

You may already be aware that Scott's Radio Site does not feature certain stations within the Station Guide section. This is because all radio stations are assessed for quality of service, prior to inclusion.

This document sets out the criteria the website uses to assess stations. Scott's Radio Site has also started to highlight some of the poor quality DAB stations and formats that have started to operate, and the criteria for assessing these is also included.

## Assessment Criteria

For a station to be included, it must be fit for purpose, and operated in a way which balances both profit and public service.

### National Stations

For national stations, the station must either have the majority of daytime and evening programmes presenter led, or have a legitimate reason for using automation.

For example, although Union Jack is mostly automated, it qualifies for inclusion as the station playlist is controlled by the listeners via the website and app, providing audience participation. This is therefore deemed to be a valid reason for automation.

Due to the excessive amounts of networking on local stations operated by Bauer Media Limited, and Global PLC, national stations operated by these firms (including Absolute Radio, Gold, Magic, Radio X etc) are excluded from the Station Guide by default.

### Local Stations

Due to the number of networked stations, where local licenses are merged together to provide a national service with limited local opt outs, Scott's Radio Site has strict criteria for local stations to be included.

Ofcom, the industry regulator, now only requires 3 or 6 hours of local programmes on weekdays, depending on the amount of news provision. There is now no requirement for weekend local programmes or news. Scott's Radio Site does not believe that this is sufficient to providing an adequate local service.

These are the minimum requirements for inclusion within the Station Guide:

- 7 hours of local programmes on every weekday, and 4 hours on Saturday and Sunday
- Local programmes can either be made within the coverage area, or from an area bordering the coverage area, if two neighbouring stations are co-located.

- Exceptions are made for small groups of 3 larger licenses or 5 smaller licenses, where stations are within the same or neighbouring regions, provided reasonable provision of opt outs is in place. In these instances, a minimum of 4 hours of local programmes are required each day.
- In all cases, daytime programmes (7am to 7pm weekdays, 10am to 4pm weekends) must be presenter led, unless increased automation is required to ensure the station remains financially viable.

Scott's Radio Site recommends that local stations should have at least 10 hours of local programmes on weekdays, and 6 hours local programmes on Saturday and Sunday. Scott's Radio Site does not deem local station names to be a requirement, although an appropriate local name is preferred.

Scott's Radio Site is also not against networking in principal, but networking must be used sparingly and only where appropriate.

## DAB Assessment Criteria

The following station bit rates should be used to ensure that a station broadcasts with appropriate sound quality:

<b>Station Type</b>	<b>Bit Rate (kbps)</b>
Music Based Primary Service (local station or key national brand such as Magic or Kiss)	112 or 128 in joint stereo
Music Based Secondary Service (decades station or other spin-off, and specialist services, or stations with a mix of music and talk)	80 kbps in mono
Talk Based Service	56 or 64 kbps in mono
Music Based DAB+ Service	48, 56 or 64 kbps in stereo
Talk Based DAB+ Service	32 kbps in mono

Bit rates of 24 kbps or lower, and any other stations observed, will have a 'poor audio' label where appropriate. This does not mean that the station itself is poor, but is a recommendation to listen online where possible.

## Further DAB Recommendations

Due to DAB+ being used more often, it is recommended that listeners by a DAB+ compatible radio (easier said than done, labeling is poor across the industry). If you already have a DAB radio, and it receives Gold or Union Jack, it is already DAB+ compatible.

However, if you already have a DAB radio and it is not DAB+ compatible, Scott's Radio Site does **not** recommend replacing it, as this causes unnecessary electrical waste. If the station you listen to has switched to DAB+, Scott's Radio Site recommends switching to a different station, or listening on FM or online, where sound quality is considerably better.