

# UK: Forest of Dean Becomes First Licenced Full Time Community Radio Station

The UK's first fulltime community radio station Forest of Dean Radio was awarded a five year licence on 11th March. The Community Media Association and its members have long campaigned for community radio stations. Director of the CMA, Diane Reid said: "This is a day to celebrate! At last communities have a real stake in the airwaves.

The communities involved may be small, but the impact of the stations will be huge." Forest of Dean Radio project co-ordinator Amanda Smith said: "We're over the moon! It's a fantastic team effort. We weren't expecting to hear for a few more weeks. Now we're getting the word out to all our volunteers and programme makers. There'll be a celebration for everyone and of course, we'll be doing something on air."

The group currently operates one of the pilot community radio services. It began broadcasting in July 2002 and broadcasts on AM (medium wave). The Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire is a rural area, and Forest of Dean Community Radio has built a relationship with communities across the varied landscapes and distinct culture of the Forest, through its commitment to social inclusion. Its service is aimed at everyone who lives, works or studies in the area.

Ofcom received one application for this area and the licence awarded to Forest of Dean Community Radio is for a five-year period. Applications for the first wave of community radio licences were invited in September 2004.

Ofcom received 194 applications and is currently assessing those applications and examining frequency availability options. There are currently 14 pilot community radio stations operating around the UK. Given the large number of applications received for community radio licences, Ofcom decided to assess them in order of priority by first considering applications for areas where the 14 pilot community radio stations are currently broadcasting.

This involves over 70 applications, and includes areas such as London, Manchester and Glasgow. Ofcom is aiming to make decisions in these areas before the end of June, before moving on to look at applications for areas not involved in the pilot scheme. This first round of the community radio awards process is expected to be completed by late summer/early autumn, when applications for the second round will be invited.

Community Media Association [www.commedia.org.uk](http://www.commedia.org.uk)