



Restricted Service Licences

Annual Report 2009

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Section 1

Introduction

Restricted service licences (RSLs) are granted by Ofcom under the Broadcasting Act 1990 (section 104(6)). Further information is contained in our document 'Restricted Service Licences: Notes for Applicants', which can be found at: www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/rsls/rslapps/.

There are three main types of RSL (short-term RSLs, long-term RSLs and Audio Distribution Systems RSLs), and these licences are available for a range of uses. A short definition of each is given below.

Short-term RSLs (S-RSLs)	Are granted for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• coverage of special events• other special projects (e.g. training)• trial services (e.g. in preparation for applying for a community radio licence) Licensees are limited to : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a small coverage area• a usual maximum of 28 consecutive days• a maximum of two licences per year, with a minimum four-month gap between the end of the first and the start of the second (but only one per year within the M25) There are some exceptions to the consecutive days requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• on AM for coverage of a series of events• within a stadium on FM at very low power
Long-term RSLs (L-RSLs)	Are granted for : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a service provided within a clearly-defined single site occupied by an establishment such as a university, hospital, military barracks, marina or shopping centre• broadcasting usually on AM only (FM is available in some locations)• up to five years (renewable)
Audio Distribution Systems RSLs (ADS-RSLs)	Are granted for : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• services provided within a site, such as a sports stadium or conference centre• coverage of events or other temporary purposes (e.g. commentary, translation services)• services provided at the same site, or at a number of different locations• low power services broadcasting on spectrum other than FM or AM, the access to which has been secured separately• a five-year period

Section 2

Summary

Short-term RSLs (S-RSLs):

During 2009 we received **551** applications for S-RSLs from groups and individuals throughout the UK. This was an increase of 9% when compared with 504 applications received in 2008.

A total of **368** temporary radio services were given licences for a wide variety of purposes. For example there were radio stations at sports events, for religious purposes, for schools and colleges, music festivals and other cultural events, and for drive-in movies at various locations. There was a decrease of 16% in the number of licences issued when compared to 2008, when 438 licences were issued.

In 2009 around 40% of these temporary radio services broadcast for 7 days or fewer, with a further third on-air for between three to four weeks.

96% of services broadcast on the FM waveband. 12% of stations (42) requested very low power on FM. Low powers are used when only a small broadcast area is needed for example, drive-in movies, or services within sports stadia.

Long-term RSLs (L-RSLs):

There are 96 services operating under long-term RSLs around the UK. Of these, 12 licences were issued or renewed during 2009. Six licences were surrendered.

The L-RSL services can be broken down as follows:

- 40 of the licences are held by educational establishments;
- 42 are at hospitals;
- 12 are on military bases;
- One is a tourist information service; and
- One is a traffic and travel information service.

Audio Distribution Systems Restricted Service Licences (ADS-RSL)

During 2009 five ADS-RSL licences were issued bringing the total number of licences to nine. Currently licensee include;

- three football grounds
- two cricket clubs
- one entertainment arena, and
- three companies which provide audio services at a range of different venues, including major sports stadia.

Section 3

Short-term Restricted Service Licences (S-RSLs) in 2009

Applications received and licences issued

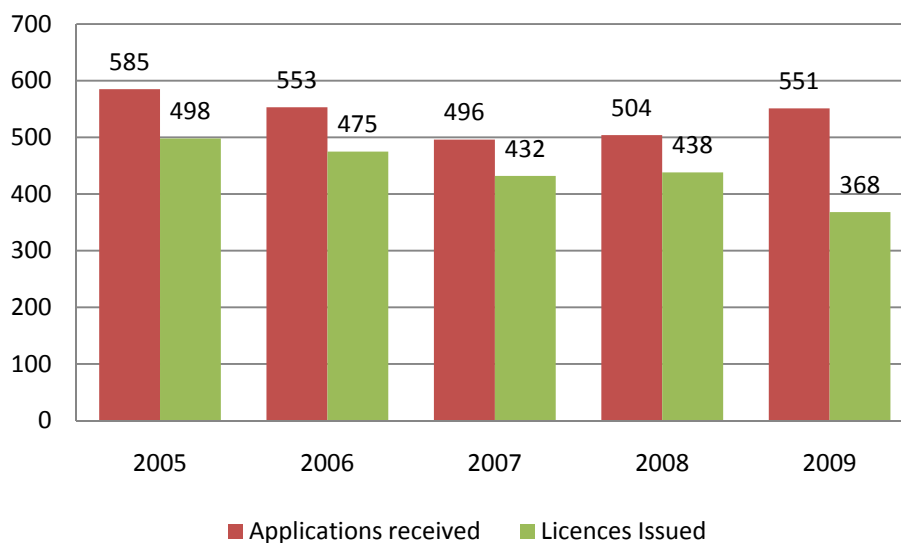
These temporary licences are restricted in duration (a usual maximum of up to 28 days) and coverage (they are for small-scale community use). They are typically used to broadcast information and other material for a range of sports, cultural or religious events, or for training or educational purposes or in preparation for applying for a five-year community radio licence, for example.

In 2009 we received 551 S-RSL applications; with 368 licences issued, 43 applications were rejected and 17 were cancelled by the applicant prior to broadcasting. Similarly to 2008 the main reason for rejecting an application in 2009 was due to other RSL services already agreed in the area and a lack of suitable frequencies for further services. 150 applications received during the year were for services in 2010.

Notable trends for S-RSLs in 2009

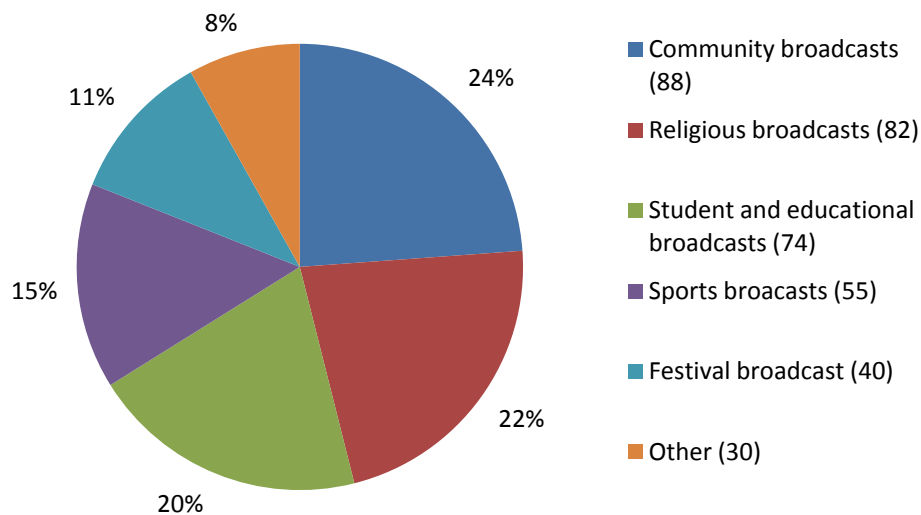
- The number of applications for S-RSLs rose by 9% in 2009 compared to 2008. Cancellations by applicants and the number of rejections fell slightly year on year. The number of licences issued in 2009 however declined by 16% compared to 2008. A significant number of applications were received in advance for broadcasting in 2010. As FM frequencies become more scarce in urban areas (as more community radio services start broadcasting) many S-RSL operators have taken our advice to submit applications early to secure the dates they want (applications can be submitted up to a year in advance).

Figure 1: S-RSL applications received and licences issues by year



- The breakdown of S-RSL usage shows the reasons given for broadcasting by applicants in 2009 were similar to those seen in 2008 and 2007, with an increase in festival broadcasts and, as seen in previous years, an increase in broadcasts for religious purposes. There was a decline in both student and community broadcasts.
- The breakdown of duration of S-RSL broadcasts shows demand for licences for broadcasts of 7 days or fewer was highest at 40% of all licences, up 5% from 2008.
- Broadcasting on FM at a power level above one watt remains by far the most popular power and wavelength at 85% of all licences, however this is down slightly from 89% in 2008.

Figure 2: S-RSL licences issued in 2009 by purpose



It should be noted that some S-RSLs are difficult to classify, especially as they may broadcast for more than one purpose (for example a community radio triallist may broadcast to coincide with a local arts festival, and such a broadcast could fall under the 'community' or 'festival' heading).

Community broadcasts (88)

Community and community trial broadcasts remained the largest category for issuing RSL licences though this year saw a small decline in the number being issued, which reverses the trend seen in the two previous years. Demand was mainly but not exclusively from groups intending to apply for a community radio licence in future.

Religious broadcasts (82)

2009 saw a rise in the percentage of licences issued for services of a religious nature making it the second most common reason for broadcasting. For the observance of Ramadan 26 licences were issued, of which 14 were determined by a public draw in May 2009. Draws were also used for awarding of licences for the Muslim events of Muhurram

and Milaad in Bradford. Licences were also issued for Sikh, Christian and Hindu radio services.

Student and educational broadcasts (74)

Demand for licences for student and educational broadcasts declined from 24% in 2008 to 20% in 2009, pushing it into third place for the most common purpose for applying for an RSL. This can be explained in part by the continuing trend whereby a significant number of university radio stations are choosing to transmit via the internet only rather than using FM or AM; demand from schools for FM licences, however, remains at a similar level to previous years.

Sports event broadcasts (55)

The percentage of licences issued for sporting events remained static in 2009 compared to 2008. The range and diversity of sporting events remained wide. RSL licences were used to broadcast at a number of motor sports meets, yachting regattas, horse races as well as tennis and golf tournaments.

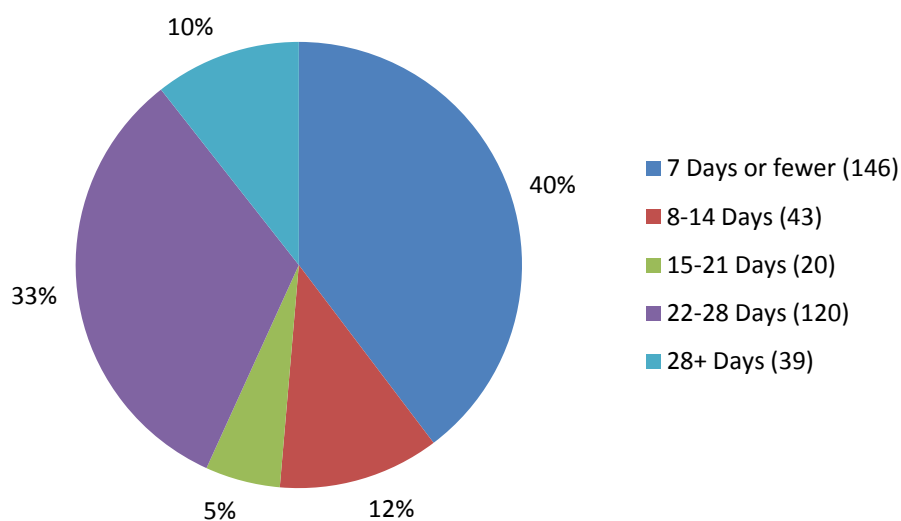
Festival broadcasts (40)

This category saw an increase in 2009 and accounted for 15% of all licences issued. Many of the events are annual and see a radio broadcast as part of the festival experience as well as a tool for providing information. Festivals which featured their own radio station included the Belfast Film Festival, Whitstable Oyster Festival and Glastonbury music festival.

Other Reasons (30)

In 2009 the percentage of licences issued to services which did not fall into any other category grew slightly. This includes drive-in movies, charity fundraisers and art projects.

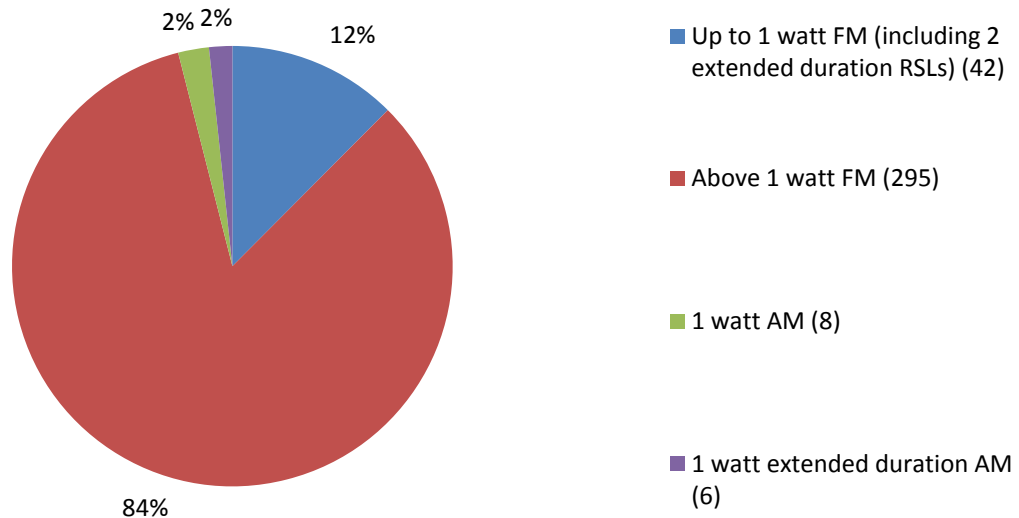
Figure 3: S-RSL licences issued in 2009 by duration



Applications for broadcasts of 7 days or fewer were the most common, followed by longer broadcasts of between 22 days and the normal maximum of 28 days. The '28+ Days'

category in the chart above includes the exception made for broadcasts for Ramadan and Eid which together last 32 days, as well as the extended duration RSLs which can be used for up to 28 non-consecutive days over a period of up to a year. This is commonly used for sporting events at the same venue which may be part of a series such as football fixtures or motor sports. In 2009 the percentage of applicants opting for 7 days or fewer increased from 35% in 2008 to 40%, the percentage choosing 8-14 days remained static and there was a decrease in all other categories compared to 2008's figures.

Figure 4: S-RSL licences issued in 2009 by waveband and power level



There are five categories of S-RSL for the purposes of tariff setting and management. The vast majority of licences issued fall under the 'above one Watt FM' tariff which in practice sees power allocations from five to 25 watts depending on what is required to provide the required broadcast area, as well as our own policy (10 watts is the usual maximum in major conurbations). Services broadcasting on a maximum power of one watt on FM are commonly either drive-in movies or in-stadia broadcasts. The latter includes, for example, a service at the Wimbledon tennis championships. The 'one watt AM (extended duration)' category is used at motor sport venues and football clubs, for example, to license broadcasts which take place on different dates throughout the year. The number of licences issued above 1 watt FM declined from 89% in 2008 to 84% in 2009, whilst the number for all the other categories increased.

Section 4

Long-term Restricted Service Licences (L-RSLs) in 2009

The number of stations broadcasting under a long-term RSL in 2009 was 96, a reduction of two from 98 in 2008. During the year we issued 12 new licences. This consisted of eight renewals (licences may be renewed at the end of the five-year licence period) and four new services. However six services surrendered their licences. The feedback we received was that the organisations involved had either found the cost of maintaining the service too high, or that they are now broadcasting either via the internet or on a community radio licence instead. In Northern Ireland, where in the past we had five LRSLs, all but one of the establishments involved are now community radio licensees and have surrendered their LRSL licences.

The L-RSL services can be broken down as follows:

- 40 of the licences are held by educational establishments;
- 42 are at hospitals;
- 12 are on military bases;
- One is a tourist information service; and
- One is a traffic and travel information service.

Nine of the services operated under L-RSLs at military establishments are run by the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) Gurkha Radio service, which provides services in Nepali and Hindi to service personnel and their families.

Attached at Annex A is a map showing the location of long-term RSL services, and the nature of those services, broadcasting throughout the UK. The majority of services operate on freely-radiating AM (medium wave) frequencies, although there are also some services on FM, and some broadcast via an induction loop system¹ (identified as 'IL' on the map at annex A).

In addition to the services detailed above, some prisons and other penal establishments run radio services for inmates. Due to the Crown Exempt status² of such establishments they are not required to hold licences. However, they apply to Ofcom in the same way as other applicants, so that we may clear an appropriate frequency for their use.

¹ A network of small loop transmitters, each broadcasting an AM frequency, which are enclosed within the walls of buildings and deliver a signal within those buildings only.

² The situation whereby an establishment with Crown status (generally government bodies) is not bound by Acts of Parliament.

Section 5

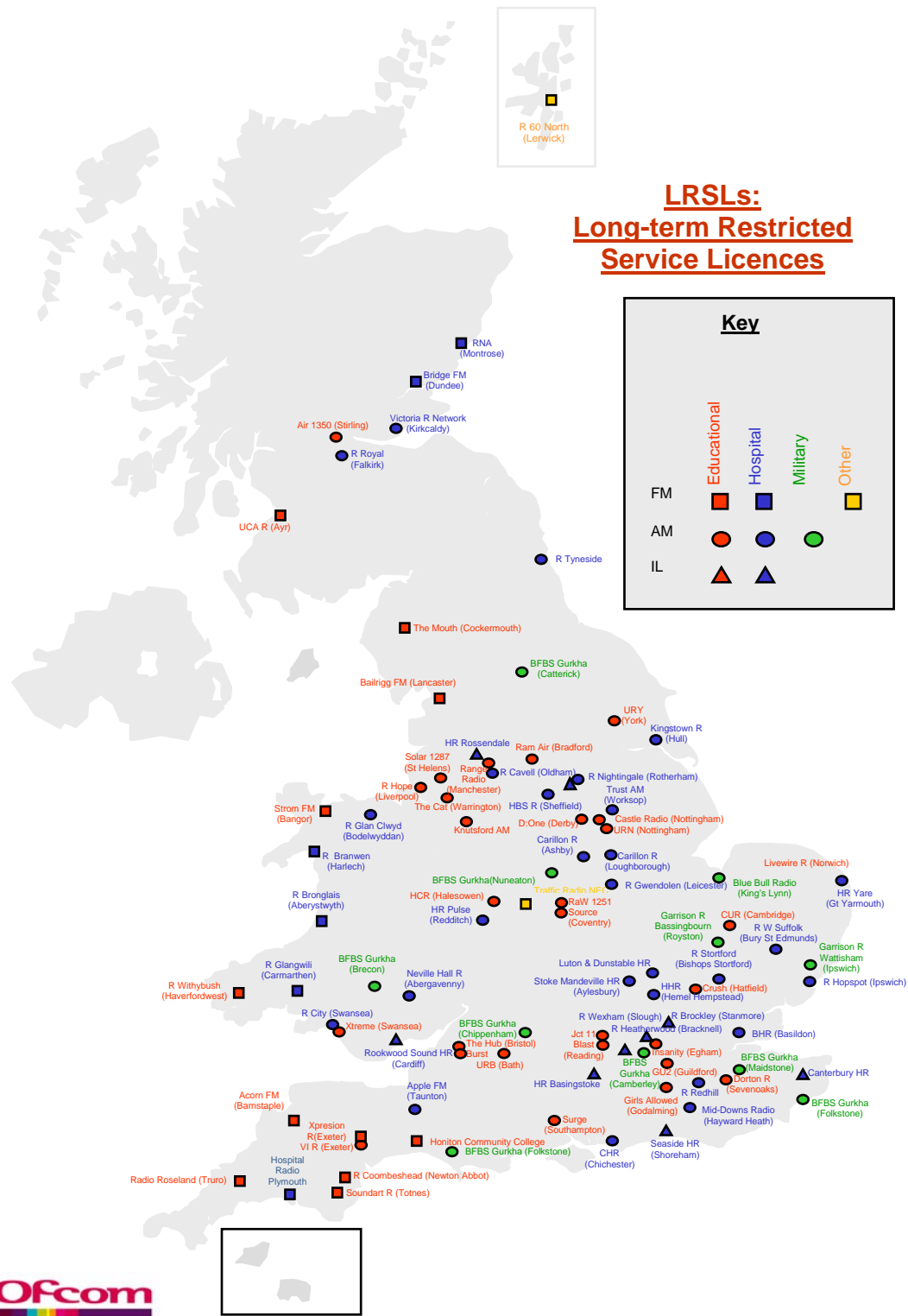
Audio Distribution Systems Restricted Service Licences (ADS-RSL) in 2009

This category of licence is issued for localised broadcast services using spectrum outside the 'traditional' (i.e. FM and AM) broadcast bands.

During 2009 five new ADS-RSL licences were issued bringing the total number of licences to nine. Current licensees include three football clubs, two cricket clubs, one entertainment arena and three companies which provide audio services at a range of different venues, including major sports stadia.

Licences are issued for five years and services typically broadcast commentary and other information for events at sports and entertainment venues. As these services use frequencies outside the broadcast bands, operators distribute 'target tuners' (small portable devices tuned to a specific frequency) to spectators or event attendees to enable them to hear the service.

Annex A



Updated Feb 2010