

# Localness guidelines – highlighting the changes

## Localness – what is it?

- Localness is not an issue for all stations, but where it is demanded within the Format it **should** be addressed directly as per these guidelines. **(changed ‘must’ to ‘should’)**
- Localness can be both characterised and delivered in a number of ways (news, information, comment, outside broadcasts, whats-on, travel news, interviews, charity involvement, weather, local artists, local arts and culture, **sport coverage, phone-ins, listener interactivity** etc etc), therefore precise definitions can be unhelpful. **(added ‘sport coverage, phone-ins, listener interactivity’)**
- Content drawn from, and/or relevant to, the area is often the major point of difference between stations, and therefore licensees should be able to identify a range of local aspects of their stations and how they are providing output specific to their area.
- The major outcome of localness delivery is the feel for an area a listener should get by tuning in to a particular station, coupled with confidence that matters of importance, **relevance** or interest to **the target audience** in the area will be accessible on air. **(added ‘relevance’, changed ‘people’ to ‘target audience’)**
- Localness is likely to give consumers a feeling of ownership **and/or kinship, particularly at times of crisis (snow, floods etc).** **(added ‘and/or kinship, particularly at times of crisis (snow, floods etc).’)**
- Localness is station programming of specific relevance which also offers a distinctive alternative to national or (other) regional services.

## Localness – what it isn’t

- Localising news (eg vox popping in one area and playing it out as if from another, or inserting local place names into national stories) without local news/information generation **would** not be regarded as **a contribution** towards localness. **(changed ‘can’ to ‘would’, changed ‘counting’ to ‘contribution’)**
- Pure promotional off-air activity such as station promotion in the area (logo’d vehicles, roadshows etc) are not in themselves substitutes for localness without on-air activity involving something other than self-promotion.
- Competitions/promotions that invite and involve listener participation from outside a station area would not be regarded as a contribution to localness.
- The Communications Act 2003 [Section 314] stipulates that advertisements are not regarded as local programming within the context of localness and Ofcom’s localness guidance).

### **(New explanatory notes added)**

**(NB These statements are guidelines which recognise localness can be delivered in many ways, which are neither mutually exclusive nor individually obligatory. For instance, regular featuring of local music or artistes is not a pre-requisite ingredient for the delivery of localness, but would certainly be regarded as a contribution towards such delivery. Similarly, the organisation of roadshows and the presence locally of promotional vehicles are regarded by Ofcom as important aspects of radio**

*station activity, but could only be regarded as a contribution towards the delivery of localness if such activity manifested itself constructively on-air, as Section 314 requires Ofcom to consider only what is included in “programmes”).*