



The Scottish  
Government

"We are Community Builders,  
Part of The Fabric": A Review of  
Community Radio

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

- 1.1 Scotland has an active community radio infrastructure which primarily uses volunteers to deliver hours of specialist programming to local people across the country. The Broadcasting and Creative Industries Policy Team at the Scottish Government commissioned this research to provide an overview of community radio generally but also to focus on the Scottish sector specifically. As such the review is intended to inform future actions in support of community radio provision in Scotland.

## What the research consisted of

- 1.2 Phase one of the study involved a review of literature on community radio in general and phase two consisted of two surveys and two focus groups with station managers and community radio volunteers in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The review examined:
- Legislation, funding, programming, volunteering and training structures
  - Listener numbers and profiles
  - Standards, benefits and working with others
  - Common support needs
  - International perspectives

## Findings

### *Phase one: Literature review*

- 1.3 Unless otherwise stated findings from the literature review are UK wide.
- Income for the UK stations varies widely and mean income has dropped by 19% since 2009/10<sup>2</sup>
  - Independent audited listening figures and profiles are not available to assess the market share, advertising effectiveness or social impact of the UK sector
  - Community radio creates broadcasting space which is free from commercial interests, and which also actively uses and promotes the arts
  - In research on public attitudes towards broadcasting in Scotland 49% of respondents indicated that it was either fairly or very important to have a community radio station in their area
  - Ofcom indicate that over 12.5 million people in the UK may be able to receive a signal, however, this does not account for actual numbers taking up the service

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<sup>1</sup> The primary research included community radio stations and small scale independent local radio stations in Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> The average station income for those stations which reported in 2009/10 and 2010/11 was similar, however, which implies that the financial situation for those stations which submitted annual reports for the last two financial years has remained relatively stable (Ofcom, 2011b: 23). Ofcom also state that actual income reported by these stations has fallen marginally (Ofcom, 2011b: 24).

- Commentators maintain that maximising listenership is not a primary objective and that quality of engagement for participants and the delivery of social gain objectives off-air are of principal importance
- Community radio provides over 12,500 volunteering opportunities and 15,000 hours of original radio per week across the UK
- Although the evidence on benefits is largely anecdotal, positive impact is suggested in relation to education and training, well being, creativity, community cohesion, information exchange and active participation
- According to Ofcom, all stations in the UK offer some form of training for volunteers and the majority also provide training for their target communities
- Concern was identified in relation to poor marketing, the lack of strategic thinking in the sector, relationships with professional broadcasters, decreasing advertising revenues, deficient audience data, training, lack of funding, inflexible funding criteria, and supporting and maintaining volunteers

### ***Phase two: Scottish community radio research***

1.4 The following findings relate to the primary research conducted in Scotland.

- Lack of finance is a consistent challenge for Scottish stations
- Suggestions for improving financial circumstances include gaining increased recognition from Creative Scotland and seeking wider assistance with identifying funding sources
- Most station managers would consider sharing premises with other arts, community, education and voluntary organisations
- All surveyed managers would be willing to share equipment and resources
- The number of volunteers at individual stations varied from 31 to 85
- Volunteer benefits included: increased confidence and self worth; companionship; a greater sense of belonging; satisfaction from helping others; technical and social skills: knowledge and experience; enjoyment and improved mental and physical health, and; career development
- None of the station managers surveyed offer accredited training, although just over half of volunteers indicated they would like to receive this
- There is clear interest in receiving additional training, particularly in relation to marketing, volunteer management, fundraising, journalism and administration (station managers), broadcast delivery and engineering, interviewing, producing, presenting and engineering (volunteers)
- Although the sector has collaborated with training providers and education establishments more could be done to improve these links and embed training provision within the wider qualifications framework
- Community radio stations do collaborate with each other but it was felt that such links could be consolidated and improved
- The desire to work more closely with the arts sector was repeatedly expressed
- Areas of success were identified as: volunteer input and team working; working with disenfranchised and young people; community engagement activities; local news and public service output; supporting diverse music styles and artists; specialist programmes; local presentation teams and successful partnerships

- Challenges were highlighted in relation to volunteer management and communication, listener data, marketing and public profile, equipment costs and failure, and working with others
- Support was given to the Scottish Community Broadcast Network (SCBN) functioning as a common body which assists the sector to coordinate and collaborate more effectively
- Concerns about licence fees, signal coverage, FM, DAB, and access to emerging platforms such as Freeview were raised
- It was felt that the sector would benefit from improving links with professional broadcasters in order to assist with training, equipment and programme sharing, and career development
- Interest was expressed in improving lobbying and awareness of the value of community radio
- Improving training provision was a leading priority particularly in relation to course content, delivery, links with colleges and universities, certification, monitoring, and progression into paid employment

### **Implications – improving support**

1.5 This review has highlighted a number of issues of relevance to the wider discussion around how best to guide and support community radio provision in Scotland. It is suggested that there is a need for further consideration of the following areas:

- For the community radio sector to develop a clear understanding of what community radio should consist of, what it should achieve, for whom, and how it can fulfil these aims
- A possible role for the Scottish Government and relevant public bodies in improving training provision and potentially seeking accreditation
- Following this, the community radio sector to identify and secure clear training and career pathways between community radio and professional broadcasters and other education providers
- The community radio sector to consider how to further support volunteers and improve management/governance skills
- The potential for various public bodies (i.e. local and national Government, the Scottish Community Broadcast Network and Creative Scotland) to work together to support and promote community radio

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

### Introduction and background

- 2.1 Having obtained an Ofcom licence, the first community radio station in the UK was launched in November 2005. Operating as small scale, not-for-profit radio services designed to deliver community benefits, a total of 196 stations are currently broadcasting in the UK (Ofcom, 2011b: 3).<sup>3</sup> The Broadcasting and Creative Industries Policy Team at the Scottish Government commissioned this study to provide an overview of the community radio sector with a focus on Scotland specific circumstances. The research is intended to assist policy development in support of such services.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government has sought to support community radio by, for example, increasing the amount of advertising purchased through community radio by 48% in 2009/10 compared to the previous year. In addition to representing the sector by working closely with Ofcom and the UK Government, the Scottish Government has also commissioned this research to inform future policy options for the field.

### Research aims and objectives

- 2.3 The purpose of the research was to provide an overview of current community radio provision with a specific focus on the Scottish sector. By providing evidence around the following questions the research is intended to help inform future actions in support of community radio provision in Scotland:
- What does community radio consist of generally and in Scotland specifically?
  - What are the perceived benefits of taking part?
  - What currently works well in terms of management, volunteering provision, training and delivery?
  - What difficulties does the currently sector experience?
  - What kind of support does the sector require and how can the Scottish Government and/or other partners assist?

### What the research consisted of

- 2.4 The study consisted of two phases:
- A literature review looking at community radio in general
  - Two Questback surveys and focus groups on community radio provision in Scotland specifically
- 2.5 In phase one a desk and internet based review of published literature on community radio in Britain and abroad was carried out. Literature was drawn from a range of sources detailed in Appendix one. This study is not a systematic review of all available literature but is intended to provide an overview of evidence on community radio provision, what it consists of, how it

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<sup>3</sup> Community radio stations can cover a radius of up to 5 km.

operates and what benefits result from it. The literature search was conducted by the Scottish Government Information Management Unit.

## **Research participants/respondents**

- 2.6 The station manager survey received 11 responses from a possible 25 community radio stations and small scale independent local radio stations in Scotland. The survey was open to any individual who worked in a management capacity at their station either as a paid employee or volunteer. Six of the 11 respondents worked or volunteered as station managers. A number of respondents indicated that they worked as a presenter (five), development manager (four), sales manager, engineer (three), and/or volunteer manager (two). A further four respondents worked as project director, chairman and/or licensee.
- 2.7 Of the 11 participating station managers, three were full-time paid workers and one was part-time paid. A further three worked full-time as unpaid volunteers and there were also four part-time volunteers. In addition to the four paid station managers detailed above, respondents indicated that there were also a further seven full-time workers at their radio stations. These full-time jobs were supported by a further five paid part-time workers. Another two posts were not specified as either full or part-time. Three respondents indicated that they did not have any paid staff at their station at the present time and a further three gave a negative response that was inconclusive.
- 2.8 The volunteer survey received 91 responses. Volunteers frequently undertake more than one role at their radio stations. The majority (96%) had a presenting role and 40% were also involved in producing. Other roles included general volunteering, fundraising, journalism and engineering. Respondents also volunteered as board and trustee members.
- 2.9 Preliminary analysis was undertaken on data from the surveys prior to the focus groups in order to help frame and focus the sessions. The aim of the focus groups was to elicit further responses to the research questions and provide participants with an opportunity to discuss more fully the kind of support they believe is required and to suggest how they think this could be achieved. In such a way the focus groups assessed the current position whilst also engaging participants in shaping potential solutions and defining the future direction of the field.
- 2.10 Two focus groups were held, one with community radio station managers and one with volunteers. There were 26 participants. An invitation to take part was emailed to all community radio station managers in Scotland from the Scottish Community Broadcasting (SCBN) circulation list. Managers were asked to pass on the email to as many volunteers as possible.
- 2.11 It should be noted that due to the small sample size, findings from the station manager survey should not be regarded as generalisable. The station manager focus group does provide additional insight which strengthens reporting on these participants.



2.12 The main findings from the literature review and station manager survey and focus group are discussed in chapters three and four respectively, and those from the volunteer survey and focus group are examined in chapter five. The report ends with a summary of findings and concluding thoughts and suggestions in support of community radio provision in Scotland.

### 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

3.1 While some information to answer the research question was available at a UK-wide level, principally through Ofcom Annual Reports, Scotland specific research was required to improve our knowledge of the field. By undertaking a literature review the study examined:

- Legislation, funding, programming, volunteering and training structures
- Listener numbers and profiles
- Standards, benefits and working with others
- Common support needs
- International perspectives

3.2 The following sections provide an overview of community radio provision in the UK, looking specifically at structures, listeners, impacts and benefits, and support needs. The penultimate section draws on international examples in order to illuminate alternative forms of practice. The conclusion highlights evidence deficiencies in the current literature and identifies future research questions for phase two.

#### Legislation

3.3 Community radio has been around in Britain since the 1960s in the form of temporary restricted licences (Clayton and McDonald, 2006: 6). Although the 1990 Broadcasting act did not provide for the introduction of full-time community radio services it did allow for the provision of temporary short-term broadcasting licenses and long-term very low power services for closed establishments such as hospitals and universities (Hellitt & Wilson, 2010: 5). Short and long term 'Restricted Service Licences' (RSLs) remain popular today with a significant number of temporary broadcasts taking place each year. Current UK community radio regulation was developed in conjunction with the sector and was marked by the launch of fifteen temporary experimental stations in 2001/2 (ibid: 1). Known as 'Access Radio' stations, they were intended to develop the concept and model of community radio in the UK. Having reached the end of their temporary licences, a number of these stations received extensions and later became fully licensed community radio stations. Section 262 of the Communications Act 2003, subsequently provided powers under secondary legislation for radio services which would provide for the good of members of the public or of a particular community, rather than for commercial reasons (HM Government, 2003: Section 262 (2) a & b). This legislation enabled the establishment of community radio services whilst also establishing the Community Radio Fund (see below).

3.4 The Community Radio Order 2004 (CRO 2004) built on the requirements of Section 105 of the 1990 Broadcasting Act (BA 1990) which itself sets out what Ofcom has to consider when assessing applications for commercial radio licences (ibid: 3). The CRO 2004 also requires Ofcom to consider additional

factors such as an applicant’s ability to deliver ‘social gain’ (community benefits), ensure accountability and provide access to facilities (ibid).<sup>4</sup> This specific permanent legislation was followed by two rounds of licensing for community radio stations. A third round of licensing commenced in April 2011 (Ofcom, 2011b: 3).

## Structure and licensing

- 3.5 Community radio operates as a third tier alongside the BBC and commercial radio channels.<sup>5</sup> In its response to the House of Lords Select Committee on communications Report into the Digital Switchover of Television and Radio, the UK Government state that it “recognises that a strong local and community radio tier is an important part of a healthy local media sector” (DCMS, 2010a: 3). The UK Government response to the Commons Select Committee, Culture, Media and Sport Committee report on the Future for Local and Regional Media states that the provision of hyper-local content which is specifically relevant to local audiences should be actively encouraged (DCMS, 2010b: 9). In this response the Government also welcomed the upgrade to DAB which will enable the development of a new tier of hyper-local community radio to occupy the FM spectrum vacated by larger stations (ibid).
- 3.6 Of the 231 licensed community radio stations, 169 are in England, 12 in Northern Ireland, 18 in Scotland and nine in Wales (Ofcom, 2011b: 8-9). Scotland also has seven small scale independent local radio stations.<sup>6</sup> Table one provides details on the 18 licensed radio stations in Scotland.

**Table one – licensed community radio stations broadcasting in Scotland**

Station	Location	Category of target community	Annual report
3TFM Community Radio for Health	Saltcoats, Ayrshire	Health promotion	Yes
Alive Radio	Dumfries	Religious	Yes
Awaz FM	Central Glasgow	BME	Yes
Black Diamond FM	Midlothian	Geographic - urban	Yes
Brick FM	St Boswells, Borders	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Bute FM	Rothesay, Isle of Bute	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Celtic Music Radio	Glasgow	Music – Scottish	Yes
Dunoon CR	Dunoon	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Edinburgh Garrison FM	Edinburgh	Military	Yes
Insight Radio	West Glasgow	Disability group	Yes
Leith FM	Edinburgh	Geographic – urban	Yes
Mearns FM	Mearns, Aberdeenshire	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Pulse CR	Barrhead, East Renfrewshire	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Revival Radio	Glasgow	Religious	Yes
shmuFM	Aberdeen	Geographic – urban	Yes

4 See (Hellitt & Wilson, 2010) for a more detailed history of the community radio sector and associated legislation.

5 See (Hellitt and Wilson, 2010) for a discussion on the relationship between community radio and BBC local radio.

6 The small scale independent local radio stations in Scotland are Argyll FM, Cullin FM, Lochbroom FM, Nevis Radio, Oban FM, Two Lochs Radio and Isles FM.

Speysound Radio	Badenoch & Strathspey		Yes
Sunny Govan Radio	Govan, Glasgow	Geographic – urban	Yes
The Super Station Orkney	Orkney	Geographic – town/rural	Yes
Source: Community Radio: Annual report on the sector: 20010/11, London: Ofcom, 2011b: 12 & 52-57.			

3.7 Demand for licences has outstripped supply and in August 2010 121 of the 200 second round applicants in the UK were given a license (Ofcom, 2010a: 6). Over 230 expressions of interest were received for a potential third licensing round. This was subsequently confirmed and applications for the third round of licensing in Scotland should be submitted in March 2012.

## Accountability

3.8 The characteristics of community radio services in the UK and the definition of social gain are laid out in the 2004 legislation (amended in Jan 2010). Services must:

- Be for the good of the public
- Deliver social gain
- Serve specific communities
- Be non-profit making
- Provide managerial and operational opportunities for target community members
- Be accountable to the community concerned (Ofcom, 2011b: 34)

3.9 Four mandatory social gain objectives are defined by the legislation. These require stations to:

- Serve underserved groups
- Facilitate discussion and the expression of opinion
- Provide education or training
- Strengthen links within and facilitate better understanding of a particular community (ibid)

3.10 In addition to the four mandatory social gain objectives, many stations also commit to further objectives of a social nature such as those outlined in the CRO 2004. These include delivery of services provided by local authorities, the promotion of employment/work experience, economic development, social inclusion, cultural and linguistic diversity, and civic participation and volunteering (Ofcom, 2010a: 36).

3.11 Ofcom (2011b: 12) states that “Each community radio station has a set of ‘key commitments’ which forms part of its licence” and sets out how it will meet these characteristics and deliver social gain”. Accountability to the community, ensuring access, programming aims and other social gain objectives such as training provision are laid out within these ‘key commitments’. Performance should in large part be judged relative to this. Appendix two outlines the key commitments of Scottish community radio stations.

3.12 Stations operating for over a year are also required to complete an annual report. Ofcom checks each station's annual key commitments report against the promises made in its licence to ensure key commitments are being met (Ofcom, 2010a: 30). The regulator also listens to individual station's output through a process of 'content sampling'.

## Income

3.13 The average (mean) community radio station income in the UK is £63,000 of which grant funding accounts for 37%, on-air advertising or sponsorship for 21%, donations for 12% and Service Level Agreements for 11% and other (such as membership schemes and fundraising events) for 6% (Ofcom, 2011b: 14-15). According to Ofcom (2011b: 22), average income is much higher in Scotland than the sector average and income from Service Level Agreements is almost treble the sector average. While the sector average for donations is 12%, in Scotland donations account for 39% of income (ibid).

3.14 Public sources of funding currently account for around 25% of total station income in the UK (Ofcom, 2011b: 18). This has dropped year-on-year since 2007/08, with a 12% decrease from 2009/10 to 2010/11 (ibid). In 2010/11 public funding of community radio stations in the UK consisted of 3% from the Community Radio Fund, 8% from other public bodies such as the Arts Council, national lottery awards, health and education providers, and 13% from local authorities (Ofcom, 2011b: 19). The remaining 75% of income was derived from non-public sources (ibid).

3.15 Community radio stations are not permitted to generate more than 50% of their annual income from the sale of on-air advertising or sponsorship (Ofcom, 2011b: 14). In 2008 Ofcom drew up guidelines for community radio stations wishing to take into account volunteer time when calculating their annual turnover (Ofcom, 2008). The average value of an hour's volunteering is calculated as £13.13 for senior volunteers and £9.38 for standard volunteers (Ofcom, 2011b: 14). The average value of in-kind support was £73,000 in 2010/11 (up £44,000 on the last reporting period) (Ofcom, 2011b: 17).<sup>7</sup> This has helped stations to avoid breaching the single source income limit requirement. Stations must be non-profit distributing and any produced profit should be used to improve the service or delivery of social gain.

3.16 Income across individual stations in the UK ranged from less than £1,500 to over £550,000 (Ofcom, 2011b: 14). Four stations earned more than £250,000 (ibid). Stations serving a general urban audience report an average income of close to £90,000 compared to the sector average of around £63,000 (Ofcom, 2011b: 20). Mean income for UK stations has dropped by 19% since 2009/10 (Ofcom, 2011b: 14).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The total value of in-kind support in this period across the UK was close to £9m. As not all stations report in-kind support the actual figure is likely to be much higher (Ofcom, 2011b: 14).

<sup>8</sup> The average station income for those stations which reported in 2009/10 and 2010/11 was similar, however, which implies that the financial situation for those stations which submitted annual reports for the last two financial years has remained relatively stable (Ofcom, 2011b: 23). Ofcom also state that actual income reported by these stations has fallen marginally (Ofcom, 2011b: 24).

- 3.17 Stations cost on average around £64,500 (- 13% on 2009/10) to run and although they roughly break even, the highest deficit in the UK was reported as close to £90,000 (Ofcom, 2011b: 31). Almost 50% of running costs are for staff expenditure (Ofcom, 2011b: 27). In response to concern about cuts to public finance and diminishing advertising revenue, Hewllitt and Wilson (2010: 28) suggest it may be possible to pass over a share of any top-sliced revenues from the Television Licence Fee to small-scale not-for-profit broadcasters rather than subsidise commercial radio.

### **The Community Radio Fund**

- 3.18 The Community Radio Fund is one of the most significant sources of public funding for community radio in Britain. Local authority funding also remains significant, as do other sources of public funding such as the Welsh Assembly Community Radio Fund and bodies such as the Arts Council in England. The community Radio Fund is administered by Ofcom on behalf of the DCMS. The fund is intended to help support the core costs of running a community radio station and in particular to provide for areas of work which are otherwise difficult to secure alternative funding for. Long term sustainability, core activities and innovation are priorities. There is no limit on the amount which can be applied for but priority is given to those who have not previously received the award.
- 3.19 The DCMS is providing up to £500,000 a year for the Fund which has been confirmed up to 2014/15 (Ofcom, 2011a: 2). Ofcom awarded £459,992 to 29 stations in the UK over two rounds of funding in 2009/10 (Ofcom, 2010b: 2). Applications amounted to £2,077,123 for both rounds and the average award payment was for £15,861 (Ofcom, 2010b: 6). 3TFM in North Ayrshire and Bute FM both received awards in 2009/10. The former was for a fundraising officer to support the SCBN and the latter was for a station manager.
- 3.20 Ofcom carried out a public consultation on the management and administration of the Fund in 2005, proposing a light touch approach to its operation as well as representation from the Community Media Association on the grant awarding panel. Ofcom report that Funds typically generate two to three times the income received in the form of further grants and advertising to UK stations (Ofcom, 2010: 7). This figure can rise up to five times. Ofcom receives feedback on the Fund from awardees and report that there is little negative feedback from stations (Ofcom, 2010b: 4). The Fund has, however, been criticised by some stations and commentators for not being sufficient to support the growing number of community radio stations (Hallett and Wilson, 2010: 12, Ofcom, 2010a: 40). The DCMS have also indicated that the Fund will be cut by £17,000 in 2010/11 and that £20,000 will be diverted to support the CMA (Ofcom, 2010 b: 3).

## **Content and programming**

- 3.21 Community radio stations in the UK broadcast for an average of 82 live hours per week topped up by a further 12 hours of original pre-recorded material per week (Ofcom, 2011b: 35 & 5). Networking or overnight automation is common within the radio sector generally. Speech accounts for around 32% of daytime output (Ofcom, 2011b: 36). A range of community organisations and initiatives can feature in this speech output as well as music which is selected according to the focus of a particular station or is more generic to satisfy a more general geographical audience. Specialist output tends to be broadcast in the evening. Most community radio stations also broadcast online and a number deliver through other licensed platforms such as DAB or satellite.
- 3.22 Ofcom is required to consider whether stations will broaden choice and offer distinctive content which is sufficiently different to other local commercial and community radio services (Ofcom, 2010a: 29). Consequently, music output is necessarily diverse with community radio, ranging from mainstream pop, Christian rock and gospel to devotional and spiritual Islamic songs.
- 3.23 Speech output across UK stations can include contributions from local public bodies, private and third sector organisations. Local individuals and celebrities as well as professionals from different services such as health, fire and the police can feature in programming output. A variety of languages are also spoken on community radio, although this can be dependent on the availability of particular volunteers. Community radio stations also undertake outreach work such as attending events and holding outside broadcasts. Audiences in the UK are increasingly being engaged through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and web forums (Ofcom, 2010a: 33). Although on-air discussion is a popular way of expressing views, this is also substituted by text and email.
- 3.24 Paul Moore (2008: 46) argues that community radio assumes that listeners are subjects and participants rather than objects to be captured for advertisers, or citizens to be informed or improved. This is an important point as it illustrates how community radio is seen to create broadcasting space which is free from commercial interests (Elson, 2007: 32) and is shaped by the contours and needs of its immediate environment.

## **The arts and community radio**

- 3.25 In their research report, Chochrane et al (2008: 8-10) highlight the commonality between the arts and community radio in the UK, arguing that community radio utilises art forms and represents and progresses artistic interests. For example, the authors suggest that there is a high commitment to literature and spoken word programming and that a number of stations produce drama on a regular basis. Approximately 70% of community radio programming is music-based, often reflecting the complex layers of musical practice which intersect particular communities. There is evidence (Chochrane et al, 2008: 8) to suggest that many urban stations are beginning to develop effective partnerships with well-established theatres, producers

and performers. Chochrane et al (2008: 9-10) also suggest that film and visual arts feature prominently in listings and review programmes, through interviews with artists and coverage of exhibitions and events. Organising and covering local events, festivals and carnivals plays a central role in community radio. Approaches to training vary with some stations offering accredited courses and structured training programmes, but the majority rely on informal mechanisms (ibid).

3.26 Chochrane's research (2008: 9) points out that the arts sector is a key potential ally and delivery partner for community radio in Britain. The sector acts as a conduit for information about the arts and cultural activity, functioning as a cultural 'hub' connecting artists and organisations together (ibid). The authors highlight the considerable synergy the sector has with the creative industries, not least, through its training and skills development function which enables many volunteers to pursue careers in the mainstream media. They maintain that there is considerable scope for the Learning and Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Council to support training in community radio settings (ibid). They caution that involvement with formal education and accredited training should be developed in ways that take into account the sector's informality and slender administrative resources (ibid). The report makes a number of recommendations relevant to this review:

- That the community radio sector is recognised by the Arts Council England (ACE) as a delivery agent for innovation and participation in the arts and actively seeks to support the growth of the sector
- That ACE and the CMA work together to build networks and increase understanding between the arts and community radio sectors, public and private sector agencies, venues and arts organisations
- That discussions should take place between Government departments to recognise the role community radio plays in achieving cultural, social, educational, environmental and regeneration benefits
- That the Sector Skills Councils – Skillset and Creative and Cultural Skills work with the CMA and ACE to ensure community radio is represented in workforce development and training within the wider creative and media sector – training opportunities should also be mapped and publicised
- That the ACE ensure there is a designated officer to act as a 'first contact' for community radio practitioners seeking arts funding
- That the Government should ensure the community radio sector is aware of possible business support services
- That the CMA should organise a series of regional seminars to showcase excellence in arts-based programming and raise awareness of community radio work
- That the CMA should develop a marketing, press and communications strategy to raise the profile of the sector

## **Volunteering**

3.27 Volunteering is a key characteristic of the community radio sector in the UK with volunteers taking on a variety of roles from presenting to marketing, journalism and sports correspondence. A number of stations are entirely volunteer run. Volunteer involvement varies from 1 to over 295 hours per



week with UK stations on average working with around 78 volunteers (Ofcom, 2011b: 36). Ofcom estimates that volunteers contribute close to 250,000 hours a month (Ofcom, 2011b: 6). Volunteers can be involved for a short time or for many years.

- 3.28 The value of volunteering is highlighted by Clayton and McDonald (2006: 12) who point out that volunteering links people together in networks of shared norms, reciprocity, trust, solidarity, and community action. They maintain that communities that have volunteers as active citizens will have higher social capital and be stronger and more cohesive. Volunteers are regarded as pivotal to this link between community radio and social capital – “The pursuit and entrenchment of community radio as a force for civic virtue is arguably one of the potentially positive manifestations of social capital as a creative force for the public good” (ibid).

### **Training**

- 3.29 According to Ofcom (2010a: 34), all stations in Britain offer some form of training for volunteers and the majority also offer training opportunities to other members of their target community too. Training ranges from taster sessions and short courses through to fully accredited training programmes (ibid). Schools are also encouraged to undertake radio skills training. Training partnerships with other local media organisations as well as local agencies such as health or community groups have been formed by some. Many stations also offer work experience opportunities to school pupils or students. Placements can run from a day to a few weeks.
- 3.30 According to Cochrane et al. (2008: 68) community radio is underrepresented in planning for training, workforce development and professional learning within the wider creative and cultural sector. It is suggested (ibid) that Skillset (the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media) should work more closely with the CMA and the Arts Council of England, or in Scotland’s case this would mean Creative Scotland, to rectify this situation.

### **Listener numbers and profiles**

- 3.31 RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research Ltd) is the radio industry standard for measuring listener figures in the UK. It is used by the BBC and commercial radio services and costs around £10,000 to commission. Community radio stations are not measured by RAJAR and consequently independent audited listening figures and profiles are not available to assess the market share, advertising effectiveness or social impact of the sector. Stations are also not able to use potentially positive listening figures from such research to secure more revenue funding. Notwithstanding the prohibitive cost of RAJAR, the facility is not designed to measure small audiences. Given this it is questionable whether it is an appropriate means of measuring community radio audiences.
- 3.32 Ofcom invite stations to detail any listener research they have conducted in their reports, however, any evidence from stations in the UK is informal and largely anecdotal. Methods include listener correspondence, emails, social networking, website forums, phone calls, street surveys and even a website

Guest Book (Ofcom, 2010a: 41/49).<sup>9</sup> Third party companies are used on occasion. Cost, lack of resource and staff capacity/skills are all highlighted as factors inhibiting more diligent listener research by individual stations.

- 3.33 The Scottish Government (2009) published research on public attitudes towards broadcasting in Scotland. Overall, low levels of listening were recorded for community radio, with 2% indicating they had listened in the last 7 days (Scottish Government, 2009: 34). Levels were highest in the Highlands and Islands with 10% of respondents having listened to community radio in the past 7 days. This was followed by 5% for the North, 2% for the East/South and 1% listening in the West of Scotland (ibid).
- 3.34 Demand was also measured (Scottish Government, 2009) by the asking respondents whether they thought it was important to have a community radio station in their area. Overall, 49% indicated this was either fairly or very important to them (Scottish Government, 2009: 34). A further 33% said the opposite (that it was fairly or very unimportant to have a station in their area). Therefore, while almost half said it was important to have a local community radio station, 51% either indicated this was not a priority, that they did not know, or were not sure. It would be helpful to know to what degree the neutral and negative responses were based on informed opinion about or experience of community radio provision rather than a lack of understanding of what it involves. The research does breakdown responses into socio economic groups, indicating that 56% of C2s were in favour of having community radio provision in their area while 45% of AB1s thought it was important. It is also apparent that 41% of the over 65s testified positively. Geographical differentiations were noted again and stronger support was recorded where community radio already exists.

**Table two – importance of having own community radio station in Scotland**

Region	Level of Support
North	59%
East/South	48%
West	45%
Highlands and Islands	67%
Source: Public Attitudes Towards Broadcasting in Scotland 2009. Scottish Government, 2009: 34-35.	

- 3.35 Given the geographical differentiations in both listening patterns and demand for community radio locally, the literature implies that it may be more appropriate for community radio provision in Scotland to adopt a more nuanced place-based approach rather than one based on the assumption of equal demand/need across the whole country. Ensuring stations are supported within particular geographical areas should also, however, be balanced alongside the need to accommodate thematic stations which serve particular listener sub-groups (such as minority ethnic populations) or interest categories (such as different music genres).

<sup>9</sup> See Ofcom (2010: 41) for an indication of the areas covered in individual station listener research.

- 3.36 Using computer modelling of population data and signal reception, Ofcom estimate that over 10.5 million adults in the UK (just over 12.5 million people in total), are able to receive a community radio service (Ofcom, 2011b: 12). These figures estimate potential to receive a signal, however, rather than actual take up of community radio services. Community radio is not intended to maximise listenership. It is also worth noting that the delivery of social gain objectives can be as much about what takes place off-air during the production process as the numbers of listeners any given station may attract. As Phil Korbel observed, community radio is about the quality of engagement, the ownership audiences feel for the station and how it is able to benefit both participants and listeners (Korbel, 2006 quoted in Hallett and Wilson, 2010: 17). Notwithstanding this, the literature did not contain a reliable account of or method for assessing either listener numbers or experiences.
- 3.37 According to Ofcom (2010a: 3), the majority of stations in Britain serve a general audience in an urban/suburban area (17%) or a town/rural area (43%). Others serve communities of interest such as minority ethnic groups (14%), youth audiences (11%) or religious groups (7%) (ibid). Stations can serve more than one type of community and those with a geographical community often include a specific remit to serve subgroups within this wider community.

### **Impact and benefits**

- 3.38 According to Ofcom's (2011b: 5) annual report 2010/11, the community radio sector in the UK reported providing the following benefits at a cost of just over £10 million pounds:
- A total of almost 12,500 volunteering opportunities
  - Over 45,000 volunteer hours each week
  - Over 15,000 hours of original radio output each week
  - Output broadcast in a wide range of community languages
- 3.39 The literature reviewed also included a significant number of case studies of individual community radio initiatives. These included using community radio to improve communication between landlords and tenants (Lupton, 2005a), an initiative in Oldham to engage students and young people in clean and green messages (Odell, 2006) and Radio Regen in Manchester engaging disenfranchised young people (including refugees) through workshops, training courses and projects (Crispin, 2007). Other named benefits in the literature include:
- *Education and training;*
    - Building local volunteer and community aptitudes
    - Contributing to local education/training provision
    - Providing training and work experience opportunities
    - Promoting technological literacy
    - Developing media skills and awareness
    - Developing entrepreneurial skills

- *Personal wellbeing;*
  - Engaging teenagers and giving them something to do
  - Boosting self and collective confidence
  - Providing escapism and ‘the feel good’ factor
  - Attaining better standards of living and life opportunities
- *Creativity and belonging;*
  - Consolidating the identity of a given area
  - Enabling cultural and creative expression
- *Participation (or the ‘big society’);*
  - Promoting volunteering
  - Encouraging the aspirations of peers
- *Representation;*
  - Providing a voice for underrepresented groups of people such as older people and minority language speakers
  - engaging individuals and communities which other stations and community groups cannot reach
  - Responding to particular needs such as refugee or migrant communities
  - Ensuring overall radio output is more diversified and locally responsive
  - Producing alternative ‘non-mainstream’ formats and content
- *Communication;*
  - Providing an extra communication channel for local service providers to promote their work and to keep in touch with local people’s views
  - Keeping people in touch with news and events locally
  - Ensuring information is accessible
  - Acting as an impartial forum and mediating local disputes

3.40 A number of commentators celebrate the transformative power of community radio (Everitt, 2003a/b, Clayton and McDonald, 2006:10 & 23). However, Cammaerts (2009: 6) points out that the reality of community radio as an alternative platform can be a lot messier than the positive accounts allow for, with many reproducing mainstream formats, adopting semi-professional governing structures and financing their work through advertising and sponsorship contracts. Additionally, it should be noted that the evidence on benefits is largely anecdotal. This review did not uncover any systematic breakdown or measure of the social, educational, cultural, personal, community or other outcomes resulting from either producing or listening to community radio broadcasts. This is not to neglect the value of existing accounts, it is simply to note that these conclusions have not been empirically tested, particularly in relation to longer term consequences. Echoing this concern, Professor Everitt (2003a: 8 & 133) in his otherwise enthusiastic evaluation of the 15 access radio projects in the UK called for Ofcom to commission major research to assess the social and personal outcomes of access radio.

## Linking up with other services

- 3.41 In his follow up study of the access radio pilot projects, Everitt (2003b: 41) applauded the development of partnerships between stations and local councils, other public sector and voluntary bodies and local strategic partnerships. Indeed, a number of case studies also highlighted how community radio can benefit other service providers locally, enabling them to reach and engage potential users, improve relations locally and inform people of the work they do. For example, Peter Richmond (Lupton, 2005a: 21), the Chief Executive of Castle vale Community Housing Association explained that the association provides free accommodation to Vale FM because of the social and economic benefits of having the station on the doorstep and the positive experience they provide for local people:

*Particularly for young people, a radio station is somewhere they're comfortable to go into. It's using people's interests to explore opportunities for training and employment. And there have been some real success stories in the past of young people who have been right on the edge of exclusion and through their involvement with the station that's then helped them into formal training.*

Peter Richmond, Chief Executive, Castle vale Community Housing Association

- 3.42 A further example is Preston FM, a new station set up by community arts company Prescap, over 70 volunteers were involved in the first broadcast. The Women's Refuge were encouraged to take part in the breakfast show and their director commented that their involvement had been beneficial for both the refuge and the listening public.

*We had one woman visiting our Drop in Centre, The Hope Centre, specifically because she had listened to the first programme. The Refuge has benefited greatly from the project because we have been able to tell listeners about the wide range of services we provide. We interviewed local service users and nothing is quite as powerful as a survivor of domestic violence telling of her experiences and how she has come through it. We were able to raise public awareness of the massive problem of domestic violence and by presenting part of the show in Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu meant that we reached out to a wider community.*

Valerie Wise, Director, Women's Refuge

- 3.43 In 2005 Phil Korbel, Head of Radio Regen and former programme maker for Radio 4, claimed (Lupton, 2005a: 21) that "regeneration practitioners ignore it [community radio] at their peril" and will use it as second nature in 3-5 years time. Although this view may now be regarded as overly optimistic by some, the literature suggests that community radio can enhance understanding of other forms of local provision and improve local people's engagement with these services.

- 3.44 Reference to Scottish stations in the literature included Ofcom's example of shmuFM in Aberdeen which following £30,000 of Scottish Government funding through the Offender Literacies Learning Challenge Fund, offered prisoners community media activities in prison. This support and skills training was continued on release in order to break the cycle of offending. The project was recognised as good practice by HMle (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education, Scotland) (Ofcom, 2010a: 36). Insight Radio which serves the visually impaired in Glasgow is also cited for helping to educate potential employers about employing blind or partially sighted individuals (Ofcom, 2010a: 37). In 2011 Awaz FM in Glasgow were recognised as winner of the Queens Awards MBE for Voluntary Groups and Black Diamond FM (Midlothian) won several awards for programme quality and production (Ofcom, 2011b: 59). Young presenter Kenny Coyle of 3TFM Community Radio for Health in Salcoats also received a National Award from Creative Scotland at Adult Learners Week (ibid). Celtic Music Radio and Insights Radio in Glasgow both receive awards for traditional music output and station of the year respectively (ibid).
- 3.45 As part of the reporting process Ofcom encourage stations to report on their achievements beyond their specific social gains. Named achievements in the sector's annual report 2009/10 included; remaining financially viable on air despite the current economic climate; bringing together a large number of people without broadcasting experience, and; continuing to deliver training, music, news information and advice without substantial funding (Ofcom, 2010a: 39). Celtic Music Radio in Glasgow cited their outside broadcasts as an important way of involving performers, singers, bands and the general public. In terms of further achievements, Awaz FM in Glasgow achieved acclaim by receiving the Queens Award for Voluntary Service which is regarded as the equivalent of an MBE.

### Quality

- 3.46 Given that community radio is conceived and produced by local people with limited technical and broadcasting skills, it is unrealistic to expect the same level of quality as achieved by the BBC and commercial radio. Although little is written about the quality of programming output, comments from a Preston FM listener (Mailout, 2006: 17) imply that listeners appreciate the unpolished and genuine style of delivery:

*It is obvious that a lot of the presenters on Preston FM haven't done the job before and there have been a few guffs when I have been listening. I think this is one of the things which has kept me tuned in since the launch. Personally, I find the down to earth, average Joe-type of presenter much more endearing than the polished ones who get paid to do the job. Earlier there was a guy who obviously has some form of disability but I thought it was excellent that he was given the opportunity to take part in something he could never do professionally. I thought he did superbly.*

Listener, Preston FM

3.47 This view is echoed by Phil Korbel (Harward, 2003: 13) of Radio Regen who remarked that:

*The whole thing about this is our volunteers make our programmes. If the airwaves sometimes thud to the sound of a presenter bumping into the microphone, who cares – better to have local accents, minority languages and enthusiastic people than uniform media professionals ... We have a music programme in Benin [a Nigerian language]. I don't understand a word of it but you can tell the presenters are buzzing.*

3.48 This view suggests that whilst reasonable production standards should apply to community radio output and the aspiration should be there to be as professional as possible, the involvement of local people and relevance of programme content are more important than polished performances.

### **Common support needs**

3.49 Clayton and McDonald (2006: 17) outline a number of areas of concern which were suggested to them by community radio station participants. These include:

- A lack of strategic thinking and poor marketing (which can result in poor visibility)
- Controlling quality with limited staff
- Advertising industry perceptions that community stations 'sound rubbish' and are therefore not worth backing
- The lack of audience research which hampers attempts to target advertisers and consequently conduct financial planning and development

3.50 The following sections provide more detail on common areas of difficulty outlined in the literature.

### **Funding**

3.51 With a decline of 19% in average income compared to the previous year, lack of funding was highlighted as the most common difficulty faced by community radio stations in the UK (Ofcom, 2011b: 14, Clayton and McDonald, 2006:14-16).<sup>10</sup> Justifying radio as an art form to potential arts funders and the difficulty of obtaining funding for unattractive costs like electricity were pointed out (Clayton and McDonald, 2006: 15). In their report on The Arts and Community Radio, Cochrane et al (2008: 67) recommend that the "Arts Council of England recognises the community radio sector as a delivery agent for innovation and participation in the arts and actively seeks to support growth in the sector". The prescriptive nature of project funding is also highlighted (Clayton and McDonald, 2006: 15) as this restricts what stations can spend their money on. While the Community Radio Fund is welcomed it is also acknowledged that this is not enough to provide financial stability through properly subsidising core costs (ibid).

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<sup>10</sup> See footnote 2.

3.52 Cuts in budgets for potential supporters and a more cautious approach from advertisers were another source of concern. Leith FM explain how the financial climate has made fundraising more difficult and that income from advertising has been limited (Ofcom, 2010a: 66). Grants available in their first year of operation have also not materialised in subsequent years. The growth in the number of community radio stations in Britain may have exacerbated an increasingly competitive funding climate. As a consequence many stations rely more on voluntary workers and have imposed redundancies and/or wage cuts as a way of reducing expenditure (Ofcom, 2010a: 40).

### **Volunteers**

3.53 Although volunteers are the lifeblood of community radio, difficulties can also accompany their involvement. Clayton and McDonald (2006: 14) suggest that it can be hard for stations to manage volunteer expectations as many would rather play music and hear their own voice than go out into the community and involve them in the broadcast process.<sup>11</sup> Those volunteers who have an appropriate level of interest and skill can also move on quickly to the BBC or independent local radio. Community radio loses talent quickly as it does not pay (ibid). The problem of 'churn' is identified with volunteers leaving because they are 'no good' or because they move onto a job in the professional media. The quality and commitment of work experience trainees is also highlighted in Clayton and McDonald's work (ibid). Finally, difficulties associated with an over-supply of volunteers were also pointed out (ibid).

### **Balancing volunteer and paid worker input**

3.54 An increased reliance on volunteers can result in a loss of expertise and also affect the quality and consistency of the service in the UK (Ofcom, 2010a: 40). Reduced professional capacity can also have knock-on effects on the delivery of social outcomes and specific services like training and programming. Regular news services and speech-based content require more resources and are difficult to facilitate without paid worker input. One station reported an increased reliance on the goodwill of volunteers as access to one part-time member of staff was not enough to fulfil both their programming responsibilities and community remit (Ofcom, 2010a: 69). A Scottish station pointed out that limited governance and senior management skills among volunteers has hampered organisational development, decision-making and fundraising at the station (ibid). Another station highlighted how without a dedicated worker it was not possible to respond to the "huge demand" for training courses and volunteering opportunities (ibid).

### **Coverage and premises**

3.55 Ofcom (2011:51) identify coverage as a major issue for a number of stations in Britain, with some feeling that they are not achieving suitable coverage or reaching their chosen target area or are restricted by the coverage allocation. Inadequate coverage also makes it difficult for some stations to sell

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<sup>11</sup> This research had a limited sample with evidence derived from 20 emails to existing stations and two interviews with station managers on the phone.



advertising (ibid). A number of stations in Scotland reported difficulties reaching all their target community. Revival FM, Glasgow indicated that their low power level has resulted in poor/patchy signal reception (Ofcom, 2010a: 69). A lack of space and facilities were also identified as difficulties by a small number of stations (Ofcom, 2010: 69).

### International perspectives

- 3.56 A significant portion of the literature on community radio focuses on examples of the empowering and liberating effects of the medium on individuals and communities in the developing world (Bosch, 2007, Elliot, 2010, Jones, 2007, Rael, 2009). Community media – and community radio in particular – are seen as potent tools enabling communities to represent themselves, challenge and critique authority, and advocate strong citizenship (Cammaerts, 2009: 2). The peace-building capabilities of the media are also being increasingly recognised within these contexts. The literature provides an example of community radio assisting with disaster relief efforts -- the Federal Communications Commission licensed an emergency radio station for use by families displaced by Hurricane Katrina, in Houston (Social Policy Summer, 2006). There is evidence that literacy rates among school children are significantly higher in villages in Benin with greater access to community radio (Keefer and Khemani, 2011: 2 & 27).<sup>12</sup> Improving community relations, communicating information and promoting social justice principles are further facilities attributed to community radio within the developing world.
- 3.57 Cammaerts (2009: 3) maintains that the propensity to concentrate on Community radio in Asia, Latin America and Africa has led to a lack of critical reflection on its role within Western Democracies and the stifling and/or promotional effects of the regulatory regimes which govern it. Jones (2007), for example, celebrates the first on-air broadcast of WMXP-L/95.5 FM in Greenville, South Carolina, which marked the end of a seven-year battle against the National Association of Broadcasters and the commercial radio station's lobbying organisation in Washington D.C to provide an alternative to the city's large commercial stations for the African-American community. Organised resistance to what commentators regard as the ubiquitous power of commercial radio appears to be most prevalent in literature about the United States, although discourse emanating from the developing world commonly pits community radio in opposition to what is regarded as the dominating, unaccountable and unrepresentative interests of commercial operators, state-owned and controlled press and/or oppressive political and social regimes.

*When you look at the big companies – Clear Channel, GE, ABC, Disney – trying to negotiate more and more control without being accountable, what you're finding is a media justice movement that really understands how they're trying to do it, a movement capable of using the same leverage to fight for access. What we're saying is that we want the local control and*

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<sup>12</sup> Contrary to prior research this improvement is not related to increased household knowledge of Government education policies, but is due to households with greater access being more likely to make financial investments in the education of their children (ibid).

*determination which allows us to participate in our democracy ... to say no to corporate consolidation of media outlets.*

Hannah Sasaman, programme director, Prometheus Radio Project<sup>13</sup>

3.58 In this scenario, community radio takes on a profound purpose which goes beyond cultural representation to become a matter of democratic participation. Never-the-less, Cammaerts (2009) argues that community stations in the West are often forced to operate in the margins and struggle to exist and survive. Drawing on the US, UK and Belgium examples, he (Cammaerts, 2009: 2-3) identifies the following factors as having restrained the development of community radio in the West:

- Having to win the right to exist
- Gaining political recognition
- Having little lobbying power
- Accessing adequate frequencies
- Being positioned as rogue and unprofessional actors within the broadcasting community

3.59 Hallin and Mancini (2004) outline three comparative regulatory models as: the North/Central European democratic corporatist model which combines commercial and public service media interests; the North Atlantic or liberal model which is market dominated and the Mediterranean or polarized model in which state or political elites exert a high degree of control over both public and commercial media. While divergences exist in this and other historical accounts, Cammaerts maintains that the US, UK and Belgium regulatory regimes and the accompanying theoretical conceptions of these regimes have in their own way excluded community radio. Cammaerts (2009: 1) suggests that (Western) regulatory regimes need to account for the distinctive nature of community radio in order to create an enabling environment and emphasise the importance of participation and civic culture. This view is echoed across other commentators who openly question whether commercial radio can legitimately represent local interests:

*When big companies put out content that is primarily about increasing advertising revenue, it's clear that issues that are important to the local community in that market simply do not matter to them.*

Hannah Sasaman, programme director, Prometheus Radio Project<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusion

3.60 Having highlighted the existing evidence on the processes and structures which underpin the community radio sector, this review looked at listener

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted from A Conversation with Hannah Sassaman and Kat Aaron in Social Policy Summer (2006: 28)

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from A Conversation with Hannah Sassaman and Kat Aaron in Social Policy Summer 2006: 28. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications commission (2009) produced a detailed summary of community broadcasting structures internationally. See also Price-Davies and Tacchi (2001) for a detailed comparative analysis of community radio in six countries. This work is quite dated, however, and as a result it has not been covered in this review.

profiles, the impacts and benefits associated with the sector and common support needs in the UK. Finally, international perspectives were discussed. This section discusses remaining gaps in knowledge and outlines the research questions for the second phase of the research. A number of policy issues which have transpired from this literature review are outlined in chapter six.

- 3.61 The literature review shows that there is a paucity of evidence on community radio provision in Scotland. Given this, the existing account of community radio in the literature is largely derived from England, the UK as a whole or through international example.
- 3.62 Whilst there is evidence pointing towards the overall benefits of community radio for participants, there is a lack of systematic evidence on outcomes for listeners. Little is known about the numbers, profile, preferences and interests of community radio listeners in the UK, for example. Demand has also proved difficult to ascertain and consequently investment decisions have largely been made on the basis of the benefits of producing rather than listening. This review suggests that benefits for participants may be far reaching, although it is not clear how representative and inclusive this volunteer workforce actually is. Discussion in the literature about what is meant by 'community' suggest that more thought could be given to how communities are defined and targeted and consequently how services are shaped around their interests.
- 3.63 The literature draws attention to the difficulties stations in the UK have in funding core costs and paying for key workers. Financial stability is likely to become increasingly difficult to attain within a more stringent public funding climate and when advertising revenues are decreasing. Rewarding synergies between the arts and community radio sectors have been uncovered, as has the opportunity this represents for community radio to further tap into the arts funding infrastructure. Difficulties relating to volunteer management and training, poor marketing and the lack of strategic thinking in the UK sector are also outlined. Concerns were raised, particularly through the international literature, on the status of community radio relative to the wider broadcasting community.
- 3.64 Although this review has gone some way to answering the objectives of this study, there remain unanswered questions about benefits and the ways in which community radio in Scotland currently works with other sectors and institutions. Improved collaboration with education, cultural and creative sectors could potentially help to consolidate the position of community radio, increase participation and broaden its appeal to new listeners, for example. A more thorough understanding of the sector's support requirements in Scotland would also help to inform future strategic decisions.
- 3.65 The literature reviewed highlighted a number of shortfalls in the available evidence:
- Limited evidence on the community radio sector in Scotland specifically

- A lack of data on listener numbers and socio-economic profile (for advertising purposes and to justify public investment on the basis of social gain and community involvement)
- A paucity of evidence on listener experiences and what they get out of listening
- No systematic breakdown of benefits over time or into different outcome categories

3.66 Although the literature search uncovered a surprising breadth of writing about community radio, very little was written about community radio in Scotland specifically. A number of questions central to this research were not, therefore, resolved by closer reading of the literature. For example:

- How does Scottish community radio operate in terms of funding, volunteering, training and so on?
- What are the perceived benefits of taking part in community radio in Scotland?
- What currently works well and how could future provision be improved upon?
- In what ways does the sector collaborate with other local service providers and institutions in Scotland?
- What support does community radio in Scotland require in order to become sustainable and maximise benefits for local people?

3.67 Building on the literature review, the second phase of the research was undertaken in order to answer these questions and provide a more comprehensive evidence platform from which to direct future policy and investment in community radio provision in Scotland.

## **4 FINDINGS - STATION MANAGERS**

### **Introduction**

4.1 Phase two of the research consisted of two Questback surveys and two focus groups which were intended to provide a more detailed understanding of the community and independent local radio sector in Scotland. The survey of station managers focused on resources, volunteers and training, links with others, listeners and benefits, and good practice and further support. The survey received 11 responses out of a possible 18 community radio stations and seven small scale independent local radio stations. There were thirteen participants in the station manager focus group which looked in more detail at their perceptions of the benefits, challenges, training, role of the SCBN and future aspirations of the sector.

### **Premises, equipment and funding**

4.2 In response to the survey, station managers indicated that income at their stations ranged from nothing to £190,624 (inc VAT). Seven (of a possible 11 responses) to this question registered a total income of £7,000 or less. No station managers have had or expect to receive a Creative Scotland Grant in 2011/12. Three stations received a local authority grant in 2011/12. These awards ranged from £1,200 to £10,000.

4.3 When asked, three station managers (of a possible 11) confirmed that they owned their own premises. Of those who rent, seven managers reported paying a subsidised rent and one paying commercial rates. Just over half of station managers (six out of 11) were not satisfied with the premises they currently occupy. The remaining five were either satisfied or very satisfied with their premises. This indicates that more could potentially be done to support the securing of satisfactory community radio station premises. Eight respondents indicated that they would consider sharing premises with another arts, community, education or voluntary organisation.

4.4 A reassuring number of station managers (eight of 11 respondents) stated that the equipment they use is adequate for their current purposes. This implies there is no pressing need to provide support with equipment hire or purchase. All station managers confirmed that the equipment they use is in reasonable functioning order. Despite having no apparent concerns about the function of equipment, seven respondents (of a possible 11) stated that there is equipment which they do not have and do need. Equipment needs may therefore be seen to centre around the need to purchase new equipment rather than on the adequacy of existing equipment.

4.5 Station managers were all willing to share equipment and resources, which highlights a cooperative approach to delivering the service. While eight out of 11 station managers have volunteers who service and fix equipment, a further three also pay either a member of staff or someone externally to provide this service.

## Volunteers and training

- 4.6 The number of volunteers working in community radio stations varied considerably with one station manager indicating they had 31 volunteers through to another manager who works with 85 volunteers contributing a total of 190 hours per week. The smallest volunteer contribution was put at 80 hours a week. Using Ofcom figures, one manager calculated volunteer effort was worth £125,000 to their station annually.
- 4.7 Ten station managers (out of 11) confirmed that word of mouth is the most prevalent means through which volunteers are recruited. This is followed by on-air advertising (nine responses), and recruitment through schools and local community/voluntary organisations which six managers said they utilise. Four managers (of 11 possible responses) used further education institutions as another locus for potential volunteers (higher education institutions were used by two managers). Off-air advertising is accounted for by three station managers and less prevalently, single responses were registered for recruiting through the NHS and other related health initiatives and job centres. A further five station managers (of 11 responses) also recruit through other means such as community engagement activities, community magazines, and via websites, social networking sites and radio road shows.
- 4.8 There was a lot of consensus among station managers about what they believe volunteers gain from taking part in community radio. Suggestions included increased:
- Confidence, self worth and pride
  - Companionship
  - Sense of belonging
  - Technical skills (computing, radio production/broadcasting and presenting)
  - Social skills (communication, team-working, employability and personal development)
  - Knowledge and experience
  - Enjoyment
- 4.9 Gaining transferable skills and improving overall training for further employment were regarded as volunteer benefits. Volunteers were seen to increase their sense of self-worth as a result of expressing their interests, exercising their talents and also actively supporting their community and local charities. A broadening of local knowledge and understanding about wider global issues such as poverty and discrimination were also acknowledged, as was increased wider cultural knowledge. The value of making new friends and further social engagement were also noted, particularly in relation to older volunteers. The thrill of taking part in radio broadcasting and knowing others are listening also registered as a benefit for those involved.
- 4.10 The Majority of station managers (nine out of 11) said that they do provide formal volunteer training in addition to induction training. When the remaining two managers were asked why they do not provide formal volunteer training, they both cited lack of time, having no space to provide training and the lack of training resources/funding. Lack of training skills and not being aware of

what training/qualifications to offer were identified as further inhibiting factors by one of the two managers. Both of the managers who do not currently provide formal volunteer training stated that they would like to do so in future. In focus groups participants indicated that they access Independent Learning Accounts (ILA) and Education Maintenance Allowances to assist volunteers to take up training offered.

- 4.11 The survey revealed that a number of community radio stations in Scotland provide more formal/extensive volunteer learning which ranges from technical (ISDN, audio editing, techniques and using equipment such as editing desks) to broadcasting skills (journalism, interviewing skills, presenting, microphone techniques). One station also offers training in legal and libel law and another runs classes in local schools and community centres using a mobile studio. A further station manager said they provide training in community development theory. One station manager has worked with their local council training services and community learning and development sector. Another provides a comprehensive training package which involves a 12 week introductory course followed by a 12 week intermediate course, and opportunities to shadow other presenters, gain additional top-up training at regular intervals and also attend specific courses on employability and interview skills, journalism and audio editing. The station also offers training for offenders.
- 4.12 None of the community radio station managers which responded to the survey currently offer any accredited training (i.e. as part of a formal qualification). This confirms concerns identified in the literature review about how community radio is underrepresented in training, workforce development and professional learning within the wider creative, cultural and broadcast sector. When asked about possible levels of interest locally in attending a community radio broadcasting course, however, ten of the 11 respondents indicated that there would either be a lot or some interest in doing so.
- 4.13 When offering training, community radio stations in Scotland most frequently link into and work with secondary schools (eight of 11 station managers had done so), primary schools and further education institutions (seven of 11), and community education providers (six of 11). Station managers were less likely to have worked with higher education institutions (three had done so) and one manager stated that they had not worked with any education institutions or training providers.<sup>15</sup> Respondents also indicated that they have worked with a secure educational unit for young people, a link centre, an adult learning centre and a training centre.
- 4.14 There is clear interest in receiving additional training, support and guidance among station managers, particularly in relation to marketing (seven of a possible 11 managers were interested), volunteer management, fundraising, journalism and administration skills (six of 11 respectively). Station managers (three of 11) also indicated some interest in HR, staff management, broadcast engineering, presenting and interviewing skills. As one respondent demonstrated, however, this position is not unanimous – “We are a very experienced group of people we do not need other people to teach us about

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<sup>15</sup> A further three station managers had worked with 'other' education/training institutions and providers.

producing community radio, we have done this for five years you show me a lecturer that has that experience in community broadcasting”.

### **Working with others**

- 4.15 Community radio managers who responded to the survey are most likely to work with local shops and businesses (non retail) – all 11 respondents confirmed they had done so. Ten managers had also worked with local community/voluntary organisations and nine had worked with their local council, the NHS and police. Slightly less station managers (six of the 11) had worked with other health providers/services. The fire and prison service were less common partners (four and three stations out of 11 respectively). Schools, libraries, churches, the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and “all government and community agencies” were also mentioned as ‘other’ partners. These findings are consistent with data in the literature review on collaboration with other sectors and contributions from diverse public and private bodies.
- 4.16 There is a willingness within the sector to collaborate with other community radio stations (nine survey respondents indicated they have done so) as well as with other public sector broadcasters -- three station managers had collaborated with the BBC. In the focus groups, station managers indicated that they have had good and bad experiences of collaborating with the BBC and commercial broadcasters. It was thought that community radio functions as a ‘hot house’ training ground for young people moving into professional media. However, there was also a belief that other providers regard community radio as a competitor and can therefore be obstructive and seek to control potential collaborations. Others did give examples of having good relationships with commercial radio, however, explaining that stations do help each other out. One participant had collaborated with the BBC and shared studio provision, for example. It was suggested by another focus group participant that a memorandum of understanding has been drawn up in England between providers and that the SCBN could potentially look at replicating this in Scotland.

### **Listeners and listener benefits**

- 4.17 Consistent with findings from the literature review, survey respondents struggled to provide accurate ‘over the air’ listener data. Two station managers provided unverified listener figures as 1,000 listeners per day and “About 10% of our total possible audience of 150,000”. Estimating online listening figures appears to be less problematic, however. One station manager said “... online internet listening is encouraging with 120,142 listening hours p.a. with an average of 2,310 hours per week”. They also stated that one programme had attracted 1,293,121 hits on the website for the 12 months to October 2011.
- 4.18 While a number of respondents emphasised how their output appealed to a broad cross-section of the population, others referred to listeners from particular population sub-groups. These included:



- Men
- Women
- Young
- 25+
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Housebound
- Religious
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
- Ethnic (especially Polish and Asian)

4.19 While geographically bound groups of listeners were mentioned, survey respondents were more likely to refer to communities of interest linked to particular music, performers, artists and cultural programmes. The link between output and audience profile was highlighted – “... we have a broad selection of show types and therefore a broad range of listeners at different times”.

4.20 When asked what they think their listeners gain from listening, station managers typically talked about how community radio provided:

- A platform for local musicians and artists to get their music across to a wider community
- Exposure to local talent, skills and new music and ideas
- An outlet for niche music genres
- Confidence for local voices taking part
- Entertainment and cultural activity (music, books, films, gaming, sport, theatre, exhibitions, museums and galleries)
- Information and discussion about local news, services, organisations and agencies, issues, activities and events
- Information about equalities, (local)government and agency information
- An opportunity to participate in training and presenting, interact with the station/studio and take part in local democracy/dialogue
- A voice for the underserved and a chance to tackle negative stereotypes
- A strengthened feeling of community
- An independent body that can be contacted any time

4.21 The importance of providing local news and information was consistently highlighted, as was the specificity of wider programming. One manager recalled how their station had worked with the police, Red Cross and other agencies to help people in their community through the last two bad winters.

4.22 Elaborating on the cultural benefits of listening, one survey respondent stated that:

*Listeners gain by being exposed to new and fresh talent, new musical works, education by means of interviews and talks in terms of Scotland's history and heritage and contemporary arts and music information and 'live' music performance by artists which they – listeners and performers – would not get anywhere else.*

4.23 These observations confirm findings from Chochrane's research (2008) on the positive synergy between the arts and community radio in the UK. In addition to this, other specific benefits of community radio were highlighted as enabling discussion around health related issues and listeners to hear church services, and helping community charities to get free adverts and interviews.

### **Benefits for local communities**

4.24 Focus group participants highlighted a number of ways in which community radio benefits local communities. Stations were seen by station managers to make available critical information on emergency services and dealing with bad weather, for example. Stations were also regarded as providing a Scottish angle on issues and helping to disseminate local information on events and so on. Community radio was regarded by focus group participants as bringing together other community services, helping to break down barriers and bring together people who do not normally communicate with each other. As one participant said, "We are community builders, part of the fabric". The ability to reach and serve people which other media does not cover was mentioned. Finally, the benefits resulting from volunteering such as increased knowledge and skills were acknowledged. Many of the benefits outlined above are consistent with those identified in the literature review, particularly in relation to promoting creativity and belonging, enabling communities to represent themselves and communicating relevant information.

### **Successes**

4.25 When asked what currently works well at their stations, station manager survey respondents provided examples relating to:

- Volunteer input
- Team working
- Boosting the confidence of disenfranchised individuals
- Working with young people
- Community engagement activities and input
- Local news output
- Local government and public service information
- Providing an information platform for community organisations
- Offering diverse music styles and support to local bands
- Specialist programmes
- Local presentation teams
- Successful partnerships

4.26 The value of team working and the "superb enthusiasm and fantastic contribution of [our] volunteers" were particularly prominent in responses to this question. Work undertaken with young people was also regarded as particularly successful. One station manager had over 800 young people taking over the airwaves for nine hours a week last year. Although the resulting programmes include discussion of issues, expert interviews and sharing problems, the most important benefit was simply to "have fun". Another station manager talked of how community radio provides an outlet for

young peoples' frustrations. Older people, it was said by another, are able to voice their concerns through community radio. Having an 'open door' policy and upholding equal opportunities and diversity were cited as positive contributing factors by others.

- 4.27 Supporting local charities and community groups and actively engaging with the local community by, for example, advertising, attending and recording events were commonly regarded as being important by survey respondents. One station manager claimed to have over 50 active partnerships which are essential to the existence of the station. Details were also provided about a successful partnership with a local secondary school where the radio station has set up a satellite station which is used by the pupils to broadcast live. Participation was seen to add a new dimension to pupils' learning and to complement well with the Curriculum for Excellence. Being able to provide references for young people hoping to secure full time employment and education was seen to be beneficial by one station manager.
- 4.28 Fundraising success and generating good advertising and sponsorship income were mentioned by two station managers. One station also benefitted from having a purpose built studio.

## Challenges

- 4.29 In the survey, station managers identified a range of factors, from broadcast regulation to volunteer management, which make running a community radio station difficult. The most challenging factors were seen to be:
- *Management;*
    - ensuring all volunteer needs and expectations are met (i.e. in relation to time and resources)
    - managing diverse groups of volunteers
    - making sure volunteers and presenters uphold policies and standards
    - coping with illness and ensuring presenters turn up
    - communication between presenters and directors
    - being responsible for everything and being on call 24 hours a day
  - *News;*
    - the lack of a Scottish news service
    - gathering and compiling local news
  - *Listener data;*
    - the absence of an official structure to generate listener evidence
  - *Marketing and public profile;*
    - the lack of money for marketing and promotion
    - the slump in advertising
    - improving understanding about the difference between community and commercial radio
    - getting people and the government to understand that community radio is a community asset
    - encouraging the government to understand how grass roots local media hothouse young talent whom subsequently move to more 'senior' media
  - *Equipment and costs;*

- increased transmitter rentals
- equipment failure
- keeping equipment up to date
- finance
- *Working with others;*
  - attracting involvement from already stretched community organisations
  - encouraging more Gaelic input

4.30 Consistent with findings in the literature (Ofcom, 2011b: 49), focus group participants felt that funding is a key challenge. They remarked on how difficult it was to keep your “head above board”, particularly as community radio does not qualify for a number of funding streams and others are fragmented and difficult to access. They also found it difficult to find funding for specific areas such as paid staff. The difficulty of accessing arts funding and of funding awards being too prescriptive echo further findings from the literature review. One income generating suggestion raised in the focus groups was for community radio to operate more effectively as a delivery avenue for health and other campaigns. It was thought that improved brand awareness could assist community radio to present its case in this regard. Participants called for Scottish Government support to achieve this. It was also felt that advertising agencies were not currently serving community radio adequately and that this could be improved upon. In the literature review it was suggested that access to improved listener figures could help to secure such funding.

4.31 In relation to broadcasting regulation, one survey respondent highlighted what they felt was the need for a new broadcasting regulator for Scotland. Further requests included legislation to change the Ofcom Measured Coverage Area maps.

### **The Scottish Community Broadcasting Network and Creative Scotland**

4.32 The SCBN was launched in June 2008 with the aim of encouraging community radio stations to work together to shape community broadcasting across Scotland. The network aims to stimulate positive relations within the sector and capitalise upon the shared experience, knowledge and programming of the community radio station network. It encourages stations to help each other to develop into effective organisations with high quality output (SCBN, 2008). The SCBN has been instrumental in assisting with this research by advising on content, disseminating the surveys and supporting the focus groups in particular.

4.33 When asked in focus groups what function they thought the SCBN serves, station managers said that the organisation is an umbrella body which represents licensees, negotiates with Government, exchanges information, answers questions from stations and encourages them to help each other and cooperate as one voice. One participant said their aim was to help community radio stations to grow. They thought the SCBN had been very effective at this. It was suggested by another participant that the SCBN could potentially look into ways of supporting smaller stations to access funding.

- 4.34 A focus group participant indicated that the SCBN had helped when they found they could not afford consultant or training fees. This manager also thought the SCBN's presence helped to make it easier for other bodies to deal with the sector. The organisation had assisted others with producing Ofcom and financial reports and provided useful information. Another thought that while the organisation had been weak in the past it was now moving forward to a new place with a new chief executive.
- 4.35 During the focus groups participants mentioned that they felt there was scope for Creative Scotland to become more fully engaged with the community radio sector. The new vision for Creative Scotland was regarded as an opportunity in this regard as it was seen to be a far better fit with community radio provision than the previous one. One suggestion was for community radio to help advertise Creative Scotland and its funded organisations. There was a sense that this could potentially deliver "enormous returns" for the arts in terms of audience turn out. Participants also discussed the wider issue of whether community radio is defined as art and therefore whether it should qualify for arts funding. An example was given where an application to Arts and Business was rejected on the basis of not being an arts activity.<sup>16</sup> This discussion confirms concerns identified in the literature review about the profile and definition of community radio within the arts, and how there is considerable scope to consolidate working relationships.

### Future priorities

- 4.36 Focus group participants outlined a range of different things they would like to see addressed in future. A primary concern was to increase awareness of the value of community radio, particularly in relation to its contribution to local communities, giving a voice to people in poverty and projecting an image of Scotland internationally through the internet. Participants were also keen to highlight that community radio represents a good return on investment with every pound spent securing a considerable number of volunteer hours. As such the sector would like increased support to be viewed as a hand up and not a hand out. The abolition of license fee charges and assistance with identifying other sources of funding were also viewed as being important.

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## 5 FINDINGS - VOLUNTEERS

### Introduction

5.1 The second survey in phase two was designed to elicit views from volunteers on their experience of volunteering at a community radio or small scale independent radio station in Scotland. The survey looked at volunteer roles and experience, benefits, training, good practice and further support. The survey received 91 responses. There were thirteen participants in the volunteer focus group. The focus group enquired in more detail about participant's involvement as volunteers, training experiences, challenges for the sector and the SCBN.

### Context – volunteer roles and recruitment

5.2 It is clear from responses that community radio volunteers often take on a number of different roles within their station, the most prominent of which is presenting. Relatively few of the high number of presenters appear to be engaged with journalistic tasks which perhaps reflects a balance of programming in favour of content of a spontaneous rather than informed nature. Table four summarises volunteer roles in community radio as declared in the volunteer survey.

**Table three: Volunteer roles**

<b>Volunteer roles</b>	<b>Number of individuals fulfilling these roles (as a % of 91 responses)</b>
Presenting	96
Producing	40
General volunteering	24
Fundraising	17
Journalism	14
Other	12
Engineering	10
Administration	9
Marketing	8
HR (human resources)	3

5.3 Fundraising activities register slightly above journalism, and interestingly, fundraising effort also involves more volunteers than marketing work. Other activities undertaken by volunteers included board membership, web development, trainee mentor, audio editing, supporting youth and pensioner work and co-presenting.

5.4 The majority of volunteers give up between one to six hours of their time to community radio per week. Understandably the number of volunteers undertaking more hours than this drops considerably (see below).

**Table four: Volunteer hours per week**

Hours volunteered	Number of individuals (out of a possible 91 responses)
1-2	22
3-4	28
5-6	17
7-8	5
9-10	5
11-12	4
13-14	0
15-16	1
17-18	0
19-20	4
30+	2

- Responses indicate the number of voluntary hours individual respondents undertake per week

5.5 Length of service is similarly weighted towards the lower end of the spectrum with over 70 of the 91 survey respondents indicating that they have volunteered for up to 4 years.

### **Getting involved**

5.6 The majority (65%) of respondents to the survey did not have any broadcasting experience when they first became a community radio volunteer. Word of mouth is the most common means (54%) by which individuals become involved as a community radio volunteer. While 13% of volunteers become involved as a result of listening to the station, a lesser number 4% did so having taken a related education/training course. Other forms of introduction such as being a guest on a show, through the church and community jobs, or as a result of looking for a job in radio, accounted for how 34% of volunteers got involved in community radio. There was some discussion in the focus groups about how to involve more volunteers, and it was found that while some stations had a lot of volunteers, others struggled to recruit enough of them. It was also felt that too many volunteers want to be presenters which results in other roles being underrepresented.

### **The difference volunteering makes to volunteer's lives**

5.7 When asked what they liked about being involved in community radio, focus group participants said that they enjoyed giving people a voice, bringing people together, getting involved for the community, giving something back and helping vulnerable and less able people. One respondent felt there was "a lot of glamour attached to radio" which he liked. Others said becoming a focal point and having your finger on the pulse of the community were of benefit. The appeal of community radio across all ages was also appreciated, particularly in terms of the ways in which young people are able to develop new skills and build confidence. Dislikes included board meetings and internal politics/governance issues.

5.8 The volunteer survey revealed considerable convergence of opinion about the benefits of volunteering for those involved. In approximate order of priority,

benefits included: satisfaction resulting from contributing to one's local community; being a part of something and developing new friendships; gaining confidence; developing new skills and learning; the pleasure of taking part and the hope this brings; being given something constructive to do; increasing professional, communication and public speaking skills; providing specialist music programmes; gaining and sharing knowledge; improved mental and physical health; enabling creative expression; providing opportunities for ex-professionals to maintain involvement in broadcasting and; enabling career development.

5.9 As with the focus groups, satisfaction gained from making a contribution and giving something back to the local community was very apparent in the survey responses. Volunteers talked of having "A big satisfaction that I am doing something for our community". Others remarked that; "I enjoy it and it gives something back to the community" and "I get to be involved in a worthwhile community project, and I love it!".

5.10 Although their engagement is clearly altruistic, volunteers also acknowledged that they gain a lot personally from taking part, particularly through the development of new friendships. The importance of meeting like minded people, being part of something and sharing their music was consistently foregrounded. Involvement in community radio is seen to enrich personal involvement with volunteers' communities.

5.11 Volunteers testified that being involved with community radio has made them feel more self assured:

"It has boosted my confidence immensely"

"It has given me self-confidence, provided me with new skills and challenged me to push the boundaries back"

"Since joining the station I feel more confident about myself, giving me the ability to believe in myself"

"Has really gave me focus and confidence back into my life and helped so much with talking to/with others, i.e. has gave me a voice, a great sense of self worth is experienced from doing the volunteering at [station] and I can honestly say has made me an all round better person".

5.12 An unemployed volunteer testified that:

*"From complete technophobe to highly proficient computer user; including editing, research and downloading/uploading, and in general, an easiness with computer technology. Becoming comfortable with a mike has increased my presentation skills, and volunteering for community radio 'gets me out of the house' and meeting people. Finally, it gives me the feeling that I am contributing to the community"*



- 5.13 Volunteers also value the skills they have gained and regard community radio as an educational enterprise which tests and draws out previously unrecognised abilities:

*“It involves planning, preparation and delivery in an intense short space of time. It’s a rewarding discipline. It is educational”*

*“it has made me learn to value and discover skills that I have and didn’t realise”*

- 5.14 For some participants, community radio seems to provide a sanctuary from their ordinary lives, providing valuable space to pursue their own interests and passions and to simply have fun. Community radio:

*“... gives me something to look forward to each week”*

*“[is] a great outlet to follow my passion in broadcasting and playing good music that I can share with others”*

*“Gives me a bit of Me time”*

*“I love it, it’s great fun”*

*“Allows me to enjoy good music”*

- 5.15 Community radio also provides structure and purpose to the lives of volunteers. As one volunteer said, *“It has given a focus, something with goals in retirement”*. In the words of another, *“it gives me something to do in my spare time”*. A number of ex professional broadcasters highlighted how their involvement has enabled them to keep in touch with former colleagues and enjoy taking part as a hobby.

- 5.16 Increased communication and public speaking skills were mentioned as benefits resulting from volunteering. The central role played by music as a way of communicating with listeners and colleagues was repeatedly highlighted, particularly in relation to how community radio nurtures specialist music tastes:

*“the main difference is meeting other singers I hadn’t seen for years who come in for interviews, which has led to working together again. Also, I love interviewing and of course, enjoy the music. It is also great to hear how healthy the singer/songwriter fraternity has become and to work for a station which gives every encouragement”*

- 5.17 It is apparent that taking part in community radio production has had a profound significance for some volunteers, helping them to cope with difficult personal circumstances:

*“At the time my friend got me involved, I was suffering from depression and panic attacks. I also care for my disabled son 24/7. So volunteering got me out of the house, gave me something to do and a*

*new circle of friends. I felt it was something for ME [respondent's emphasis]*".

*"Being involved at [station name] is like a life line to me. I had a bad accident and can't get full time work, and my mood was so low. I became a volunteer and bang I now feel I have more confidence and a bit more get up and go". [Station name] is one of my saviours of my sanity"*

- 5.18 The value placed on being involved is well summarised by the comment from one, presumably young, volunteer that "I might keep the radio on in later life". The testimonies above eloquently illustrate the point made in the literature review that community radio should be recognised for the contribution it makes to the lives of those who participate as well as for the pleasure it brings to listeners.

### **Listener benefits**

- 5.19 Focus groups participants were asked how they think listeners benefit from the service and they discussed how community members could hear themselves represented, the radio could bring communities and their music together and promote local culture and events. This local rather than Scotland wide focus was seen as being beneficial, for example with the coverage of local sport and recording of school concerts.

### **Volunteer training, involvement and support**

- 5.20 Volunteer training provision varies considerably between stations, with some survey volunteers testifying that their stations provided them with none or minimal training. Others said they had received "thorough" training and a "whole host of training". One volunteer had undergone a 12 week training course, for example. Volunteer training needs also vary depending on previous experience. A number of individuals indicated that they did not need any training as they had sufficient previous experience. One volunteer had undertaken radio studies at college, for example. Appendix three details the training participants have received as community radio volunteers.

- 5.21 Survey results indicate that the quality of training is also inconsistent across the sector. It is apparent that a number of volunteers have had to use their own initiative and pick up skills 'on the job' and also that training is delivered by other volunteers:

*"School of hard knocks! Learning on the job"*

*"I am very good at picking things up, am technical minded and therefore have taught myself a lot about the stations"*

*"... in many ways we were the station's pioneers, learning as we went along through trial and error"*

*"... Most of it has been self taught"*

*“Some help with on-air and recording from other volunteers”.*

5.22 A focus group participant explained that managers were doing as much as they could, however. One survey volunteer received training from other providers and at events such as the Highlands and Islands Community Broadcasting Annual Conference. One other had trained at another radio station.

5.23 Other survey volunteers had much more positive experiences:

*“The training is first class. If you are a complete novice you would be expecting to be actively involved in broadcasting shortly after signing up. I have been there two years and still get coached on different and changing aspects of the station. There is always room for improvement”.*

*“... many other skills too numerous to mention. A very thorough course”*

*“Extensive training in most aspects of production and control of broadcasts”*

*“... Help is always at hand if required”.*

5.24 Refresher courses were available to some volunteers to ensure skills levels are maintained. However, it was also acknowledged that improvements could be made to volunteer training:

*“As a station we need to develop better training for new volunteers”*

5.25 Even when training is available, time restraints can inhibit the ability to take up opportunities – “Plenty [of training] is offered, however, time constraints have made this impossible to take up”.

5.26 When asked about the quality of the training they have received, 51% of volunteers surveyed said it had been excellent and 29% thought their training had been good. Consistent with this approval, over half of volunteers (59%) would like to receive more training at their radio station. A further 18%, however, felt their training had been okay or not very good and a minority (2%) confirmed it had been poor. Only 9% testified that they would not like to have any more training, whereas a significant number indicated they would like to receive some training from another station (30%) and/or take part in broadcast training provided by another education/training institution (38%).

5.27 Volunteer respondents were most interested in gaining more skills around broadcast delivery and engineering: interviewing (68 %); producing (60%); presenting (60%); engineering (38%) and; journalism (26%). Learning how to train volunteers was also a popular training need (29%). This was followed by gaining marketing skills (21%), fundraising (19%), administration (11%), staff management (10%) and human resource skills (7%). A small number (4%) of

other areas such as writing for radio, editing and youth work training were also mentioned.

- 5.28 In order to ascertain what significance volunteers may apply to their training in terms of any wider potential career ambitions, we asked respondents whether they would like the training they receive to be accredited as part of a qualification of some kind. Just over half (53%) indicated they would like this and around a quarter (26%) were not interested in gaining qualifications as a result of volunteer training. There was a general consensus within the focus groups that volunteering would be improved by the introduction of in-house qualifications and accredited training. One suggestion was for community radio to promote access to Independent Learning Accounts. Another was for the sector itself to award certificates of completion for volunteers undertaking training in community radio.
- 5.29 According to volunteer survey respondents, a high proportion (around 80%) of community radio stations offer induction training and have volunteer guidelines and procedures. About half of respondents said their stations also have a standardised approach to dealing with volunteers. The availability of human resource support is low (16%), and under half of stations have a complaints procedure, however. This may be due to lack of capacity and knowledge about how to set up such procedures and practices. Although low interest in developing human resource skills imply these functions are not seen as a priority among the volunteer community. Around a quarter of stations provide volunteer expenses which could mean that such subsidies are not necessary for most, or that stations are not able to accommodate this expense within their overall running costs. There is scope to improve the strategic, longer term and developmental support given to volunteers.
- 5.30 Whilst around 60% of volunteers report that their stations have regular staff/volunteer meetings, under half (42%) of volunteers have access to structured opportunities to be involved in decision making at their station. This implies there may be scope for improving how volunteers are involved in decision making within individual stations. Just over half of stations provide management support to volunteers, a situation which may be exacerbated by the fact that only 45% have a volunteer manager/coordinator. Again this could be due to lack of time and resources rather than poor organisational planning.
- 5.31 Similarly, attention could be given to ensuring more stations develop volunteer management programmes with aims and objectives for the entire volunteer resource and also individual volunteer plans. Survey respondents indicated that 36% and 29% of their stations (respectively) engaging in such work. The effective monitoring and evaluation of volunteering activities could benefit from further development (33% of respondents indicated their station did not undertake this).
- 5.32 The above findings suggest that community radio stations are functioning very well in relation to volunteer induction, guidelines and procedures, but that they either lack the motivation, resources and/or skills to provide further volunteer support in some other areas. Provision of volunteer expenses and structured opportunities for volunteers to be involved in decision making could be

improved upon. Just under half of respondents said their station has a volunteer manager/coordinator and perhaps as a result of this, around two thirds thought their stations did not have volunteer management programmes in place. A similar number stated their stations do not effectively monitor and evaluate volunteering activities.

### **Volunteers' aims and priorities**

- 5.33 In the survey we also asked volunteers whether they regarded their overall involvement with community radio as an end in itself or as a way of progressing onto further things. Just under half of survey respondents (49%) saw their involvement as an end in itself and were not interested in it leading to anything else in career or educational terms. A significant proportion of volunteers would like their involvement to be a way of progressing a career in broadcasting (43%) and/or a career outside broadcasting (21%), however. This implies that whilst volunteering may be altruistic in many ways, it also has a strategic career oriented function for the majority (64%) of volunteers. A further 16% would like their involvement to contribute to movement into more education/training. Community radio was regarded by focus group participants as one of the only avenues available for getting into wider broadcasting.
- 5.34 When asked to comment on what they think works well for them as volunteers, respondents most commonly cited the freedom they are given to select and present their own material as being most valuable. They also appreciated the freedom to express their own ideas, and suggested that these conditions were not available in commercial radio. Their comments confirm observations by Elson (2007: 32) and Cammaerts (2009:3) on how community radio in the West creates space free from commercial interests and provides a local alternative to commercial broadcasting. Relatedly, a number of volunteers noted how they felt trusted and appreciated and said that this was important to them.
- “All staff members seem to value your input and the shows I am involved with are not restricted or strictly structured. You are allowed to pretty much be yourself, not just a voice and a playlist”.*
- 5.35 The second priority for volunteers was the sense of camaraderie and togetherness which prevails in many community radio stations. Working in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and the sheer enjoyment of producing the shows were valued highly. Volunteers cited their relationships with management and other volunteers and support and guidance they were given as following on from this in importance.
- 5.36 Having the opportunity to contribute new ideas, being listened to, voting on decisions and engaging with a breadth of issues through their shows were all mentioned as priorities. The variety of people they meet, their involvement with members of the community and how inclusive their stations were highlighted as being significant to them.
- 5.37 Flexibility in terms of programming and the demands placed on volunteers were mentioned by a number of respondents. This enabled volunteers to

develop their own programming style and structure their engagement around other work commitments. The provision of training, the wide range of opportunities and ability to learn new skills were also widely appreciated. The sense of achievement and improved confidence resulting from this was noted.

- 5.38 A number of management approaches were mentioned as being effective. These included: the provision of regular staff/volunteer meetings; an ongoing support programme; monitoring (not specified) and; a standardised approach to dealing with volunteers. Finally, individual volunteers cited funding, having something to do, interviewing guests and presenting, and having the space to develop one's own skills as being significant to them.

### **What could be improved to make volunteering more successful?**

- 5.39 Volunteers highlighted a wide range of practical measures which they thought would help to improve the effectiveness of volunteering practice at their individual radio stations. It is worth noting that 11 respondents (out of 91) indicated that they could not think of any improvements their station could introduce to make volunteering more successful. Of those who made suggestions, a significant number outlined how they thought the volume, resourcing and organising of training could be improved. In addition to specific kinds of training they would like to receive, volunteers also thought there should be more and regular training, more trainers, formalised training structures, better support with training and improved training resources. The need to provide accredited training was also mentioned, as was the establishment of a clear line of progression from volunteering to professional broadcasting.
- 5.40 Although the adequacy of facilities and equipment were mentioned, less comment was received on these areas than might have been expected. Not so for funding, where a number of volunteers identified specific areas where more funding was required, namely in relation to expenses, programme content, studio improvements and equipment, and purchase of CDs.
- 5.41 A number of volunteers thought that they would benefit from increased support from management and directors. Frequent meetings were raised as one possible mechanism in this regard, as was improved volunteer involvement with management. The potential to improve internal communications as well as marketing were also identified as a priority. Similarly, Clayton and McDonald (2006: 17) highlighted how poor marketing among UK stations results in poor visibility. More decisive leadership was also highlighted by volunteers. Regular feedback, appreciation and recognition were seen as lacking by other volunteers.
- 5.42 Attention was drawn to whether the institutional structures and procedures which underpin individual stations are professional and coherent enough. It was felt by some that a more business-like approach should be adopted and that specific improvements could be made to the range of procedures available, accountability processes and roles and responsibilities. Similar concerns about governance and management skills were identified in the literature review. In addition to this, the lack of administration resources,

particularly in relation to staff time, were also mentioned. It was felt by some volunteers that additional staff are also required to ease workload and co-ordinate volunteers.

- 5.43 Respondents also suggested ways in which relationships with other volunteers could potentially be improved. Ideas included holding more volunteer meetings, establishing a volunteer group, increasing the number of volunteers working on back office functions, and devising off-air schedules to structure volunteer time. Others felt that increased interaction between presenters would improve volunteering experience, as would additional help with managing and securing guests.
- 5.44 Programme output could be improved by having more defined programme plans and increased assistance with programme content. One volunteer called for hourly news and weather updates as a specific content recommendation. It was suggested by others that community involvement could be increased by holding more road shows. Doubt was cast on whether stations have a clear enough understanding of their listeners numbers and profile.

#### **What external support is required?**

- 5.45 Although the survey question on external support requirements invited respondents to think of potential areas of support which did not include funding, a significant number of them felt that funding was so important that it could not be excluded from their response. Similarly, focus group participants also emphasised how central they felt funding is to the future of community radio. One participant said that “We are living month to month. Volunteers are dipping into their pockets”.
- 5.46 It was suggested that something could be done to alleviate start up costs and the burden of licence fees (estimated at £6,000 per year), utility bills and transmission fees. The 50% cap on advertising revenue was regarded as arbitrary and it was suggested that this could be removed. Focus group participants suggested that assistance from either the Scottish Government or local councils with accessing other sources of national and local funding would be beneficial. They felt that they were not aware of what funding opportunities were out there, how to access these or who to get assistance from.
- 5.47 A number of focus group participants and survey respondents raised concerns about signal allocation and requested larger coverage as well as the opportunity to broadcast on FM rather than AM/MED. However, while one focus group participant said that FM with a sensible power would resolve these difficulties, another pointed out that young people now listen through a plethora of different platforms such as mobile phones rather than automatically using FM. Access to emerging platforms such as Freeview and mobile phones were also raised, as was switching to digital radio (DAB). There were concerns about how regulatory decisions affect Scotland, for example in relation to spectrum allocations.

- 5.48 Survey respondents voiced concern about definition and profile and thought that community radio would benefit from more publicity in order to increase awareness within local communities, with local businesses, and among national and local politicians. Local businesses could, for example, play community radio on their premises in order to increase their involvement with the sector. It was felt that local politicians and local authorities could also assist with raising the profile of community radio.
- 5.49 Concern was expressed by respondents about the need to increase support from local communities and encourage them to become more involved. Specific attention was drawn to the need to involve young people in decision making within stations. Better links with community groups was seen as one possible way of engaging local people, as was more active promotion of community radio by local bodies such as the council. Assistance from local press to provide local content and undertake cross-promotion was also put forward.
- 5.50 Attention was drawn to the lack of awareness of the community radio sector among advertisers and it was suggested the sector would benefit from support with securing commercial advertising revenues. Survey respondents would like greater flexibility in relation to advertising levels and also for bigger more established radio stations to advertise community radio. It was felt that consistent paid for public service messaging would be beneficial. Volunteers also called for input from external marketing experts.
- 5.51 A number of suggestions from survey respondents focussed on ways of promoting more effective interchange between community radio stations. A forum or base for community radio stations to interact with each other was suggested. Further ideas included; an improved networking system to allow sharing of materials and shows; a database with information and help; a skills exchange system whereby volunteer skills can be recruited to assist other stations and; a common event.
- 5.52 Volunteers were also concerned to improve links with and access to professional broadcasters in order to benefit from programme production, engineering, journalism and presenting expertise. It was suggested by respondents that such assistance could be in the form of workshops or other training sessions or by highly experienced individuals helping to monitor community radio provision and provide constructive support. A number of practical suggestions were also put forward in relation to the wider public broadcast sector. These included: help to integrate with other forms of broadcasting; increased coverage in other media passing free air time over to community radio programmes; a hand-down of redundant equipment; access to local news feeds; links to public broadcast material and; permission to run repeats of BBC Scotland archive material. The support required from the profit based sector consisted of celebrity promotions and free CDs from major record labels and programme listings in newspapers. A plea was also made for other media outlets to support community radio rather than regard it as a competitor.



- 5.53 Training provision was cited as a leading priority by focus group participants and survey respondents, and it was felt that more could be done to monitor training and provide training in presenting, management and governance skills. It was suggested in the survey responses that this could be delivered using peripatetic trainers running evening classes, or through training days and mentoring programmes, for example. Concern was expressed to improve links with colleges and universities in order to secure further training options for volunteers. Specific ideas from the survey were to offer free media training at college level, to provide places at university for bright students to progress careers in radio and journalism. A particular priority was to certify volunteer training in order to ensure learning is linked to recognised qualifications. Support with training from professional broadcasters was also mentioned as a priority.
- 5.54 A number of survey volunteers were interested in opening up opportunities to progress from volunteering into paid employment in the broadcasting sector. It was felt that this could in part be achieved by building active migration routes with public sector and commercial broadcasting institutions. Increased support from these two sectors would need to be secured in order to establish these links. This may be an area where national and local government could provide assistance.
- 5.55 Volunteer respondents thought that community radio would benefit from more support from MSPs and the Scottish Parliament as well as national and local Government. This would help to increase the visibility of the sector. More hands-on support from the Scottish Government was requested, for example through provision of a broadcasting champion in Government. Local councillors were also called on to do their bit in practical ways by ensuring stations are invited to local events and providing content for local public service based programmes.
- 5.56 The current balance of programme content was questioned by a few survey respondents who felt that output could be improved by achieving a better balance between chat/pop and drama/comedy. An increase in local news and 'What's on' shows would also ensure a more satisfactory balance of material. One suggestion was to establish a content exchange which would operate as a platform for volunteers to meet, exchange content and co-present programmes with their regional counterparts. Volunteers would also like more feedback from listeners and those who provide information for the shows.
- 5.57 A number of ideas focussed on improving the status and rights of volunteers within the sector. A community radio volunteer union and/or volunteer forum were proposed which would help to address the balance of power and mediate potential disputes between volunteers and paid workers/management.

### **What community radio can do for itself**

- 5.58 Volunteers were asked what they thought the sector could do to improve the situation for itself. A number of these points echo those raised in the section above. Again the issue of funding was pushed to the fore, as represented by

the following quote where the respondent highlights how difficult it is for the station to function without funding support.

*“We try constantly to do as much as we can with other stations and with the local community. There is a feeling that there is no real support externally no matter how hard we try. All we can do is keep going and deal with as much as we can without outside help., particularly external grant support which would be the single thing which would make the biggest difference. It is impossible to deal with this survey properly without bringing funding into play. It is all consuming in a small station”.*

- 5.59 Volunteer respondents highlighted fundraising events, more effective lobbying, improved input from advertisers and better take-up of education and employability funding as actions which would all help to improve the financial outlook for the sector.
- 5.60 In addition to abiding concerns around funding, survey respondents also had suggestions around broadcast regulation. Running a campaign for relaxation of the regulations in favour of local programming as opposed to national networking priorities and corporate interests was raised by one individual. Support was also expressed for devolving licensing and the media to the Scottish Government. Switching to DAB and increasing transmission power were also voiced.
- 5.61 Survey respondents also called for an increased sense of self-belief within the sector and for volunteers to aspire to achieve professional standards. This view is consistent with the literature review which found that while reasonable production standards should apply to community radio output, the aspiration should also exist to be as professional as possible. One suggestion was to have a national award for the sector. A number of self-promotion ideas were put forward including a monthly magazine, a national promotion campaign and publicising the service more widely in schools.
- 5.62 Respondents were keen to promote more collaboration between community stations, possibly by setting up a forum or committee for sharing knowledge, programming and successful approaches. Holding an annual community radio broadcast conference was also put forward. It was suggested improved pathways between community radio and a career in professional broadcasting could be created. It was felt that the sector could provide more training and qualifications for those who want this. Others looked to fostering better relationships with the music industry and the ‘big’ labels. Volunteers emphasised the need to maintain their identity in relation to commercial radio output by, for example, increasing the number of local discussion programmes and political debates. Programmes, it was suggested could be linked with other community stations. One volunteer speculated about whether it would be possible to provide Scottish news bulletins on the hour by linking with other media providers.
- 5.63 A plea was also made to provide more varied and creative programming and cater for a wide spectrum of music tastes. Such efforts could help stations to

relate more closely to their immediate communities. Concern was expressed to improve involvement from people of all ages and create more interest locally. As one respondent said, the sector should “focus more on ‘community’ rather than on ‘radio’”, so becoming invaluable to local communities. Listener feedback should be valued and one idea was to develop a challenging agenda to increase audience participation across the sector. This would assist with the wider aspiration to provide potential advertising subscribers with a better idea of listener numbers. Overall, it was felt that the SCBN could be utilised more effectively by the sector to provide support for the aspirations outlined above. It was also said that the organisation could benefit from more support from the sector.

### **The Scottish Community Broadcasting Network**

5.64 Although one respondent suggested the sector should support the SCBN, the survey suggests that the network could also improve recognition among community radio volunteers in line with the stronger recognition it had among station managers who were surveyed. Focus group participants did, however, acknowledge that it is difficult for the SCBN to create a climate of cooperation when stations are effectively chasing the same funding. Participants were keen on working with the SCBN to ensure the sector is more coherent and has a common voice and it was felt that the organisation could do with more support from the sector to achieve this.

5.65 Survey respondents were unsure about whether the community radio sector has a network at all - “Isn’t there a network in Scotland? I can’t find info anywhere on the internet about that”. Despite the existence of an SCBN internet site, there was also concern that any possible network did not appear to have a web presence - “The sector doesn’t even have a website”. Volunteers repeatedly noted the need for stations to work more effectively together and build an infrastructure which could actively facilitate practical collaborations. This aspiration clearly chimes with the overall remit of the SCBN and consequently given a higher profile the organisation could be key to achieving this aim. As one survey respondent said, there is a need to:

*“Create a ‘tighter knitted’ community with the various regional community stations, building infrastructure between them. You may claim this already exists, but if it does, I am not aware of it and that surely shows that more can be done!”.*

5.66 It was felt by focus group participants that the SCBN should aspire towards becoming a single, accessible structured forum for the sector and that it could set out a framework for community radio stations in Scotland to collectively work towards as part of this process. Participants were committed to the SCBN functioning as a common body which acts on behalf of the whole sector and represents its interests to Ofcom and the Scottish Government. It was, however, acknowledged that the organisation is still in its infancy and that it may also be difficult to arrive at a single structured aim across all stations. Participants would like more communication within the sector to be conducted through the SCBN, and for the network to involve and communicate more with presenters and volunteers rather than just managers.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### Comment on the research

- 6.1 The previous chapters provide an overview of community radio provision in the UK and internationally through the available literature. Subsequent chapters detail the results from primary research conducted on the community radio and independent local radio sector in Scotland. The literature reviewed reveals a surprising breadth of writing about community radio generally, although little account is given of provision in Scotland specifically. Evidence on the benefits of community radio for participants, listeners and local communities is largely anecdotal in the literature but is borne out by findings from the primary research. Given this it is possible to conclude that the benefits resulting from community radio provision are far reaching, certainly for those involved in its production. Unfortunately little is known of about the numbers, profiles and preferences of listeners and a concern about this lack of listener data was echoed by station managers and volunteers through the surveys and focus groups.
- 6.2 The literature and primary research findings draw attention to the difficulties stations have in funding core costs and paying for key workers and volunteer expenses. This review also invited those taking part to explain what they thought worked well or what could be improved at their stations. Findings were largely consistent with material in the literature review with Scottish participants highlighting funding, training provision, sector profile, management and governance arrangements, the lack of listener data, spectrum coverage and allocation and volunteer involvement in decision making as potential areas for improvement.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the challenging funding climate and other operational difficulties, Scottish station managers and volunteers talked passionately and positively about the wide achievements and benefits of community radio. For many their involvement had proved personally rewarding, providing structure and purpose, and improving their lives in other significant ways. They were animated about their suggestions for how the sector could be improved and what they hoped it would become in the future. A number of practical suggestions were made which could realistically be implemented by the sector itself and associated partners. Improving collaboration between community radio and the arts is one such opportunity.

### Findings – literature review

- 6.4 Below is a summary of the most significant findings from the literature review. Unless otherwise stated, these findings relate to the UK wide community radio sector.
- 6.5 Processes and structures:
- 18 of the UK's 231 licensed community radio stations are based in Scotland - the demand for licences outstrips supply
  - The growth in the number of stations in the UK may be exacerbating an increasingly competitive funding climate

#### 6.6 Income and funding:

- Income across the sector (UK wide) varies widely with grant funding and revenue from on-air advertising and sponsorship providing the most financial support. Mean income has dropped by 19% since 2009/10
- Applications to the Community Radio Fund far exceed awards and the average award payment for just under £16,000 is estimated to generate two to three times this amount in further grants and advertising

#### 6.7 Output:

- UK stations broadcast an average of 80 live hours per week topped up by a further 10 hours of original pre-recorded material
- Community radio creates broadcasting space free from commercial interests and which includes contributions from local public bodies, private and third sector organisations as well as different professionals and local people
- Community radio uses and promotes the arts through, for example, literature and spoken word programming, drama productions, live and recorded music, listings and review programmes, organising and covering local events, festivals and carnivals and providing training

#### 6.8 Accountability:

- Community radio services in the UK must meet four mandatory social gain objectives and set out how they will meet their 'key commitments' and deliver social gain as part of their licence
- Stations operating for over a year are required to complete an annual report

#### 6.9 Market size and listeners:

- Independent audited listening figures and profiles are not available in the UK to assess the market share, advertising effectiveness or social impact of the sector

#### 6.10 Demand:

- Research on public attitudes towards broadcasting in Scotland recorded low levels of listening for community radio, with 2% indicating they had listened in the last 7 days
- While 49% of respondents in Scotland indicated it was either fairly or very important to have a community radio station in their area, 51% indicated this was not a priority, they did not know or were unsure
- Geographical differentiations in both listening patterns and the demand for community radio stations have been noted in Scotland
- Ofcom estimate that over 12.5 million people may be able to receive a signal in the UK, this does not account for the actual numbers who take up community radio services
- Commentators maintain that maximising listenership is not a primary objective of community radio and that quality of engagement and the delivery of social gain objectives off-air are of principle importance

#### 6.11 Impact and benefits:

- Community radio in the UK provides over 10,000 volunteering opportunities and 10,000 hours of original radio per week delivered in a wide range of community languages
- The evidence on benefits is largely anecdotal and this review did not uncover any systematic breakdown or measure of outcomes
- Benefits include: providing education and training opportunities; enhancing personal well being, creativity and a sense of belonging; encouraging participation; providing a platform for underrepresented groups and; communicating information relevant to local needs
- Many stations in the UK encourage other organisations and service providers to take part and this can enhance understanding of other forms of local provision and improve people's engagement with these services
- The literature suggests that the benefits of taking part should be offset against any potential loss in broadcast quality which is inevitable with amateur production

#### 6.12 Volunteers:

- UK stations on average work with around 78 volunteers who contribute over 250,000 hours a month to community radio
- All stations in the UK offer some form of training for volunteers and the majority also offer training to other members of their target community such as work experience for school pupils or students
- Although community radio could not function without volunteers, there are also difficulties associated with their involvement, such as allocating roles, high 'churn' and loss of talented individuals, and the quality and commitment of work experience trainees

#### 6.13 Common support needs:

- Concern was expressed about poor marketing and the lack of strategic thinking with stations in the UK
- The need to boost advertising revenues in the UK and change negative perceptions of community radio within the advertising industry were also mentioned
- Deficient audience data was also cited as a problem, as was poor/patchy signal reception which can hamper the ability to reach target communities across the UK
- The lack of funding in Britain, cuts in budgets and decreasing advertising revenues caused most concern – relatedly, the Community Radio Fund was regarded as being too small
- The difficulty of gaining funding for unattractive costs such as power bills or securing cultural funding when community radio is not regarded as an art form in the UK were mentioned, along with the overly prescriptive nature of project funding
- A decrease in funding can result in reduced professional involvement which can have knock-on effects on the delivery of social outcomes, training and programming for British stations

#### 6.14 International perspectives:

- A significant portion of the international literature on community radio focuses on examples of the empowering and liberating effects of the medium
- Community radio's ability to challenge and critique authority and enable communities to self-represent are also highlighted, as is its ability to communicate information, improve community relations and even build peace
- Concerns were raised about the status of community radio relative to the wider broadcasting community as well as its lobbying position and political recognition of its worth

### **Findings – Scottish community radio research**

6.15 The following sections summarise key findings from the primary research on community radio provision in Scotland. Much of this is consistent with conclusions from the literature review.

#### 6.16 Funding:

- Both station managers and volunteers drew attention to how lack of finance affects their ability to service and purchase equipment, pay license fee charges, recruit paid staff, pay volunteer expenses and core running costs, make improvements, and provide training
- Difficulties accessing arts funding and securing advertising revenue were also highlighted
- Lack of awareness about funding opportunities and the need for assistance with accessing wider funding pools were mentioned

#### 6.17 Premises and equipment:

- The majority (eight of 11) of station managers indicated that they would consider sharing premises with another arts, community, education or voluntary organisation
- The same number (as above) suggested that the equipment they use is adequate for their current purposes and they all (11) confirmed that their equipment is in reasonable functioning order
- All station managers said they would be willing to share equipment and resources

#### 6.18 Volunteers:

- The number of volunteers working in Scottish stations varied considerably, ranging from 31 through to 85 volunteers
- Volunteers are primarily recruited through word of mouth and on-air advertising and the majority volunteer for between one and six hours a week
- The majority of volunteers are involved in presenting (96%), followed by producing (40%) and general volunteering (24%), with 17% undertaking fundraising duties
- Most volunteers (65%) do not have any broadcasting experience when they become involved
- There was wide consensus about what volunteers gain from taking part in community radio, with benefits identified as increased confidence and self worth, companionship, a greater sense of belonging, satisfaction from helping

others, technical and social skills, knowledge and experience, enjoyment and improved mental and physical health, and career development

#### 6.19 Training:

- Most station managers (nine out of 11) said that they do provide formal training in addition to induction training
- Lack of time, space, resources/funding and training skills were cited as reasons for not providing further training
- While training provision is patchy, a number of stations do provide extensive training in a wide number of areas including, technical and broadcasting skills and community development
- Volunteers indicated that the quality of training is not consistent across the sector
- None of the station managers surveyed currently offer any accredited training, although just over half of volunteers indicated that they would like to receive this
- When offering training stations most frequently link into and work with secondary and primary schools, further education institutions and community education providers
- There is clear interest in receiving additional training, support and guidance particularly in relation to marketing, volunteer management, fundraising, journalism and administration (station managers), broadcast delivery and engineering, interviewing, producing, presenting and engineering (volunteers)

#### 6.20 Working with others:

- Although the sector currently collaborates with training providers and education establishments more could be done to improve these links and embed training provision within the wider qualifications framework
- Community radio stations do collaborate with other community stations, but it was felt that such links could be consolidated and improved
- The desire to work more closely with the arts sector was repeatedly expressed

#### 6.21 Listeners and listener benefits:

- Consistent with the literature review, station managers were not able to provide any in-depth or systematic data on listener numbers and profiles
- Survey respondents were more likely to refer to communities of interest linked to particular music, performers and cultural programmes rather than geographically defined listeners
- A wide number of listener and community benefits were identified including, access to local musicians and talent, local news and information, an active voice, a strengthened sense of community

#### 6.22 Successes:

- Areas of success were identified as: volunteer input and team working; working with disenfranchised and young people; community engagement activities, local news and public service output; supporting diverse music styles and artists; specialist programmes; local presentation teams and successful partnerships



#### 6.23 Challenges:

- Challenges were highlighted in relation to volunteer management and communication, listener data, marketing and public profile, equipment costs and failure, and working with others

#### 6.24 The Scottish Community Broadcasting Network (SCBN) and Creative Scotland:

- Recognition of the SCBN was not as high among volunteers as station managers and it was suggested that volunteers would appreciate more involvement with the organisation
- Research participants were keen on the SCBN functioning as a common body, assisting the sector to coordinate and collaborate more effectively
- It was suggested that the SCBN could potentially support smaller stations to access funding
- It was felt that there was more scope for Creative Scotland to become involved with the community radio sector (and vice versa)

#### 6.25 External support requirements:

- Assistance with accessing alternative sources of national and local funding was sought
- The abolition of license fee charges was also viewed as important by some
- Concerns about signal coverage, FM and access to emerging platforms such as Freeview were raised and a number of participants requested support with reviewing these areas
- More active promotion of community radio by national and local politicians, the Scottish Government, businesses and community/voluntary organisations was regarded as a possible way of supporting development and increasing recognition locally
- Greater flexibility in relation to advertising levels as well as support with securing commercial advertising revenues was requested (for example through consistent paid for public service messaging)
- It was felt that the sector would benefit from assistance with improving links with professional broadcasters, for example through training, workshops, increased coverage, handing down redundant equipment and access to local news feeds

#### 6.26 What community radio can do for itself:

- Station managers were primarily concerned to improve lobbying and increase awareness of the value of community radio, particularly in relation to local communities, for disadvantaged individuals, with the Scottish Government and funding bodies, and in terms of Scotland's international profile
- Improving training provision was a leading priority particularly in relation to course content, delivery, links with colleges and universities, certification, monitoring and progression into paid employment
- Provide more varied and creative programming and cater for a wider spectrum of music tastes
- Investigate how to increase community and listener participation across the sector

- A number of suggestions were made on how to improve interaction between stations, these included a practical system for sharing materials and shows, an information database, a skills exchange system and a common event

## **Implications – improving support**

6.27 This review has highlighted a number of issues of relevance to the wider discussion around how best to guide and support community radio provision in Scotland. It is suggested that consideration could be given to the following areas.

6.28 Defining and measuring success:

- It could be helpful to work with the sector to reach a clear understanding of what community radio provision in Scotland should consist of, what benefits accrue from it and for whom
- Agreeing a vision for the sector could help to clarify the relative value which should be given to listener numbers as opposed to the benefits of taking part, and therefore whether further investment can be justified on the basis of potentially low listener volumes
- Benefits could be measured against this agreed vision/definition of success
- Government support for and investment in the sector could be justified through reference to this vision and the benefits resulting from implementing it

6.29 Education and training:

- It may be possible to improve the training capacity of community radio stations, for example, through better links with HMIE, HE/FE, schools, the cultural sector and creative industries
- Consideration could be given to whether the training provided by community radio stations should be accredited – this could include discussions with the above organisations and the Sector Skills Councils

6.30 Volunteers and management:

- Alternative ways of retaining talent and avoiding high ‘churn’ of volunteers could be explored
- Thought could be given to providing access to training in volunteer management and in management and governance skills
- It could be helpful to look at ways of further enfranchising volunteers within individual stations and in relation to the SCBN, for example

6.31 Accountability:

- Performance could be benchmarked against the overall vision for the sector, individual station objectives and stated local community and listener requirements
- Consideration could be given to whether the sector should be subject to the same standards and forms of accountability that govern other community, education and cultural providers

#### 6.32 Support needs:

- Discussion with the sector could help to clarify what form and level of involvement policy should have particularly in relation to agreeing outcomes, setting standards and measuring benefits
- Policy support could take the form of: facilitating more effective partnerships with education and cultural sectors and the creative industries; helping to improve political recognition; consolidating the status of community radio in relation to wider broadcasting services; and providing networking and best practice sharing opportunities
- Policy could follow recommendations from the Chochrane report in order to encourage greater use and recognition of community radio within the arts community and ensure increased access to the arts funding infrastructure particularly through Creative Scotland
- With the assistance of the SCBN community radio stations could explore how to strengthen links with the professional broadcast sector in order to expand training, resource and programme sharing opportunities

## 7 APPENDIX ONE – LITERATURE SEARCH

<b>Databases/sources searched</b>	<b>Keywords used</b>
IDOX – 19/05/2011 CSA Collections. Includes: ASSIA Econlit Social Services Abstracts Sociological Abstracts PAIS International EBSCOhost Research databases: Academic Search Premier Internet	Community radio, community broadcasting, local radio, community media Subsidiary search on audiences, market, volunteers, community involvement, impact, benefits, delivery structures, needs, market size and impact.
Limits 5 years; any country; English only	

## 8 APPENDIX TWO – KEY COMMITMENTS OF SCOTTISH COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS

Station	Category of target community	Key commitments
3TFM Community Radio for Health	Health promotion	Improve health and wellbeing; involve residents actively in the enhancement of their health; enable those excluded in society to become included
Alive Radio	Religious	Provide a platform for people to be involved in broadcasting; present the Christian faith in an attractive and understandable way; act as a point of contact to allow people to interact with Christians
Awaz FM	BME	Serve the Asian (Indian sub-continent) population; be the Asian voice of Glasgow; support and promote good causes and offer training opportunities
Black Diamond FM	Geographic - urban	Serve the community as a communication tool; reflect Midlothian's unique blend of community interests, cultural and linguistics diversity; provide quality training opportunities
Brick FM	Geographic – town/rural	Unite the local community by providing local information and commentary on local sports, especially rugby, football and cricket; broaden choice in the community by broadcasting new music from abroad
Bute FM	Geographic – town/rural	Offer a community focussed station for the people of Bute; provide a varied mix of music together with local news and views, up-to-the-minute travel information and other items of local interest
Celtic Music Radio	Music – Scottish	Be a strong cultural voice for contemporary and traditional Scottish music and song; advance education, in particular by promoting the performance, learning and appreciation of a broad spectrum of Celtic music; be pro-active in the development of the rich heritage of Celtic music
Dunoon CR	Geographic – town/rural	Provide a service with a strong focus on local content and information
Edinburgh Garrison FM	Military	Provide a welfare and communications package to the target community to make it aware of both current army and local issues; raise awareness of available facilities and opportunities, involve the target community in local events and activities; provide other relevant information
Insight Radio	Disability group	Provide information to blind people which they would ordinarily struggle to access: broadcasting a high level of news, current affairs debates and public service information; provide blind people with specialist information, such as health advice, in an entertaining and informative manner
Leith FM	Geographic – urban	Strengthen the community spirit and identity of Leith; provide employment opportunities, work experience and training; reduce isolation in the Leith community; build the capacity and skills of the community and local residents; promote the heritage, history and story of Leith

Mearns FM	Geographic – town/rural	Be a socially inclusive station maintaining a service of community news, music, drama, discussion and debate; act as a channel of communication for those wishing to forward community initiatives; assist those wishing to develop their personal talents; achieve a more cohesive, friendly and culturally rich local society
Pulse CR	Geographic – town/rural	Be a volunteer-led project with a significant emphasis on the development of young people; offer training and volunteering opportunities; encourage community participation, to celebrate cultural diversity; give a voice to people who are seldom heard on mainstream broadcasting
Revival Radio	Religious	Be a community radio service from a Christian perspective; meet many of the informational, social, and spiritual needs of members
shmuFM	Geographic – urban	Provide and encourage a voice to those who have been disenfranchised or who have limited or no access to the media; support individuals and groups to manage the whole project and get involved in the production, development and presentation of programmes
Speysound	Geographic – town/rural	Provide a locally-focussed service aimed at the population living, working and undergoing education or training in the target community
Sunny Govan Radio	Geographic – urban	Provide opportunities for local people to access information, education and training; give people the opportunity to express opinions and discuss issues which affect them and their community; focus on community and equality using community radio as a vehicle for community development
The Super Station Orkney	Geographic – town/rural	Provide up-to-the-minute news, views and information together with a balanced mix of music from the past 40 years; appeal to the tastes of the station's target audience of 15-44 year old Orcadians
Source: Ofcom website <a href="http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/Community/community-main.html">http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/Community/community-main.html</a> (7th July 2011).		

## 9 APPENDIX THREE – TRAINING RECEIVED BY VOLUNTEERS

Broad category of training	Specific training received
<b>General</b>	Station's ethos
	Volunteer rules
	Induction
<b>Computing</b>	Computing skills
	Using editing software
	Music editing software
	Adobe
<b>Equipment and technical</b>	Operating broadcasting equipment/studio skills
	Using the mixing desk
	Using the sound desk (i.e. Synergy system)
	Health and safety and protecting vulnerable groups
	Setting up outside broadcast equipment
	Uploading CDs
	Technical training on the systems used
	Maintenance of studio desks
	Station playout system
<b>Recording and editing</b>	Show production training
	Recording process (inc pre-recording, mobile/outdoor recording)
	Editing audio programmes (i.e. Audacity)
<b>Pre-broadcast skills</b>	Broadcast/radio guidelines and laws (i.e. Ofcom rules)
	Radio toolkit (developed by Radio Regen – Manchester)
	Research
	How to interact with and serve the community and broadcast information relevant to them
	Film magazine and radio
	Script writing
	How to plan a show
	Show management
<b>Broadcast skills</b>	Interview skills (i.e. for outside)
	Speaking and communication guidance
	Broadcasting techniques (inc. live outside broadcasting)
	How to do a programme from start to finish
	Beginners, intermediate and advanced presentation skills
	Broadcast good practice

\* 'Specific training received' is presented in respondents own words

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