

Plan of Work team
Ofcom
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To whom it may concern,

OFCOM PLAN OF WORK 2024/25

I write on behalf of the UK commercial radio industry in order to highlight a number of priorities for our sector this year and how these relate to Ofcom's upcoming programme of work. Overall, we welcome Ofcom's Plan of Work for 2024/25 and recognise that there is a wide range of policy areas for Ofcom to address, particularly as Ofcom's remit has expanded following new obligations and powers within the Online Safety Act.

2024 is set to be a significant moment for radio regulation, with the anticipated passing of the Media Bill in the coming months. Looking ahead, there are four key areas of interest to our members – commercial radio regulation reform; Ofcom's new duties around Regulated Radio Selection Services; small-scale DAB; and ongoing regulation of the BBC.

The Media Bill is making swift progress through parliament. Once enacted, new laws will provide a range of duties and opportunities for Ofcom with regard to commercial radio regulation and a new regime for designated operators of smart speaker platforms. We understand that a road map will be published early this year, which will outline how and when Ofcom will address the reforms outlined in the new legislation. We look forward to the publication of the road map at the earliest opportunity in order to set out the necessary milestones ahead of further industry engagement. Of particular interest for commercial radio broadcasters is the anticipated consultation on new 'localness' guidelines, as well as Ofcom's wider Local Media Review.

A number of our members are also concerned about the success of the rollout of small-scale DAB and whether it's adequately delivering for broadcasters and ultimately listeners. We will contact officials on this matter separately to provide further details, but believe that it is now an appropriate time for Ofcom to conduct a thorough evaluation of the regime and whether it is delivering on its original objectives. A review of local DAB coverage has also recently been discussed in parliament.

Following the introduction of the BBC's new Operating Licence in April last year, we continue to monitor the BBC's performance against its obligations, particularly with regard to BBC Sounds. We will review the BBC's annual plan and report, in addition to Ofcom's annual report on the BBC, in due course.

We look forward to continuing to work with the various Ofcom teams on the wide range of radio-related issues throughout the year ahead.

Yours faithfully,

Matt Payton
Chief Executive
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