

## Response to BBC Public Interest Test Consultation on new music radio stations on DAB+

### About AudioUK

AudioUK is the trade body for the audio-led production sector, which is comprised of companies making high-quality podcasts, radio programmes and audiobooks for brands, broadcasters and platforms, as well as self-publishing content. AudioUK has four core priorities: Business; Representation; Community; and Excellence – and has around 140 member companies based across the whole of the UK, representing around 95% of sector turnover. Our members were responsible for 31% of eligible hours of the BBC's network radio output in the period 2022-23.

**Question 1: What do you think about the potential public value of our proposals for the launch of new music radio stations on DAB+, including the extent to which our proposal contributes to the BBC's mission to serve all audience through the provision of high quality and distinctive output and services which informs, educates and entertains?**

And

**Question 2: What do you think about the benefit to audiences who will listen to the stations, as well as wider potential social and cultural impacts?**

The extent to which there is genuine public value to the proposed new services will depend on the quality of the content and the extent to which a variety of talents and expertise are brought in to create the services.

At present our sector provides a range of shows for the BBC's music networks. However there is an ongoing issue that some parts of the schedule are reserved for in-house production, meaning the Licence Fee Payer is not benefiting from the greater diversity of production talent available in the independent sector. This represents a limit on creativity on these networks and we continue to ask that this policy is revisited. We are also able to continue to ask that this policy is revisited.

In addition the budgets made available for some music shows are not sufficient for them to be made without either a sacrifice in the quality (which is not to say any programmes are poor quality but that any additional distinctive creative elements are not possible), or the producer having to commit additional resource at their own cost to make the content to the standard they believe the Licence Fee Payer should expect.

We already have examples of member companies having to make extra content for the BBC's additional Sounds sub brands, without being paid extra to do so, on budgets that already make it

hard for them to pay their staff a fair wage. There is a deep concern in the disparity between the wages that The BBC are able to pay its in house teams, vs the wages that independent production businesses can pay their staff, based on BBC budgets.

We note the proposal is stressful

