

Commercial digital radio multiplex licences renewed until 2035

Press release

Radio lovers will be able to enjoy the best of the UK's national commercial broadcasters' content through free-to-air digital radio for the next decade.



- Future of popular radio stations including Absolute Radio, Classic FM and Times Radio will be secured on digital for at least the next decade
- Renewal of the two UK national digital radio multiplex licences means stability for listeners and broadcasters

The government is giving Ofcom the power to renew two national commercial radio multiplex licences – Digital One Ltd Multiplex and Sound Digital Ltd Multiplex, due to expire in 2023 and 2028 respectively – until December 2035.

The move will mean audiences across the UK will enjoy uninterrupted access to the huge range of radio content available from the country's national commercial broadcasters through their digital devices on a free-to-air basis.

Well-known stations on the Digital One Ltd Multiplex include Absolute Radio, Capital and Smooth. Listeners can find the likes of Jazz FM and Talk Radio on the Sound Digital Ltd Multiplex.

Media Minister Julia Lopez said:

Radio's distinctive and much-loved format means it continues to be at the heart of people's lives. Today we are confirming plans to extend radio multiplex licences until 2035 so our hugely popular stations can continue to reach audiences through digital radio networks and we can give broadcasters the certainty they need to invest in their future services.

Radio is extremely popular in the UK. Almost 9 in 10 adults listen to their favourite stations every week. But technological developments mean more people choose to listen to their favourite stations on digital devices and terrestrial broadcast digital (DAB) radio is now the most popular way people listen to radio programmes in the UK.

A digital radio multiplex is a service which groups a number of different radio stations onto one frequency. It differs from analogue (FM/AM) broadcasting where a single signal is broadcast.

Multiplexes allow radio broadcasters to use the spectrum – the airwaves over which all wireless communications devices communicate – to be allocated more efficiently and give listeners more choice on digital radio.

Renewing the two multiplex licences via a Legislative Reform Order will also provide long-term continuity for various national commercial stations to broadcast digitally.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The government consulted on the approach to the future licensing of national commercial radio multiplexes in a document [published in July](#) last year.
- In October the government and radio industry published the [Digital Radio and Audio Review](#), which assessed likely future trends in listening and made recommendations on ways of strengthening UK radio and audio.
- Recommendations included no formal switch-off of FM services before 2030 and new measures to protect UK radio stations' accessibility so that their content is carried on platforms via connected audio devices such as smart speakers.
- The full list of the radio services carried on the multiplexes being renewed:

D1 Multiplex licence expiring in 2023:

Absolute Radio

Capital

Capital XTRA

Capital XTRA Reloaded

Capital DANCE

Classic FM

Gold

Heart UK

Heart Dance

Heart 70s

Heart 80s

Heart 90s

KISS UK

KISSTORY

LBC

LBC News

Magic

Radio X

Smooth UK

Smooth Chill

talkSPORT

UCB 1

SDL/D2 multiplex licence expiring in 2028:

Absolute 80s

Absolute 90s

Boom Radio UK

BFBS

Fun Kids

Jazz FM

Mellow Magic

Planet Rock

Premier Christian Radio

Premier Praise

Scala Radio

Sunrise Radio

talkRADIO

talkSPORT 2

Times Radio

UCB 2

Union JACK

Union JACK Dance

Union JACK Rock

Virgin Radio

Virgin Chilled

Virgin Anthems

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