



audio
content
fund

Annual Report

2019-2020: Interim

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This report summarises the activities of the Audio Content Fund from April 2019 – March 2020. It breaks down the bids received, and details the successful projects and their intended outcomes. It also briefly summarises some significant activity in April and May 2020.

This edition is labelled an Interim Report since, at the time of writing, several of the later projects have not yet entered production or been broadcast. It will be superseded by a Final Report once the final project has been broadcast.

Author – Sam Bailey, Managing Director, Audio Content Fund

Date – 1 June 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Audio Content Fund (ACF) exists to finance the creation of original, high quality, crafted, public-service material for broadcast on commercial and community radio. It is part of a pilot Contestable Fund, funded by the UK Government.
2. The industry trade bodies AudioUK and Radiocentre set up the pilot fund, which is responsible for distributing a grant of up to £3 million over three years. Year One had a budget of £750,000 with an additional £50,000 for pre-launch administrative costs.
3. Bidding for ACF funding in 2019 took place in three rounds (in April, July and October) resulting in 121 bids, from 61 different suppliers, for content on 126 different radio stations.
4. Bids were assessed by the ACF's Independent Funding Panel, comprised of four people, resulting in 25 projects being selected for funding.
5. The funded projects range from £10k - £61k and total £655,898. They will collectively generate 162 hours of content, and reach a gross audience of 5.616m listeners on analogue or DAB radio.
6. Of the 25 projects, 23 are from new production/broadcaster partnerships – companies and broadcasters that have never worked together before.
7. ACF funding has created unique opportunities for independent production companies to work with commercial and community radio, and forge working relationships that in many cases have persisted beyond the scope of the ACF-funded project. Many of these have been podcast companies, getting their first on-air radio credits.
8. ACF funding has supported eight projects on community radio which the stations would not otherwise have been able to afford. Testimony from community radio organisations makes it clear that, mostly being charitable, volunteer-led, or non-profit organisations, their scope for high-quality, crafted programming is very low.
9. ACF funding has supported 17 projects on commercial radio which would not have been possible to fund via conventional commercial relationships. A number of projects have either continued after ACF funding, or had notable influence on programming decisions made by the broadcasters.
10. Fifteen of the 25 projects were from suppliers based outside of London. Projects were funded for broadcast in all four nations of the UK, with content produced in English, Welsh, Irish and Ulster Scots. All bids are assessed for the diversity of their representation, and several funded projects are primarily focused on BAME, LGBT, and disabled narratives or perspectives.
11. Year Two of the ACF has begun with the distribution of £400k for 28 projects to support audiences during coronavirus. The remainder of the £1m budget will be distributed in August 2020, November 2020 and March 2021.

HELEN BOADEN, CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT FUNDING PANEL

What a pleasure and a privilege it has been to chair the ACF Panel in its inaugural year, spending a generous grant from DCMS to deliver inventive public service content across a wide range of radio stations.



We aim to reach a lot of listeners of every kind so we've been delighted by the sharp ideas across every genre, developed by Indies for the tightly disciplined schedules of commercial radio. Challenging issues, like infertility and male mental health, have been brilliantly shaped to work for mainstream radio. Music and comedy ideas have flourished, local history has been uncovered, and important current affairs topics explored.

But the fund is also there for community and specialist stations. We've commissioned a soap opera for children, exquisite radio features about rural life, a discussion programme for young people, a definitive guide to jazz music, the story of being a prison wife, and a lot more.

Whilst this report focuses on the detail of 2019's funding, I can't help but pause to reflect on how many wonderful public service ideas blossomed in the adversity of the COVID-19 crisis. When lockdown changed life for everyone, we galvanised the Fund and commissioned new ideas every week. Live music and arts events had been cancelled overnight so we funded them on air; key workers were under terrible pressure so we commissioned features about their lives; listeners, young and old, were lonely so we enabled ideas which put them in touch; the country was split apart, so we funded event radio on VE Day to bring them together.

We greatly look forward to the ACF enabling yet more creativity in the coming year.

SAM BAILEY, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE ACF

We're publishing this report exactly one year since we distributed the Audio Content Fund's first grants, back in June 2019 – and to call it an extraordinary year would be an understatement.



I've always been impressed by the talent, resolve and commitment of the UK's independent audio production sector, and the 121 bids we received from companies all over the country has testified to that. It has been my pleasure to work with those talented people during that time, to help advise and support their ideas, and do what I can to connect them with brilliant broadcasters.

Seeing such creative and impactful ideas take shape on commercial and community stations has been a joy, and I'm extremely proud of the huge appetite I've seen for radio to be a force for good in what feels like an increasingly challenging world. The wide variety of formats, genres, and topics of content that we've funded shows the possibilities for public service in this space, and I'm glad that ACF funding has been able to unlock more of that potential.

In recent months – for projects that will be covered in detail in next year's report – that kindred community of indies and stations joined forces to produce some extraordinary material that I'm certain helped millions of listeners around the UK during a very uncertain period. I hope, as well as reflecting on a brilliant 2019, you'll take the opportunity to listen on our website to some of the content funded to support audiences during coronavirus.

I'm grateful to all of them, and of course to our colleagues at DCMS, for a brilliant first year of funding great radio content – I can't wait to see and hear what comes next.

SUMMARY OF SUCCESSFUL BIDS

25

Successful
Bids

21

Different
Suppliers

35

Different
Stations

162

Hours of
Content

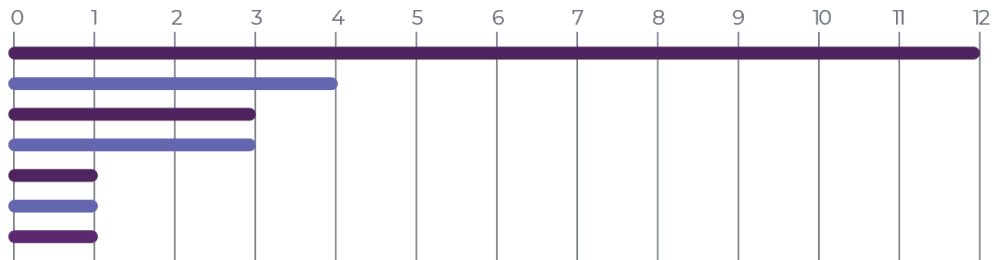
£655k

Total funds
Distributed

Genre of Content

Factual
Drama
Comedy
Discussion/Magazine
Childrens
Sport
Current Affairs

12
4
3
3
1
1
1

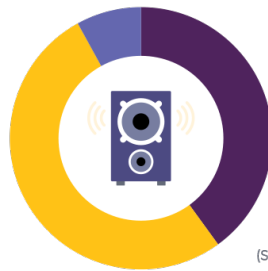


Broadcaster Type



8 Community
17 Commercial

Format



10 Short
13 Long
2 Mixture

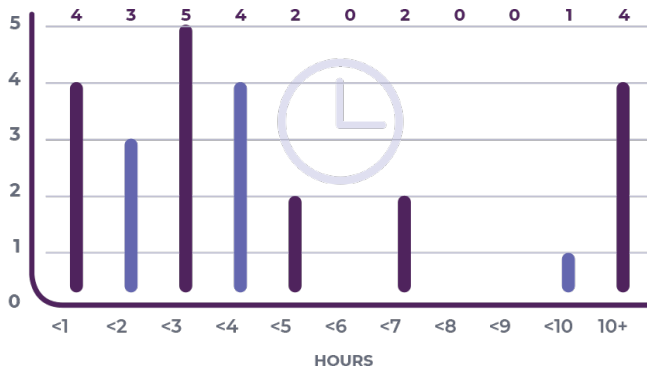
(Short = 15mins or less)

Cost per Listener Hour

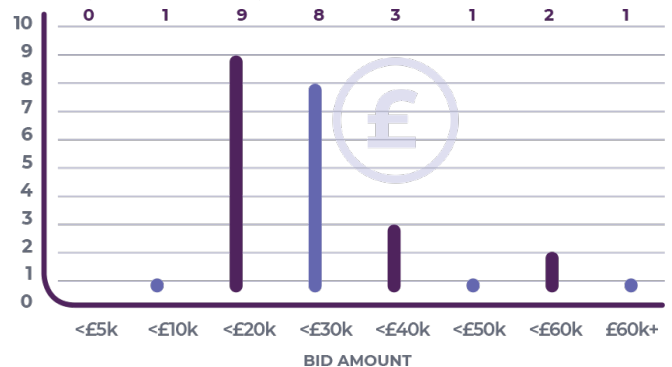


7 <5p
6 <10p
6 <15p
6 15p+

Hours of Content per project



Budget per project



Reach Estimates per project



21 COMPANIES WITH SUCCESSFUL BIDS

bafflegab

SPARKLAB

whistledown

np NAKED PRODUCTIONS

Stellaria
Media

2ZY

fallingtree

&R
REFORM RADIO

FOGHORN

Folder
&Co.

we are
unedited

PIXIU

MIM

tbi
the big idea

sblash

unusual

SWSW
Network

listen

Loftus[®]

offside
productions
media

Gusman
Productions

35 PARTICIPATING RADIO STATIONS



BACKGROUND TO THE AUDIO CONTENT FUND

The Audio Content Fund is a scheme designed to provide funding to support the creation of original radio and audio production in the UK. The ACF is part of a pilot Contestable Fund, funded by the UK Government, to support the provision and plurality of difficult-to-produce UK public service content.

The ACF is responsible for distributing a grant of up to £3 million over three years. Funding is used to produce distinctive, public service radio programming that is traditionally more difficult to support on a commercial basis (such as documentaries, comedy, drama, events).

In 2018, the industry trade bodies AudioUK (for independent audio-led production companies), and Radiocentre (for commercial radio) were tasked by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with setting up the pilot fund. Audio Content Fund Ltd. was formed in October 2018, with company directors Will Jackson (Managing Director of AudioUK) and Siobhan Kenny (Chief Executive of Radiocentre).

The fund entered into a grant agreement with DCMS which outlined a funding structure of £750,000 in the first year, followed by £1,100,000 in the second, and £1,100,000 in the third. The agreement states that these sums must include all administrative costs, and an additional £50,000 was agreed for pre-launch administrative costs, thus totalling £3m.

ACF appointed a Managing Director, Sam Bailey, to oversee the operation of the fund from April 2019. Funding decisions are made by an Independent Funding Panel, who report to the company directors via the Managing Director. The Audio Content Fund officially launched on 1 April 2019, and its first funding round opened the same day.

SUMMARY OF PAYMENTS

In this first year of operation, the Audio Content Fund administered its awards in three funding rounds, each distributing roughly one third of the annual grant budget.

Having determined its administrative budget for the year at £99,000, the fund set its grant budget at £651,000, with an objective to distribute funds evenly across the three funding rounds.

The three funding rounds were held as follows:

- Round 1 from 1-29 April 2019, awarding £234,359 in July 2019;
- Round 2 from 15 July to 11 August 2019 awarding £199,397 in November 2019; and
- Round 3 from 14 October to 10 November 2019 awarding £222,142 in February 2020.

Thus, a total of £655,898 was distributed (a grant variation having been agreed with DCMS to allow the fund to distribute slightly more than the £651,000 originally budgeted).

BIDDING GUIDELINES

The Audio Content Fund published its bidding guidelines in February 2019 (and revised them in March 2019, following some feedback from stakeholders).

The guidelines describe the funding principles of the ACF – that “the fund will accept applications from production companies, for audio content that is guaranteed to be broadcast on an Ofcom-licensed radio station” – and go on to outline the basic eligibility criteria for a bid, and the detailed assessment criteria that will be used by the independent funding panel to make their decisions.

These assessment criteria are based on the wider priorities of the Contestable Fund Pilot project, outlined in the DCMS policy paper as Quality, Additionality, Audience Reach, Nations and Regions, Diversity, Innovation, New Voices, and Plurality (further explanation of these is provided on pages 10-11).

The guidelines go on to outline special conditions for certain types of project, and give specific details about the online application process for bidders. The guidelines can be downloaded from audio.fund/guidelines

INDEPENDENT FUNDING PANEL

The panel were selected following a request for expressions of interest in Spring 2019. The initial funding panel, which first met in May 2019 was as follows:

- **Helen Boaden (Chair):** former Director of BBC Radio, and Controller of BBC Radio 4, who began her career in commercial radio and BBC Local Radio.
- **Mukti Jain Campion:** independent producer, director of production company Culture Wise with 20+ years' experience producing programmes for BBC Radio.
- **Kate Cocker:** radio presenter coach and podcaster, with a 20-year career in both public service and commercial radio, notably as Programme Director of Manchester's Key 103.
- **John Myers:** commercial radio executive, owner, and presenter, including Chief Executive of GMG Radio and author of numerous government reports.

John died suddenly in June 2019, having played a full part in assessing the first round of Audio Content Fund bids. He was replaced on the funding panel in September 2019 by:

- **David Lloyd:** radio consultant and historian, a former executive at Orion Media, Virgin Radio, and Border Radio Holdings. An active podcaster and presenter.



Helen
Boaden



Mukti Jain
Campion



Kate
Cocker



John
Myers



David
Lloyd

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Managing Director of the ACF assesses all bids against the basic eligibility criteria laid out in the bidding guidelines, and passes eligible bids to the Funding Panel for consideration. The panel score the bids against the evaluation criteria outlined in the guidelines, each conducting their own independent scoring.

Three of these criteria are mandatory (Quality, Additionality, Audience Reach) – bidders are expected to score well in all three of these criteria. Despite being mandatory, these are still subjective criteria and are subject to comparative assessment (i.e. one bidder can score more highly than another).

The other five criteria are supplementary (Nations and Regions, Diversity, Innovation, New Voices, Plurality) – bidders do not have to score well in *all* of these criteria, but the more criteria they cover, the higher they will score. While there is inevitably some degree of subjectivity in assessing bids, the stated criteria enable members of the Funding Panel to systematically consider the relative merits of competing bids and how they will fulfil the ACF's public service remit.

Following their individual scoring process, the panel then convene to compare their scores and identify the leading bids. At this meeting, the originality, deliverability and likely audience impact of the various shortlisted projects are discussed and debated. The panel also look at the slate as a whole to ensure there is a range and balance across the ACF's output with regard to, for example, subject matter, genre, audience profile and budget allocation.

INELIGIBLE BIDS

Over the course of the year, 15 out of 121 bids were deemed ineligible, for not meeting the basic eligibility criteria set out in the guidelines:

- Nine bids were rejected because they did not meet the special conditions for audience reach of projects to be broadcast on community radio stations. The guidelines state that bidders should endeavour to form partnerships of community radio stations, to maximise the potential audience reach of their projects, and help these stations make impact within their communities.
- Two bids were rejected because they were due to be made by a company under the same ownership as the proposed broadcaster. The guidelines state that the producer should be separate from the broadcaster.
- Two bids were rejected because they could not demonstrate any Audience Reach data, because they were newly launched stations without any RAJAR or equivalent research available.
- One bid was rejected because it did not meet the mandatory criteria of Additionality – it was for a programme already being made and broadcast.
- One bid was rejected because it did not have a guarantee of broadcast on an Ofcom licensed radio station – it was for a podcast-only project.

MEETING THE AIMS OF THE CONTESTABLE FUND

DCMS's Contestable Fund pilot establishes eight evaluation criteria, which are in turn used by the Audio Content Fund's independent funding panel to assess all bids.



Quality

To ensure that productions met the standards and characteristics expected of public service content, funded by public money, the panel ensured all bidding suppliers demonstrated significant experience and expertise in their proposed subjects. They sought to be assured of the necessary levels of editorial oversight from appropriately qualified senior leadership, and to be confident in the production company to deliver on time and on budget. They interrogated each bid's budget breakdown to make sure the project was appropriately resourced, and explored the production and broadcast experience of key named personnel.

Additionality

As part of the Contestable Fund pilot, ACF projects must demonstrate they would be too difficult to produce without our intervention. The panel sought to support productions which the market would have deemed a commercial risk, and which were over and above the broadcasting station(s) core offer. All our successful bidders and their broadcast partners demonstrated their commitment to introducing additional, high public-value content to their schedules, and many indicated that the proposed formats and topics were a significant departure from their existing services.



Audience Reach

The terms of the pilot require ACF-funded projects to be available on free-to-air, Ofcom-regulated platforms, that have significant audience reach. While we did not set a minimum threshold for reach (since regional markets all vary in size), the ACF panel did make judgments about whether they felt proposed broadcast slots represented enough prominence for the genre and format of content. As our data shows, more than half our funded projects were expected to reach 150,000 listeners or more, with 20% of them expected to reach more than 250,000.

Nations and Regions

This criterion was assessed through consideration of the location of the supplier, the subject matter of the content, and the perspectives and locations of its contributors. Of the 25 funded projects, 15 are from suppliers based outside of London. We spent 6% of the year's grant budget on content in UK Indigenous languages; *On The Land / Ar Y Tir* is a bilingual English/Welsh project, and *The Hidden History of Place Names* is bilingual in Irish/Ulster Scots. A further 4% was spent on English-language content broadcast on local stations in the Nations (*The Central FM Comedy Hour*, and *Young and Cool*). In the English Regions, projects such as *XS Manchester's Music Tour*, *Patches of Land* and *Our Journey* each have a particular local focus. For the projects broadcasting on national stations, commitments were made to ensure contributors were from a wide range of backgrounds, representative of the whole UK.





Diversity

The ACF seeks to promote diversity both on- and off-air, and our assessment process seeks to encourage opportunity for those who are currently under-represented in broadcasting, within production teams and in content. A number of our funded projects had diversity at the core of their proposal: *Kick Off: Added Time* is a football phone-in focused on contributors from minority backgrounds; *Relay* is a radio drama devised and written by disabled writers about the disabled experience; *The Rainbow Road to Tokyo* will tell the stories of young LGBT athletes preparing for the

Olympic and Paralympic Games; *Equal Britain?* will examine the effectiveness of equality legislation at safeguarding nine legally protected characteristics. The majority of bidders committed to ensuring the diversity of contributors within their projects.

Innovation

Bidders and broadcasters met the challenge of innovation in a number of areas, often resulting in the introduction of novel formats and genres to stations. A welcome approach was the combination of short-form and long-form content, as a way of targeting daytime listeners as well as those listening in the evening. *Time To Listen*, *The F Word*, *Minds Over Matter*, and *Hometown Stories* all presented variations on this approach. Many projects represented audio genres that were previously not explored by their broadcast partners: *Space is the Place* will be the first audio drama on Jazz FM; *Open Forum* was the first long-form discussion programme on Gaydio; and *The Central FM Comedy Hour* delivered that station its first comedy show. A number of projects delivered creative innovation in their style and sound design, notably *Patches of Land*, *Time To Listen*, and *Prison Bag*.



New Voices

DCMS funding provides opportunities to introduce fresh voices and new ideas, in both on-air talent and through supporting smaller suppliers and new producers. Projects focused on nurturing on-air talent include *The Central FM Comedy Hour* (new, regional comedy talent), *The Space Programme* (new, young acting talent), *Prison Bag* (writer Josie Bevan, on-air for the first time), and *Open Forum* (led by a regular focus-group of young people). ACF funding saw a number of podcast producers getting on-air radio credits for the first time (including Unedited, Pixiu Productions and Offside Media Productions). Other smaller and newer suppliers included Sblash

(until now focused on local marketing), Reform Radio (working as a production company, rather than a broadcaster), and SWSW Network (sole-trader and presenter Miranda Rae).



Plurality

In aiming to increase the amount of public-service programming in UK radio, the ACF panel considered whether projects represented an increase in public service within the wider market place (notably, in addition to BBC and online content). Many ideas brought considerable new public value to audiences, with topics or content that weren't available elsewhere: *The XS Manchester Music Tour* delivered in-depth local music history in long-form over several months; *The Central FM Comedy Hour* provided audiences with locally-tailored comedy material unavailable on other platforms; *The Space Programme* was the only children's radio soap opera broadcast anywhere in the UK.



DETAILS OF FUNDED PROJECTS

This section provides details of all the projects supported by the Audio Content Fund in 2019-2020. Where projects have also been completed within the same time period, a case study is provided with feedback from the producer, broadcaster, and audience. Projects are listed in order of broadcast, as follows:

	Project Name	Producer	Broadcaster	First TX	Budget
Projects which have been broadcast or have begun broadcasting, at time of publication:					
1	Kick Off: Added Time	Unedited	talkSPORT	Aug 2019	£61,600
2	The XS Manchester Music Tour	2ZY	XS Manchester	Oct 2019	£19,898
3	Minds Over Matter	Whistledown	Union Jack	Oct 2019	£22,300
4	Time to Listen	TBI Media	Absolute Radio	Oct 2019	£19,932
5	Open Forum	Reform Radio	Gaydio	Nov 2019	£40,089
6	On The Land / Ar Y Tir	Splash	Radio Carms / Pembs	Jan 2020	£17,100
7	The Central FM Comedy Hour	Gusman	Central FM	Jan 2020	£14,850
8	Patches of Land	Stellaria Media	5x community radio in Devon and Cornwall	Feb 2020	£10,000
9	The Space Programme	Bafflegab	Fun Kids	Feb 2020	£29,700
10	The Hidden History of Place Names	The Foghorn Company	Raidio Failte and Fuse FM	Mar 2020	£32,381
11	Prison Bag	Falling Tree	National Prison Radio and 3x Community	Apr 2020	£50,124
12	Team Talk	TBI Media	BFBS	Apr 2020	£26,299
13	Relay (Development Funding)	Naked Productions	4x community radio	n/a	£10,509
Projects which are in production and have not yet been broadcast, at time of publication:					
14	Loneliness Awareness Campaign	Offside Productions	talkRADIO	June 2020	£10,230
15	Young and Cool: A Brief History of Country	Made in Manchester	Downtown Radio	June 2020*	£10,140
16	The F Word	TBI Media	Magic Radio	Sept 2020*	£20,700
17	Space is the Place	Sparklab	Jazz FM	TBC*	£36,134
18	Story Explorers	Pixiu Productions	Fun Kids	TBC*	£29,933
19	Equal Britain?	Loftus Media	talkRADIO	TBC*	£27,375
20	Our Journey	SWSW Network	6x community radio	TBC*	£14,295
21	Rockanory	Unusual Productions	Absolute Radio	TBC*	£34,914
22	Hometown Stories	Listen	Virgin Radio	TBC*	£53,040
23	The Definitive Guide to Jazz in Britain	Made in Manchester	Jazz FM	Nov 2020	£28,165
24	Magic's Olivier Stories	Folder & Co	Magic Radio	April 2021*	£12,000
25	The Rainbow Road to Tokyo	Made in Manchester	Gaydio	June 2021*	£24,190

* These projects had planned transmission dates ranging from March to August 2020, but their productions and broadcast have been affected by coronavirus restrictions. We are in regular contact with them about revised timelines.

Kick Off: Added Time

produced by Unedited, for talkSPORT

Kick Off: Added Time is a weekly football phone-in committed to airing the opinions and views of fans, journalists, and personalities from diverse backgrounds. It is hosted by Hugh Wozenecroft, Vaishali Bhardwaj and Jordan Jarret Bryant, with recurring co-presenters and guests.

Guests have included Lucy Clark (football's first transgender referee), black filmmaker Robbie Lyle, 19-year-old club owner Sartej Tucker, the leaders of Rising Ballers FC, and WSL experts Anne-Marie Batson and Fadumo Olow.

Topics have included the transfer window, racist chanting at England vs Bulgaria, the evolution of football positions, the art of football punditry, retro team kits, and the impact of coronavirus on football competitions. Essentially, all the usual features of football phone-ins, but from perspectives that are rarely given exposure on national platforms.

The success of this project ultimately led a significant change of presenter line-up at talkSPORT, with Added Time frontman Hugh Wozenecroft taking on other weeknight shows, and other BAME presenters Reshmin Chowdhury, Darren Bent and Trevor Sinclair joining the station's presenting roster.

Chosen because: A strong commitment to new, diverse talent and under-represented audiences, from the largest sport broadcaster in the commercial radio sector.

The producer said: The opportunity that the ACF has given our company to make quality programming for talkSPORT has been significant. We have learnt valuable lessons in editorial procedures, handling of matters of race, homosexuality and gender, opening up the discussion as well as just having a normal conversation about football. – Andrew Spence, Co-owner, Unedited

The broadcaster said: The Unedited team have used their expertise and industry knowledge to create a programme that has built trust amongst communities that have, at times, found themselves at odds with the coverage on mainstream media. By being able to create a platform of this kind (a weekly and regular programming strand) progress has been made in rebuilding trust and giving credible voices a say in the important sporting debates of the day. – Laurie Palacio, Deputy Head of talkSPORT

Key Facts

Format: 40x 1hrs

Total Duration: 40hrs

Budget: £61,600

First Broadcast: Aug 2019

Audience Reach: 176,200¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 0.8p

Listen: audio.fund/kickoff



The XS Manchester Music Tour

produced by 2ZY Ltd, for XS Manchester

The XS Manchester Music Tour was a 10-part series of outside broadcasts, from each of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. Presented by Clint Boon, each programme was broadcast live from a location that held significance for Manchester's musical heritage or music scene today. Each three-hour programme was a combination of pre-built packages, live interviews, and live music, together with regular playlist tracks.

The content of the shows focused on the musical heritage of Manchester, with an eye clearly on the present and future of the music scene too. Live music was provided by up-and-coming artists local to each venue, while interviews about heritage explored Manchester's musical greats including The Smiths, Oasis, Inspiral Carpets and David Bowie.

This project provided a level of historical education rarely heard on prime-time commercial radio, and delivered it with charm and warmth from a highly qualified and much-loved presenter. It provided a platform for music lovers and artists to share their passions, and represented the diverse and varied heritage of one of the UK's richest music scenes.

The Audience Reach for this timeslot more than doubled during the period the project was broadcast.¹

Chosen because: A strong 'out of London' project (in terms of production and broadcast) but with clear national interest. A genuine independent local radio station, and an innovative format mixing live and packaged material.

The producer said: As a Manchester-based indie (and qualified tour guide) this was a passion project. XS Manchester was the perfect place to land a series like this one, with its Manc credentials and its support of new music from the city. The Audio Content Fund gave us the investment to spend production time finding the stories and contributors we needed, and it funded network-class engineering to deliver live sets and guests. – John Ryan, 2ZY

The broadcaster said: These ten outside broadcasts wouldn't have been possible without the Audio Content Fund's backing. The money enabled creative freedom and increased production values on these shows, resulting in a rich and intelligent listen. The XS Manchester team loved collaborating with 2ZY to make the shows happen and fit seamlessly in to the station's output. – Neil Sloan, Group Content Director, CommunicorpUK

The audience said: "Absolutely loved the show, brought back so many memories" – Hayley via Twitter. "Just listening to you broadcasting from Guide bridge. A real blast from the past" – Lorraine via Twitter

Key Facts

Format: 10x 3hrs

Total Duration: 30hrs

Budget: £19,898

First Broadcast: Sep 2019

Audience Reach: 65,700¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 1.0p

Listen: audio.fund/xs



Minds Over Matter

produced by Whistledown, for Union Jack Radio

Minds Over Matter was an 8-day focus on men's mental health, explored through live music and comedy. The project started with a live music concert and ended with a live comedy gig, with high profile interview packages played throughout the week.

The live performances were recorded in 'Sheds' that form part of the 'Men in Sheds' network of outreach projects across the country. The comedy gig took place in Walsall with comedians Scott Bennett, Josh Pugh, and Harvey Hawkins. The live music took place in Crewe with John Darley, Mica Miller, and Ben Williams. Both events were edited together with conversations with audience members ('Shedders') about mental health issues.

Throughout the week, Union Jack played packages of interview with high profile guests including Robin Ince, Rudimental, Babyshambles, Jon McClure, Tom Robinson, Frank Turner, and Futureheads. Both the live elements and the interviews were made available as podcasts.

Sensitively hosted by Beverley Turner and Rhianna Dhillon, the content succeeded in balancing the voices of ordinary people dealing with day-to-day challenges of life, alongside entertaining and thought-provoking contributions from artists and comedians.

Chosen because: Innovative format, with a concentrated focus on the issue. The panel were interested in the variety of formats being deployed throughout the week. Adds plurality to the slate as it is a new, independent station (not part of one of the three big groups) only broadcasting on DAB.

The producer said: The conversations that we recorded with musicians and comedians for Union Jack weren't rushed promo interviews - they were long, thoughtful and incredibly personal. Most of them were speaking for the first time about their struggles, and their methods of coping and coming to terms with mental illness. The feedback we got from listeners really showed us how the material had hit home and made people to think in a completely different way – David Prest, Managing Director

The broadcaster said: Minds Over Matter was Union JACK's first foray into male mental health. As a station loved by listeners for playing more comedy than anywhere else, it was a significant shift in focus. The stories, pathos and heart of the interviews really resonated with our audience and beyond. It really elevated our programming and helped contribute to Union JACK being recognised as one of the top six national stations at the ARIAs – Giles Gear, Union Jack Radio

Key Facts

Format: 2x 1hr + 20x 3mins

Total Duration: 3hrs

Budget: £22,300

First Broadcast: Oct 2019

Audience Reach: 50,000¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 14.9p

Listen: audio.fund/minds



Time To Listen

produced by TBI Media, for Absolute Radio

Time To Listen provided a platform for musicians and artists to open up, in frank conversations about mental health and wellbeing. Via a week-long residency on Danielle Perry's evening show, guests selected tracks that held significant meaning, and spoke candidly about issues including relationships, therapy, and suicide.

The series ran for ten weeks, and featured contributions from Tom Walker, Midge Ure, Jo Brand, Gary Lightbody, Sam Fender, Adam Clayton, Skin, and others. As well as the short evening show packages, omnibus episodes were created and broadcast on Sunday evenings and made available as podcasts.

The programme format provided an accessible route to discuss mental health, via artists that are a natural fit on the station's playlist. The scheduling of short-form and omnibus provided a significant chunk of audience reach, and established a template that other bids later followed.

Chosen because: A long-term commitment in a regular slot on a big national radio station. Low-cost production, and a simple, unobtrusive format which is likely to retain the listener's attention.

The producer said: TBI Media's mission is to create Content That Makes a Difference and Time to Listen has proved to be an extraordinarily rewarding project for us. The concept always felt like it would deliver stand-out moments, but the passion with which each artist embraced it was a constant surprise. As well as the input of the artists and production team, Absolute Radio have been nothing but brilliant as a partner every step of the way – Dave Young, TBI Media

The broadcaster said: Time To Listen has been a wonderfully crafted piece of programming, which has added to the rich tapestry of the Absolute Radio evening show. The station's audience is the most at-risk of depression and suicide while also being the least likely to open up about feelings. This project has acted as a true conversation starter. It taps into the station's Real Music/Comedy ethos and has had the authentic feel which runs through the station's DNA. – Paul Sylvester, Content Controller, Absolute Radio

The audience said: By SMS – "My go-to tune is Muse - Feeling Good which I found after going through a hard break up, depression etc... Tomorrow is a new day and I'm feeling good. A few years on now and life is so much better. Music is so powerful. Cheers, Steve"

By SMS - "I've been in a new job for the past 2 months, it's not going as well as I'd have liked, but I'm standing my ground. When I get in my car in the AM, my heart is beating out my chest. I've got a baby boy so there's no choice.... "Ok Google - play Invisible Sun by Liam Gallagher" every morning!!! Turn it up, blows me back on track. I suffer from all sorts - this tune has now become part of my morning routine.... Matt, Cheshire x"

Key Facts

Format: 48x 5mins

Total Duration: 4hrs

Budget: £19,932

First Broadcast: Oct 2019

Audience Reach: 329,500¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 1.5p

Listen: audio.fund/time



Open Forum

produced by Reform Radio, for Gaydio

Open Forum was a series of monthly discussions, crafted from workshops of young people aged 16-25. The free-flowing discussions – edited down to 1hr episodes – also include live performances of spoken word, rap, storytelling, music and other artistic material.

Each episode covers a different topic impacting young adults: Identity; Sex; Home; Relationships; and Women. The discussions are hosted by Dean McCullough, who expertly navigates the complexities of each topic, making all contributors feel at-ease.

The production company for this project was online radio station Reform Radio – a non-profit culture station focused on making content to support young adults into employment. Their broadcast partner Gaydio is aligned in audience profile, and broadcasts on community FM licences in Manchester and Brighton, with DAB coverage on six local multiplexes.

Sonically, the Open Forum shows are an effortless weaving-together of discussion and performance, with hugely illuminating contributions from their speakers. A fascinating record of life for young adults in the 21st century.

Chosen because: Innovative approach and format, involving groups of young people and covering a wide range of issues. One of the largest community stations in the country, this is nonetheless content they could not afford to make.

The producer said: This funding has helped us to do something completely transformative in our organisation. It's helped to engage with new audiences and communities, create extraordinary content for both our station and Gaydio, and helped us to develop a format that will continue well after the funding stops. We are looking to write other bids to continue this work and pitch the idea to commission bodies – Jemma Tanswell, Reform Radio.

The broadcaster said: Thanks to the fund, we've been able to showcase pioneering artists and share vital conversations from under-represented voices. The very concept of working with an independent production company is something that we wouldn't even be able to consider without the existence of the ACF – Toby Whitehouse, Gaydio

Key Facts

Format: 5x 1hr

Total Duration: 5hrs

Budget: £40,089

First Broadcast: Oct 2019

Audience Reach: 80,000⁶

Cost per Listener Hour: 10p

Listen: audio.fund/open



On The Land / Ar Y Tir

produced by Sblash, for Radio Carmarthenshire and Radio Pembrokeshire

This series of short feature packages highlighted the people, groups and enterprises at the centre of rural communities in West Wales. The packages are produced in both English (On The Land) and Welsh (Ar Y Tir), and broadcast on Nation Broadcasting's stations in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

From lifestyle businesses, to farmers developing alternative methods, to entrepreneurs developing outdoor pursuit centres – there's a lot going on in West Wales that deserves to be talked about.

Presenter/Producer Aled Rhys Jones speaks to a wide variety of people including farmers, property owners, rugby clubs, engineers, even beekeepers.

Key Facts

Format: 160x 2.5mins

Total Duration: 6.67hrs

Budget: £17,100

First Broadcast: Jan 2020

Audience Reach: 22,300¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 12p

Listen: audio.fund/land



Chosen because: High value for money, especially for an indigenous language project. Producer has a proven track record in this market and on these stations. Versatile format over long broadcast period, makes it likely that most of the existing audience will hear some of this content.

The producer said: During the production of these features, we uncovered some great characters, community work, and a diverse range of businesses that operate in the countryside. For some of the contributors, it was their first experience of being interviewed for radio and being given a platform to share their story. These features have helped increase the amount of Welsh language content on local radio. The counties of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire both have strong pockets of Welsh-speaking communities and it has been great to give them a voice
– Aled Rhys Jones, Sblash Cyf

The broadcaster said: This project has been of great value to our stations. We know from experience that our listeners are always interested in the stories of people who live and work in the countryside. The fund has also allowed a broad range of topics to be covered and has showcased individuals who may not have been given the platform otherwise. One of the other major benefits has been the ability to create more bilingual content - the Welsh language is particularly important to the rural communities of West Wales and this has been very well received.
– Neil Greenslade, Nation Broadcasting



The Central FM Comedy Hour

produced by Gusman Productions, for 103.1 Central FM

The Central FM Comedy Hour did exactly what it said on the tin – an hour of comedy, every week, on Central FM.

The programme was broadcast every Friday evening at 10pm, hosted by duo Kris & Dave, and included comedy sketches, short-form narrative sitcoms, and stand-up, all written and performed by aspiring comedy talent from the Central Belt of Scotland.

The show had a unique local focus, providing a platform for aspiring comic talent from the area.

Chosen because: A commitment to local new voices and an innovative break from the format for a commercial music station. Good value for money, despite the relatively low reach, and an opportunity to do something unique in the marketplace.

The producer said: The writing and performing talent who were offered the opportunity on this project were all sourced from the local transmission area and they really delivered on the ethos of the bid. We also set out an ambition to offer practical experience to young local production talent and we were delighted to give that to two outstanding, young, aspiring producers. The team also rose to the challenge of writing and performing a weekly sketch show which is no mean feat, and was a wonderful creative challenge. The team immediately tuned in to the needs of the show and the audience they were serving, and came up with some brilliant locally-observed characters and situations – Gus Beattie, Gusman Productions

The broadcaster said: The Central FM Comedy Hour was a first in our local area and a breath of fresh air to our programming. We enjoyed the blend of youthful exuberance and experienced comedy production each week, which was even more notable when lockdown kicked in. The show gave local comedy and radio talent the chance to shine and for that alone it was an undoubted success – Liam McCann, Programme Controller, Central FM

Key Facts

Format: 12x 1hrs

Total Duration: 12hrs

Budget: £14,850

First Broadcast: Jan 2020

Audience Reach: 2,100¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 59p

Listen: audio.fund/central



Patches of Land

produced by Stellaria Media, for Phonic FM, St Austell Bay Radio, Radio Scilly, Soundart Radio, and The Source 96.1FM

Patches of Land is a package of 100 exquisitely small audio 'patches', each one a different perspective on our relationship with the land throughout Devon and Cornwall.

The patches feature the voices of the people of Devon and Cornwall, captured through informal conversations, personal testimonies and field recordings. Listening to the resulting list of patches is an increasingly addictive experience, each offering a unique insight into a stranger's life, or a piece of landscape.

The patches were designed to be broadcast either in isolation, or compiled together into longer formats. A 30-minute compilation of patches was simulcast on all five radio stations on 1st February 2020, with each station then taking their own approach to how to broadcast them over the remainder of the year.

Chosen because: An innovative format that is low-cost and has the flexibility to potentially be high-impact on air. A partnership of like-minded community radio stations, and a bid that speaks directly to their Ofcom key commitments.

The producer said: Patches of Land has been an adventure. We contributed far more hours than budgeted. We met fascinating people in incredible places. This project was rooted in community media practice, incorporating the skills and resources of all stations involved and their volunteers. We had a participatory production process which enabled us to include a wide range of voices. Patches of Land started many conversations, which has inspired other female community radio practitioners to start new projects of their own, including a programme about land and food at Soundart Radio, and a Source FM collaboration with their local women's centre. – Alice Armstrong, Stellaria Media

The broadcaster said: The accounts that were recorded contained a joyous range of lives and insights, the various compendia of them took us on journeys around the familiar and new. The musical realisations and their relationship to the spoken words were sublime, it really brought a solid, contemporary feel to the project and anchored it in an 'art' – Stuart Crewes, Phonic FM

It takes us away from a standard radio format. It challenges perceptions I had of what radio needs to be. Really it can be anything you want! In fact, the project we are developing with the Women's Centre in Cornwall is similar – conversations, making short features with people. Patches has influenced this project and the way we are working now. – Chiara Muzzi, Source FM

Key Facts

Format: 100x 2mins

Total Duration: 3.33hrs

Budget: £10,000

First Broadcast: Feb 2020

Audience Reach: 10,000²

Cost per Listener Hour: 30p

Listen: audio.fund/patches



The Space Programme

produced by Bafflegab, for Fun Kids

The Space Programme is a gripping soap opera for children, in which a tiny island in the Irish Sea is surprised to find itself the base for a new space programme. When two tech entrepreneurs announce their plan to make one of the local kids the world's first child astronaut, nothing is ever the same again.

The series is produced by award-winning radio drama producers Bafflegab, and written by established author Eddie Robson (Adulthood, Hollyoaks, Doctor Who), and Fun Kids is the country's only children's radio station available on DAB nationwide.

The young cast are all new voices, and are entirely based in Scotland. The recording took place in Edinburgh, and none of the young actors have done audio drama before.

Chosen because: A cost-effective drama proposal, from a producer with a strong track record. High quality, crafted programming for a very young audience.

The producer said: This project embodied something which had rarely, if ever, been attempted before – short radio dramas for children with enough drama to carry the audiences through to the following week. Recording 200 scenes and 20 characters in three days was incredibly complex, but the result was gripping, and we're proud to give many listeners their first experience of audio drama – Simon Barnard, Bafflegab Productions

The broadcaster said: Adding drama to the schedule was adventurous for Fun Kids - it's a type of content that's difficult to produce well. The Space Programme was a well-executed idea, and has added real texture to the radio station. As stand-alone short-form content, it's also something that we can put online as a podcast channel - this helps build the station's awareness, and can drive new listeners – Matt Deegan, Fun Kids

The audience said: "I love it! It's the best! Can you please make some more because I would hate it if that was the end. I really want to find out what happens next"

"I've just listened to only 3 episodes and I'm literally hooked! Only problem is that they're too short. Maybe you should've made them longer but I don't care because it's awesome!!!"

"I loved every second of this. It is brilliant. Please make more"

Key Facts

Format: 20x 10mins

Total Duration: 3.33hrs

Budget: £29,700

First Broadcast: Feb 2020

Audience Reach: 150,000⁵

Cost per Listener Hour: 6p

Listen: audio.fund/space



The Hidden History of Place Names

produced by The Foghorn Company, for Raidió Fáilte and FuseFM

A 12-part history series for Northern Ireland, presented in the Irish and Ulster Scots languages, revealing the hidden and shared past beneath our feet. Produced by The Foghorn Company, for Raidió Fáilte and Fuse FM.

In the company of presenters Kathy Clugston and Linda Ervine, listeners time travel with historians, linguists, authors, and experts from the Queen's University Place Names Project and the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris.

Each episode focuses on a particular county and illuminates the character of Armagh, Antrim, Derry/Londonderry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. Listeners are invited to open a Google Map – or even an old atlas – on the page for each county being explored. The evocative sounds of nature, water, wind and trees are ever present, as they were for our ancestors.

While a lot of documentary content for Northern Ireland focuses on the history of the last fifty years, this content seeks to fascinate the listener through the places and the characters from life, legend, literature and song across thousands of years in the province of Ulster and beyond

Chosen because: A ground-breaking concept, connecting both communities in Northern Ireland in both indigenous languages

The producer said: This project proved more complex to deliver than originally thought, but I believe we created a much richer and surprising history series for the people of Northern Ireland as a result. The joy of making the series came from bringing experts from Queens and Ulster University face-to-face with local historians in atmospheric castles, graveyards, lakesides, and ancient sites of battle and worship in order to capture a sense of ourselves and the listener among the elements that once buffeted our ancestors during formative moments of conflict and community building. – Peter Curran, The Foghorn Company

The broadcaster said: This project was an immensely valuable addition to our ethos of educating and entertaining our listeners, and the feedback we received showed a real appreciation of scholarship and storytelling skill that broadened traditional notions of history and heritage in our Ulster Scots community. We've been happy to repeat the series at teatime during the recent school closures, as an entertaining family learning experience.' - Codie Murray, Station Manager, FUSE FM

The audience said: "Although an unfamiliar format to most of them, our pupils were fascinated by the vivid stories in your audio history" – Angela O'Hara, Headteacher

"I thought this would be a dry old radio lecture that would tell us the same old stories. I was pleasantly surprised. Thank you."
William Tickell - FUSE FM listener.

Key Facts

Format: 12x 15mins

Total Duration: 3hrs

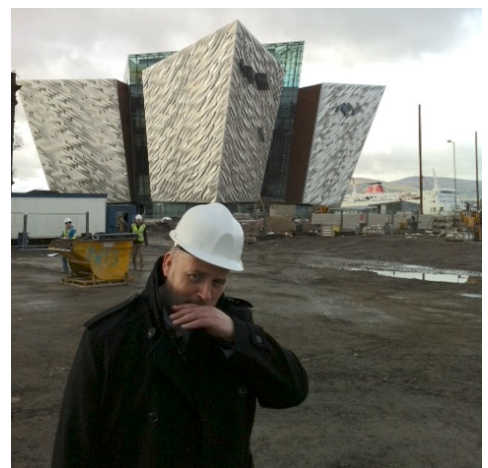
Budget: £32,381

First Broadcast: Mar 2020

Audience Reach: 6,000²

Cost per Listener Hour: £1.80

Listen: audio.fund/places



Prison Bag

produced by Falling Tree, for National Prison Radio,
Resonance FM, Reverb FM and Chapel FM

A 12-part adaptation of the blog written by Josie Bevan, about her experiences as her husband Rob serves nine years for fraud. Prison Bag is a compelling, humorous, heart-wrenching account – and interrogation – of prison from both sides of the razor wire.

Josie's personal journey – from middle-class, north London mother and part-time worker to 'prison wife' – is at all times framed within the dark shadow of the criminal justice system. As the jail door shut on Rob, countless other doors opened for Josie onto people, experiences and attitudes most of us will never have to encounter.

As Rob learns to navigate life inside, Josie finds herself in the prison reform world juggling a new career alongside single motherhood and the unique pressure prison places on a relationship and on the children.

The audio production effortlessly weaves Josie's readings of her blog posts with dramatised scenes, letters, narration, inner voice, and documentary material capturing the testimonies of others in Josie's position, a former cell-mate of her husband and a range of perspectives on the criminal justice system.

Chosen because: An innovative format, with very impressive, high-quality source material. Proven track record from the indie, and committed partnership of community radio broadcasters.

The producer said: The challenge – and the fun – was always in translating the distinct, well-established voice of Josie's blog into the medium of radio. The process involved building in new elements (interviews, actuality, music and what we ended up referring to as 'animations', rather than dramatisations) and revisiting the blog. Josie's delivery at the microphone was also a key element. Having found her voice – its tone and pacing - she's turned out to be one of the most fluent and consistent presenters of a script. One aspect of production which we hadn't been able to predict in advance was quite how good Josie is as an interviewer - the listener gets pulled close and shown what really matters and why they should care. – Alan Hall, Falling Tree Productions

The broadcaster said: Resonance FM was privileged to broadcast this fascinating series. It's a formally elegant slow burner, full of surprises, and rich in lived detail. The narrative impulse is always to the fore and the whole series provides an object lesson in how to handle the gamut of human perspectives – Ed Baxter, Resonance

Prison Bag absolutely succeeded in generating conversations and new ideas with our listeners, staff and volunteers, especially the young people we work with, many of whom have had relatives or friends incarcerated – Tony Macaluso, Chapel FM

The audience said: *"I am an ex-prisoner, but these podcasts taught me things. You had me shaking my head in anger, cry with despair, and smile at the love that surrounds your family unit. Thank you so much for doing these"* - @TheTartanCon

Key Facts

Format: 12x 25mins

Total Duration: 5hrs

Budget: £50,124

First Broadcast: Apr 2020

Audience Reach: 93,300^{4&2}

Cost per Listener Hour: 11p

Listen: audio.fund/prison



Team Talk

produced by TBI Media, for BFBS

Broadcast over thirteen weeks, Team Talk is a family-focused programme about the triumphs and trials of forces family life, produced by TBI Media and broadcast on the forces station BFBS – both in the UK via ten community radio licences, and on British military bases overseas.

The series (still broadcasting at the time of writing) is hosted by regular presenters Charlie Fife and Jill Misson with regular contributions from Louise Fetigan of charity Little Troopers.

The show regularly hears from military families about the issues that affect them – everything from the upheaval of being posted to a new home, finding the right help with special educational needs and time spent apart from loved ones.

It features celebrities like magician LCpl Richard Jones, Rugby Union player Joe Cokanasiga and singer James Blunt, who all have a military connection. They share their journeys in exclusive interviews, revealing interesting, thought-provoking and positive stories.

Chosen because: An opportunity for ACF money to serve an underserved audience with clearly articulated, high social value. Good value to prove the concept over 13 weeks, with support from well-established charities.

The producer said: We believe we've brought both unique subject matter to BFBS and a unique production format too, providing completely new content which the network would not otherwise get to deliver. We've also supported and developed existing BFBS talent Jill Misson and Charlie Fife in their debut presenting role on a worldwide BFBS programme. In addition, the series has hosted a variety of new voices - most notably Louise Fetigan, from the Little Troopers charity – and a further 25+ “real” voices from the Forces world aged between 5 and 60 who appear throughout the series – Dave Young, TBI Media

The broadcaster said: I just feel so elated that these voices have a platform within a bright and really well-made programme. It's a really authentic reflection of forces life and TBI have done an amazing job at making the references to the world we're living in today. Working with an indie wasn't something we'd had the opportunity to do before. Our experience with TBI has been outstanding. Truly public service content that we would never have been able to make on our own, developed in a collaborative and inclusive way, working with independent programme makers and championing new and diverse voices, with stories that haven't previously been heard on our wide-reaching platforms – Nicky Ness, Director of Forces Broadcasting

Key Facts

Format: 13x 30min

Total Duration: 6.5hrs

Budget: £26,299

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 250,000³

Cost per Listener Hour: 2p

Listen: audio.fund/team



Relay (development funding)

produced by Naked Productions, original bid to be broadcast on Resonance FM, Radio Reverb, Soundart Radio, and Verulam Radio

Relay was submitted to the ACF as a full production bid for an ambitious multi-part drama written and produced by emerging disabled writers, to be broadcast in the build-up to the 2020 Paralympic Games. The proposal included a plan for face-to-face workshops with writers from across the country, to draw out storylines about the modern disabled experience, and develop scripts in an immersive writer's room format.

The ACF funding panel recognised the compelling nature of the concept, but didn't feel able to support the project without first understanding details of the story the drama would tell. Having accepted that the authenticity of the project relied on the facilitation of writing workshops, the panel took the unprecedented step of offering Naked Productions development funding to deliver storylines and a sample script, ahead of a full re-bid in a later round.

Working closely with Graeae Theatre Company, the producers sourced four exciting new writers with disabilities, and engaged Sara Daniels and Alex Bulmer to facilitate storyline and episode development.

The resulting story follows couple Stella and Ali travelling from Manchester to Heathrow to fly to Tokyo for the Games, and explores relationships, the everyday experience of being disabled, and the impact of profile-changing events like the Paralympics.

Chosen because: A brilliant concept, providing opportunities to new voices and portraying the lives of underserved audiences.

The producer said: Having the time to get together with our talented new writers and experienced mentor writer Sarah Daniels was a great opportunity to start generating ideas for the drama series and find a way of working that made best use of all the individual skills and energy. It is very beneficial to have development time for audio drama, especially when working with exciting new to radio writers. – Polly Thomas, Naked Productions.

Graeae's *write2play* alumni look to us to seek new possibilities and training. It has been a fantastic opportunity to have been able to offer this initiative and to spend time with our writers developing their radio plays and strengthening their confidence to write for this medium. – Jenny Sealey, artistic director, Graeae

The Relay workshop was a really enjoyable experience. We bonded over the couple of days of working together, exercised our creative muscle. But, more importantly, it felt like a safe space. A space where we had the freedom to explore our ideas. We could brainstorm feverishly and there was no limit to our creative power. – Shahid Iqbal Khran, Relay writer

Key Facts

Format: Workshops with writers, leading to story outlines and scripts

Budget: £10,509

Delivered: Mar 2020



GRAEAE



Loneliness Awareness Campaign (working title)

produced by Offside Productions Media, for talkRADIO

A week-long campaign to highlight loneliness, for Loneliness Awareness Week in June 2020. Focussing on the stories of twelve people, the series will look at how loneliness is intergenerational and investigate the impact of factors such as ethnicity and locality.

Chosen because: A good value bid, from a production company with significant podcast credentials, delivering to radio for the first time. A universal topic which promises to be illuminating.

Key Facts

Format: 20x 2mins
Total Duration: 40mins
Budget: £10,230
First Broadcast: June 2020
Audience Reach: 201,400¹
Cost per Listener Hour: 8p

Young and Cool: A Brief History of Country

produced by Made in Manchester, for Downtown Radio

Documentary examining the current great renaissance in country music, told through the passion of a new, young, first-time radio presenter. The host (selected with help from the Bauer Academy), will explore what it takes to make a country hit, by interviewing writers, performers and label bosses.

Chosen because: Clear commitment to developing new presenting talent, with clear additionality on a local radio station.

Key Facts

Format: 1x 1hrs
Total Duration: 1hr
Budget: £10,140
First Broadcast: June 2020
Audience Reach: 17,000¹
Cost per Listener Hour: 60p

The F Word

produced by TBI Media, for BFBS

A six-day campaign, challenging the taboos and debunking the myths of fertility issues, which affect 1 in 7 couples in the UK. Short-form packages will tell the real-life stories of couples with experiences from IVF to surrogacy, whilst providing insight and advice from experts. A 2hr show will round off the week.

Chosen because: An extremely cost-effective project with a high estimated reach. The format shows a strong commitment and increases the likelihood of all listeners hearing it.

Key Facts

Format: 25x 2min
Total Duration: 50mins
Budget: £20,700
First Broadcast: Sept 2020
Audience Reach: 1,735,000¹
Cost per Listener Hour: 1p

Space is the Place

produced by Sparklab, for JazzFM

A series of five dramas about jazz legends, broadcast to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Jazz FM. Written by Liverpool artist and writer Jeff Young and featuring the music of Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Juliette Greco, Nina Simone, Ella Fitzgerald and more.

Chosen because: A smart format (with short and long-form options) that is well-targeted at the station's loyal audience. A rare chance for quality drama on national commercial radio.

Key Facts

Format: 25x 5mins
Total Duration: 2.08hrs
Budget: £36,134
First Broadcast: TBC*
Audience Reach: 142,500¹
Cost per Listener Hour: £12p

Story Explorers

produced by Pixiu Productions, for FunKids

A daily radio series by children about the stories they love. Produced in partnership with The National Literacy Trust, the show will feature children interviewing well-known children's authors with the help of presenter Ben Shires.

Chosen because: A strong editorial partnership with a trusted organisation, producing educational and informative content in an amenable format, appealing to young listeners everywhere.

Key Facts

Format: 30x 15mins

Total Duration: 2.5hrs

Budget: £29,933

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 111,000⁵

Cost per Listener Hour: 11p

Equal Britain?

produced by Loftus Media, for talkRADIO

2020 marks ten years since the UK passed the Equality Act – legislation supposed to make us more equal as a society. Over ten weeks this season will ask "How equal is Britain?", exploring race, sex, religion, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and class through the eyes of a diverse range of contributors.

Chosen because: Our first Current Affairs bid, with strong promises from the broadcaster to inform debate across the station. Timely and valuable original journalism.

Key Facts

Format: 10x 20mins

Total Duration: 3.33hrs

Budget: £27,375

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 151,800¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 5p

Our Journey

produced by SWSW Network, for Ujima Radio, Resonance FM, ALL FM, Somer Valley FM, Soundart Radio, Bradley Stoke Radio

Documentary series capturing the voices of the Windrush Generation in Bristol and the remaining activists of the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963. It will tell the stories of their journeys, their arrival in the UK and their cultural experiences, and capture this important oral history, before it's too late.

Chosen because: A strong regional partnership of community radio stations, led by an experienced producer and broadcaster, capturing important British history within their local community

Key Facts

Format: 6x 30mins

Total Duration: 3hrs

Budget: £14,295

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 23,000²

Cost per Listener Hour: 21p

Rockanory

produced by Unusual Productions, for Absolute Radio

A short-form scripted comedy format from the brain of Jon Holmes. A celebrity narrator will tell apocryphal tales of rock'n'roll – all enhanced, re-enacted and brought to comedy life by diverse new talent from across the UK (both behind and in front of the microphone).

Chosen because: Significant additionality, with scripted comedy on this radio station for the first time. Strong pedigree in supplier, and well-tailored format for significant audience reach.

Key Facts

Format: 24x 5mins

Total Duration: 2hrs

Budget: £34,914

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 300,900¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 6p

Hometown Stories

produced by Listen Entertainment, for Virgin Radio

Celebrating the musical map of the UK, with a series of six documentaries that take artists back to their hometowns. Each of the six will be fronted by the artists themselves, and will be followed by an acoustic gig at an intimate venue of significance to them, with an invited audience of Virgin listeners.

Chosen because: Combining documentary and live music creates an impactful appointment-to-listen, and provides music placement opportunities in daytime schedule.

Key Facts

Format: 6x 2hrs

Total Duration: 12hrs

Budget: £53,040

First Broadcast: TBC*

Audience Reach: 422,600¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 1p

The Definitive Guide to Jazz in Britain

produced by Made in Manchester, for JazzFM

Ten hour-long episodes celebrating 100 years of jazz in Britain. A landmark series on the UK's only dedicated jazz station, charting the history of the musical genre in Britain from the eve of the 1920s through to the present day.

Chosen because: Clear additionality and plurality, with very good value for money and a perfect fit for the brand. Potential to be a valuable learning resource in perpetuity.

Key Facts

Format: 10x 1hr

Total Duration: 10hrs

Budget: £28,165

First Broadcast: Nov 2020

Audience Reach: 188,600¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 1p

Magic's Olivier Stories

produced by Folder & Co, for Magic Radio

Ten heart-warming stories from around the UK in the run up to the 2020 Olivier Awards, which will shine a light on the work being done behind the scenes to ensure that UK stage productions are tapping into the wealth of young, BAME and out-of-London talent.

Chosen because: A high-reach project, which builds on an existing relationship to add diversity and quality to the current output.

Key Facts

Format: 10x 2mins

Total Duration: 20min

Budget: £12,000

First Broadcast: April 2021

Audience Reach: 643,200¹

Cost per Listener Hour: 6p

The Rainbow Road to Tokyo

produced by Made in Manchester, for Gaydio

Short form series profiling the record number of out LGBT athletes taking part in the 2020 Olympics. In celebrating the achievements of those who have beaten the stigma to get to the greatest show on earth, these short profile programmes will inspire other LGBT people to realise what can be achieved.

Chosen because: Telling the unfamiliar elements of familiar stars' stories, and shining a light on an obstacle many would think no longer exists. Adding plurality to Olympics coverage.

Key Facts

Format: 20x 4mins

Total Duration: 1.33hrs

Budget: £24,190

First Broadcast: July 2021*

Audience Reach: 250,000⁶

Cost per Listener Hour: 7p

References

Cost per Listener Hour is the price for each hour of content that one listener would hear. It is calculated as $\text{Budget} \div \text{Duration} \div \text{Reach}$ – that is, the total budget (in £GBP), divided by the duration of the content (in hours), divided by the estimated reach (in listeners).

* These projects had planned transmission dates ranging from March to August 2020, but their productions and broadcast have been affected by coronavirus restrictions. We are in regular contact with them about revised timelines

1 – Reach estimates for community radio station bids are based on Measured Coverage Area (MCA) figures published by Ofcom. Station reach is estimated at 7% of the total potential audience within the MCA, unless the bidder has provided compelling evidence otherwise. Programme reach is then estimated for the timeslot(s) and number of weeks proposed.

2 – Reach estimates for commercial radio station bids are based on RAJAR for Adults 15+, taken in either Q1, Q2, or Q3 2019 depending on the bidding round. RAJAR analysis tools are used to determine programme reach based on the timeslot(s) and number of weeks proposed.

3 – Reach for BFBS is estimated based on research by OnePoll/72 Point, March 2019

4 – Reach for National Prison Radio is based on internal research by the Prison Radio Association conducted in 2018

5 – Reach for Fun Kids is estimated based on their London-only RAJAR survey, extrapolated for national coverage using comparable survey data from other stations

6 – Reach for Gaydio is estimated based on research by Audionet

CLOSING STATEMENT

The Audio Content Fund was established to increase the amount of high quality, crafted, public service content available to UK radio listeners. In its first year, it has achieved this by funding 25 distinct projects for broadcast on commercial and community radio stations of all sizes, across all four nations of the UK.

162 hours of high quality, crafted, speech-led material has been funded, which will reach an estimated 5.6m listeners. Content representing the diverse perspectives of people from under-represented backgrounds has been prioritised, and projects have provided opportunities for new voices to be heard on-air.

The funding has gone to independent audio production companies – all Small and Medium-sized Enterprises or Community Interest Companies operating in the UK. In doing so, the funding has broadened the marketplace for audio production in the UK, and created opportunities for new business relationships.

At the time of writing, 13 out of 25 projects have been delivered, with some productions delayed due to coronavirus restrictions. This Interim Report will be superseded by a Final Report once all projects have been broadcast (estimated, Summer 2021).

More details about the ACF's recent activity can be found at www.audiocontentfund.org.uk, where you can also hear samples of all the funded projects.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF ALL BIDS RECEIVED IN 2019

121

Total bids received

61

Different Suppliers

126

Different Stations

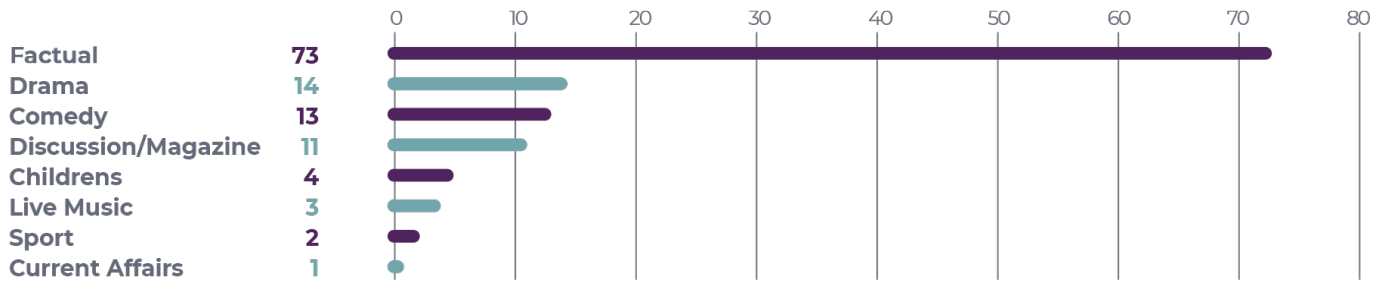
1,776

Hours of Content

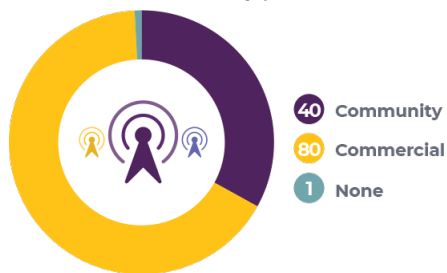
£4.0m

Total value of all bids

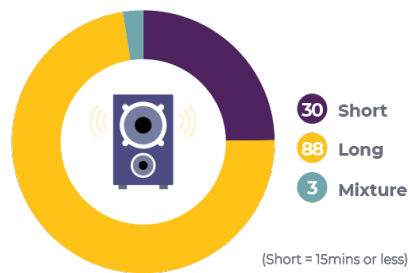
Genre of Content



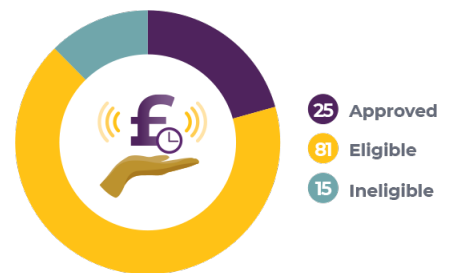
Broadcaster Type



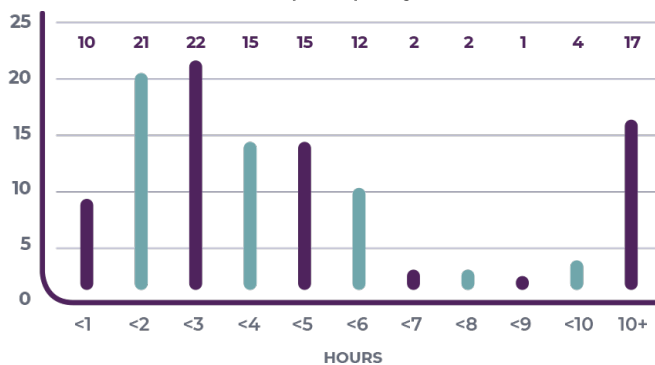
Format



Status of Bid



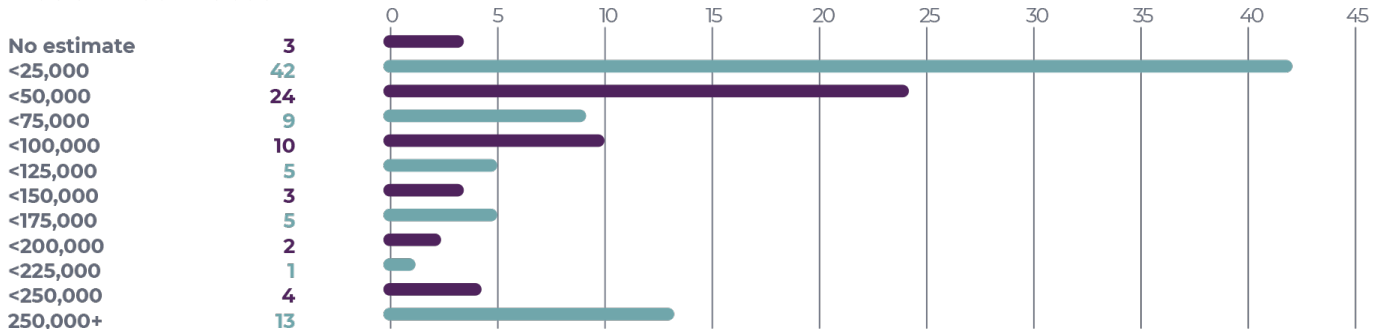
Hours of Content per project



Budget per project



Reach Estimates



APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING AUDIENCES DURING CORONAVIRUS

Our stated ambition for the financial year 2020-21 was to run three standard funding rounds in a similar pattern for 2019-20, each distributing an equal share of our £1m annual grant budget. We launched the first of these funding rounds at the start of March 2020, but during that month it became increasingly clear that we would need to alter our plans in order to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 19 March, we announced an additional, rolling funding round for ideas that needed broadcasting urgently to support audiences during coronavirus restrictions. We diverted £400,000 to this round, and committed to reviewing bids within two weeks of submission. The first project was broadcast on 1 April, and in total the round supported 28 projects. These will be detailed in full in the 2020 Annual Report, but are listed below by way of summary:

	Project Name	Producer	Broadcaster
Coronavirus Support projects which have been broadcast or have begun broadcasting, at time of publication:			
1	Self-Isolating with Lee & Dean	Bingo Films	Fix Radio
2	Kiss Fest	We Are Grape	KISS network
3	'Scala Sessions Live'	Listen Entertainment	Scala
4	Kerrang! Sessions Live'	Listen Entertainment	Kerrang!
5	'Planet Rock Sessions Live'	Listen Entertainment	Planet Rock
6	'Virtual Jazz Festival'	Somethin Else	Jazz FM
7	Front Room Festival	TBI Media	Absolute Radio
8	All Together Now	Want Some Media	Greatest Hits Network
9	Prime Timers	SWSW Network	Community Radio x4
10	Kids Play	TRCKSUITS	Fun Kids
11	Heart's Home Town Heroes	This Is Distorted	CommunicorpUK Hearts
12	Caring for Carers	John Dash Media	96x Local stations
13	Sporting Memories	Tongue Tied	TalkSPORT
14	The Show Must Go On	Offside Productions	Union Jack & Jack Radio
15	60 Second Support	Audio Always / Somethin Else	200+ Stations
16	Absolute Radio 40s	TBI Media	Absolute Radio (1215AM)
17	Manchester Adventures of Brian Hovis	Low Fat Radio	XS Manchester
18	Essential Voices	TBI Media	Magic and Greatest Hits
19	Lockdown Love Letters	The Foghorn Company	Local Radio x5
Coronavirus Support projects which are in production and have not yet been broadcast, at time of publication:			
20	Virtual Strawberry Fair 2020	Folder & Co	Local stations x5
21	Connections	Naked Productions	5x Community Stations
22	Buddyline	Reform Radio	Community Radio x6
23	Unheard Voices	Sixteen Media	Community Radio x4
24	UK Radio Pride	2ZY	Gaydio, PrideFM, JuiceFM
25	Monty Panesar in Self-Isolation with...	Head on Media	Asian Stations x5
26	Undiscussable	Old Bill Media	talkRADIO
27	Cities of Sound	BCU Enterprise Ltd	Greatest Hits Radio
28	Step Up	Sound Communities	Fun Kids

Links to on-demand or podcast versions are available at audio.fund/funded-projects.

APPENDIX 3: TIMELINE FOR 2020-21

At the time of writing, with coronavirus restrictions gradually being lifted, it is our intention to revert to the original plan of dividing the remaining budget equally across three standard funding rounds. The first of these was Funding Round 4, opened in March 2020 and later extended to also cover April 2020.

Our planned timeline for the rest of the year is therefore as follows:

- Funding Round 4 – closed 27 April 2020, announce decisions 10 August 2020
 - Funding Round 5 – open 31 Aug 2020, close 28 Sept 2020, decisions 30 Nov 2020
 - Funding Round 6 – open 7 Dec 2020, close 18 Jan 2021, decisions 22 Mar 2021
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