

DMB0047

Written evidence submitted by All-Party Parliamentary Group on Commercial Radio

Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Media Bill

I write to Culture, Media & Sport Select Committee on behalf of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Commercial Radio as it conducts its pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Media Bill. The APPG welcomes the publication of the draft bill and supports the clauses that have been included for radio.

Overall the UK radio industry has 50 million listeners, many of whom now choose to listen online, with listening via the internet (including smart speakers) having risen to a record 24%. The draft clauses in the Media Bill address two important areas for radio as technology changes and listening continues to adapt.

First, provisions for UK radio broadcasters reflect the important recommendations that were outlined in the DCMS-led Digital Radio & Audio Review (published in October 2021) which ultimately recognise the significant public value delivered by broadcasters to audiences across the country. These new safeguards will guarantee access to UK radio services online and on smart speakers.

Secondly, the introduction of legislation to implement commercial radio deregulation is welcome. This overdue update of decades old regulation will implement recommendations from Government that were outlined back in 2017, creating a level playing field and reducing burdens on operators that face more competition than ever.

While in general the draft bill is welcome, there are three areas where the bill could be improved in order address dynamics that are only likely to play an even greater role in the near future. These include: extending the legislation to cover on-demand and IP only content (such as catch up, internet only stations or podcasts) from UK broadcasters; ensuring access to audience data is safeguarded; and clearer definitions around online audio advertising, which is of increasing importance to commercial broadcasters.

We support the Radiocentre industry-wide response to the Committee and look forward to reviewing the Media Bill once it is formally introduced in the next parliamentary session. In the meantime, I would be very happy to discuss the importance of legislative support for radio with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Carter MP

Chair – APPG on Commercial Radio