a useful one too. Needless to say, such ventures can be extremely lucrative for the station but time-consuming also.
- **Studio and equipment hire.** If you have spare capacity in any area – for example a training studio that lies empty for two days a week, or IT equipment that is needed while training is in progress but sits idly at other times, put them to work. Offer your facilities to other community groups at friendly rates, and to businesses at commercial rates.

As with all commercial activities, it is crucial that in pursuing extra money you do not lose sight of your purpose as a community radio station. If your volunteers are complaining that they can't prepare their show because the studio is being used to make a corporate CD, or if your volunteer support staff are spending all of their time babysitting teams of chartered accountants on team-building away days, then you have a problem. Your business activities must be conducted to make you a better community station, not just a richer one.

CRIB SHEET

Your commercial activities:

- Can come in many shapes and forms, so be imaginative
- Should give you extra resources, not use up your resources

Local fund-raising, support in kind and donations

In many other countries, the type of financial support offered to British community radio stations is unheard of. Instead they raise the money they need from within their own communities. While it is true that stations in these countries may not have the same emphasis on community development and statutory social gain that the British model of community radio imposes, their experiences are a worthwhile reminder that your community itself can be a useful source of funding. The two principal community fund-raising systems are broadly:

- **Membership scheme.** This is the usual funding model in Australia, where community radio stations are sometimes the only point of communication and information for widely scattered populations, and so have immediate, obvious value. Local supporters and listeners are asked to pay an annual subscription, and may in turn receive benefits (such as a monthly raffle draw, discounts to other members' services or tickets to events provided by your community partners). This has the advantage of bringing your community closer to you and increasing the sense of ownership. But it may be difficult to attract significant numbers of supporters, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, and especially in early days when your worth to the community has yet to be proved.
- **Local fund-raising events.** In the USA and many other countries, community radio stations pay their way with garage sales, charity shops, benefit nights and so on. As with membership schemes, these serve a dual purpose of raising money and increasing the sense of ownership within the community. If a listener has helped pay for your existence, they will feel much more closely attached.

The big problem with community fund-raising is that it can be incredibly inefficient. A membership scheme that takes weeks to set up and weeks more to publicise may only attract a handful of members. A jumble sale or benefit event might take a team of volunteers weeks to organise and then raise a few hundred pounds. In the immortal words of Chris Morris, interviewing the organiser of a celebrity jam



sale on The Day Today: 'That's pathetic – you'd have made more money sitting outside a tube station with your hat on the ground!' But this is not necessarily the point. The actual process of raising money this way is an incredibly useful one, strengthening your place in your community. That has a value beyond sterling. And of course the money – however modest it may be – comes in handy too.

CRIB SHEET

Community Fund-raising:

- Is a great way to increase your profile in your community and to increase your community's sense of investment in the station
- Is a rather inefficient way of making money, so shouldn't be depended upon

Support in kind

Anyone involved in running a community radio station will spend a frightening amount of time thinking about money. It is easy to forget that there are other ways in which you can seek support beyond funding. There are all sorts of organisations who may not have any spare money to give you, but are willing to help in other ways.

Much of this is simple bartering and contra deals. Your local paint shop might give you a few gallons of paint for your redecoration, in return for a friendly mention on air, or simply because it is taking up space in the yard and they need to get rid of it.

At the more formal end of the spectrum, many medium to large scale companies now have an expressed commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR). This is the theory (heavily backed by the Department of Trade and Industry

and most business advisers) that it is in a company's own interest to support and serve the communities from which they prosper. The logic is that the more secure, successful and affluent a community becomes, the more economic benefits and commercial opportunities will arise. CSR is also valuable to companies in terms of their marketing and public relations policies, and can also add to the experience and skills of their staff.

Sometimes CSR will be expressed through cash donations, but not often. Much more commonly companies will offer their own facilities or resources to help community projects. Among the many ways CSR may be manifested are:

- **Loan or donation of facilities and equipment.** IT facilities, meeting rooms, furniture, stationery, audio equipment; whatever you might need there is a chance that there is a company nearby who may be willing to spare you what you need – for a brief period or even for keeps;
- **Secondment.** There are many companies who have large teams of professional staff, any of whom would be incredibly useful to a community radio station. Legal firms, accountancy firms, marketing and advertising companies, IT firms etc. Even the BBC and commercial radio stations may be prepared to lend you an experienced staff member. If you can persuade one of these companies to let you borrow a member of staff for a few weeks, the value to your station could be immense, while the staff member on secondment might gain valuable experience in a different setting and gain a whole new perspective on their work;
- **Company 'volunteer' days.** Some companies will persuade their employees to give up a day or two of their time to work on a voluntary project – for example a 'barn-building' project such as redecorating a community radio station or conducting some kind of sponsored activity for your benefit.

In some areas the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Link will have a resident CSR co-

ordinator, whose role includes pairing up willing companies with appropriate community projects. Make yourself known to such people and of course, use your existing networks and partnerships to press the CSR button of local businesses.

It is often the case that the most unlikely people are enthusiastic about a community radio project (see Voxbox 14.03). Make it known that you need their assistance and you may be astonished at how willing they are to help. As with so many other dealings, a neck of pure polished brass is required.

VOXBOX 14.03

“I’ve been talking to all kinds of local businesspeople recently and it’s amazing how many of them turn out to be closet DJs. All these solicitors, accountants, executive directors, they all say ‘Oh I’ve always wanted to be on the radio, if we do something for you could I bring my records in and play for half an hour?’ I say well, maybe, I’ll have to ask Alex.”

*Fay Armstrong, Business Development Officer,
ALL FM, Manchester*

“Fay gets all these business partners saying ‘ooooh, can I have a go on air?’ And every time I say, nope – but there are plenty other things you can do for us. They are usually happy with that.”

*Alex Green, Station Manager,
ALL FM, Manchester*

There are other ways in which bartering and trading in kind can be formalised. LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes) could give you good access to skills in your community (see p77), and more commercially minded web-based barter schemes are emerging constantly. These activities will never become the mainstay of your long-term survival, but can occasionally provide useful operational support.

CRIB SHEET

Support in kind:

- offers useful non-financial support to your activities
- can be accessed through corporate social responsibility practices
- can also be accessed through bartering schemes such as LETS

Further reading and links

Fund-raising

The Complete Fundraising Handbook. Sam Clarke, Nina Botting and Michael Norton (Directory of Social Change, 2001)

Writing Better Fundraising Applications. Michael Norton and Mike Eastwood (Directory of Social Change, 2001)

Grant-spotting resources

www.cibfunding.org.uk

www.grantsnet.co.uk

www.governmentfunding.org.uk

www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

www.sage-rsa.org.uk/envawards

www.trustfunding.org.uk

www.funderfinder.org.uk

www.nwnetwork.org.uk

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

www.can.uk.com

www.e-mailout.org

General business advice

www.businesslink.gov.uk/

www.bitc.org.uk/index.html

www.setas.co.uk/

www.socialenterprise.org.uk

LETS schemes

www.letslinkuk.net



SELLING YOUR SERVICES

Service level agreements

Grants versus contracts

Staying independent

Partner agencies



SELLING YOUR SERVICES

Everything that makes community radio effective makes it valuable to service providers. Community radio's ability to reach disadvantaged communities, its potential to change lives and places for the better, its position at the centre of a community, all these things make it a valuable material resource.

All mainstream services have a vested interest in tackling disadvantage and exclusion, whether or not this is part of their stated aims. The police may exist to prevent crime and enforce laws, but they are not blind to the truth that poverty, alienation and social exclusion can drive crime and that the lack of youth facilities can drive anti-social behaviour (see Voxbox 15.01). Primary (health) Care Trusts are similarly aware that economic and social conditions are inextricably linked with physical and mental health. Community radio offers a valuable platform for such agencies to improve the work they do.

VOXBOX 15.01

"We did a three-day RSL in Salford and on the last day we had a session with the local community policeman. We asked him if he'd been busy and he said 'nope, quiet weekend. Mostly because of you lot.' We only had about six young people in the station but all their mates were at home listening in. They weren't on the streets."

Phil Korbelt, Director, Radio Regen

Among the services which can benefit from community radio are:

- Local authority departments (e.g. social care, youth services, housing, waste collection, library services, parks and leisure departments etc.)
- Law enforcement, crime prevention and judicial systems
- Educational institutions
- Utilities, including public transport. (These may be private companies, but they still have a public service remit and obligation)
- Health services e.g. Primary Care Trusts, hospitals
- Jobcentre Plus and other employment services
- Housing providers

All mainstream agencies need some kind of relationship with the community they serve: a relationship of trust, respect and mutual communication. If this relationship is working well it helps them to do their job better. Many will admit to being somewhat deficient in making this relationship work as well as it could, but scratch their heads about how to improve it.

Mainstream agencies have previously been reliant on publicising their local services through leaflets that might not be read, posters that might not be seen and newspaper articles and ads that might be flicked past. Commercial radio may have been unaffordable or unco-operative. But community radio gives these agencies the chance to talk to people directly in their homes, offices and cars. It allows them to talk to people who, because of language, literacy or simple geography, they would never otherwise reach. Equally importantly, information relayed by a trusted community radio station may be treated with less suspicion and cynicism than other platforms.

Your value to mainstream agencies should ultimately translate into financial support. Your station is entitled to that. As discussed in Chapter 14, this financial support may come in the form of grants and advertising contracts, but it can also be channelled to you via a Service Level Agreement (SLA). SLAs are straightforward contracts awarded to perform particular activities. These offer a fantastic opportunity for community radio stations to earn money doing what they do best – working with and talking to people.

Unfortunately getting the service providers to understand this can be a tortuous and frustrating process. Full-time community radio is a new concept in Britain of course, and it may take time and patience

before the relevant decision-makers fully realise community radio's potential. While of course there are massive variations, public services are often intrinsically conservative in their working methods. They are staffed by vast numbers of often overworked and undervalued employees. People get set in their ways and change is often slow and unwelcome.

All of this can make engaging statutory agencies hard work. If it looks to them like you are needy or a nuisance, if they think you will be putting more demands on their time and resources, they may do their best to block you out. On the other hand, if they can be persuaded that you offer them the chance to do their job more easily and even more cheaply, you will (eventually) get their attention.

At ALL FM and Wythenshawe FM we have had wildly varying experiences of working with different agencies. Some have been highly enthusiastic and helpful, others have seemed impossible to connect with at all. We hope that as time passes and our sector's profile rises, service agencies will one day be hammering at the door of every new station.

CRIB SHEET

Mainstream service providers:

- Have plenty to gain from community radio
- Should be expected to pay a price for these benefits to reflect the fact that you are helping them to do their job better
- Can be difficult to engage and persuade

Contracts versus advertising

Ofcom requires you to distinguish between income from advertising or programme sponsorship (which must not total more than 50% of your annual income – see p40) and income from other sources e.g. grants, donations and SLA contracts. However, at present there is a big grey area between programme sponsorship and 'funded programming' i.e. SLA contracts awarded to you to deliver certain broadcast outputs. As the sector matures and Ofcom sets some precedents for what is and is not acceptable, the picture should become clearer.

Grants versus contracts

The advantages of SLA contracts over grants are clear. Grants can often be time-intensive and unwieldy to both obtain and justify, involving extensive application and monitoring processes. SLAs involve much less administration and bureaucracy, which is a practical advantage. But at a more profound level, contracts are an acknowledgement of the effectiveness and value of community radio activities. A contract is awarded because you have proved that you have a more effective approach than rival bidders to publicising health campaigns, tackling joblessness or whatever the activity may be. Grants are a recognition that you serve useful functions; contracts are an acknowledgement that your work is essential.

The downside of SLAs is that they can be difficult to obtain – particularly in the first instance. Community radio has little track record of service provision and a bid for a contract may be met with disbelief. You will need to make a very persuasive pitch.

The good news is that local authorities are currently showing increasing interest in bringing voluntary (or so-called third) sector organisations into the equation of service delivery. In the jargon, they call it 'mainstreaming' – bringing groups from the margins of public service onto the front page of their budget planning. As part of this process, many local authorities are now establishing 'voluntary sector compacts' – sets of guidelines for mainstream agencies to guide their dealings with the sector. Check with your own local authority if

they have agreed any such compact, and if they have, use the information there to guide your bids. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has been at the forefront of negotiating a national Compact as a template for local versions. Their website (www.ncvo.org) has further details.

The availability of service contracts to voluntary sector organisations is a new and rapidly evolving development. Community radio is emerging at just the right time to take advantage of these new opportunities.

CRIB SHEET

Service Level Agreements:

- Are a highly desirable alternative to grants
- Are hard to obtain
- Are mostly uncharted territory for community radio stations

Not selling your soul

It is likely that every time you talk to a new potential partner agency you will have to explain to them that you are different to any other radio station. They may think you are like a commercial station but a bit smaller, or like a pirate station with a licence. You must explain that you are effective because you are independent and authentic. This is radio made of the community, by the community and for the community. As soon as you become the voice of authority talking to – or even at – the people, you are no longer a community radio station.

Some agencies, and particularly local authorities, have a reputation for control freakery, even paranoia, when it comes to their public image and PR. It must be made clear to them that you are applying for contracts and grants to achieve specified outcomes, you are not a propaganda tool for hire.

Let's take a hypothetical example. A community radio station may agree a contract with their council to broadcast public information about waste collection services and recycling. This is a

straightforward deal. There should be no small print specifying that the station must portray the service in a good light at all times. If the bins have not been collected for three weeks, presenters would retain the right to 'fair comment' (see p103) and the station would be duty-bound as a community broadcaster to request an interview with a representative of the service, and ask tough questions.

It is also important that your radio doesn't sound like 'Spokesperson FM' (see p17). It might be desirable (or essential) to have people from the agencies involved in making and even broadcasting a show, but members of the public must be on air too as either guests or co-presenters, maintaining the inclusive atmosphere of community radio. Perhaps the best option for everyone is for the agency to provide the funding to train volunteers specifically to present their show. ALL FM and Wythenshawe FM's weekly 'Job Shows' are a fine example of this, funded directly by Jobcentre Plus on an SLA contract to assist unemployed people in finding work, and presented by volunteers who are themselves unemployed.

VOXBOX 15.01

"When ALL FM's police show started they might as well have been Dixon of Dock Green standing with their hands behind their backs. We used to joke that it should be called 'Evenin' All FM'. After a while they warmed up, dropped all that, and involved more people in their show. And it got so much better and thus more effective."

Phil Korbel, Director, Radio Regen

CRIB SHEET

Contracts with mainstream agencies:

- Must not interfere with your independence
- Must not change the nature of your station
- Should involve volunteers from the community at every level

Dealing with different agencies

Local authorities

Your relationship with your local authority is vital in countless respects, but particularly in accessing contracts. As already noted, getting your foot in the door of council departments is more easily said than done. Local councillors are often more responsive than council officers and they can be a useful way of opening doors, but be careful how you use this approach. It can backfire if you are not careful – officers sometimes feel resentful if their political masters begin ordering them to engage with you. It is better for the paid workers to actually want to work with you rather than feeling obliged to. Asking a friendly councillor to put in a word for you and introduce you to the relevant officers is probably about as strong an involvement from politicians as you would want. This can get the door open for you but unless you are actually delivering the goods, the relationship will soon flounder.

In all negotiations, be clear about what benefits you are offering and what you are looking for in return. The idea is to get them thinking about your station as one possible part of their service delivery mix. That means selling yourself on the strength of your activities, not on personal or political sympathy.

Local Strategic Partnerships

There are currently 88 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) around the UK. These exist to bring together statutory agencies with the community and voluntary sectors, the public and other stakeholders, to co-ordinate their activities, identify failures in service provision and avoid duplication of services. These partnerships gather all the key players into one place and so are immensely valuable for accessing funding and contracts. It is the LSP that controls the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Different LSPs have different organisational structures, but typically they will have sub-sections or committees with particular responsibility for education and youth services, health, housing etc. There will also normally be some form of action team for each ward or local area. The more deeply involved you can get in LSP

activities the more rewards are likely to flow. In heavily-populated metropolitan areas there may be considerable competition for seats on committees, in other areas LSPs are crying out for community groups to become involved. Community Networks also have a 'shadow' function with LSPs, to ensure that the community's voice gets heard in their deliberations. Whether you get on committees or not, be aware of their activities and read their strategies and minutes to align any approach you make to their aims.

It's probably worth publicising your LSP – they don't get much media attention and will probably be very grateful. Broadcast their news releases on your community shows, include their activities in your events listings etc. This is part of your remit as a community radio station anyway, but may also be an astute political move.

Youth services and Connexions

The momentum in youth services is currently towards the so-called one-stop shop, currently manifested as Connexions centres. The idea is that advice, support and diversionary activities should all be accessed from the same point, where all of a young person's needs and wishes can be assessed and met. This should in theory be helpful for community radio stations, meaning fewer negotiations and less bureaucracy.

Unfortunately, youth services in most areas appear to be among the least well-resourced and most overstretched agencies of them all. They tend to have a massive list of activities and projects they would like to be able to fund but can't, many of which will be just as deserving of grant funding or contracts as you are.

Funded youth work is often intensive and demanding. It is a sad truth that interventions by youth services often come very late in the day for the young people concerned. Once they have been excluded from school or received a criminal conviction, opportunities suddenly arise for activity schemes, special needs education, social support and so on. This means that many of the young people you might be funded to work with could

already have deep underlying problems that may sometimes be impossible for you to address. In terms of social gain, it is often just as useful to work with young people who are not yet excluded or in trouble, but who nevertheless feel isolated, neglected or just plain bored. Finding funding to do so can be a major headache, however.

The big selling point that community radio has over many other youth services is that making radio is pretty damn cool. It is often a more attractive option than playing ping-pong or many of the other choices that young people are traditionally offered. Community radio often appeals to young people who wouldn't be seen dead in a youth centre. This is why most community radio stations could fill their schedules ten times over with young people. (Leicester's Takeover Radio, run entirely by and for young people, is a case in point.) In practice, the limiting factor is often your child protection policy (see p158), which will effectively determine how many young volunteers you can work with at any one time. A fully-trained youth worker is of course a valuable asset to any station and will open up many streams of funding.

Health agencies

The agency responsible for delivering health care to your community is the Primary Care Trust. (PCTs allocate around 75% of the NHS's total budget.) There will also be your Mental Health Trust, Hospitals Trusts and others. There may also be a specific body such as a Health Action Zone (HAZ), which works rather like an LSP to bring the key players in health service delivery to the same table.

In our experience, health trusts have proved extremely difficult to engage. They are large, cumbersome democracies and everything that was said above about local authorities applies doubly to the NHS. There is no doubt that community radio has enormous potential value to NHS Trusts, but sadly many Trusts have yet to be convinced of this. Trusts have a statutory duty to engage and consult with their own communities on their strategic planning and this in itself should be reason enough, regardless of community radio's potential contribution to health education, public information and social welfare.



That said, the PCTs are being obliged to move more towards a wider perspective on health care, one that recognises well-being, self-esteem, social exclusion and so on as health issues. Involvement in community radio can lead to significant improvements in physical and mental health for the individual, and have a genuine impact on the health of a community. In Wythenshawe, for example, the community radio station ran a series on healthy eating – from growing your own vegetables to the school canteen – long before Jamie Oliver had the idea.

PCTs are also the bodies tasked with increasing the level of public involvement in decision-making in health services – another function where the application of community radio is obvious.

Housing

Housing providers are another sector with much to gain from a community station. A better skilled, more empowered group of tenants is easier to work with. A radio station (or programme) can provide a common focus and foster a good sense of identity.

In return, housing trusts often have money available for worthwhile projects, and can also access Community Training and Enabling (CTE) grants from the Housing Corporation, project funding that is only available to social housing providers and their project partners. This was pioneered by Wythenshawe FM with its local social landlord, Willow Park Housing Trust.

Employment services

As noted above, Jobcentre Plus (in partnership with the European Social Fund) was among the first public service agencies to agree a local service level agreement delivered by community radio (the 'Job Shows' on ALL FM and Wythenshawe FM). They have much to gain from such a deal, as community radio offers both training in transferable skills and a platform to advise on job-seeking and advertise vacancies.

Jobcentre Plus offices across the country offer a large number of contracts for services such as outreach to ethnic minorities and non-English speakers. Some community radio stations may be well placed to apply for such contracts.

Business support services

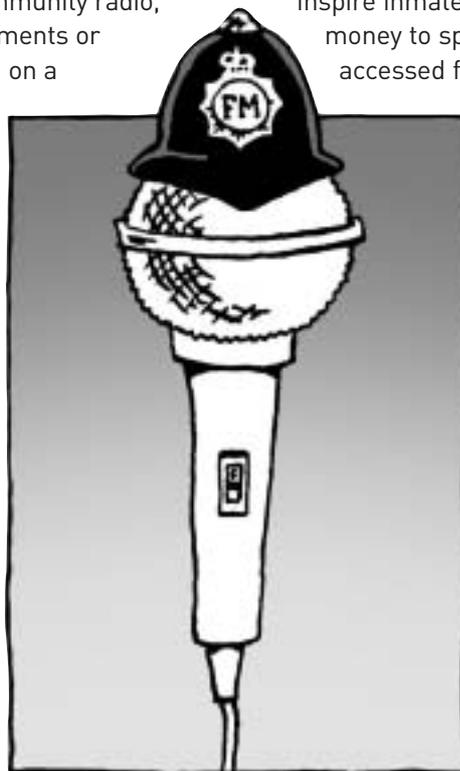
Organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and Business Link have advice services and other activities to promote. They often find that small businesses in less advantaged areas are those that need the most support but are the most difficult to engage. Community radio stations may reach such businesses. Business support services could benefit considerably from publicity on community radio, whether through public announcements or advertising, a regular 'advice spot' on a general interest show, or even their very own programme. Beyond simple advice surgery spots, there are endless possibilities for such a partnership to promote enterprise, self-employment and business start-up.

Police, legal and judicial services

Police forces across the country have also been fast to recognise the value of community radio. Community policing has been at the heart of their service provision since the late 80s, and community radio offers such officers the opportunity to reach thousands

of local residents simultaneously. In many areas (not just the inner cities) public engagement with police officers is suspicious at best and downright confrontational at worst. Rarely does anyone talk or listen sympathetically to a police officer. When people hear police officers talking on the radio, complete with personalities, bad jokes and worse music, it helps to make the police service more human, more approachable and able to do its job better.

Whilst there is obviously real value to this, translating that value into cash may not be easy. Police divisions do have budgetary independence, so in theory they should be able to pay for their use of community radio facilities. Be prepared to lobby hard for a financial arrangement. This may include offering free use of your facilities while the service is being piloted, but make sure that you specify the length of the trial. It may also be possible to engage other judicial services such as probation services, youth offending teams and possibly even prisons. (There would be practical difficulties with working with prisons of course, but many prison governors are on the look-out for new projects to involve and inspire inmates. And they sometimes have money to spend – whether their own or accessed from grants.) Also, most LSPs have a Crime & Disorder committee.



All law-enforcement agencies are currently immersed in the idea of 'community justice' and local involvement in policing. This underpins everything from Neighbourhood Watch to ASBOs. Community radio could have a great role to play in making safer streets, offering a voice to the victims of crime, and also as a voice of reason. Discussions about anti-social behaviour often fall into the trap of tarring all young people (or those of a particular social or ethnic group) with the same brush. Community radio can open up communication and

strengthen understanding between generations, or between different sections of the community. That may do more to reduce the fear of crime than anything else. As we go to press the Home Office has launched a cross-departmental strategy called 'Together We Can' which covers a lot of these points and more (see www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

CRIB SHEET

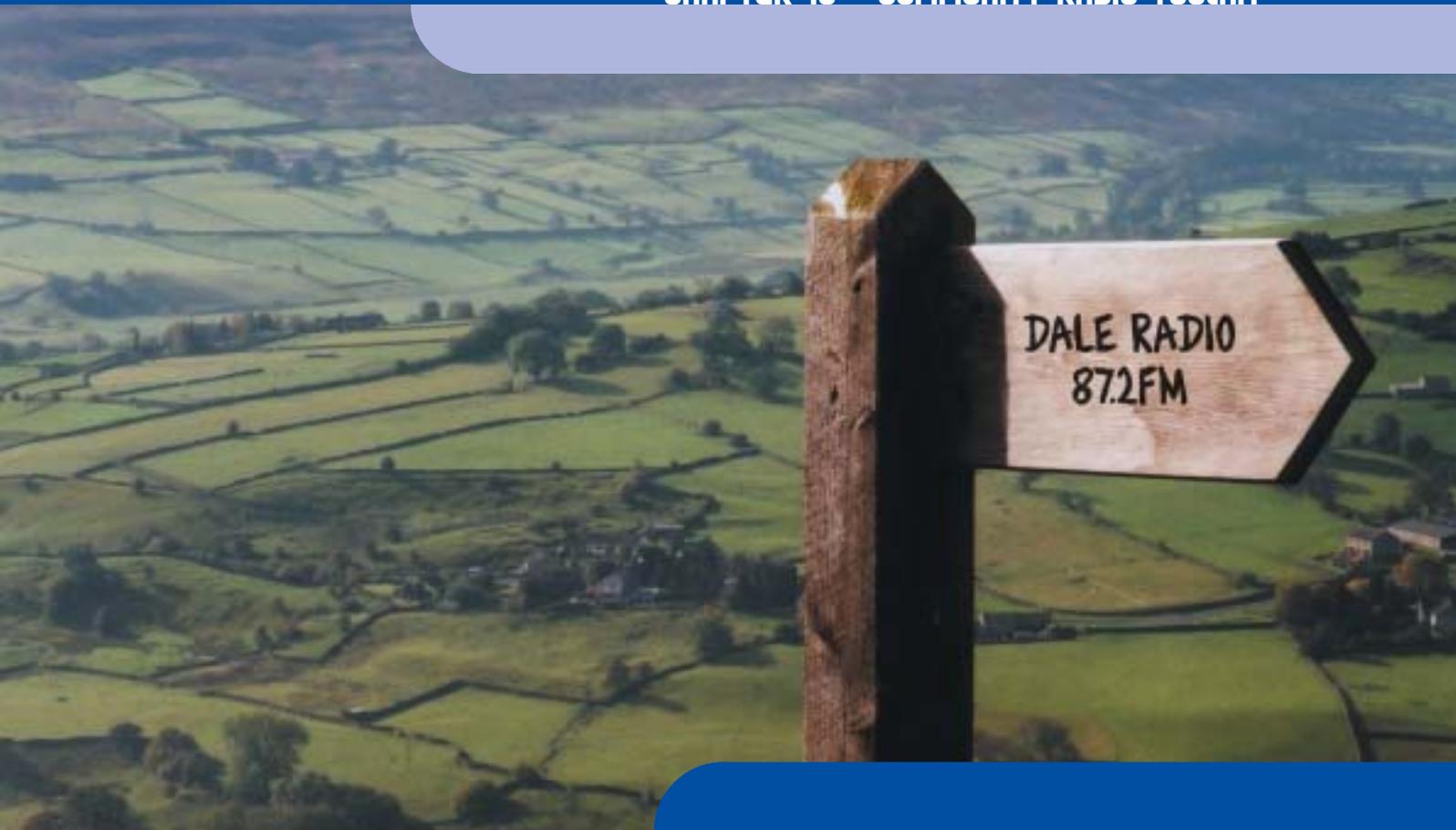
The agencies you may work with:

- Will each have a different perspective on the role of community radio
- May all have different reactions to your approaches
- Will all bring their own business and funding opportunities

Further reading and links

www.ncvo.org

www.businesslink.co.uk



RURAL RADIO

The needs of rural communities

Technical problems

Practical problems

Rural funding and finance

Rural programming



RURAL RADIO

The principles that drive community radio – the ability to transform lives and places, the need to offer access to the airwaves – apply to any community, any station anywhere. Most of the advice offered in this Toolkit is equally valid in Stoke or Stonehaven, Camberwell or Carlisle.

But every community is different, and community radio stations reflect that. It would be foolish to think that Radio Regen's experiences in deprived areas of Manchester will be exactly replicated in the dales of Yorkshire or the forests of Gloucestershire.

Rural communities have different problems, different concerns and different interests. Rural community radio stations offer different opportunities and different solutions. This chapter will highlight some of these differences and hopefully demonstrate that although rural community radio stations are less numerous than their urban equivalents, they are no less necessary.

Given that frequency scarcity will greatly limit the growth of urban community radio, we feel that a chapter devoted to its rural cousin is more than justified. It would not be unreasonable to forecast many rural communities taking up the challenge of community radio in the years to come. With the challenges to rural areas outlined below not likely to go away, and the opportunities available from community radio being easy to access, we hope that community radio will break out of the urban estates and become part of the everyday story of country folk.

CRIB SHEET

Rural community radio:

- Has many similarities, but also many differences to its urban equivalent
- Is just as necessary as its urban equivalent

Forest of Dean Radio

The Forest of Dean is a beautiful corner of Gloucestershire – an area of about 25 square miles between the rivers Severn and Wye that is home to only 80,000 people. The majority of people live in and around small villages and hamlets, with the rest spread between five small towns. It's a popular tourist destination, but its picturesque landscape masks some deep social and economic problems remaining from the devastation of the mining industry which once supported the local economy. Around a third of the working population commute outside the area each day. According to Government statistics, those who remain have fewer skills, educational attainments and employment prospects than the national average.

VOXBOX 16.01

"I moved here in 1986 and I soon had a feeling that in an area like this where people were so cut off, radio would be a very good medium. There's a real sense of people being isolated, even invisible. All the media we get comes from other places. So-called local news comes from Bristol, Cardiff or Birmingham, local radio comes from Gloucester or Hereford. Even the local press doesn't cover the whole Forest. Nothing was being produced in this area. There's an unacknowledged history here, it's geographically tucked away on the border. There's a real need for identity in this area and the longer I lived here the more I felt that."

Roger Drury, Founder, Forest of Dean Radio

In 1995, community arts worker Roger Drury made his first tentative steps towards establishing a community radio group (see Voxbox 16.01). After 20 temporary stations (or RSLs), in 2002 Forest of Dean Radio became one of the Access Radio pilot stations and the only one that was purely rural. In



Community radio has a place on the rural map

March 2005, now operating from five studios across the Forest, the station was honoured with Britain's first five-year community licence. Their experiences form the basis of most of this chapter.

The need for rural community radio

Any community would benefit from having its own radio station, and in rural areas the potential value is arguably even greater. Here are just some of the unique benefits offered by community radio in a rural setting:

- **Access to information and services.** People who live in rural areas are often cut off from resources which city-dwellers take for granted. When the nearest library may be many miles away, it is not easy to pick up a leaflet about local activities or services, drop into the local benefits office to ask a question or pick up an information pack from the local health centre. Community radio can bring all these things straight into people's homes.
- **Publicising community activities.** If someone in a city centre wishes to publicise the school jumble sale, it is relatively easy to stand on a street corner and give away thousands of leaflets in a few hours. In rural areas, this is rarely possible. Many community events may go unnoticed outside the single village where they occur. Community radio can change that.
- **Maintaining community identity.** Our countryside is changing. With the rise of commuting (and consequent arrival of incomers from the cities),

the disappearance of traditional industries and crafts, changes to agriculture, fluctuations in the housing market and other such developments, people in many rural areas feel as if the sense of social cohesion in their villages and towns is dissolving. Community radio not only maintains that cohesion, it can help it to adapt to the changing world. A new sense of identity can be developed that reflects the residents' lives as they are now, not as they once were, but which also respects local tradition.

- **Encouraging community cohesion.** A community radio station attracts people of all ages, classes and types. It is a great leveller, and can help ease tensions between different generations or different villages and of course the almost inevitable tensions between locals and incomers.
- **Availability of education and training.** Community radio stations will often be closer to residents than the nearest college. A station offering accredited training can boost the skills base of a rural area.
- **Motivation for education and training.** Colleges and schools may offer media courses, but they rarely offer the opportunity to create media and distribute the results. Radio training is not an end in itself but a means to a greater end, and that is something rarely available to rural communities.
- **Battling isolation.** Many people in rural areas live far from their neighbours and further from centres of social activity – whether that's the church, the shop or the pub. Community radio has incalculable value to such people.
- **Battling boredom.** Younger people in particular often complain that there is 'nothing to do' in small towns and villages. There is now.
- **Democratic participation.** Geographical constraints mean that election candidates and elected politicians are less available to their voters in rural areas than urban ones. Getting to a public meeting may be difficult and bumping into a rosette-wielding representative on your doorstep may be unlikely. Political phone-in shows and

VOXBOX 16.02

“We do most of our fund-raising ourselves. We had an Isles FM Day recently, with all sorts of fund-raising events – with pledges, ceilidh dances, all sorts of community events. It was very successful, we had schools, youth clubs, pubs and clubs, businesses, everybody was involved. I think it was a reflection of how important we have become to the community here – especially after the terrible storm that hit the islands last winter. We were the only people giving out any information for three or four days, giving out warnings to stay inside, which schools were open and shut, which shops were open. We had so many calls thanking us and asking us what was going on. If it hadn’t been for Isles FM there wouldn’t have been any sort of information at all. There was another day when we were all snowed in, one of my colleagues, called Kenny ‘There You Go’ Macleod made it in to do the breakfast show before the snow started, and he ended up doing it all day because nobody else could get in and he couldn’t get out.”

*Kathleen MacIver, Station Co-ordinator,
Isles FM, Stornoway*

debates have a real value to rural voters. On a day-to-day basis, it is possible to make great radio by sorting out problems between listeners and their councillors – a useful activity when the town hall may be many miles away.

- **Discussion of local issues.** Isolated communities often have isolated problems, such as difficulties with public transport or service delivery. These may be below the radar of even the local commercial station, but of significant importance to members of your community. You offer that platform.
- **Confidence and pride in the area.** In many rural areas there is a widespread feeling that things happen elsewhere. If someone has an idea for a business enterprise or creative expression, they feel they have to go to a city to realise it. Community radio helps to foster a sense of activity, of vitality, of confidence in the area. That can be infectious.

CRIB SHEET

Rural communities need community radio because:

- Community radio can offer unique solutions to unique problems
- Everybody needs community radio

Technical issues

In cities and large towns, communities are typically close together, and the standard 5km range of a 50 watts FM transmitter may comfortably reach 100,000 people or more. In rural areas, problems arise.

These are principally:

- **Widely scattered populations.** Members of a ‘small’ rural community may live 50 miles apart from each other – much too far for a single low-powered transmitter to reach them all. Ofcom are willing to be flexible about transmission specifications in sparsely populated rural areas where there is little competition for frequencies, but many community stations may still need at least one booster transmitter to cover their full patch. That means more hardware, more maintenance and of course more cost.
- **Geographical and geological problems.** Many rural communities live in landscapes marked by hills, valleys and mountains. Even if you can site your transmitter on the highest point around, there may well be many areas where reception is poor. This problem can be worsened if the land is rich in minerals, which interfere with radio signals. Forest of Dean, for example, is among the worst places in the country for radio reception, standing as it does on a bed of coal and iron ore, with even the hills mostly landscaped from mining slag heaps.

Both transmission distance and reception will often be better on AM (medium wave) than FM, and despite the lack of hi-fidelity stereo, this will often be the preferred band for rural radio. Thus Forest of Dean Radio overcomes its geology by using a series of medium wave transmitters. Even so, radio waves are difficult beasts to predict. Forest of Dean Radio

has one file of letters complaining about poor reception a few miles away, and another file of letters from Norway and Sweden congratulating them on the quality of their signal!

This unpredictability makes it very hard to assume reception anywhere, however long you and Ofcom engineers may spend pouring over graphs and formulas. Usually the only way to find out how good a transmission site may be is to set it up and switch it on. If possible, new rural community groups would be well advised to try out different locations for RSL broadcasts before settling on the final site for a transmitter. Once Ofcom has agreed a location for a five-year licence they are unlikely to let you renegotiate a new transmitter location a few months later without very good reason.

Of course transmission and reception problems increase the importance of other forms of broadcasting – notably web-streaming. And as technology develops, digital radio may open up yet more possibilities.

CRIB SHEET

Radio in rural areas:

- Has to reach a much more widely scattered audience than urban radio
- May face geographical and geological problems with reception
- Might face larger equipment costs
- May not know how good reception will be until broadcasts begin

Practical problems for rural community radio

The distant spread of a rural community doesn't just bring problems with transmission and reception, it also creates problems with participation. Volunteering on a project is a much less practical prospect if it is many miles away, particularly for those without a car. If a station is to be truly accessible to everyone in the community, it must make extra efforts to make participation possible for everyone, no matter which part of the area they live in. Possible solutions include:

- **Multiple studios.** This is not a cheap option, but establishing additional studios brings your station closer to more distant parts of the community. Different studios could host different shows, or whole days or evenings. Ideally there would be a part-time worker (at least) based in each, conducting local outreach work and community development. Forest of Dean Radio has no fewer than five studios, reflecting the unusual population spread of the area.
- **Outreach work.** Even if your facilities can't extend to full extra studios, it would still be useful to have link workers with responsibility for outreach in other towns or villages, encouraging local involvement. Paid workers would be the preferred option but trusted volunteers could also take the role.
- **Encouraging volunteers to pre-record items and shows from their homes or in the community.** With a lap-top or a mini-disc recording and editing kit, it is possible to make a radio show without going near a studio. Pre-recorded output could be transferred by broadband or ISDN if facilities exist, or courier, post or carrier pigeon if they don't.
- **Use the phone.** Radio production convention discourages the use of phoned-in features, except for public phone-ins and urgent breaking news. It's true the sound quality can be poor, but the advantages to a community station definitely outweigh such purist concerns. Volunteers from remote areas can be trained in news gathering, reporting, scripting and broadcasting, then phone in their own village news to 'Round the Region' type shows.
- **Invest in outside broadcast equipment.** There are a variety of encoder/decoder (codec, in the jargon) systems on offer that can allow you to take your studio to the community, whether that's in a field or at a village fête. POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service) is a relatively inexpensive system that allows you to send a live broadcast direct across a simple telephone line (even a mobile) and can be powered by a car battery.

Even if all these steps and more are taken to involve the whole community, there will be other problems:

- It is harder to offer support and assistance to your volunteers if you rarely see them. It is easy, but a mistake, to think that just because a volunteer records a brilliant show once a week and never complains, everything is automatically rosy. You may need to make extra efforts to see every volunteer face to face occasionally.
- There may not be such a 'family' feel to your station if many of the volunteers never meet or see their colleagues. Regular meetings and social events are essential to bring the group together.
- Local rivalries may remain. If your station is based in Village A, you can be sure some residents of Village B will be slightly distrustful and be more reluctant to get involved. Extra efforts must be taken to establish a sense of ownership across the whole of your community.
- Sections of your community may remain elusive. However hard you try, it is never possible to engage with every member of any community. This can be especially true in the countryside where some of the people who could benefit most from hearing or making community radio may be literally out of sight and out of mind. Establish partnerships or friendly relationships with all agencies, groups and services in the area, and always look for new ways to reach the further corners of your community.

CRIB SHEET

Rural community radio stations:

- Must make themselves accessible to everyone in their community
- May benefit from more than one base or studio
- Should encourage the making of radio in the community, not just at the station
- Should go to whichever parts of the community will not come to them
- May find it harder to support their volunteers and have them bond.

Funding and finance

Rural community radio stations face the same perennial problems in raising cash as their urban cousins, and of course will find similar solutions (see Chapters 13, 14 and 15). Rural stations will mostly survive through a combination of:

- Grant funding;
- Service contracts;
- Advertising and sponsorship;
- Training revenue;
- Donations and community fundraising.

In each case, there are some marked differences in availability for rural stations compared to cities.

Grants

There are some streams of funding that are appropriate for rural areas. These include:

- **Regional regeneration funds.** There are four statutory rural development plans, one for each country of the UK. Each is devolved to regional funding programmes. At a more local level, every rural regional authority should have a Rural Renaissance Partnership in operation, which will also have some grant-awarding powers.
- **Arts Council(s).** The Arts Council of England and other UK equivalents have an obligation to 'rural proofing' – demonstrating that they are supporting arts and culture in rural areas. This opens possibilities for rural stations, not just for creative projects (drama, music etc.) but also for support for arts-based discussion, debate and listings shows. But before you get too excited, the Arts Council still shows a remarkable reluctance to fund community radio itself – make sure your idea is an 'arts' idea that happens on community radio rather than just plain old community radio.
- **National Lottery Heritage Fund.** This has a wide remit and many community radio projects in rural areas are well placed to support their aims of preserving the 'buildings, objects and environment of the United Kingdom.' This is particularly true in National Parks and other protected regions. Before proceeding with any bid to this pot, do find out exactly how much core

funding they will provide – it is our understanding that the Heritage Lottery Fund are currently reluctant to offer much.

- **Agricultural support organisations.** From the NFU to the Soil Association, there are many farming-related organisations with much to gain from community radio.

And don't forget all the options discussed in Chapter 14 above.

Service contracts

If anything, the possibilities for contracts and service level agreements (see p191) are probably better in rural areas than urban. Statutory agencies are typically more remote from their clients, have greater practical problems with service provision and giving out information, and very often there will be far fewer community groups and social enterprises tendering for contracts.

As anywhere, it is worth building strong relationships with other voluntary sector organisations and statutory agencies, which may involve offering free involvement – whether presenting shows or just reading press releases – as a way of demonstrating your usefulness in the early days. Build partnerships but be wary of selling yourself short. Always remember that your broadcasts have a tangible value in enabling agencies to do their job better.

Advertising and sponsorship

In urban areas, companies and agencies benefit from a concentration of listeners, allowing them to reach thousands of potential customers within walking distance of their business. If the station serves a community of interest – for example members of a particular ethnic group – then the potential for advertising revenue is very strong. In rural areas, a particular trader may operate many miles away from most listeners and would see the benefits of advertising as being limited – probably quite rightly.

The experience of rural community radio thus far seems to have been that advertising will never bring in more than a useful top-up income. It is unlikely to ever become a viable route to financial stability.

However, businesses in rural areas have a vested interest in supporting the social and economic regeneration of their community. Corporate social responsibility (see p187) applies to small local companies as well as multinationals. It makes sound business sense for companies to invest in projects that are helping to improve the quality of life and economic prospects for their customers, and of course it is good for a firm's public image to be seen to be supporting community efforts – especially in small tight-knit communities where word of mouth travels fast – good news fast, bad news faster. Small scale sponsorship of a show or broadcast strand can be inexpensive by itself, but if say twenty local businesses were to commit themselves to just £20 a week, that would raise enough to employ an extra member of staff.

Education, training and access to technology

As with any community radio station, training income is likely to be a vital part of the revenue mix (see p167). In cities there will usually be several local colleges and countless independent projects offering various courses in ICT, media studies, sound engineering, audio production etc., all of which compete for the attendance of local trainees. In rural areas, a community radio station is likely to have far fewer rivals for its training provision. It is worth establishing what types of courses are already provided in your area, and tailoring your training to fit the gaps. This may mean offering training not only in radio production and broadcasting, but in other related skills, from literacy and numeracy to basic ICT. Of course this is dependent on their being enough local people wishing to train. Stations in small rural communities may struggle to recruit enough trainees to make a training regime viable.

Similarly, your capacity for raising additional income through audio production services and the like will be assisted if you are the only project in the area with the capability to offer such services.

Community fundraising

Your ability to raise money in your community will probably depend upon two principle factors:

- The usefulness of your station – if you make yourself essential to your community through

your activities and broadcasting, then donations will flow;

- The affluence of your community. Whilst some of the residents of your rural area may be economically disadvantaged, there may be a broader mix of lifestyles and income brackets compared to an inner city area like Moss Side or Hackney.

The usual fund-raising rules apply (see p186). Common sense would suggest that rural stations may have better prospects for benefit events, membership schemes, 'friends of' clubs and the like (see Voxbox 16.02), although only more time – and more rural community radio stations – will confirm whether this is true in practice.

CRIB SHEET

The financing of a rural community radio station:

- Will be similar to any other station, but with a different balance
- May involve obtaining more of your income from grants, contracts and donations
- And less of your income from advertising revenue

Rural programming

Of course no two rural communities are identical, and different stations must find a programming schedule that provides what the community wants and needs. However, a big clue to your programming policy will come from Ofcom's insistence that a community radio station should offer programming that is not supplied by existing local non-BBC broadcasters. With fewer commercial stations on rural airwaves, this means many gaps to be filled. A community station's priorities are likely to include:

- **Local news.** A community radio station may be the only media source that covers local developments with the care and concern which rural residents would like. The national and regional media may arrive in force when a pig escapes from a slaughterhouse (yes, Forest of Dean again), but are utterly disinterested in

stories of real concern to local people, such as the closure of a primary school or the opening of a new health facility. It has been the experience of rural community radio in Australia that the 'merger-mania' that has swept commercial radio has often left them the only station in town. As ownership liberalisation takes hold in the UK expect a similar effect here. Recent Ofcom changes mean that even if there is a local commercial station, it is less likely to have a local newsroom, so a community station's role in this field is even more vital.

- **The weather.** In agricultural and inaccessible areas, weather forecasts take on an importance that is alien to city-dwellers. And of course British people everywhere love talking about the weather.
- **What's on and listings.** Scattered communities will often find it difficult to keep each other informed about events, concerts, fêtes and other occasions that can do so much for community cohesion and quality of life. This must be a cornerstone of rural radio.
- **Sports features.** Local sports teams and clubs play an important part in community life in many areas, and if they aren't competing in professional national leagues they are usually ignored – even by the regional media. You can be sure that any weekend programmes following local leagues will be very popular.
- **Local interest features.** These can be about issues of serious importance, such as the affordability of housing, environmental issues such as quarrying, forestry, wind farming or GM crops in the area, or issues of particular local interest in public health and social welfare (such as teenage pregnancy rates or lack of provision for the elderly). There will also be issues which look trivial to outsiders, but that are hotly debated topics in the local pub or the letters page of the local paper. Should sheep roam free or be fenced in their fields? You decide.
- **Cultural heritage.** As our countryside changes, many rural communities feel that their local

heritage is being lost and forgotten. There's a value (and of course great interest) in programming based around local dialects, local history, myth and legend and other aspects of cultural wealth that would once have been passed down through word of mouth in closely-knit families. One of the highlights of Radio Regen's only rural RSL, in the Lancashire village of Chipping, was discovering that a local tenant farmer and farmers' spokesman was also an accomplished poet.

- **Local arts and culture.** Musicians, performers and artists may have few available outlets in their home territory. With few galleries, theatres or live music venues in the area, a community radio station may have an additional role to play in nurturing, supporting and publicising local talent.
- **The community's place in the wider world.** Never forget that rural areas have their part in the national and international picture. People from all areas attend national demonstrations or pop festivals, travel abroad as aid workers, get elected to parliament, or otherwise contribute their own shards to the daily mosaic of global events. There will be a local angle to any major news story – and you can highlight that without resorting to the approach of the (sadly apocryphal) local newspaper headline after the Titanic sank: Aberdeen Butcher Lost At Sea.

CRIB SHEET

The programmes broadcast in a rural area:

- Will fill gaps left by other broadcasters
- Will address issues of local importance and local interest – but in the wider context
- Will serve the needs of the whole community

Marketing and branding

It is difficult for any community radio station to get itself noticed, particularly in the early days. That task is even harder across a wider area. Some useful steps include:

- **Going out and about.** There is no substitute for

getting out and meeting people face to face. A new community radio group should have a stall at every village fête and school fair, or anywhere large numbers of people are assembled.

- **Promotional events.** Organising concerts and social evenings can be a useful fund-raising policy, but can be equally useful in raising awareness of your station and creating an identity for yourself.
- **Posters and notices.** These need to be placed across the relevant area, in shops, pubs, village halls etc. It's not enough to blitz the major market town and assume everyone will see your publicity eventually. They may do, but the impression you will give will be of a centralised project that is excluding remote residents. If you can persuade supportive landowners to let you erect posters or placards in strategic roadside locations then so much the better.
- Use the power of partner **schools** (see p158)
- **A 'supporters club'** could come into its own in a rural context – as supporters display promotional material and deploy that most awesome of marketing weapons – word of mouth.

Of course all the usual advice about publicity materials, on-air branding, media relations and so on holds just as true in rural areas as anywhere else.

CRIB SHEET

Marketing your station in rural areas:

- Will be hard work
- Should stress your place in the whole community, not just the town or village where you are based

Further reading and links:

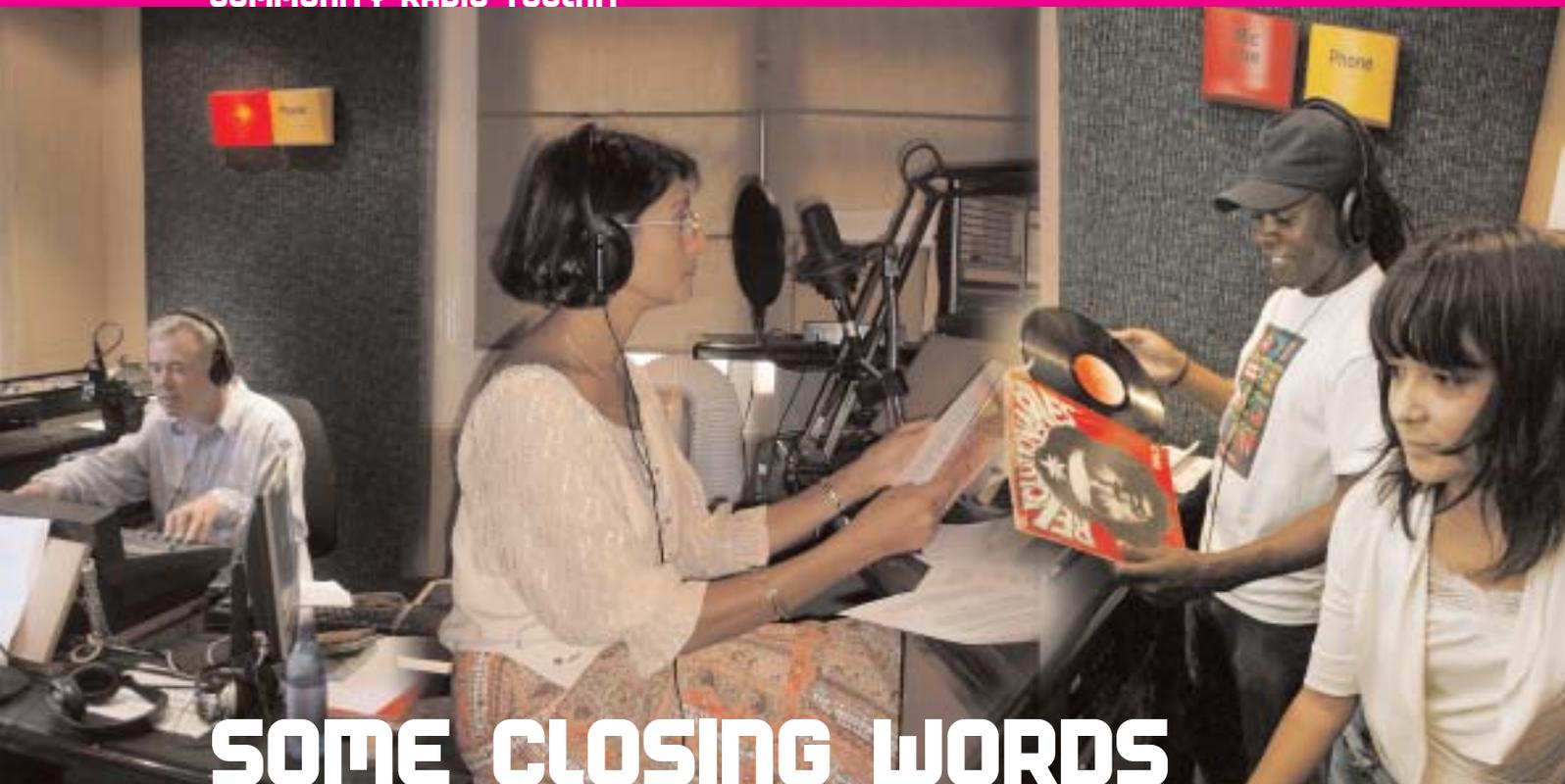
Forest of Dean Radio

www.fodradio.org

Rural development resources

www.acre.org.uk/

www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/



SOME CLOSING WORDS

VOXBOX

"The high points have been spectacular and the lows have cut deep, it really has been a rollercoaster. Now I can sit back a little. It is hard to let go, but the station now affords three full time staff and a host of fellow volunteers, most of the back-breaking groundwork is done. I remember literally sitting on the roof of the station cleaning out the guttering at the outset. It has certainly not been dull though, from hosting the opening party, releasing a fund-raising album, auctioning a vibrating sausage sculpture donated by Gavin Turk, curating a sound art exhibition and most importantly getting hundreds of brilliant artists and musicians on air.

I would strongly encourage others to get involved with community radio, not only is it a way of gaining and sharing skills but importantly it is a way for experiencing other voices and ideas.

The late John Peel remarked in recent years that the possibility to be surprised by radio was fast disappearing. I think community radio has certainly helped reverse the trend. Long may it continue to do so."

Magz Hall, founder, Resonance FM, London

We began this book a couple of hundred pages (and about eight months) ago with a warning that community radio will get into your blood and stay there like an exotic parasitic disease, an itch to be constantly scratched. It may sap every last drop of your energy, we said, wake you up in the middle of the night, drag you out of bed and turn your hair grey. We should have guessed that exactly the same would apply to the Community Radio Toolkit.

This project has only been made possible by the generosity and patience of dozens and dozens of community radio enthusiasts, operators, volunteers and professionals, who have given up their extremely scarce time to share their experiences and wisdom to help - not us, but the new generations of community radio operators whom we have no doubt will take this wonderful medium in directions and to places that we never believed possible. Community radio in the UK is a mere toddler. It has a lot to learn, and a lot of growing up to do.



In trying to keep this project to a manageable size, we have had to restrict ourselves. We have heard so many inspiring stories of lives that have been changed, talents that have been awoken, communities that have been transformed by radio projects, that we could have easily written another book. And that is just the tip of the iceberg. Across the country there are projects emerging like wild flowers in a meadow, many of them as yet largely unnoticed. We look forward to the day when the achievements of Radio Regen and our old friends across the sector are thoroughly eclipsed by community radio stations with new ideas, new methods, new energy and new blood. We shall enjoy playing catch-up.

Your big opportunity to join in this growth will be via the Toolkit website and particularly its forums. There will be several Toolkit discussion forums for you to take part in – we will be distilling the useful information from the chatter to be easily accessible. So you won't have to trawl through a twenty message exchange to find that magic update for Adobe Audition – it will be flagged up for you. But unless YOU join in the chatter, we'll never know what we got right, how you used the Toolkit or how you improved upon it and took the whole game to another level. The information in this book comes dead cheap (if not free), so please become part of this flow and keep those ideas and opinions coming in. We need a place for the community radio community to chat and we hope that www.communityradiotoolkit.net will be it.

If you read this Toolkit by starting on page one and progressing to here, then thank you for your attention, and we hope you have got everything from the experience that you hoped for. On the other hand, if you've skipped straight to the end to find out whodunit – well it was Reverend Green in the studio with an extension cable. And by the way, you missed a really steamy sex scene on page 107.

And now, over to you.

CRIB SHEET

- our work here is done
- But yours is just beginning
- There's a lot of work to make it work
- But it's not rocket science
- Turn on, tune in and....

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