

# AUDIO – A Breath of Fresh Air... Cut Short



Fresh Air Radio, Edinburgh's only student radio station, is facing a challenge. Their funding has been cut, and with it, access to their studio. Live shows can now only air after 5:00 pm, with the remaining shows being broadcast as pre-records.



Jon Parker held the position of manager when these changes were announced. When questioned about this new announcement Jon expressed frustration, as it was done "without any warning." This cut comes at a time when Fresh Air's listeners have been increasing, following a large marketing push. "We're a victim of our own success because we were on a small PPL licence, which is what we pay to be able to broadcast live on the Internet, and we've recently gone up to a standard one because our listeners have really shot up this year. It's a good thing, it just means we need to do more fundraising." Especially now.

A cut in studio time could be frustrating at the best of times, but coming on the heels of Fresh Air's win for best radio station in Scotland at the Scottish New Music awards, it's particularly devastating. Of the win, Jon said:-"It's amazing because we beat Capital FM and Real Radio who have millions and millions of pounds to spend on having Rihanna on their TV commercials, and we're a bunch of volunteers with zero funding."



One of those volunteers is Ben Garlick, host of Spaces, Places and Faces, Edinburgh's only geography themed radio show.

Having hosted a live show, alongside two colleagues, last semester, he's deterred by the need to pre-record this time around. "It's quite disappointing, I think one of the reasons that I was attracted to doing a show was the fact that it would be live. I think there's something about the energy of a live show, which you can't really replicate off air."

While Jon may agree about the atmosphere, he did suggest that there are some positive aspects to the new set up at Fresh Air. "Pre-records for a start are far better quality, they get far more listeners." As Fresh Air is an online station, Jon believes most of their listeners are people who listen to content at a time that suits their own schedules. This suggests that the content will still be heard, and the time it is aired is rather trivial. This new need to pre-record could ultimately create better quality content, as Jon believes "production is the secret to good radio."

The Fresh Air team are actively working to improve Fresh Air's funding and listeners. Jon's replacement as Station Manager, Alex Rata, and his team are working harder than ever to ensure that the reduced hours don't discourage volunteers.

The Fresh Air team may not have chosen their new set-up, but they are approaching it with a positive air and a smile on their faces. New manager Alex agreed with Jon's sentiment:- "We're all volunteers, everything we're doing is amazing, and nine times out of ten Fresh Air will surprise you with how much it can achieve. It should be the best semester we've ever done."