

# Boost for commercial analogue radio stations

News story

Listeners of popular radio stations such as Classic FM and TalkSport will be able to access their favourite analogue shows for another ten years thanks to new government plans.



Media Minister John Whittingdale has today set out how commercial radio will be licensed over the next decade so that listeners can continue to enjoy their stations of choice despite rapid changes in technology and radio listening.

Nearly 60 per cent of all radio listening is now via digital devices, but analogue stations remain an important platform for millions of listeners who still tune into FM and AM radio services every day.

Several FM and AM commercial radio licences are due to expire from early 2022.

Provided the stations also broadcast on digital radio, the government has decided to allow Ofcom to renew these analogue licences for a further ten-year period.

**Minister for Media and Data John Whittingdale said:**

As we move into an increasingly digital world we're making sure the licensing landscape for radio is fair and up-to-date and allows audiences to enjoy a wide range of high-quality stations.

Today's step ensures there is no disruption for loyal listeners of treasured FM and AM radio services such as Classic FM, Absolute Radio and TalkSport over the next decade.

We will soon be turning our attention to providing similar long-term certainty to support the future growth of digital radio.

The government's decision follows extensive consultation with industry and clarifies the long-term licensing arrangements for FM and AM radio services in the light of the shift to digital listening.

It will help support further investment and innovation in DAB but also provides certainty to commercial radio as it seeks to manage the financial impact of coronavirus.

The legislation to amend the Broadcasting Act 1990 to enable Ofcom to renew these licences will be laid in parliament shortly.

Following the decision on analogue licenses, the Government will now consider the position of DAB multiplex licences. Multiplexes consist of a number of digital radio stations transmitted on a single frequency, which is a more efficient method of transmission than analogue radio's individual frequencies.

Government will consult on changes to extend national and local digital radio multiplex licences by the end of 2020, in order to help futureproof the radio industry's wider licensing structure.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

- The Government has today published the response to a public consultation on extending analogue commercial radio broadcasting licences which ran from December 2019 to February 2020 and sought views on whether these licences should be renewed, and if so how long for. Read the [consultation response](#).
- Analogue (FM or AM) commercial radio licences are issued by Ofcom under powers granted to them by section 86 of the Broadcasting Act 1990. Such a licence permits a commercial radio station to broadcast to a specific licensed geographic area (known as the measured coverage area) in accordance with a specified format (e.g. mainly speech-related requirements, such as news) for a set period of time.
- Since the mid 1990s, the analogue licences of stations that also provide a service in digital form (in practice, either via digital audio broadcasting (DAB) or its successor technology, DAB+) have benefited from an entitlement to claim a series of renewals, in accordance with amendments made to the Broadcasting Act 1990 by the Broadcasting Act 1996, the Communications Act 2003, the Digital Economy Act 2010 and the Legislative Reform (Further Renewal of Radio Licences) Order 2015.
- A number of licences, including national analogue licences for Classic FM and TalkSport, have used up their renewals and were due to expire from early 2022. Ofcom now has the power to renew these licences for a further period. The changes only affect analogue commercial radio services. Digital radio and community radio are subject to different licensing arrangements.
- DAB radio services are broadcast as multiplexes. A radio multiplex consists of a number of DAB radio stations bundled together to be transmitted digitally on a single frequency in a given geographic area.

This makes it a more efficient way of transmitting sound signals compared to analogue radio, where stations are broadcast on individual frequencies.

- The first national multiplex licence for commercial radio expires in 2023 and the shift in listening to digital (more than 58% of all radio listening is now digital) means it is time for the Government to consider the licensing arrangements for DAB multiplexes.
- The Broadcasting (Radio Multiplex Services) Act 2017 gives the DCMS Secretary of State a power to modify (through secondary legislation) the various procedures to create Small Scale Radio services. Ofcom has recently launched details of their [plans](#) to start licensing small scale radio later this year.

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## [Up to £75,000 available for UK space technology projects](#)

News story

Government grants worth up to £75,000 are available to the UK space sector to develop new commercial technologies and bring them closer to market.



The funding from the UK Space Agency is available for businesses, non-profits and academics.

The UK has a thriving space sector which generates an income of £14.8 billion each year. The UK Space Agency is working closely with industry and academia to ensure it recovers strongly from the coronavirus pandemic. This funding call, as part of the National Space Technology Programme (NSTP), is looking for innovative 6-month projects that could develop instruments for commercial applications or test disruptive ideas.

Since launching in 2011, the NSTP has supported 272 projects. Previous successful applicants include Belstead, which improved drag sail methods in the removal of space debris, and a collaboration between the University of Bristol and Rutherford Appleton Laboratory to track and analyse volcanic ash clouds, which can be detrimental to jet engines.

Charles McCausland, Head of Major Projects and Technology Development, UK Space Agency, said:

The National Space Technology Programme has a strong track record of developing new ideas and driving growth in the UK space sector, with support available for organisations of any size.

In 2019, we successfully funded 58 projects. As we ramp up support for national space capabilities and develop the new UK space strategy, the programme will continue to play a major role in forging new collaborations and backing early-stage technologies with future potential.

The NSTP funds four types of grants. This call for Pathfinder projects aims to increase the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of space technologies, encourage collaboration between industry and academia, and encourage new entrants to the space sector.

The UK Space Agency is leading work across government to develop a comprehensive UK space strategy. A new National Space Innovation Programme will further strengthen national space capabilities and international space co-operation, while creating high-skilled jobs across the country.

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## **Fusion mission continues in Covid-secure working environment**

News story

Our work to bring fusion energy to fruition is back underway at Culham, but working conditions have now changed to reflect the circumstances.



The JET control room

Following the hard work by many staff across the UK Atomic Energy Authority, led by Chief Operating Officer Lyanne Maclean, the site's key research facilities are reopening, with stringent safety, social distancing and hygiene measures to guard against the spread of Covid-19.

UKAEA has restarted operations on the [EU's JET fusion machine](#) at Culham, now with a smaller operational team in the Control Room, and with videoconferencing facilities allowing scientists to participate in experiments remotely.

Meanwhile work continues on the UK's [MAST Upgrade tokamak](#). Despite the challenges of the new working conditions, engineers have successfully tracked down and fixed some elusive earthing issues within some of the complex suite of power supplies, enabling the commissioning process to continue.

At UKAEA's [RACE centre](#), experimental work into robotics has restarted, with distancing between staff working in the facility's large work hall.

Watch this video on how working conditions have changed at Culham: [Restart of operations at UKAEA](#)

Most UKAEA staff continue to work from home – thanks to the great efforts of the IT team, remote home working is proving very effective.

[Please read this article](#) for a reminder about the current status at UKAEA, including procurement contact information. Our recruitment activities carry on as normal and you can find latest job opportunities at: <https://ccfe.ukaea.uk/careers/vacancies/>

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# UK aid will help provide millions of Palestinians with healthcare and education

Press release

UK support will help the UN Relief and Works Agency to continue delivering on its mandate to support and protect Palestinian refugees.



Food parcels being delivered for Palestinian refugees in Gaza, April 2020.  
Picture: UNRWA/Khalil Adwan

The UK has pledged new funds to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to provide vital support to Palestinian refugees, the UK's Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, announced today.

UK support will help the Agency to continue delivering on its UN mandate to support and protect Palestinian refugees.

The UK has consistently been one of UNRWA's top donors, and its support in the last year has enabled UNRWA to provide education for more than half a million children and helped over 3.5 million Palestinians access health services.

Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, said:

Overcrowded living conditions and years of conflict have left Palestinian refugees particularly vulnerable to the impact of coronavirus. The pandemic has made it more difficult for UNRWA to carry out its essential work, yet its staff continue to work tirelessly to provide help to those in need.

I am delighted the UK is providing this new support to UNRWA so it

can continue to deliver its vital services, including healthcare and education, to Palestinian refugees.

The UK continues to support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair and realistic settlement for refugees.

Until that happens, the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees across the region.

## Notes to editors

- This additional £33.5 million of UK funding announced today brings the UK's total contribution to UNRWA for 2020 to £34.5 million.
- On 23 June donors pledged \$130m at the UNRWA pledging conference co-hosted by Jordan and Sweden.

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# [Charity Commission concludes inquiry prompted by dispute at South London charity](#)

Press release

Charity Commission criticises a group of trustees of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators over long-running dispute



The Charity Commission has [concluded its inquiry](#) into [Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators](#), finding that one group of trustees' inability to manage a long-running dispute is evidence of mismanagement.

The charity was established to preserve the commons for the purposes of exercise and recreation. In 2014, it sold land access rights (an easement) to Wandsworth Borough Council to allow for a road to a primary school and residential flats being developed on part of the commons.

The granting of the easement led to damaging disputes between the trustees over whether it was sold at an undervalue and whether the sale was in the best interests of the charity. The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the charity in August 2016, after it failed to resolve the issues with advice and guidance from the regulator.

The inquiry did not find any one individual responsible for any incorrect decision, act or omission, but finds the inability of the trustees in post between 2015 and 2018 to manage the dispute resulting from the granting of the easement has been costly to the charity, and is evidence of mismanagement.

The Commission did not make any findings about the decision to grant the easement or the terms of that grant.

**Helen Earner, Director of Regulatory Services at the Charity Commission, said:**

All too often we see differences of opinion amongst charity trustees deteriorate into entrenched disputes. We would expect charities to resolve such disputes themselves, before they damage the charity's reputation and deplete its funds. Unfortunately, in this case, the trustees failed to make this happen, to the detriment of the charity.

I am encouraged by steps we are seeing towards improved governance, and increased transparency and accountability at the charity. I expect progress to continue, with trustees living up to the high standards of behaviour and conduct that the public rightly expect of charities.

Alongside its own inquiry report the Commission has, in the interests of transparency, published [findings made by an interim manager appointed to the charity in 2017](#). A [full report of the inquiry](#) is available on GOV.UK.

**Ends.**

**Notes to editors:**

1. Due to the long-running issues spanning several years, the report distinguishes between three sets of trustees; the original trustees, subsequent trustees, and current trustees.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that



people can improve lives and strengthen society.

3. It is not for the Commission to take sides or mediate in disputes. The Commission's role is, instead, to ensure that charities are governed effectively, charitable funds are properly accounted for, and trust in charity is maintained.

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