

Edinburgh open for new community radio

The UK Broadcasting regulator OFCOM has included Edinburgh in its latest list of places that can have a community radio station.

The Edinburgh station would operate on the FM band, with a power of 25 watts, giving a typical coverage radius of 5kms. It could add internet streaming and be part of a small scale DAB transmitter, but that is a separate business consideration.

Edinburgh used to have a community station called Leith FM, which went bust in 2012. There are well established community stations in Haddington (East Coast FM), Penicuik (Crystal FM) and Dalkeith (Black Diamond FM).

There will be no special protections for Edinburgh's commercial radio stations because they all have service areas with populations above a threshold of 150,000 people. This allows community radio applicants to obtain up to 50% of revenue from radio advertising. The rest of the money must come from non commercial sources such as subscriptions, donations, merchandise, lotteries and grants.

As well as a clear FM frequency and reputable owners, a community radio station has to persuade OFCOM that there will be 'social gain'. This boils down to four factors; finding an under-served audience, allowing expression of opinions, providing media training to local people and strengthening community links.

The last time community radio licences were advertised in

Edinburgh, an Asian station called APNA tried and failed to win a licence. No-one appears to have gone public yet, but the inclusion of Edinburgh on the OFCOM list suggests that someone is sniffing around.

The deadline for this round of new licences is 3pm on Tuesday 26th March 2019.

[Guidance notes are available here](#)