

Your response

Question	Your response
<p>Question 1: Do you have any comments on Ofcom's proposed Plan of Work 2024/25?</p>	<p>I read the new Media Bill with interest and whilst I support the new legislation to help commercial radio achieves its aims of creating national commercial brands, I do have a concern with one element in particular. For now it is vital Ofcom's workplan for the next year includes work to allow on-demand new analogue entrants as this is of paramount importance to the local communities Ofcom serves.</p> <p>The Media Bill (as amended) in Clause 42 provides an opportunity for Ofcom to accept on-demand applications for new analogue entrants, which, in my view is essential to establish new services to serve underserved communities, such as a couple of areas I personally represent in East Berks, South Bucks and parts of Surrey. My area has no local commercial radio station covering it (due to Time 106.6 handing the licence back to Ofcom in 2015), it currently has no community radio station and is not covered sufficiently by BBC local radio (which itself has been cut back recently).</p> <p>My group applied for a community radio licence to serve "South Bucks, Uxbridge & surrounding areas" in 2019 and Ofcom rejected the application in February 2020, due to a "lack of frequency availability". With extensive research being carried out by two established and experienced engineers, it was found that suitable frequencies "could" have been used, albeit with restrictions given incoming and outgoing interference. At the time, we were very much of the idea that some kind of FM coverage was better than none at all.</p> <p>We support the idea of new players being given a chance to enter the market, whether it be community or new local commercial licences. We believe that the FM band should now be regulated the same as DAB services, in that a group could apply for the equivalent to a "DSP" or "C-DSP" style licence that you can apply for to broadcast digitally.</p> <p>With Ofcom deciding that the preferred direction of the commercial radio industry is to become larger national networks, with no local programmes, I do feel that they could have gone further to realign the FM band to better accommodate national radio networks, providing the</p>

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	groups with an opportunity to have full nationwide coverage (like Classic FM) and create the space for new local radio services to launch.

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